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Seasons of Change

Ni-Vanuatu and the Recognised Seasonal Employer’s (RSE) Scheme

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Abstract

The Recognised Seasonal Employer’s (RSE) scheme is analysed using a governmentality framework to examine the contradictions in the subjectivities that are constructed for Ni-Vanuatu working in the RSE. This analysis calls attention to the fluid social relations of RSE participants whose subjectivities are predominantly constituted by “migration narratives” derived from the social context in New Zealand and Vanuatu. The analysis is based on qualitative interviews with RSE participants and stakeholders in charge of managing this migration scheme in a multi-sited three-phase research design spanning two agricultural seasons; and a review of documents behind the emergence of the RSE scheme. The findings reflect the tensions among the subjectivities that individuals move between and the gains and losses that contribute to their continued engagement in the RSE.

By investigating the rationalities upon which the RSE has emerged, I have been able to show how migration and development narratives at international and national levels contribute to its maintenance. I draw attention to particular types of rationalities behind the policies and practices of the RSE scheme. I identify and analyse two political rationalities: a neoliberal rationality focused in productivity, and a customary rationality grounded in a sense of community. These rationalities are in constant interaction; sometimes interwoven and sometimes at odds. In doing so, I draw attention to the governmental techniques of self-care and discipline that are transforming the subjectivities of Ni-Vanuatu RSE, to provide a nuanced argument highlighting the contradictory consequences of the development that the scheme brings for Ni-Vanuatu – at individual and community levels. This research contributes a new perspective of the transformations in social relations brought about by the RSE, in care giving and dealing with communal responsibilities. This perspective can be extended to the analysis of other migration management programmes.
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIP: Approval in principle
ATR: Agreement to Recruit
CSWAP: Canada Seasonal Agricultural Work program
DOL: Department of Labour
ESU: Employment Services Unit
GCIM: Global Commission on International Migration
HortNZ: Horticulture New Zealand
ILO: International Labour Organization
INZ: Immigration New Zealand
IOM: International Organization for Migration
MBIE: New Zealand Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment
MFAT: New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MIRAB: Migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy
NELM: New Economics of Labour Migration
NIROMP: New International Regime for Orderly Movements of People
NPM: New Public Management
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCTA: Office of the Chief Trade Adviser
PACER: Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (2001)
PIF: Pacific Island Forum
PCF: Pacific Cooperation Foundation

PICTA: Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement

RSE: Recognised Seasonal Employer’s scheme

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SPP: Strengthening Pacific Partnerships

TMP: Temporary Movement of Persons

VNPSO: Vanuatu National Planning and Statistics Office

VNSO: Vanuatu National Statistics Office
Chapter 1. Introduction

The Recognised Seasonal Employer’s (RSE) scheme was introduced in 2007 as a temporary migration scheme to recruit workers from Pacific Island countries (PICs) to work in the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture sectors. The RSE scheme is part of a new generation of seasonal migration programmes underpinned by a neoliberal approach that allows the private sector to have a stronger role in the economy and limits the state to a correspondingly smaller role. Vanuatu was one of the first kick-start countries to participate in the RSE scheme. This thesis examines the resultant transformations of Ni-Vanuatu workers brought about by their country’s engagement in international labour mobility since the 2006 pilot of the RSE scheme. This does not mean that Ni-Vanuatu did not migrate or were not involved in labour mobility before the scheme such as during colonial times, but the particularities of engaging with a new migration model and the associated changes to adapt to it are problematic in the long term. The new social relations constructed around the subjectivities generated by the roles of waged labourers combined with considerable sums of money brought in by the seasonal workers transforms daily lives by creating new hierarchies that privilege merit instead of lineage. In addition, social practices such as taking care of children and gardens, are transformed. Studying the RSE scheme in this manner allows for a nuanced understanding of the contradictory social outcomes associated with temporary migration management programmes.

Since the early 1990s, the revival of temporary migration programmes has been associated with specific labour migration policies in the United States of America (USA) (1990) and Europe (1997). Such programmes are presented as a response to uncontrolled migration across terrestrial borders. They strive to regulate the mobility of populations in a policy effort to control the security risks that unregulated migration threatens, striving to make migration “safe, orderly, and regular” (IOM, 2017). The aim of these new types of migration programmes is twofold – to discourage irregular, as in unregulated, migration and to address demographic and development disparities or issues such as unemployment (GCIM, 2005). The RSE scheme has been widely recognised as ‘best practice’ in relation to addressing wider issues of inequality
through its ‘fair recruitment’ (ILO, 2015b),1 a claim that invites closer scrutiny. This research examines the RSE as a migration management scheme and how the new subjectivities it generates affect development in the countries involved.

The global shift in the management of migration is based on the premise that there is a direct relationship between migration management and development. Under these schemes, migration is used to ameliorate unemployment pressure in developing countries and address labour shortages in the developed countries that receive the migrants. Earlier migration policies were based on the notion that well-managed migration could be an opportunity for all the parties involved; however, ‘migration management’ approaches signal a discursive shift. (GCIM, 2005; WCSDG, 2004). This shift is related to the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s that accompanied the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) approaches. NPM brought a managerial style to policy making and governance, which encourages interinstitutional coordination and a reliance on technocratic expertise to define key policy issues. Thus, labour migration programmes are required to improve cost-efficiency by mobilising labour to support productivity and competitiveness. In this scenario, if migration is to generate development, it needs to be managed – and not left unregulated – because of the economic risks that unemployment and insecurity pose for civil unrest. This global concern with security issues grew with the securitisation of migration after 9/11 with a focus on the surveillance of diaspora activities.

Analysing the RSE from a governmentality perspective (Foucault, 2001) will allow the conditions, norms and practices associated with the management of the scheme to be politicised as techniques of governmentality, as managing a population includes managing their overall results in depth and detail (Foucault, 2007). The analysis of academic discourse, unpublished grey literature and statistics, will trace the governmentality techniques at work in the construction and configuration of knowledge in relation to the scheme. This approach assumes that modes of government and power are derived from practices and social relations. In this thesis, I intend to interrogate the power relations and differentials existing between the various RSE stakeholders as expressions of wider transformations underway in Vanuatu and New Zealand. This analysis aims to identify the processes by which certain forms of power and

---

1 The ILO had argued that the RSE scheme had implemented a “system of checks to ensure that the migration process is orderly, fair, and circular” (McKenzie & Gibson, 2010: 3) which could be used as a model for other countries.
subjectivities are produced by exploring the means by which such migration management policies have been enabled at the international level.

A governmentality approach distances itself from economic analyses that do not consider the differences existing among individuals and their social relations, and the dynamic nature of authority. Narratives are considered the effects of power and knowledge relations, thus become crucial discursive tools and practices (Livholts & Tamboukou, 2015). From this standpoint, I am critical of the underlying assumptions and the political character of technocratic practices and their operationalisation. The narratives of purely cost-benefit economic assessments that have largely been used to monitor and evaluate the RSE and other migration programmes thus far, discount the possibility of changes that are revealed in the relational analysis used in this thesis. There are other frameworks of analysis that essentialise workers as ‘others’ especially those which view migration management as the interaction of objective push and pull factors measurable by statistics and economic indicators. These approaches oversimplify the complexity of development issues and are marginal to this thesis. These dominant approaches derive from early migration theory (Harris & Todaro, 1970; Ravenstein, 1885; Zelinsky, 1971), which has been re-defined in recent decades in approaches such as the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) (J. E. Taylor, 1996) and thereby linked to NPM. They are characterised by using quantitative data to bring evidence to policy making and focus on economic determinants to facilitate decision making.

Through its engagement of seasonal agricultural workers, the RSE is changing social relations between participants and their communities – both in New Zealand and Vanuatu. Studying the effects of such changes on the way individuals relate to each other and in their common social practices requires an approach which emphasises the relational construction of knowledge and social relations; which often goes unnoticed in conventional economic assessments. This thesis understands that subjects are constituted by their relations, and that through the RSE workers are involved in relations that otherwise would not occur. In doing so, it examines the transformations in social relations brought about by the RSE by highlighting the unintended changes brought by seasonal migration. It provides a critique of disembodied analyses – concerned with populations and not individuals – that hide the materiality of workers’ experiences and their real social relations by instead focusing on productivity and money, which in turn contribute to the production of such relational changes.
Chapter 1

The title of this thesis, *Seasons of Change*, points to the fluid social relations of RSE participants; relations which over time and space construct subjectivities based on different “migration narratives” specific to a social context. Following Geiger and Pécoud (2010; 2013), my analysis acknowledges that the formal and informal institutions that govern social relations are not neutral. I examine the various practices through which the flows of power transform the lives of RSE workers and others in their families and communities who are not directly engaged in the scheme. I will argue that the RSE, as is true of most seasonal work programmes, is predominantly viewed as governing labour relations in a depoliticised way. Seen from a relational analysis framework, changing the social order, hierarchies and movement of capital set in motion a new set of relations that did not exist before the scheme. As subjectivities and institutions are formed and transformed by mundane practices derived from power relations (Rose & Miller, 2010), these new relations may bring disempowering changes that have yet to be appreciated.

My findings point to the construction of particular subjectivities which are transformed by individuals’ involvement in the RSE scheme. I link these changes to specific narratives of development embedded in the policy, and which permeated the workers’ interviews as they talked about adapting their behaviours to improve their “standard of living”. This research aims to fill a gap left by current evaluations and grey literature, and similarly by recent doctoral theses (Bailey, 2014b; Rockell, 2015; R. E. Smith, 2016) which have, however, extended their scope of analysis of the scheme beyond economic terms. This analysis considers the quantification of the “triple wins” perceived as benefits of the RSE as insufficient. Instead, the analysis in this thesis focuses on social relations, an often disregarded topic in the assessments of the RSE scheme. Using a multisite study in the Hawke’s Bay of New Zealand, and Efate and Santo in Vanuatu, I interviewed RSE workers, workers’ leaders, relatives and community members as well as key RSE stakeholders in charge of the management of the RSE scheme. I also undertook document analysis to elucidate how policy documents and grey literature are connected to and guide individuals’ actions.

The complexities derived from an analysis from a governmentality perspective shed light on how the RSE brings dimensions beyond material outcomes and gains for Ni-Vanuatu working in the scheme. Such an analysis takes into account the construction and transformation of social relations and subjectivities, which can sometimes originate at the policy level. In doing so, it has not been my intention to diminish the economic achievements of New Zealand companies, or individuals participating in the RSE scheme, but rather to interrogate the consequences of
those gains. Studying the implicit assumptions underlying the understanding of monetary and measurable gains as sufficient justification for continuing temporal migration programmes is a further focus.

1.1. Background to the RSE scheme in Vanuatu

The RSE scheme was first piloted with 45 Ni-Vanuatu participants in 2006 and then officially launched in 2007 after the signing of bi-lateral agreements between the New Zealand Government and the five “kick-start” countries – Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu. To date, over 30,000 limited visas, valid for a maximum of seven months, have been issued to Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers, and up to June 2017, 28,172 workers – many of them repeat participants – had engaged in the RSE (INZ, 2017). Before the introduction of the RSE scheme, Vanuatu lacked access to other visas and formal “migration outlets” (R. Bedford & Hugo, 2008; Ramasamy et al., 2008) and international migration from the country was negligible compared to other PICs (Xu & Ratha, 2008); a situation which has dramatically changed since the introduction of the scheme.

At the time of the launch of the RSE scheme, the New Zealand viticulture and horticulture sector had been resorting to using ‘irregular’ migrants to handle seasonal labour needs. In this context, the scheme designers considered it a more attractive labour solution than employing workers locally, because of Pacific workers’ willingness to work. This meant they could achieve economic growth and maintain the competitiveness of the sector in exporting to international markets (MFAT, 2007; Ramasamy et al., 2008). According to the storyline traced through the migration management policy documents – manuals, guidelines, and grey literature – analysed, the RSE scheme was designed to meet private sector pressures to minimise losses attributed to lack of suitable local labour and to maximise the use of flexible labour, which was in excess in PICs. At the same time it aimed to right the wrongs and issues occurring in the viticulture and horticulture sectors, including: human trafficking and related fraud (Coppedge, 2006; Sharpe, 2010), and a lack of productivity due to labour shortages (Ramasamy et al., 2008).

The RSE policy was communicated through a narrative linking migration to development. One of the RSE objectives is to promote development in the Pacific nations, “encouraging economic
development, regional integration and stability (Ramasamy et al., 2008: 171). This objective would be achieved by a planned policy approach which through migration management would deliver benefits for the sending and receiving countries, including migrant workers, and their communities. This thesis examines the RSE as a migration management programme in New Zealand and Vanuatu presenting a “triple win” scenario by which labour mobility provides employment and training opportunities for the workers and brings money into the family and local economy, and more widely economic growth and development to the Pacific. The scheme allows a supplementary workforce (INZ, 2016b) to support the viability and prosperity – economic growth and productivity – of the New Zealand’s horticulture and viticulture sectors, by securing workers to meet growers’ intensive seasonal labour needs for activities such as thinning, pruning and harvesting.

The stated purpose of the RSE is to encourage economic development, regional integration and good governance within the Pacific, by allowing preferential access to workers who are citizens of eligible Pacific countries. At the same time, the RSE aimed to promote best practice in the horticulture and viticulture industries ensuring the protection of employment conditions, including adequate payment and financial benefits. This would promote the “integrity, credibility and reputation of the New Zealand immigration and employment relations systems” (INZ, 2016b). Private sector needs were coupled with increasing demands from PICs, through the Pacific Island Forum (2005), for improved labour mobility through access to labour markets in New Zealand and Australia. Because of the “youth bulge” in the Pacific population, there was an accompanying oversupply of labour, as confirmed by the recorded numbers of unemployed. This approach explicitly joined foreign policy to development and market goals (Barker, 2010).

Statistics and economic indicators both confirmed and articulated a mismatch between labour demand in New Zealand and labour supply in PICs (R. Bedford, Ho, Krishnan, & Hong, 2007; World Bank, 2006a). The ensuing discourses were framed in political speeches (Plimmer, 2006), press releases (MFAT, 2007), and in the grey literature (World Bank, 2006a). Policy makers, academics, and officials from the World Bank, who were pivotal in the eventual launch of the RSE (HortNZ, 2009; Plimmer, 2006; Winters, 2016; Winters, 2016; World Bank, 2006a; World Bank, 2006a), echoed the demands of the industry and argued that matching supply and demand could be a “win” for all parties involved. The New Zealand private sector could meet seasonal labour requirements and at the same time the RSE scheme could tackle unemployment
in the Pacific region (Ramasamy et al., 2008; World Bank, 2006a), which the World Bank had considered “one of the ingredients for civil unrest” (World Bank, 2006a: 27).

From its inception, the RSE received endorsement from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as government officials in the various participant countries, and interested parties in the New Zealand private sector who would benefit from the scheme. This industry-driven labour migration scheme was seen by stakeholders to be a promising initiative because it would allow workers who lack work opportunities in their home countries to match the temporary labour needs of the horticulture and viticulture sector in New Zealand. Pacific Island Forum (PIF) members have long advocated for labour mobility and access to unskilled labour markets in New Zealand and Australia (R. Bedford & Hugo, 2008). PICs governments consider the scheme a partial response to ongoing regional trade negotiations. Labour mobility is included in the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus) was signed in June 2017 with a side arrangement on labour mobility (Kautoke-Holani, 2018).

Since the beginnings of the RSE, the New Zealand government has more than doubled the number of workers allowed to participate in the scheme – which speaks to the strong uptake of the scheme. The cap is set based on the capacity of the labour market to employ migrant workers and the projected needs of the horticulture and viticulture industries. The annual cap for seasonal workers has increased from 5,000 in 2007, to 10,500 by late 2016. The RSE scheme has become increasingly important for New Zealand. Along with the growing numbers of RSE workers being employed in viticulture and horticulture, the New Zealand Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) uses the same migration and development rationale in discussions with other industry sectors to advance the possibility of scaling up seasonal migration initiatives (World Bank, 2016). Alternatives such as changing other existing schemes have been proposed based on the RSE experience (ADB, 2018; MBIE, 2017). However, to date, these discussions have not prospered because of the lack of interest of sectors such as dairy and fisheries, which rely on other arrangements than the limited seasonal visa that RSE workers are granted.

The outcomes of the RSE scheme as well as its associated programmes, such as the Strengthening Pacific Partnership (SPP) and the Vakameasina, have been consistently monitored by the New Zealand government. Employers are surveyed annually, and more
recently information on individual remittances has been collected. The various evaluations and assessments commissioned by the New Zealand government (IMSED Research, 2010; Labour Immigration Research Centre, 2012) and the World Bank (Luthria, 2008; McKenzie & Gibson, 2014) have been positive. The economic flow-on effects of the cash earned by RSE workers has been gauged in terms of infrastructure and new houses, water wells, solar panels, and so on. A positive economic balance has been reported for workers and employers when salaries and remittances have been measured against outgoings for airline tickets, visa applications, and room and board. However, these predominantly economic measurements do not fall within the scope of this thesis.

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the current strong emphasis on the cost-effectiveness of New Zealand public sector policies is in tune with the currently predominant NPM approach on which the application of business-like practices by the public sector is predicated (Hood, 1991). Several factors have contributed to the rapid adoption of NPM in New Zealand since 1984, when the then Minister of Finance first began deregulating the New Zealand public sector, namely: the perceived inefficiencies and overall size of the public sector, and the adoption of similar models in Britain, which also started “rolling back the state”, and in the USA where it is known as managerialism (Whitcombe, 2008). The structural reforms occurring in New Zealand during the 1980s and 1990s under this model saw the creation of state-owned enterprises, merging of government ministries, and a growing emphasis on coordination between state agencies working towards joint outcomes in a process known as joined-up government.

The considerable body of research on the RSE scheme by international organisations and academics has predominantly focused on the material gains for RSE participants. Policy effects have thus been measured in terms of national level priorities and wider economic benefits, rather than from individual or societal perspectives. Important questions remain in relation to how individuals understand their engagement with the scheme (beyond the direct economic gains), in terms of their social relations in New Zealand and in their communities in Vanuatu. To this end, I have interviewed male and female RSE workers, workers’ leaders and members of their families and communities, as well as government officials and contractors in Vanuatu and New Zealand to understand how social relations are being transformed alongside the RSE scheme. These semi-structured interviews provide insight into the changing attitudes, towards money and work ethic for example, and how these can transform subjectivities at various points in relation to time and place.
Most discussion and assessment based on quantitative approaches to measuring RSE economic benefits supports the view that, to various degrees, the scheme is meeting the expected “triple wins” for which it is designed (Bailey, 2014a; Bailey, 2015a; Bailey, 2015b; C. Bedford, 2014; C. Bedford, 2013; R. Bedford, Bedford, Wall, & Young, 2017; Brickenstein, 2017; N. Lewis, 2014). These commentators argue that first, the RSE guarantees labour, and therefore increased productivity, for employers who are not otherwise able to secure it; second, they see value in “unskilled workers” being given the opportunity for waged employment; and third, remittances are channelled to workers’ communities. Remittances and material gains have certainly had significant effects, particularly for rural areas of Vanuatu (Bailey, 2015b). These effects have also been understood in relation to the exercise of customary practices, as the influx of money has gained social relevance (Bailey, 2014b; R. E. Smith, 2016). Following these arguments, the inclusion of more RSE workers in the scheme, or expansion of the scheme to sectors other than horticulture and viticulture seems justified. Nonetheless, the unintended consequences of increasing the involvement of rural communities in a monetary economy need to be more explicitly addressed when discussing the “triple win”. As explained in the next section, this research takes a different approach to unveiling some of these consequences.

1.2. Research Questions

This thesis examines the narratives and practices behind the RSE to identify how they are related and asking how migration management and development narratives contribute to the practices that sustain the scheme. I analyse both neoliberal and “customary” political rationalities underlying the RSE scheme which are underpinned by such narratives. I distinguish both for analytical purposes as they occur alongside or in combination with other types of knowledge and rationalities. My focus is on how governmental technologies operate on the multiple social relations that workers engage in when participating in the RSE. I consider RSE “migration narratives” and practices are constructing subjectivities with a particular disempowering character. Thus, these new adjustments may be more problematic than those associated with earlier forms of labour mobility in the Pacific. The overall research question guiding this thesis asks in what ways do neoliberal migration management practices alongside Ni-Vanuatu worldviews construct new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and how do these new subjectivities contribute to Vanuatu development trajectories.
Chapter 1

These specific research questions are addressed:

- Which “migration management narratives” made the emergence of the RSE scheme possible, and how did this happen?
- How do neoliberal rationalities, narratives, and practices construct new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and what are the implications of such transformations for Ni-Vanuatu social relations?
- How do customary rationalities and practices transform new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and what are the implications for Ni-Vanuatu most permanent social relations with their families and communities?

With these questions in mind, I analyse the RSE as a seasonal migration programme and the intended and unintended consequences of workers’ participation in the scheme. The multisited research design involves three phases of data gathering, including interviews with the same participants in New Zealand and Vanuatu. I argue for the importance of the temporal dimension of RSE workers’ social relations and their transformations during pre-departure, preparation and return, as they engage in seasonal migration and the long-term implications. The analysis draws attention to the transformations of social relations by migration management narratives. These transformations – unintended or not – are telling of how Ni-Vanuatu are participating with their labour in global horticulture and viticulture markets, which to remain competitive need to reduce costs and maximise benefits. The next section describes the structure of the thesis.

1.3. Overview of the thesis

The overall argument of this research is situated at three distinct levels in relation to scale. First, I argue that migration narratives are used by various stakeholders to define the practices that sustain the RSE scheme. These discursive forces produce bodies of knowledge which in turn confirm a common understanding of problems. At both national and international levels, these narratives of development linked to productivity, competitiveness, and entrepreneurship become embedded within a configuration of rationalities that are considered as truths, and thus remain unquestioned. Second, the RSE is presented as a solution to the problematisation of
unemployment, security, youth bulge in the Pacific – and thus a common technocratic “best practice” approach frames its operationalisation from recruitment to return. Third, the use of technocratic knowledge as apparently exempt from political considerations, establishes a system of relations based on discursive and non-discursive practices through which particular subjectivities are being constructed. In the articulation of market needs through migration management and development narratives, entrepreneurial selves are responsibilised for their own development (Kunz, 2008). My analysis identifies two intertwined rationalities – neoliberal and customary – each related to certain subjectivities, which are often mutually supportive.

From a governmentality framework, I identify governmental techniques operating in complementary and contradictory ways to transform Ni-Vanuatu subjectivities. I have identified techniques within the two extremes of “self-care” and “discipline” which are connected to common development narratives distilled from the RSE scheme, and to a variety of governmental techniques that operate within the different social relations of individuals. I argue that individuals are not purely economic agents, and thus are capable of moving through different subject positions at different times. I examine this with my participants – workers, workers’ leaders, and members of their families and communities – whose interviews illustrate the shifting subjectivities of workers along their RSE journey. Participants in the scheme are discovering new ways of being, alongside their entanglement in new neoliberal relations.

Chapters’ structure follows a three-level structure to align with the research questions guiding the overall approach to the study. I first analysed the international migration management and development discourses behind the creation of the RSE. The analysis spans both grey and academic literature and RSE documents published between 2006 and 2016, including communication material, guidelines, and reports, among others. The analysis is specific to the narratives and storylines constructing Vanuatu as part of the Pacific’s “arc of instability”, and how this problematisation has come to be widely accepted given the growing young demographic and limited opportunities for waged employment (R. Bedford, 2008b; World Bank, 2006a). I explain how labour migration came to be the solution of choice for security reasons aimed at preventing civil unrest (Dobell, 2012; Wallis, 2012). Second, I analyse the practices embedded in the management of the RSE. I draw attention to the way international best practice and policy is interpreted by different stakeholders in New Zealand and Vanuatu, at times with ambiguity and discretionality, and interrogate whether such practices are necessary to maintain the scheme.
Thirdly, I focus on RSE workers’ subjectivities as constructed by the interaction of international narratives and local understandings alongside material and symbolic forces. On the one hand, new subjectivities linked to neoliberal rationalities have emerged. The transformation of subjectivities is a continuous process linked to wider processes of globalisation and local transformations. While I am not suggesting that other types of work in the monetary economy are not relevant in the transformation of subjectivities; this thesis interrogates only specific subjectivities in relation to the RSE scheme narratives linking migration and development. The “profit maximising”, the “self-driven”, and the “goal setting” individual embodies productivity, self-care and discipline. At the same time the “disciplinarian leader” emerges as a subjectivity related to the ascendance required to manage a team to be productive. On the other hand, subjectivities informed by customary rationalities related to ableness and qualities of “good” character, such as being a “good provider”, “strong worker” and “good kinsmen”. Though at most times intertwined, these subjectivities can lead to contradictory positions at different places and moments in time.

Because of the emphasis this thesis places on discourses and narratives in the construction of subjectivities, I acknowledge that the use of certain terminology can be problematic. For example, a term such as Melanesian, used to describe ethnicity, is loaded with its colonial origins. However, to stay as close as possible to original sources, I have opted to use them when they appear in the referenced literature, or when interviewees in this research have directly used such terms. My intention is not to essentialise, but rather to raise awareness of specific historical circumstances indicative of identities being reduced to stereotyped meanings. I have also kept the language used by participants in interviews that reflects their own representations. For example, “Ni-Van” can be a derogatory term when used by a non-Ni-Vanuatu person, but not so when used by a Ni-Vanuatu. The use of such language is indicative of the communities that Ni-Vanuatu construct when arriving in New Zealand, and somewhat disregards the cultural diversity between different island groups by assuming the experience of working in the RSE will be similar for all people coming to New Zealand. This also emphasises the distinction made between other Ni-Vanuatu and the predominantly white context in which they work.

Chapter 2 is structured in four parts. First, it outlines the relevant theories behind the dominant migration models to discern the predominantly economic understandings of migration. I then provide background to the global shift that has occurred in policy making around migration, linking migration to development, from the 1990s to the introduction of the Global Commission of International Migration (GCIM) (2005), and the subsequent inclusion of
migration management as a component of one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Second, I unfold the Foucauldian theorisation and concepts that are operational in the analysis of my thesis. Third, I revise mobility theories in relation to Vanuatu, drawing attention to similarities and differences with the RSE scheme, as the RSE scheme has often been understood as a continuation of earlier mobility relationships (R. Bedford, 2007; R. Bedford & Hugo, 2008). I also engage in critiquing the academic use of post structuralism to understand the South Pacific region. Fourth, I frame the research in terms of the questions that drive and articulate this study.

Chapter 3 presents the context for the RSE in the two countries in which I carried out fieldwork: New Zealand and Vanuatu. Firstly, it focuses the specific background for the RSE as a temporal mobility programme in each country. In the case of New Zealand, the significance of the RSE for the horticulture and viticulture sectors is outlined, in providing a broader picture of the development of the respective export markets. In the case of Vanuatu, this chapter highlights the historical and continuing advocacy toward labour mobility from PICs. I then point to the multiple social relations that are required to be mobilised in both countries in relation to the RSE, in which a range of actors play specific roles at different points in time. I also describe the main characteristics of the RSE, its operationalisation and related monitoring activity, drawing attention to several practices in relation to activities that are allowed and not allowed while working in the RSE scheme, and discuss the extension of the RSE scheme to other sectors.

Chapter 4 explains both the analysis and fieldwork methodology, including the three-phased research design and its scope and limitations. I explain the reasons behind the multisited design, along with the time frames and methods. I emphasise how the semi-structured interviews with the same RSE workers at different times and places allowed for a better appreciation of the discursive forces behind the transformation of their subjectivities. I also reflect on my positionality as a researcher as a non-Ni-Vanuatu woman, particularly during the fieldwork, and the challenges encountered in New Zealand and Vanuatu. I acknowledge my own position of power in being the one asking questions and also in my interpretations (Briggs, 2007) and try to identify the limitations of my own comprehension. The documents analysed as part of this research, as well as the interviews with relevant informants which provided background information about the functioning of the RSE are outlined. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some research considerations.
Chapter 1

Chapter 5 analyses the emergence of the RSE in light of the body of knowledge and the problematisation it has grown from: population growth, unemployment, and the lack of skills encountered in the Pacific arc of instability (Dibb, Hale, & Prince, 1999). For this purpose, I review, in a genealogical manner, the academic and grey literature that has supported the design and implementation of the RSE. This analysis inquires into particular historical interrelations between the bodies of knowledge and migration discourses and narratives involved in the design of RSE policy and the implications of such broader shifts. I criticise the “doomsday scenario” narrative in the Pacific region (Callick, 1993) and how it has created a discourse intertwining security concerns and belittlement of Pacific peoples to feed perceptions that justify interventionism (Wesley-Smith, 2007). I argue that statistics for unemployment and a population bulge of young people have defined problems in need of solutions, and contributed to the perception of the need of a “safety valve” (AusAID, 2006; Duncan & Chand, 2002; May, 2003; Ware, 2005; Ware, 2004) for which labour migration has been the solution of choice.

Working from a governmentality framework, I develop an analysis of how the body of knowledge brought by migration and development narratives is translated into specific practices and procedures. I explain how the “4 Cs”, choice of workers, circular movement, cost-sharing of travel related costs and commercial viability, have been embedded in the RSE scheme as international best practice – and the consequences of its operationalisation. This chapter addresses the first research question in pointing out the migration management narratives that made emergence of the RSE scheme possible and explains how this happened.

The analysis continues in Chapter 6, where I address the second research question: how do neoliberal rationalities, narratives, and practices construct new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and what are the implications of such transformations for Ni-Vanuatu social relations? I analyse how the knowledge from international best practice has become intertwined with local practices to allow the continuation of the RSE scheme. Next, I address how governmental techniques of self-care and discipline operate in maintaining the RSE and then review the documents that have operationalised the RSE, linking them to neoliberal rationalities and neoliberal subjectivities. In my analysis of disciplinary practices, I highlight the discretionality embedded in the RSE operational manual. I outline the implicit and explicit expressions of discipline that RSE workers experience from the time of their recruitment, to their return. The management of the RSE is analysed in terms of the notions, practices and techniques that are part of “conducting the conduct” of workers in the interests of improving productivity, increasing income, and promoting development attuned to a neoliberal
rationality. I explain that a neoliberal rationality has engendered subjectivities related to productivity, self-care and discipline; for example, the profit maximising, the self-driven, and the goal setting individual.

In analysing the current context and narratives that facilitate the continuation and expansion of the RSE, I argue that the scheme has driven specific practices by emphasising the advantages the participating Pacific countries will receive in terms of development. I draw attention to the way the initial tacit understanding of development limited to direct economic gains was later expanded to include flow-on effects from soft skills and entrepreneurship. Along with this shift has come the expectation that workers will benefit from the salaries they earn in New Zealand, which in turn become remittances that can be locally invested and spur other productive activities managed by the savvier returnees. I also draw attention to particular practices around savings schemes and the so-called deportations and blacklisting. The last section explores how the RSE is maintained by the routine collection of data and publication of reports that aim to show the success of the scheme. The implications of role discursive forces in legitimising the RSE as a “business as usual” practice are also explored.

In responding to the last research question, I address how Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers negotiate subjectivities in their social, political and economic positions. Chapter 7 analyses how the “customary rationalities” of Ni-Vanuatu workers interact with political or “neoliberal rationalities” to transform their subjectivities. In other words, I address how the neoliberal and customary rationalities I have identified are transforming Ni-Vanuatu subjectivities as a result of their engagement in the RSE scheme. I develop an analysis of the subjectivities informed by customary rationalities, a term that I have coined to refer to subjectivities related to qualities of ableness and good character, such as being a “good provider”, “strong worker” and “good kinsmen.” I argue that the interaction of these subjectivities can lead to paradoxical positions at different places and moments in time, which speaks further to the fluidity of social relations.

In responding to the second part of the question I focus on the transformations that these political rationalities bring about for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu most permanent social relations with their families and communities. I draw attention to the transformations that RSE workers have experienced since they started participating in the scheme and how these transformations have reached their communities. For this purpose, I use the interviews with RSE workers, workers’ leaders and members of their communities. I identify how the access to large amounts of money has transformed new subjectivities related
to pride and status. I briefly discuss these changes from the perspective of the “government of things” (Lemke, 2015). Importantly, these subjectivities are not exempt from paradoxes. Individuals may move away from one to the other depending on time and place. The nature and extent of the effects of a neoliberal rationality that help sustain the program is noticeable in workers’ approach to the RSE scheme, as well as the extent to which neoliberal discourses interact with more traditional beliefs.

Chapter 8 brings the analysis from the three preceding chapters together to argue that the rationalities – neoliberal and customary – at play in the RSE scheme re-define and transform the social relations of its participants. This chapter attempts to elucidate how RSE workers are transformed by their social relations when they engage in the scheme, and how these changes are transferred back home on their return to Vanuatu. The focus is on the nature of these changes, and the extent to which the RSE constructs and engenders particular kinds of subjectivities and social relations that are instrumental to workers realising the benefits of the RSE scheme. This chapter highlights that the analysis of the RSE scheme in Vanuatu can serve as a microcosm of international development, thus raising fundamental issues in relation to neoliberal articulations of development and the redrawing of boundaries in international governance.

The chapter concludes with some recommendations for incorporating workers’ preferences into the scheme. Some policy suggestions are also outlined to reduce discretionality in policy documents, provide more democratic access to the scheme, and provide choices in terms of location and contract duration. My hope is to contribute to labour mobility studies in the Pacific and to the policy discussion regarding the expansion of the RSE to other sectors within a broader shift towards new forms of governing. Wider questions remain for Ni-Vanuatu to answer about how – or if – they want to continue gradually moving away from their traditional subsistence economy toward a more market-based economy, the kind of development they want for their country, and how they envision their future in the sense of economic development and growth. This chapter also suggests new avenues for exploring different aspects of changing social relationships through further anthropological research.
Chapter 2. Theoretical Underpinnings

This chapter is structured in four parts. First, I provide background on labour migration management, which grew out of the New Public Management (NPM) movement and the ensuing neoliberal reforms in various OECD countries in the 1980s. The discourses and business practices migration management is modelled on belong to the specific historical and political context in which a managerial approach has become instrumental in development (GCIM, 2005; IOM, 2004). To that end, I review migration theories to conclude that migration management approaches are both a means of governance and an end in themselves. Second, I provide an overview of the governmentality framework of analysis, to explain the main concepts used in this study to analyse RSE workers’ social relations and their transformations. Third, I focus on Vanuatu and theoretical underpinnings related to culture, mobility and post-structuralist approaches in the Western Pacific region. The chapter concludes with a review of previous research of the RSE scheme and then frames the research questions that drive this thesis.

2.1. Framing Migration Management

In establishing that migration management belongs to a policy shift situated in a historical context, it is first necessary to describe the migration theories from which migration management departs. The following section recounts models and notions of migration from different theoretical perspectives, with an overview of the predominant social theories and assumptions they are indebted to. It is not my purpose to provide a historical account of the most influential theories, but rather to describe those theories which tie migration to development and to the migrant’s individual choices. In these theories, development is understood as economic growth and individuals as rational actors; both of which speak to neoliberal conceptualisations of productivity, competitiveness, and entrepreneurship. As such these theories propose that migrants are able to maximise their incomes and grow their human
capital through the establishment of social networks, knowledge transfer, and by their own agency.

2.1.1 Overview of migration theories

Beginning with Ravenstein’s laws of migration (1885), migration theories have evolved from demographic theories to propose models in their own right. The following is a brief account of migration theory since the 1960s, with a focus on the policy implications of such approaches. Some of the earlier approaches to migration models were grounded in functionalism. Sjaastad introduced the notion of human capital in defining migration as an “investment increasing the productivity of human resources” (1962: 83). He estimated the costs and benefits of internal and international migration to support his view that migration has the potential to raise the productivity of an individual.

Based on gravitational and push-pull forces, functionalist models of migration propose that various economic, cultural, and environmental factors push migrants out of their places of origin, while at the same time other factors lure them to potential destinations. Along similar lines, neoclassical migration theory explains migration in terms of differences in labour supply and demand, and considers individuals as rational, income maximising actors. Todaro (1968), and Harris and Todaro (1970) looked at rural-urban migration at the level of the individual, based on the expected income of a prospective migrant. Again, this model emphasises individual choice, since potential and actual decisions to migrate by the agricultural workers are made according to their calculations of positive gains in income. Hence, extending this scenario, countries with high wages pull migrants from countries with excess labour supply. However, these models have been criticised as being too static, and not adequately explaining the full range of factors in migration processes (Williamson, 1988), as they disregard the reality that the individual’s ability to migrate is affected by structural factors which may impede migration, such as a lack of resources, or constraints beyond monetary issues. Because these theories focus on economic drivers, the role of other actors, such as governments, are overlooked.

Post World War II migration theory was influenced by the modernisation theory of development (Rostow, 1990). Zelinsky’s migration transition theory (1971) on the evolution
Chapter 2

of migration patterns, linked changes in mobility and migration to five stages in the modernisation process based on Europe’s experience following the Second World War. Influenced by evolutionism and a deterministic approach to development, Zelinsky’s theory considers that traditional nonindustrialised societies develop by adopting “more modern structures and the attitudes that underpin them” (Piché, 2013: 144). Zelinsky also considered migration in relation to demographic transitions in relation to fertility and mortality, so tying migration in with other societal changes by suggesting the notion of a “demographic regime” (Piché, 2013) which changes as societies modernise. De Haas (2012) argues that migration optimists have generally been inspired by “developmentalist” modernisation and neoclassical migration theories.

Both functionalist and modernisation theories are based on macro-economic statistical data. They take a deterministic approach in assuming migrants’ decision-making is motivated by a desire to maximise individual benefits – thereby increasing their utility – and so disregard personal preferences and individual belonging and roles in wider social groups, including families and communities. I agree with Leys (1996), who critiqued the structural-functional basis of these theories which limited their analysis to the interactions between change and economic development assuming a linear progression based on Western models. Nonetheless, these theories have remained pivotal to the conceptualisation of development from a demographic standpoint. For instance, earlier understandings of migration as a demographic reproduction strategy resonate with the current view of migration as one solution to the demographic problems in the Pacific.

Moving away from the complexities of individuals’ decision-making processes, structural migration theory focuses on the explanatory capacity of few macro level factors, such as policies and modes of organisation, to create one central dynamic. The 1960s shift towards a historical-structuralist paradigm was influenced by the expansion of capitalism and framed in the context of decolonisation and movement towards political independence by some former colonies. These theories are based on neo-Marxist traditions, which emphasise macro level societal structures and stress the importance of social relations within historical processes. Accordingly, population movements are considered as serving capitalist modes of production and accumulation. As de Haas notes, “Put in Neo-Marxist terms, migration not only reproduces but also reinforces the capitalist system based on class and spatial inequalities” (2010: 238). Consequently, the promotion of migration policies was seen as a way of diverting attention from problems rooted in social structures and thus, as inherently unable to resolve the structural
conditions that cause migration. Although I agree that government policy is significant in understanding the forces shaping migration, my approach focuses on the systems of relations that underpin migration and does not assume that social forces such as class or race are determinants of social relations.

Mabogunje (1970) is credited for proposing the first systems approach. He considered migration as a non-linear circular phenomenon dependent on a number of variables. The “world system approach” (Wallerstein, 1979) divides the world into core, semi-periphery and periphery countries according to their type of production and the associated division of labour, i.e. more skilled, less labour intensive or less skilled but more labour intensive. Wallerstein proposes that the world economy is rooted in capitalist economic relations that when introduced to non-capitalist or pre-capitalist societies can create circumstances leading to migration, thus linking migration to a globalised economy. Systems approaches, inclusive of the world system theory, link migration with globalisation, venturing so far as to propose the existence of a global labour market (Petras, 1981).

The notion of circular migration comes from the systems approach. Burawoy’s theory (1976) is based on “geographical separation of the processes of labour force renewal (reproduction) from those of maintenance” (Piché, 2013: 145). Such a separation entails a twin dependency which “does not reproduce itself without recourse to noneconomic institutions” (Burawoy, 1976: 1059), which resembles the notions of interdependence – or mismatch – between supply of labour and demand for labour, to which seasonal migration programmes respond. There is an economic and institutional dependency which reflects “a set of political and legal arrangements designed to separate the means of renewal from those of maintenance and at the same time to ensure a continued connection between the two” (Burawoy, 1976: 1059). Piché (2013) argues that even if workers who circle through this system were paid market wages, the maintenance costs linked to socioeconomic integration are kept to a minimum by depriving them of citizenship rights. De Haas (2012) notes that generally structuralist approaches towards migration consider migration as negative because of its contribution to further “underdevelopment” and the undermining of social cohesion.

Migration is seen as aggravating development problems, including poverty, by contributing to issues such as brain drain which deprive local economies of their valuable labour force (J. R. Lewis, 1986). He argues further that migration creates only temporary “cosmetic” benefits for the sending countries. In the long run, the effects of migration undermine traditional economies
and increase inequalities because those who are unable to migrate will be worse-off, and irreversible socio-economic transformations will have occurred (Lipton, 1980). At the same time the increasing dependence of the developing country on other more developed countries to provide employment will encourage additional migration.

The new economics of labour migration (NELM) (Stark, 1980; Stark & Bloom, 1985) criticise neoclassical migration theories from a microeconomic perspective. This approach understands migration as a strategy to secure household livelihood – a form of family investment which incorporates the notion of risk-sharing or spreading to overcome labour market constraints with the possibility of obtaining capital for entrepreneurial activities. These authors criticised previous research approaches to migration particularly because they excluded remittances (J. E. Taylor et al., 1996). NELM theorists consider money sent home by workers as a form of investment which can have positive “trickling down” effects for the migrant-sending communities.

Later transnational approaches incorporate interdisciplinary social science approaches along with livelihood perspectives on migration and development to theorise migration (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton Blanc, 1992). The framework I develop here aligns with some transnational approaches because they too allow for the possibility of understanding relations in a dynamic way across time and space. Transnationalism focuses on the multiple relationships migrants maintain and reproduce in both their sending and receiving countries while living transnational lives. Globalisation is emphasised as the context for the maintenance of transnational communities in an approach which challenges the use of countries as units of analysis. Scholars in this area (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994; Levitt, 1998; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993) have further developed Bourdieus social capital analysis (1985; 1979), paying attention to the role of linkages and networks as enablers of migration. For example, earlier migrants contribute to stable migrant communities and associations in the longer term by providing information and helping with employment and housing arrangements for migrants who follow. However, these networks also have disadvantages when they contribute to the formation of parallel societies in receiving countries, which can limit social integration, expose migrants to exploitative social relations, or make them part of the migration industry (Nyberg Sørensen & Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2013).

In this section I have focused on how the linkages between migration theories and development have formed over several decades, during which time portrayals of migration have oscillated
between positive and negative depending on the historical context in which the theories were produced. I have drawn attention to individual decision making, choices, and agency as concepts that have been incorporated to extend the explanatory arguments of migration theories. The next section discusses how migration has been linked to development through the provision of access to foreign labour markets, and the resultant remittances from this labour mobility. Further, it elaborates on how migration has been linked to the use of aid and its eventual tailing-off as remittances are re-purposed for development instead. The process by which migration management emerges as a desirable solution in comparison to unregulated migration is also outlined. Because migration has become increasingly consolidated as a means to development in mainstream international organisations, I focus on the “triple win” as the discourse driving the promotion of labour migration management, and seasonal migration in particular. Finally, following Foucauldian scholars (Lemke, 2011; Ong, 2012; Pécoud, 2015; Walters, 2015), I distance myself from earlier migration theories to draw on a governmentality framework to analyse labour migration.

2.1.2 New Public Management and the management of migration

In the earlier migration theories which followed a neoclassical approach (Harris & Todaro, 1970) and Rostow’s (1990) modernisation theory of development, “migration optimists” have emphasised the intervention of markets and individuals to bring about political and economic change (De Haas, 2012). The recent inclusion of migration in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the release of the Global Compact for Migration (2017) show how the link between migration and development has been formalised in policy making circles (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2017). This section outlines the mainstream consensus between international organisations and governments about the development benefits of labour migration (Faist, Fauser, & Kivisto, 2011) and the role of remittances in “trickling down” these benefits. In this context, seasonal migration schemes have become a balanced alternative for migration management. Later, I describe how the neoliberal dimensions of competition, productivity, and entrepreneurship underpin the triple win argument which supports seasonal migration programmes and the development they aim to achieve.
In migration management, migration is no longer the prerogative of receiving states but can also involve the sending countries and the migrants seeking to benefit from this type of labour mobility (Skeldon, 2010). In policy circles, the resurgence of circular migration and guest worker schemes since the 1990s has been justified as a way of preventing irregular migration, as it is assumed that the promotion of regulated options for migration will discourage individuals from using other non-regulated channels. OECD countries have become increasingly interested in the link between migration and development, and almost all of them had temporal migration programmes by the mid-2000s (OECD, 2008). The United States of America (USA) reopened migration channels after the so-called “Asencio report” (1990) introduced a development dimension to guest worker programmes. Similarly, in Europe, co-development was introduced as a dimension of circular migration (Naïr, 1997). At an international level, migration had been raised at the United Nations (UN) Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994. However, the international debate on migration management began in earnest with the joint UN and International Organization for Migration (IOM) project New International Regime for Orderly Movements of People (NIROMP) (GCIM, 2005; Ghosh, 2000b). Ghosh is considered to have elaborated the notion of migration management while appointed as the Director of NIROMP by the UN Commission on Global Governance (1995).2

Since the early 1990s migration management approaches to labour migration have been consolidated as examples of good practice because of their connection to development. When international organisations such as the IOM or the International Labour Organization (ILO) sanction programmes, or aspects of programmes, as “best practice”, they both inform and legitimise national and regional migration policy. I argue that in considering something as best, such discourses create specific practices that act to ignore other potential alternatives. Migration policies prioritise economic gains because the benefits brought by the openess of the policy framework that underpins migration management predominantly considers economic benefits such as: increasing the efficiency of international production, promoting economic wealth, and stimulating economic convergence (Ghosh, 2000a). Much less attention is given to the new social relations formed through this type of migration. This engenders particular subjectivities underpinned by the neoliberal rationality of such programmes (I return

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2 Ghosh is the IOM adviser who coordinates the NIROMP project in which the term “migration management” emerges as a key concept and “regulated openness” as a principle for a new migration regime. Ghosh’s book (2000a) is the result of this project.
to the topic of subjectivation in section 2.2.4). Accordingly, the monetary, material, and social remittances that migrants transfer to their communities are considered the primary sources of development, and migrants the primary agents of change (Faist, 2008; Kapur, 2004; Levitt, 1998; Naïr, 1997). This resonates with a “third way” approach in which migrants are “empowered” as having the primary responsibility for achieving development, as it is their individual achievements that are expected to bring development to their communities rather than external aid.

Migration management implies the adoption of a business-like model for public policies, with a focus on the costs and benefits of policies. Georgi (2010) argues that migration management is aligned with the NPM agenda, by which the public sector is encouraged to develop a manager-client relationship with its citizens and target efficiency improvements by adopting private sector management models (Hood, 1991). The adoption of migration management with its “diffuse technocratic and economic notions” (Georgi, 2010: 56) such as “best practices” or “improving the standard of living” was also influenced by the numerous publications at that time promoting the application of managerial logic in different aspects of life, which contributed to the pervading managerial mindset in individual subjectivation processes (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005).

Menz (2013) argues that NPM is tied to the growth of the migration industry and that the involvement of private actors in migration reflects the advance of neoliberalism. When discussing the adoption of this approach in European countries claims that the “competition state” promotes flexibility in adapting to global economic changes using neoliberal response strategies that promote marketisation to make economic activities more competitive (Menz, 2011). He links this to institutional and ideological change in relation to cost shifting and blame avoidance, that places the financial burden and blame in cases of non-compliance or accidents on private actors. One example of this privatisation of migration responsibilities is when employers are made responsible for controlling employees’ migration compliance. This does not mean that the state relinquishes its responsibilities over migration, but that an additional layer of management is added. Since the 1990s, the discussion of a “global migration crisis” (Weiner, 1995) in international circles pointed to ineffective and incoherent policies having the

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3 An example of those and the “self help” books on topics of time management, stress management, among others.
potential to create crises. Accordingly, norms and regulations were deemed essential to improve migration governance.

Georgi (2010) acknowledges the IOM in bringing this NPM approach to the political arena. In the 2000s, an international migration regime was outlined by the NIROMP project (GCIM, 2005; Ghosh, 2000b), under which, migration could be coherently managed based primarily on economic criteria. Under these criteria, the aims of migration management are to maximise benefits and reduce costs, while at the same time controlling migration flows from a “neutral”, bureaucratic and depoliticised standpoint. Georgi argues that the IOM’s dependence on external funding has motivated the organisation to look for projects which guarantee its continuation, such as in migration management. Thus, this necessity “creates an instrumental-rational logic that establishes the monetary value of a project as an independent and important factor in addition to its practical use-value or its normative justification” (2010: 63). As such, the management of migration is presented as a technical problem which requires the identification of policies and practices to find “what works”. The next section focuses on how the migration management has been connected to development and driven by international organisations.

2.1.3 Migration Management and International Development

The first global UN panel to address international migration was launched in 2003. Migration was then explained by the GCIM as being driven mainly by three forces, known as the “‘3Ds’”: differences in development, demography and democracy” (2005: 12). This understanding seems contradictory, as the lack of development is portrayed as a cause for migration and at the same time, development is proposed as the solution to be achieved through migration management. Accordingly, this proposal expects labour migration from less developed countries to reduce individual aspirations to migrate because countries in the long run will be more developed with the help of the earlier migrants. Though this discussion of causes and consequences of migration has not been settled⁴, international organisations, governments and

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⁴ See De Haas (2012) for a description of the different paradigms that coexist at two extremes of a continuum on the topic of migration and development.
some civil society organisations embark on interinstitutional dialogue in the context of public policy making to maximise the benefits from migration.

International organisations such as the IOM, the ILO and lately the World Bank have contributed to the discourse on migration management in recent decades through proceedings, white papers, declarations, speeches, etc. in cooperating with governments to manage migration. Influential documents include the above mentioned reports from the GCIM (2005) and from the NIROMP project (2000b), the ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization report (WCSDG, 2004) and the 2007 World Bank World Development Report (2006b), all reflecting the common viewpoints shared by these international organisations. According to Pécoud, these narratives “want the best of both worlds: a freer and flexible access to foreign workforce, and a careful monitoring of peoples’ mobility” (2015: 122).

The 2006 United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development was seminal and fueled renewed international interest in the topic (R. Bedford et al., 2017). These dialogue and narratives are aligned with the so-called migration-development nexus (Nyberg-Sørensen, Hear, & Engberg Pedersen, 2002) which has gained increasing attention in policy circles in the last decades. Push-pull models consider the continued lack of development in sending countries, along with limited employment opportunities, stagnant economic growth, population pressures, etc. as push factors driving migrants out of their home countries. At the same time, globalisation and telecommunications are believed to have increased individuals’ awareness of the “differences in living standards between rich and poor countries that has added to the allure of migration” (WCSDG, 2004: 96).

In sum, in the migration-development nexus, the lack of development fuels migration. Thus, development becomes an instrument of migration policy and also security (Nyberg Sørensen, 2012), as the migration-development nexus is allied with incorporating migrants in a controlled and secure manner and keeping unwanted migratory flows out, for which international cooperation is required (Faist, 2008; P. Martin, 2006; Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002). Nyberg-Sørensen (2002) argues that migration-development regimes and the related policy logics of closure and containment, selectivity and liberalisation, and transnationalism become a requirement for achieving development.

The link between labour migration and development has been described according to the three R’s: recruitment, returns, and remittances (Papademetriou & Martin, 1991). Recruitment refers not only to formal migration channels, but also to social networks and individuals’ motivation
to migrate; return emphasises individuals’ homecoming as an ideal; and remittances describe
the influx of money sent home by migrant workers. Although recruitment and return are
important for understanding the RSE scheme and will be discussed in Chapter 5, I now focus
on remittances. Remittances have been harnessed as a development tool and as part of the
development narrative, as the quantifying of monetary contributions has led to them being re-
routed to development activities, particularly in transnational communities. Remittances are
considered a better instrument for reducing poverty and promoting economic growth compared
to the bureaucratic management of development aid (Kapur, 2004; Maimbo & Ratha, 2005),
contributing to the optimistic view of migration programmes among international organisations
and to the construction of the remittances-to-development (R-2-D) agenda (Bakker, 2015).

Government and international focus on remittances has increased since the 1990s, when total
remittances surpassed official development assistance (ODA) levels (Gammeltoft, 2002).
Subsequently, there have been attempts at regulatory reform which aims to leverage the use of
remittances as a development tool (Maimbo & Ratha, 2005), for example by promoting policies
that create tax incentives for migrants. Engaging diasporas in transnational practices is seen as
potentially widening the volume and reach of remittances for development via investment,
relief, political advocacy, etc. in the migrants’ countries of origin (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Vertovec,
2005). At the same time, developed countries have expressed their need for foreign labour
(Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002), thereby motivating the alignment of policies that favour labour
migration at international levels.

Geiger and Pécoud (2010) consider that the influence of international organisations on policy
making not only depends on their role, but also on the support they receive from governments
in accepting them as legitimate actors regarding migration issues. Pécoud (2015) argues that
the internationalisation of political debate on migration creates a shared vision of migration to
overcome the political differences and interests of the different parties. Thus, debates on
migration and development use depoliticised international migration narratives framed around
technical expertise and understood as neutral. These narratives assume that policy making can
solve migration issues without challenging the socioeconomic or political context behind
migration, such as poverty or the apparent lack of development, which are accepted as the root
causes of migration. In striving for common objectives such as preventing trafficking, human
rights violations, or exploitation, these narratives avoid scientific or political debates grounded
in competing worldviews. Instead, such powerful narratives highlight international cooperation
as crucial to solve the issues arising from cross-border mobility (Geiger & Pécoud, 2017).
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In this new form of international governance countries see the need to cooperate to regulate the circulation and re-circulation of most migrants by implementing measures for border control and policies that facilitate migrants’ return to their homeland (Weil, 2002). It is assumed that these regulatory measures reflect the best interests of all parties involved, although the burden and responsibility for development is placed on individuals, and not on their governments or other institutions. These arguments sustain the triple win narrative. The origins of the triple win argument can be traced to Naïr (1997), whose co-development approach proposed that migration when properly managed can benefit sending and receiving countries as well as migrants themselves. This conceptualisation of a triple win is behind many of the current seasonal migration programmes that are considered best practice by international organisations (ILO, 2015a; ILO, 2015b; World Bank, 2006b) because of the widespread of benefits they are expected to bring.

Migration management proposes a reorganisation of traditional government functions in the negotiation of cooperation agreements across national borders to promote selective migration. In doing so, temporary migration – rather than permanent migration – is represented as a solution that will address economic needs in both sending and receiving countries (GCIM, 2005). This response is considered pragmatic based on the straightforward supply and demand analysis of labour force participation. Migration management narratives point to the oversupply of workers in developing countries, while the existing workers in developed countries are either not suitable or unwilling to engage in the jobs available. This solution is also seen as liberal and progressive in that it includes migrants with a variety of skills (Boucher, 2008). It follows that under migration management, access to labour markets will be ensured legally, instead of migrant workers having to rely on irregular migration or unauthorised employment.

Migration management aligns well with the currently dominant neoliberal policies and forms of governing (Boucher, 2008) as individuals and organisations’ understanding of this model is taken for granted. I see the neoliberal underpinning of migration management as encouraging competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship, which responsibilise migrants for their own development (Kunz, 2008) when they return to their countries. Migrants are encouraged to benefit from their newly created networks and become entrepreneurial, thus they are locked into a “self-help” framework (Kapur, 2004) to promote development in their countries of

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5 Examples of current best practice on labour migration policies and programmes can be accessed from the ILO Good practices database (2015a). For earlier sharing of best practices shared among international organisations, see Abella (2006).
origin. In doing so, communities have been constructed as a component of development that is supplementary to the market and the state (Faist, 2008). This model naturalises migration as “a constant and influential feature of human history” (GCIM, 2005: 5), and shifts the attention away from the real causes of the development differences within and across countries as the existing global economic structure is taken for granted.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015) includes migration management as a priority because of its managerial role and the channelling of remittances. Migration management is expected to contribute to the SDG 10 in reducing the inequality within and between countries. In this regard, the Global Migration Compact (2017) for “safe, orderly, and regular migration” is an attempt at the highest policy levels to harness the benefits of migration. While it seems that interests are convergent and aspire to a universality (Pécoud, 2015), it is important to acknowledge the obvious power relations and their influence on the narratives behind these goals. The partnership status that is extended to developing countries and sometimes to civil society organisations grants them an active role but does not necessarily identify them as equals in setting principles and priorities (Castles & Delgado Wise, 2008). The next section unfolds how the benefits for the different parties involved in managed migration programmes are understood, with specific reference to temporary labour migration.

### 2.1.4 Temporary Labour Migration and the Triple Win

Migration management approaches have shifted the discourse around development in migrants’ communities of origin. Development is seen as happening “from below” as the migrants themselves are empowered as agents of development (Kapur, 2004). This third way approach encourages a positive view of migrants as “partners in development” (Libercier & Schneider, 1996) and “active or enterprising” citizens (Dean, 1999) as they are enabled by their governments to provide aid to their communities (Kapur, 2004), and so help themselves by managing their own needs. It is assumed that with these new responsibilities, workers’ motivation to return home will increase while at the same time their motivation for becoming “irregular migrants” will decrease.

The triple win argument is built on the recognition that labour migration benefits destination countries because it eases labour needs, particularly in sectors that are deemed seasonal such
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as agriculture or tourism (GCIM, 2005; IOM, 2004). This model assumes that development in the countries of origin will occur because the pressures created by unemployment are relieved, and through remittances and knowledge transfer. In this regard, social remittances (Levitt & Nyberg Sørensen, 2004; Levitt, 1998) secure the flow of ideas as practices learned are also transferred back home (Brinkerhoff, 2008). However, this mainstream characterisation of migration management as apolitical and technocratic has been challenged by Foucauldian migration scholars, who argue that knowledge presented as factual, objective, and neutral is nevertheless informed by specific political assumptions and bias, and that notions of neutrality and objectivity themselves rest on epistemic and political assumptions. For example, Geiger & Pécoud argue that the triple-win “negates the existence of divergent interests, of asymmetries of power and of conflicts (both between and within countries)” (2010: 9).

Critics of the triple win argument argue that destination countries are the winners as they receive ‘labour without people’, or ‘circular migrants’ with ill-defined rights, making it easier for employers to exploit workers, and engage in flexible hiring and firing, in line with economic and business conditions, and short term savings in integration costs” (Wickramasekara, 2011: 3). Kalm argues that temporary migration schemes are widely accepted “because economic inequality has created the supply of this labour, which is wanted because it is cheap” (2010: 38). However, this and other critiques based in ethnographic research (Basok, 2002; Basok, 2007; Binford, 2003) have yet to become more prominent in mainstream policy making circles concerned with increasing competitiveness through the use of flexible labour.

Assessments of the effectiveness of labour migration programmes often privilege the quantitative data that justifies investing in them. These data, presumably neutral, allow the depoliticisation of migration management. They direct policy attention to the cost-effectiveness of the programmes and divert attention from migration issues that may be deemed controversial, such as restricting workers to a single employer, or extending – outsourcing – the supervisory role of employers to responsibilise them for enforcing migration policies in an attempt to use fewer resources. The systematisation of such mechanisms for managing migration disavows migrant social relations in favour of demonstrating the success of migration programmes. In depoliticising the broader and long-term transformation processes in the lives of the participants and their respective communities, new subjectivities are

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6 I return to this topic in Chapter 5 when I explain the need for Ni-Vanuatu to understand this model for it to work properly.
engendered by these programmes. More refined methodologies and nuanced analysis from a range of social sciences is needed to capture such processes. Particular methods are needed to bring to the surface the underlying power relations which inform these discourses, practices, policies and processes of subjectivation – methods which work to identify the relational and constitutive aspects of power. In other words, considerable attention needs to be given to repoliticising the power dynamics which are otherwise written out of migration management perspectives.

This thesis builds on existing criticism of the unequivocal relationship between labour migration and development and the triple win model (Basok, Piper, & Simmons, 2013; Basok & Bélanger, 2016; Wickramasekara, 2011), which argues that these types of programmes maintain the vulnerability of migrant workers and tend to perpetuate the North–South divide. The management of labour migration assumes that “poor” countries are to draw on the knowledge of “rich” countries to develop (McFarlane, 2006), while at the same time having limited bargaining power to negotiate the conditions of migration programmes. I follow the questions raised by postcolonial scholars (Asis, Piper, & Raghuram, 2010; Mains et al., 2013; Raghuram, 2009) regarding the construction of knowledge that links migration to development.

The triple win argument allows governments to prioritise the design of migration management policies instead of perhaps more empowering welfare policies for alleviating poverty that may be preventing development in sending countries. I join post development theorists in their rejection of Western rationality as the sole “modus operandi of all contemporary life” (Sylvester, 1999: 710), as it disregards local ways of knowing and doing. While not taking a homogeneous line, post developmentalists use Foucauldian theories and methodologies to argue that modernisation and dependency theories have problematised poverty and portrayed development as Westernisation.

2.1.5 Summary of section

In this section I have followed the way labour migration management has been constructed as linked to development. I have described how the realisation of the magnitude of remittances to sending countries in the 1990s began a movement which has brought migration to the international development agenda, with migration management now included as a goal of
sustainable development in itself and in the creation of a New Migration Compact. Finally, I have concurred with postcolonial scholars’ criticisms to such approaches to present the framework that drives this research. The following section links migration management to the Foucauldian concept of governmentality (2001) to explain my understanding of how these concepts are pertinent to an analysis of seasonal migration programmes. I will argue that the pragmatic approach to migration management is aligned with neoliberal rationalities which do not directly address root causes of migration and deflect criticism by delegating decision making to “objective” technocratic expertise and ultimately to the market.

2.2. A Governmentality Framework of Analysis

Building on the Foucauldian concept of governmentality (Foucault, 2001), as appropriated by Lemke (2001; 2007; 2011; 2015), Larner & Walters (2004), and Geiger & Pécoud (2010), I explain how the rationale of attending to the welfare of populations, which implies constant practices of regulation and intervention in subjects’ behaviour (Foucault, 2008), in addition to allied economic policies, is playing out in relation to seasonal labour migration. I outline the “mundane” mechanisms and practices, which are the governmental technologies used to “conduct the conduct” of labour migration participants and engender subjectivities inseparable to individuals' measurable financial prosperity. These entrepreneurial subjectivities are underpinned by particular political rationalities – knowledge – which have the capacity to transform individuals in different spheres of their lives. Because of the neoliberal rationality that underpins labour migration, a governmentality approach allows me to examine the operation of different techniques in varied forms of government. These techniques define a map of subjects as entrepreneurs of themselves and the behavioural recommendations that guide individuals’ choices to become more productive as a means of achieving development so that based on innate and acquired skills entrepreneurial subjects can manage their own human capital to obtain earnings and personal satisfactions (Dean, 1999).

By analysing how workers’ relations are transformed beyond material outcomes and gains through their participation in a labour migration programme, I aim to contribute to the understanding of how people and communities in Vanuatu are being transformed by the introduction of a new model of migration that differs from earlier migration in its seasonality
and permanency. For this model to “function”, a specific knowledge of its functioning needs to be transferred to the different stakeholders. Additionally, the influx of money to urban and rural areas can also transform individuals through processes of subjectivation. First, I review the concept of governmentality and how governmental techniques operate in response to existing bodies of knowledge – political rationalities – in transforming subjectivities.

2.2.1 Governmentality

Governmentality is concerned with the ways of thinking and acting involved in governing for the benefit of populations’ wealth, health, and happiness (Rose & Miller, 2010). However, deciding what is considered beneficial for a population entails a political aspect beyond the apparent neutrality of the means of governing. Foucault studied the processes that have allowed populations to emerge as a field of intervention since the eighteenth century. He articulates the mentality of governing – governmentality – in a performative way, referring to it as the techniques used to indirectly govern by intervening in the “conduct of conduct”, or as “the way in which one conducts the conduct of men” (Foucault, 2008: 186). In his initial lecture, Foucault (2001) differentiated this “conduct of conduct” from sovereignty, arguing that governing is concerned not with legal subjects but with empirical quantities (Lemke, 2015).

I have chosen to work with a governmentality framework as an analytical tool, following Lemke (2001; 2007; 2011) who unfolds the concept by linking it to “biopolitics” and “biopower” and their relation to neoliberalism. As a concept, governmentality allows for the articulation of diverse modalities of power. Governmentality encourages the identification of relational articulations of power which transcend the duality of consensus and violence, as these are just specific instruments of government – technologies – but never the source of power. Governing does not coerce individuals and does not necessarily require violence as sovereignty may, but is rather a “versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself” (Foucault, 1993: 204). Therefore, governmentality is indicative of all the multiple ways in which the conduct of individuals and populations is transformed to affect individual and collective welfare. This does not mean denying that unequal forms of governing can constitute forms of domination. Rather, it means that within a relational articulation of
power, domination is not the basis for unequal relations, but the result of a specific
governmentality and its technologies.

Following Foucault’s concept of relational power, power relations operate at the level of
international organisations through bi-lateral government agreements, as well as in the
quotidian social relations of individuals producing new subjectivities (Larner & Walters, 2004;
Pécoud, 2015). For example, the power of international organisations has been interpreted as a
form of “global governmentality”, in that they set standards which are measured and monitored
to “conduct the conduct” of states (Joseph, 2009; Larner & Walters, 2004). While the influence
of international organisations varies when governments consider which policies to implement,
they are self-disciplined to adhere to internationally legitimised values, which in the case of
migration in turn influence individuals’ migratory behaviour (Geiger & Pécoud, 2015).

Geiger claims migration management is part of a new governmentality of mobility because it
entails a package of tools including disciplinary tactics and technologies “ranging from
information campaigns and “pre-departure instruments” (such as language training and tests,
marriage and health checks, or measures putting an end to migration such as “voluntary assisted
return” or resettlement activities)…” (2013: 31). All of these are the manifestations and effects
of power which have gained legitimation through discourses reconfirming the roles of the
managers of mobility. In this sense, exploring labour migration schemes within a
governmentality framework focuses attention on the political technologies through which the
welfare of populations is achieved. Governmentality analyses have been criticised on the
grounds that narratives can be used to justify policies that would nevertheless have been
implemented. Critics argue that discourses do not drive policy implementation, but that
narratives and policies are only implemented if they correspond to governments’ political will
(Pécoud, 2015). The next section traces how these narratives are articulated in the
governmental technologies that operate in migration management.

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7 This study focuses on the international organisations behind migration management. While the IOM is usually considered
as the one moving the migration management agenda forward, other institutions such as the World Bank or the United
Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have become important actors in the last decade.
2.2.2 Governmental techniques

Governing entails the operation of governmental techniques, the “the complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions” (Rose & Miller, 2010: 273). Governmentality is as much internal as external to the state, and its techniques allow for the definition and redefinition of state competences (Foucault, 2001). Thus, the relevance of identifying “what relations are established between political and other authorities; what funds, forces, persons, knowledge or legitimacy are utilised; and by means of what devices and techniques are these different tactics made operable” (Rose & Miller, 2010: 275). Governmentality techniques encompass how solutions to specific problematisations are put into practice by means of strategies, tactics and government programmes which range from “governing the self” to “governing others” (Lemke, 2007).

The use of statistics is a classic example of a governmental technique, as “authorities can act upon, and enrol those distant from them in space and time in the pursuit of social, political or economic objectives without encroaching on their “freedom” or “autonomy” but by habituating them to make choices from a calculated freedom” (Rose & Miller, 2010: 285). Statistics reveal “that the population possesses its own regularites: its death rate, its incidence of disease, its regularities of accidents […] through its movements, its customs, and its activity, population has specific economic effects” (Foucault, 2007: 104). I consider numbers and statistical data hide embodied subjects and their experience (Sutton, 2010) disregarding that at the same time bodies fuel economic growth and thus are contingent on economic conditions. Statistical analyses are highly valued in policy making because they facilitate decision making, however numbers and statistical data hide the experiences of embodied subjects which are hard to quantify. Population as data is the objective of governmental technologies and the political economy is the science and the technique for government intervention in the economy (Foucault, 1991). In this way, governing the conduct of the population couples economic and political imperatives.

Foucauldian inspired studies on migration have mostly focused on the analysis of disciplining and security techniques. According to Foucault discipline is a mechanism of power over life – or biopower (1978). Discipline allows for the body to increase its economic productivity and at the same time weakens its forces “to assure political subjection” (Lemke, 2011: 36).
Discipline as a governmentality technique seeks to reshape how individuals conduct themselves in a space of “regulated freedom” (Rose, 1999). Thus, discipline “installs hierarchical differentiations that establish a division between those considered normal and abnormal, suitable and capable, and the others” (Lemke, 2011: 47) and transforms the thinking, acting, and being of individuals through self-disciplining mechanisms and norms (Foucault, 1980). For him, norms “can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize” (Foucault, 2003: 253) covering the whole surface between the body and population and taking control of life in general.

While discipline may be associated with coercion, the practices of self-care are a group of techniques associated to individuals’ freedom. Self-care techniques are used by individuals who at the same time know themselves and the behavioural rules required of them in a determined situation. These behavioural rules are at the same time considered both prescriptions and truths, and as such remain unquestioned. When individuals exercise self-care, they become subjects of their own actions. Self-care is enabling of social relations as it allows the individual to be in relation to others, whether that be living in a community or having employment relations – as in the case of the RSE. Self-care problematises social risks – such as unemployment and lack of development – transferring responsibility to individuals and collectives, and relying on their moral rational choices (Lemke, 2001). In this sense, a governmentality framework allows the “autonomous” capacities of individuals for self-control to be understood by elucidating the linkages to political rule forms (Lemke, 2011). Self-care is one of the main elements of neoliberal rationality.

Techniques operate at macro and micro levels, and this study will articulate the link between both levels. In doing so, I draw attention to how relations can be unequal or asymmetrical, depending on the governmental techniques entailed in a migration scheme. At a macro level, studies have already illustrated how international organisations govern states and citizens through a number of techniques, including consultancies and contributing to national and international legislation and protocols (Loescher, 2001; Obokata, 2010; Vestergaard, 2009) – and my analysis points to similar mechanisms. At a micro level, I unpack the emergence of notions associated with self-care, which integrate with the techniques operating at a macro level in that migrants must become productive to be development agents. This requires the close examination of the rationalities within which these techniques operate to understand the emerging subjectivities and forms of knowledge.
In managing migration, it is expected that the conduct of migrants will be regulated by creating incentives – using governmental techniques – in a way that discourages unregulated migration. Narratives of development and the behavioural rules required to achieve development are conveyed at different stages of the migration process. In this study, I work with the assumption that migration management and the operation of governmental techniques used to conduct populations produce new subjectivities. These governmental techniques, used at different levels and stages of migration management, transform social relations and cultural practices through the use of a configuration of rationalities – knowledge (Marttila, 2013).

2.2.3 Political rationalities

A rationality is a specific form of reasoning; it is the “political knowledge” underpinning practices that transcend a spontaneous exercise of power. According to Lemke, a rationality “constitutes the intellectual processing of the reality” (2001: 191) and defines the actions and adequate means to govern the subjects of a political rationality. The anti-essentialism of Foucault’s theory of power does not dissociate power and rationality. On the contrary, it considers forms of power as rationalities. Rose argues that power can be analysed “by asking what authorities of various sorts wanted to happen, in relation to problems defined how, in pursuit of what objectives, through what strategies and techniques” (1999:20). In doing so, such an analysis can uncover the historical dimension underpinning the problematisation of the conducts of individuals, identify the various authorities sought to govern conduct, and the kind of knowledge that has engendered problematisations and the management of solutions.

In order to describe how specific practices and techniques produce specific subjectivities and domains of knowledge, it is important not to compare them against an absolute form of rationality, but instead to examine “how forms of rationality inscribe themselves in practices or systems of practices, and what role they play within them, because it’s true that ‘practices’ don’t exist without a certain regime of rationality” (Foucault, 1991: 79). Foucault does not question the relation between practices and rationalities, and their correspondence or non-correspondence, in terms of a deviation or shortening of reason. Instead, his concern goes beyond investigating whether practices conform to rationalities, “to discover which kind of rationality they are using” (Foucault, 1981: 226).
Studies using a governmentality framework highlight how nations have been the “effects” of international practices. For example, Larner and Walters argue that the construction of regions responds to “specific ways of constituting international space and acting on and through them” (2002: 393). In their analysis of the moral basis behind the political power of “developmentalism”, they point at how countries have been divided into “developed” and “under-developed”. Developmentalism for them is the “set of managerial strategies and techniques invented to cope with social disorder in Europe [that] were then exported to the rest of the world” (2002: 401). They explain how developmentalism created differences between countries based on social categorisations of a world division, and further how it was associated with welfarist conceptions of political and economic life that sought to set up “developing countries” to achieve fuller autonomy. Thus, when issues such as infrastructural needs or unemployment are identified in such countries, interventions can be made to achieve material wealth and the well-being of populations.

Following Larner and Walters (2002), I consider international organisations such as the Bretton Woods system and the UN, as institutional manifestations of a developmentalist rationality, by which governments aim to promote development through explicitly constructive interventions. In this sense, migration management aligns with international organisations’ “need to move away from the ‘politicization’ of territorial imperatives with an emphasis on social, economic, and technical processes” (Larner & Walters, 2002: 405). Similarly, Crush (1995) problematises the discourse of development, and how it constructs the world and establishes its authority. In doing so, he argues that development cannot be reduced to the working of economic logic and structures, but is based in discourses having internal coherence and effects anchored in a “power-laden local and international context out of which they arise and to which they speak” (1995: xiii). Following Foucault, he understands the narratives from development agencies as polyvalent. Complex and unstable processes underpin how organisations license their own forms of interventions based on official histories often gathered in mainstream literature.

This research understands neoliberalism as a specific form of government and a political rationality that renders the social domain as economic by emphasising “personal responsibility” or “self-care”. This does not necessarily mean that neoliberalism counters collectivism, but rather it promotes self-reliant communities (Rose, 2000). Thus, I examine the effects of a neoliberal rationality based on the principles of competitiveness, productivity, and entrepreneurship from the perspective of discipline and self-regulation or self-control. Following Lemke, “neo-liberalism admittedly ties the rationality of the government to the
rational action of individuals; however, its point of reference is no longer some pre-given human nature, but an artificially created form of behaviour” (2001: 200). In other words, one neoliberal strategy is to replace rigid regulatory mechanisms by developing techniques of self-regulation. Therefore, by incorporating an analysis that takes into account the individual’s capacity for self-control, and how it relates to forms of political rule and economic exploitation, the effects of migration management become apparent.

Linking the governmentality of migration management to political assumptions rooted in a neoliberal understanding of migration is ineluctable. An understanding of the individual “as entrepreneur of himself, being himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of his earnings and entrepreneur of himself” (Foucault, 2008: 226), means understanding individuals as workers and an individual’s labour as broken down into income and skills, with their skills deciding where they are able to work. Foucault insists on mobility within the realm of human capital, and migration in particular:

“The mobility of a population and its ability to make choices of mobility as investment choices for improving income enable the phenomena of migration to be brought back to economic analysis, not as pure and simple effects of economic mechanisms that extend beyond individuals and which, as it were, bind them to an immense machine which they do not control, but as behavior in terms [of] individual enterprise, of enterprise of oneself with investments and incomes.” (Foucault, 2008: 230)

In an epistemological break, neoliberalism shifts liberalism’s object of economic analysis from the “analysis of the historical logic of processes… [to] the analysis of the internal rationality, the strategic programming of individuals’ activity” (Foucault, 2008: 223). This means not considering the worker as the object of supply and demand in a form of labour power, but as an active economic subject within an analysis of work as “economic conduct practiced, implemented, rationalized and calculated by the person who works.” (Foucault, 2008: 223). However, it is important to note that neoliberalism as a political rationality is not a fixed technology of government; its strategies are articulated according to principles of maximisation, in this case of labour and money. Thus, individuals are encouraged to become entrepreneurial, optimise their choices through knowledge that is perceived as neutral and in doing so reinforce their own subjection (Rose, 1998). The next section deals with these processes.
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2.2.4 Processes of Subjectivation and Subjectivities

From a Foucauldian perspective, power is not something autonomously exercised by subjects possessing a political rationality (Lemke, 2001), and whose pre-existence is necessarily a given in history, such as social and political classes. Instead, power is specific to power relations and the social practices that produce specific subjectivities and rationalities. Subjectivities are the multiplicity of positionings historically produced through the knowledge derived from political rationalities, which can be transformed by discursive practices and techniques grounded in knowledge functioning as truth. Power relations and processes of subjectivation are linked because new forms of social life and relations are produced by it. From a governmentality perspective processes of subjectivation are produced by discursive processes. Individuals are constituted within and by social relations, which are at the same time transformed with the creation of new subjectivities. In this research, I analyse how processes of subjectivation incorporate forms of knowledge that are transmitted in the multiple social relations of individuals. As a new migration management scheme, I consider the RSE to be productive of new subjectivities underpinned by the neoliberal framework and logic within which the scheme originates. This is not to say that Ni-Vanuatu experiences and aspirations prior to seasonal migration, such as paid employment, did not also contribute to engaging individuals in neoliberal processes.

The subjectivities of migrants are affected by public policies, such as those outlined earlier. For example, studies of migration to the USA from Latin America have focused on the “deportation regime” (De Genova, 2002; De Genova, 2006; De Genova & Peutz, 2010) and migrants’ “deportability” as a constitutive element of their subjectivities.⁸ These and other findings in relation to the disciplining of the diaspora highlight that subjectivities marked by fear and practices of resistance based on solidarity have been produced by means of laws and discipline (Aquino Moreschi, 2015; Coutin, 2003; Gonzales & Chavez, 2012) contributing to the creation of entrepreneurial subjectivities. Through shifts in their representation as national heroes and a machinery collecting statistical data, Mexican migrants have also been constituted as a population and targeted by specific policies such as microcredit programmes, promoting

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⁸ See Lawson (2000) for an analysis of rural-urban migration and hybrid migrants’ subjectivities after structural adjustment policies. See also Hedman (2008) for South East Asia and Hammond (2011) for Africa cases in relation to migration control and mobility policies.
the productive use of remittances for welfare services and development projects (Kunz, 2008). Along the same lines, processes of subjectivation mediated by religion as a means to become deserving neoliberal citizens have been explored (Guzman Garcia, 2016). Ethnographies have proved a useful entry point for studying how governmentality manifests as they provide insights into the multiplicity of power relations and practices to discern how subjectivities are formed.\(^9\)

Shifting the responsibility for social risks, such as unemployment and poverty from the state to the individual and rendering subjects responsible, transforms these issues into problems of “self-care”; accordingly, self-control will enable the individual to take care of him or herself. In this sense, for the purposes of this thesis, neoliberalism is understood “not as economic theory or political doctrine, but as certain way of governing, a certain rational art of government” (Foucault, 2014: 12). The disembodiment that these neoliberal governmental techniques of government produce is inseparable from the formation of modern capitalism. Ong (2006) draws attention to the flexibility that subjects need in adapting to the reconfiguration of relations between power and knowledge operating under neoliberalism. These relations render disciplining structures such as family, community, and work among others as able to transform subjects and their practices; but can also produce new forms of resistance.

Specific forms of governmentality, techniques and rationalities produce specific subjectivities and forms of knowledge, to which specific forms of self-control integrate. For example, neoliberalism as a market rationality uses discipline to construct productive subjects and entrepreneurial selves. As Foucault argues: “Discipline is the technology deployed to make individuals behave, to be efficient and productive workers” (2003: 239). He establishes a link between politically obedient individual bodies and an economically productive population. These techniques of self-control transform subjectivities in connecting subjects to forms of political rule and domination, as well as specific forms of knowledge. In the case of a labour mobility policy, “changes to the known characteristics of the object of intervention (e.g. unemployment) implicate that new types of interventions […] appear meaningful and, also, that responsibilities to solve the problem of unemployment can be redistributed from one social group […] to another (e.g. the unemployed)” (Marttila, 2013: 4). Analysing processes of

\(^9\) See Brady (2014) for the distinct contribution of some recent ethnographies to the study of governmentality.
subjectivation enables a more nuanced understanding of neoliberal forms of government, as it
does not focus on direct intervention by means of state apparatuses, but on indirect techniques
for guidance and control of individuals that allow an understanding of how their subjectivities
are transformed by existing knowledge. As neoliberal subjectivities cannot be understood in
isolation, I interrogate how worker involvement in the RSE as a migration management scheme
has formed their subjectivities, by relating these transformations to local ways of understanding.

2.2.5 Summary of section

This section has unfolded my understanding of the theoretical framework and form of analysis
in this research. The next section focuses on the importance of the socio-cultural context of
Vanuatu. While neoliberal rationalities may be influential at macro levels, it is important at an
individual or community level to understand how subjectivities relate to kastom, religion, and
gender roles in their transformation. First, I briefly discuss mobility theories in the South
Pacific, particularly in Vanuatu to underline how Ni-Vanuatu social relations shape workers’
subjectivities beyond a neoliberal rationality. In doing so, I expect to highlight the importance
of kin and place along with customary practice in processes of subjectivation. I also discuss the
pertinence of a Foucauldian framework for my analysis of the RSE in Vanuatu.

2.3. Vanuatu Theoretical Underpinnings Overview

Ni-Vanuatu have experienced a series of external influences over the last two hundred years.
From the arrival of early European settlers through the establishment of the Anglo-French
Condominium and now the current labour migration schemes, Ni-Vanuatu personal and social
practices such as gardening, child rearing or customary ceremonies have been transformed by
their own interpretations of these changes. This section focuses on the important theoretical
underpinnings in relation to migration, religion, kastom, and gender roles, to shed light on the
community dynamics that develop in Vanuatu and New Zealand. I discuss relevant
understandings of authority – by kin and rank – essential to the analysis of authority figures in the RSE. I also address changes in social practices that have been previously identified (Philibert, 1988), for example in social practices around marriage. I acknowledge the complexity of the *braed praes* (Jolly, 2015) to illustrate the understanding of *mane*.

Later, I present post structural literature from the South Pacific, with specific emphasis on Vanuatu, to question my understanding of how a Foucauldian framework of governmentality can be applied for the purposes of this research. I approach this task by laying out earlier theoretical approaches to Vanuatu to frame my approach to social relations and the transformations that are constituted within seasonal migration. I understand that, beyond the maintenance of traditional customary practices and the social processes that *mane* allows (Bailey, 2014b; R. E. Smith, 2016), the incorporation of Ni-Vanuatu in a labour migration scheme creates new social relations which are in interaction with local rationalities grounded in culture.

### 2.3.1 Mobility and Migration

It is widely accepted that contemporary mobility in the Pacific is not new, but a continuation of long-standing mobility patterns (R. Bedford & Hugo, 2008), within customary lifestyles, to meet labour needs – and it is circular in nature (R. Bedford, 1973; Chapman & Prothero, 1986; Chapman, 1986). Pacific mobility from the 1930s onwards has been characterised as internal and circular. It is the non-permanent movement of people having the intention of returning to their original place of residence. Circular migration\(^{10}\) studies in the 1970s and 1980s (R. Bedford, 1973; Chapman & Prothero, 1986; Chapman, 1986; Connell, 1987; Haberkorn, 1989) considered these arrangements to be “deeply rooted in a great variety of cultures and found at all stages of socio-economic exchange” (Chapman & Prothero, 1986: 6).

In pre-contact societies, individuals’ movement was motivated by a variety of factors which include ecological regimes, customary lifestyles, beliefs, values, and attitudes or decisions from

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\(^{10}\) R. Bedford (1973) defined circular migration according to intention at the time of departure. He differentiates it from migration and oscillation, understanding the latter as routine intra-island movements, which involve an absence from home for less than a month.
the elderly or prestigious village members (Chapman & Prothero, 1986). Mobility facilitated social transformation and labour engagement. These structural understanding of mobility explains migration using a push-pull model that reflects the conflict and complementarity between “centrifugal attractions” and “centripetal power” of village obligations, social relationships, and kinship ties.¹¹ As such to explain a variety of migration patterns, the different reasons for circulation were deemed explanatory of such patterns.

Labour migration is not a new phenomenon in Vanuatu. In the first half of the 19th century, and until the Second World War, large numbers of men and women migrated voluntarily and involuntarily from the Pacific. In the middle of the century the labour trade to Australia, Fiji and New Caledonia mobilised over 60,000 Pacific Islanders, particularly from Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands (Munro, 1995). Known as the blackbirds,¹² many were coerced, or lured by the promises of great wealth to be obtained from working mainly on labour intensive sugar plantations as well as on mining for rare commodities. Earlier labour mobility patterns shifted around the turn of the 20th century when some Ni-Vanuatu joined whaling ships and many others travelled internally for plantation labour, which authors argued allowed them to access European goods (C. Moore, Leckie, & Munro, 1990).

Historically, rural-urban migration responded to a variety of motivations ranging from searching for labour opportunities in the capital city or abroad, to visiting relatives in other islands. Bedford’s study of mobility transition (1971) points to changes in the spatial characteristics of mobility in relation to employment opportunities and towards the urban centers. Generally, it is men who migrate. Their routine departures for several months each year leave women with a “greater burden of cultivating gardens, nurturing pigs, collecting wood and water, maintaining households and looking after children” (Jolly, 1987: 135). In Vanuatu, men migrate but women are also mobile. For example, through marriage they create inroads for people and for social institutions. Women’s agency related to local movement is socially valued (Eriksen, 2007).

Bonnemaison (1994) compared local groups to the canoe – because their mobility – but individual men to a tree – because they take root in the land. He argues that migration will

¹¹ Chapman & Prothero (1986) argue that these longstanding migration patterns were briefly interrupted in Vanuatu by the labour needs at the USA military bases on Efate and Espiritu Santo in 1942.

¹² Blackbirding involved ensnaring or kidnapping South Pacific Islanders to be sold for work in cotton and sugar plantations in Australia, Fiji and Samoan islands. Despite England’s effort to control this practice (Nelson, n.d.) it prospered until 1904 after the new Australian Commonwealth ordered the deportation of all Kanakas (Dear & Kemp, 2007).
remain circular “as long as the actual relationship between people and territory endures” (Bonnemaison, 1985: 79). He warned that reducing migration patterns to economic terms was inadequate, as patterns can only be explained by Ni-Vanuatu sense of land and place. In the same way that trees are rooted in the land, implantation is the first value learned by Ni-Vanuatu as their identity comes from place. In describing how gender is understood in relation to mobility, Jolly (1982) uses similar metaphors of banyans and birds to highlight the complexity of historically situated changes that regard women as rooted and men as mobile. She argues that the physical absence of men cannot be seen only in terms of political economic analyses, but as constitutive of male culture and a symbolic world that has mostly excluded women (Jolly, 1987).

The canoe exists because of the strength of the wood and follows routes leading from one place to another. Thus, its value is linked to “a “wandering territory” which weaves links between implanted local groups” (Bonnemaison & Crowe, 1994: 21). When Ni-Vanuatu compare themselves to others, they see Europeans, for example, as floaters with no enduring relation to the land, and driven by an urge to search for money (Jolly, 1994). In this sense, consciously motivated movement is highly valued in comparison to wandering or enforced movement (Hess, 2009). Labour migration has a relatively long history in Vanuatu, which I return to in Chapter 3 in relation to contemporary labour mobility.

### 2.3.2 Religion and colonialism

Jolly (1991) argues that Christian missions in the Pacific were crucial agents in the process of Western colonisation. They promoted models of women’s domesticity as part of broader missionary efforts towards salvation and conversion. The success of such projects was affected by impediments to the realisation of a Christian family life in the colonies, the background of the missionaries, and the degree to which local women adopted, transformed or resisted attempts to “domesticate” them. Jolly’s study, covering 1848–1870, describes the ways in which Presbyterian missionaries challenged local behaviours within two differentiated

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13 See also Rodman (1992).
gendered domains – domestic and public – by assuming that women’s physical work beyond the home was in itself degrading.

Having women work indoors was a foreign cultural value for Ni-Vanuatu. Thus, missionaries’ attempts to improve the lives of women implied “re-orienting patterns of work, changing domestic practices in relation to clothing, shelter and food, and reforming the familial relations of parents and children and husbands and wives” (Jolly, 1991: 31). Missionaries intervened in domestic matters through the introduction of clothing (Jolly, 2000), in practices of motherhood such as infant feeding, and in domestic architecture. Jolly (1989) argues that churches changed the powers traditionally enjoyed by women when kinship was at the root. However, there is evidence that not all conversion projects were successful. For example, physical strength and ability to work “out of doors” continue to be important for women.

Philibert notes that to make sense of colonisation, Ni-Vanuatu “sought in the Christian religion the source of all European knowledge and power” (2014: 65). Missionaries’ metaphorical articulation of desires for modernity as a transition from a ‘world of darkness’ to a ‘world of light’ “marked the beginning of history and the chance for a ‘brighter’ future” (2014: 65) in which traditional culture was made redundant with the arrival of a new world. Nonetheless, he argues that in practice civilisation meant “a tightly integrated sociocultural world made of modern medicine, corrugated-iron houses, clothes, the rituals and beliefs of Christianity, participation in the cash economy, new relations between women and men, and greater geographical mobility” (2014: 65). Colonial representatives and District Agents caused political transformations by using laws and regulations (Jolly & Macintyre, 1989), which alongside missionaries’ conceptions relative to their churches’ denomination constructed a colonial project of civilisation in relation to education, housing, health, hygiene, living arrangements, and gender roles in the nuclear family (Eriksen, 2012).

Eriksen (2009) proposes that the proliferation of churches can be tracked through the colonial history of Vanuatu and in the way the nation achieved its independence, with the state playing only a superficial role. However, Hirsch (2014) argues that the state in Melanesia, through colonial and post-colonial bureaucracy, has stretched beyond towns and cities with the intention of changing people and village life “to transform them into new kinds of people who were capable of following the ways of white people, the new power and authority in their lives” (2014: 75). Douglas (2007) compares churches and customary life to a weak state, proposing that religion provides structure. Though kastom and church may seem incompatible, she argues
that Christianity has been “indigenized”. Gardner (2013) also believes that during independence Christian leaders reconciled Christianity with *kastom*. Similarly, Eriksen argues that Christianity has been “the one factor that united the islands across the different linguistic, cultural and denominational borders” (2009: 179). Christianity continues to be influential, for example, in how gender is negotiated, as this differs depending on the denomination of churches (Douglas, 2002).

Winch-Dummett’s (2010) study on the construal and practice of Christianity in Pentecost argues that the way in which Christianity is experienced has altered access to power, influence and authority differently from traditional or *kastom* structured processes. She explains that adherents’ success is based on their willingness to seize a new worldview, and they consider Christianity as a guide for moral action and “appropriate social behaviour, as offering opportunities for individual spiritual salvation, and the potential for temporal achievement” (2010: 78). According to Eves (2011), Christianity guides its adherents “by influencing their thinking in such a way that they regulate their own conduct to conform to the required standards” (2011: 758). He considers that adherants of Pentecostal churches are concerned “with regulating and reforming oneself, subjecting oneself to self-scrutiny and reining in errant desires [which] raises the issue of governmentality and self-governance” (2011: 760). Similarly to Li (2007), I believe that religion uses governmental techniques. For example, when Christianity changes the conditions under which individuals live, it engenders new practices and desires.

Eriksen (2009) differentiates the older churches such as Anglican or Presbyterian from the newer ones because of their unproblematic relationship to *kastom*. However, new churches demand a break with the past and with “negative *kastom*”. Since independence, there has been a shift in Vanuatu from colonial churches to new independent churches for which “state power is integral” (Eriksen, 2012: 106). She asserts that these churches act as disciplinary institutions that have helped develop a sense of the state by taking state forms, and filling the gaps left by the dismantling of the colonial apparatus. Eriksen argues that the “Pentecostalisation of Christianity in Vanuatu” (2016b) has created a stronger focus on the nation, particularly in Port Vila.

Eriksen (2012) also observes that international donors target churches as agents of governance because of the state effects they have. This influences how power is exercised in Vanuatu. In my analysis I incorporate an understanding of local rationalities linked to religious and *kastom*
practices because, although Christianity and colonialism are seen as a rupture with a heathen past (Jolly, 1982; Tonkinson, 1982), this customary past is relevant for Ni-Vanuatu. Individuals can still capitalise on kastom to engage in alliances or enhance their reputation, despite access to power, influence, and authority having been altered by Christianity (Winch-Dummett, 2010).

2.3.3 Kastom, leadership, and society

*Kastom* can be understood as the local beliefs and cultural practices. Bolton (2003) argues that *kastom* is “the word that people in Vanuatu use to characterise their own knowledge and practice in distinction to everything they identify as having come from outside their place” (2003: viii). Other scholars have already extended the concept of *kastom* beyond tradition (Bonnemaison, 1994; Jolly, 1982), as a moral and material order which is understood as primordial and eternal (Jolly, 1997), and which is central to understand peoples’ history. Jolly argues that *kastom* tends to exclude European elements and is associated with criticism of European morals and opposition to foreigners in general, and whites in particular. However, there are variations in the practice of *kastom*, depending on place and on the Christian denomination that was first introduced to the area (Winch-Dummett, 2010).

In Jolly’s words “*kastom* is predicated on a sense of rupture and revival (1992b: 330)”. Since the “heathen past” in Vanuatu seems to be separated from the present because of colonisation, there is a need to re-connect them. The ancestral ways of *kastom* considered as local knowledge aspects are increasingly being expanded to a notion of “a whole way of life, a culture distinctive of a local group, or a generic indigenous culture opposed to the ways of foreigners.” (Jolly, 1992b: 341). Bolton (2003) argues that the *kastom* category was developed to acknowledge the differences between local and Christian ways. Thus, *kastom* can be both a practice, and at times a political ideology that has been used as “a strategy for responding to, modifying, and sometimes resisting the pressures of European “custom”” (Jolly, 1992b: 332). Nonetheless, Jolly rightly warns that *kastom* should not be understood as ahistorical and free from Western influence (Jolly, 1992a), or as a harmonious “whole”, as “different *kastom* derives from different places” (Bolton, 2003: 76).14

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14 See also Carrier (1992) for references to *kastom* as a political imaginary non-exempt from claims of authenticity.
Chapter 2

Chiefs are important persons in the life of Ni-Vanuatu individuals. Community leadership has taken different forms since pre-colonial times. Assessors, Elders, and community leaders from colonial times were grouped under the title of “chiefs” by missionaries and officials of the Anglo-French Condominium. This title was used to designate the men who represented their communities in contexts outside the church and state. While this tradition was preserved in terms of metropolitan interests (Rodman, 1984), the role of chiefs changed during the transition to independence, as chiefs were considered as representing tradition and “the old” (Bolton, 1999). In this transition, *kastom* came to symbolise cultural practices, political resistance and national unity and became central to visions of social justice (Rawlings, 2012).

After independence, the central government created institutions such as the *Malvatumaui* Council of Chiefs, which gave chiefs a stake in the country affairs as representatives of indigenous knowledge and practice. The council comprises some successful politicians from certain regions (Jolly, 1992a). Its establishment officially acknowledges the importance of *kastom* in the creation of Vanuatu as a nation and transfers ideas of rank and status to the national level, formalising chiefs as a distinct group whose importance transcends the local level, given that before the independence, there was no chiefly elite (Bolton, 2003). The *Malvatumaui* deals with *kastom* and land. Though its role under the constitution is limited, in recent years they have been involved in establishing structures for chiefly councils and procedures for registering chiefly titles, becoming vocal arguing for legislation for chiefly powers in relation to conflict management. Lindstrom argues, “If the state has to some extent defined what a *jif* can be, along with the proper compass of his powers and duties men who call themselves *jifs* have influenced the span and effectiveness of state programs” (1997: 211). In this way chiefs can at times become collaborators in government authority, but it doesn’t mean that their role is universally accepted (Bolton, 2003).

The systems of chiefdom in Vanuatu vary depending on place. For example, in northern and central Vanuatu graded societies confer the status of bigman gradually, through the accumulation and sacrifice of pigs (Miles, 1997). Chiefdom is not necessarily inherited, but can be based on physical prowess, rank or as a result of influence and obligations. Chiefs intervene in local communities’ decisions that are built on obligations and counter-obligations.

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15 Rawlings (2012) argues that statelessness, land alienation, and *kastom* were drivers of Vanuatu’s independence.
16 The Malvatumaui chiefs are elected every four years and meet twice a year.
17 Pigs and their tusks are a symbol of Vanuatu cultural identity, along with slit gongs, woven mats, and club houses, kava and yams, which are often present in *kastom* ceremonies (Miles, 1997).
Accordingly, their actions and decisions create respect and future counter-obligations, such as in resolving conflicts. For example, to settle a dispute in Pentecost, a chief can make a payment on behalf of a person from his village, while in Ambae, this payment should be paid back by the “troublemaker” (Forsyth, 2009). In dealing with offences against the law, they have “chiefly authority in correcting an alleged wrong” (Wirrick, 2008: 76). Chiefs are widely accepted as the primary community leaders whose responsibility is to resolve conflicts by arbitrating disputes in rural and urban areas (Bolton, 2003).

During the Condominium, Ni-Vanuatu were not subject to French civil law or English common law; thus, the administration of indigenous life was based on native customs and tribal rules, though both English and French colonialism defined ‘custom’ was (Rawlings, 2012). Thus, customary law was considered as a subordinate law and subject to ad hoc interpretation. Nowadays, the authority exercised by chiefs allows them to decide on disciplinary measures such as restricting movement. While some of the chiefs’ decisions may go against the current Vanuatu constitution, these decisions are respected by villagers. In this sense, the consent of individuals as subjects of customary law transcends the “official” regulatory space, placing chiefs “in the cracks and rannies that separate village from capital city, [and] the country’s numerous local polities from its overarching institutional state” (Lindstrom, 1997: 212). Kastom cannot be considered separately; it is integrated in everyday practices of rural and urban Ni-Vanuatu as a “selfconscious preservation of tradition, not [as] the unselfconscious inheritance of a culture” (Jolly, 1997: 10).

Strathern’s (1988) widely accepted theorisations of personhood emphasise the ties that bind Melanesians to society, by which they do not consider the individual as separate from society. However, Strathern’s conceptualisations have been criticised for constructing personhood according to Western notion of individualism (LiPuma, 1998), and because her conception is idealistic in opposing the West to Melanesia (Gell, 1999). This research highlights the relevance of social relations to understand processes of subjectivation, which are dependent on culturally specific social practices. In doing so, I understand Ni-Vanuatu negotiations of their

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18 It is not the purpose of this study to analyse the specificity of how chiefdom operates differently in the areas studied in this thesis. Instead, this thesis refers to chiefs as authority figures whose decisions are respected by RSE workers.
19 The practices and sanctions of Kastom can be regarded as part of customary law and officially as a subordinate category of law because it is subject to ad hoc interpretation.
20 Similar conceptualisations have been used to understand individuals in Melanesia by establishing a differentiation with the “modern subject” (K. Smith, 2012) who is a “monadic, coherent, indivisible and personally responsible agent” (Lindstrom, 2013: 245-246).
subjectivities as underpinned by a shared communal moral code that does not stress individuality. The way Ni-Vanuatu understand themselves in relation to their community is visible in their behaviours and discourses and influences their social relations.

Since colonial times Western culture and capitalism have transformed conceptions of the individual. Li Puma (1998) links modernity to the construction of identity “in the path of desire” in which the individual facet of personhood becomes increasingly visible. He warns that relations of sameness and difference should be carefully considered in studying how personhood is reconfigured. In this sense, this research will take a cautious approach to what is considered local but has been influenced by external actors, such as Christianity, and then been re-appropriated within existing social practices. But *kastom* can also be used to “resolve the contradictions between ancestral ways and Christianity” (Keesing, 1989). Ni-Vanuatu understandings are mediated by *kastom* along with some other external influences, which I argue have been incorporated into bodies of knowledge as “customary rationalities.” Finally, it is important to highlight that *kastom* politics remain male, as are chiefs and all national politicians.

### 2.3.4 Gender Relations

Colonialism had different consequences for women and men\(^{21}\). Jolly (1997) argues that in the remaking of indigenous culture as *kastom*, some aspects of male control have been intensified. While Jolly (1991) considers colonialism, and particularly Christianity, as having improved women’s situation, for example in regulating the violence of men towards women, she acknowledges that new notions of male domination were introduced based on efforts by the Church to domesticate women. This mission was a conscious effort at transforming gender relations and promoted a form of femaleness related to maternity and a rhetoric of improvement which reformed family life (Jolly & Macintyre, 1989). These transformations can be connected to women’s marginalisation within the public domains of church and state. For example, while women can be auxiliary to male pastors and teachers, they do not have leadership roles. *Kastom* is gendered and men are the custodians of *kastom* (Jolly, 1997). *Kastom* establishes hierarchical

\(^{21}\) For the analytical purposes of this thesis a binary construction of gender is employed in the analysis.
differences between men and women that influence the multiple networks of gendered economic practices (Jolly, 2012). For example, it is mainly men who look for work (Rousseau & Taylor, 2012), thus early labour recruitment was considered a male experience, while during the same period migrant women were represented in sexualised terms as prostitutes (Jolly, 1987).

Eriksen (2016a) highlights that gender is key to understanding many of the social processes to overcome differences between males and females. Differences between men and women can be bridged through marriage, which aims to reproduce the distinctiveness of the kin-group. Nonetheless, marriage never implies a merger of two kin-groups, “because the feminine is seen as different from the masculine, and because the masculine is what is being produced in the kin-group, [so] there is never any real connection” (Eriksen, 2016a: 41). In this sense, gender differentiation is a system that unites cutting across other differences. It constructs group solidarity based on linearity and on laterality. Through marriage the “moving women create lateral connections whereas men inherit place based on patrilineal rights” (Eriksen, 2016b: 261).

Eriksen argues that both, the domestication of women and the individualisation of personhood are two parts of the same form of cultural and social change and extends these changing notions to social dynamics and to the gender of the nation. She notes that “the discourses forming the imaginings of the nation rely on the same kind of metaphors and the same kind of values as the urban Christian woman” (Eriksen, 2016b: 269). She draws attention to the new values and ideas of domesticity developing in towns and contrasts them with rural values to identify changes in women “from being mobile, outward oriented and open, to becoming ‘contained’ and immobile” (Eriksen, 2016b: 267). Because of her care responsibilities, the moral woman provides and maintains the domestic space inside the house. In urban contexts, is not morally acceptable for women to “walk around” which young men seem to frequently do. Thus, it is immoral if women go out other than for specific errands. Eriksen calls this process “the ‘interiorisation’ of femininity”.

Gender roles are also differentiated in other activities. In agricultural labour, multiple authorship does not imply that authorship is equivalent to all, because female labour does not

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22 Eriksen notes that the notion of achieving a “morally good domestic lifestyle” in urban areas is different from rural areas, and difficult to attain for people living in squatter zones because of their limited access to money.
have the same value as male. As Phillibert (1988) argues, gardening is a medium through which social relationships are symbolised and reciprocities between men and women are represented. In Jolly’s (1997) study of Pentecost women’s work, its value is encompassed within the superior value of men’s work, and for public exchange purposes wealth assumes an accepted male identity pertaining to a singular man. As Jolly explains, “In relation to his wife, the male person is several and his products shared creation; in relation to other men he is a singular male” (1997: 85), insisting that these productive relations have been transformed by colonialism and the introduction of commodities and cash crops.

In relation to marriage and braed praes Jolly (2015) argues that understandings of mane have been transformed by the introduction of Christianity and processes of commoditisation. She questions whether the “value” assigned to brides has changed and whether braed praes could be considered both as gift and commodity. The strongest arguments against the braed praes are about the use of money, as money is capable of “distorting customary values, inculcating greed, and promoting individualism” (Jolly, 2015: 64). Money is also considered to be changing traditional social relations, and I will argue individual subjectivities (Cummings, 2013a). Generally, women are not encouraged to seek paid employment. In the seasons encompassed in this research Ni-Vanuatu women represented approximately 20 percent of RSE participants. While women are increasingly involved in salaried employment and in selling their garden’s produce in local markets, the ones with access to mane are mostly men.

2.3.5 Money and Property

This research deals with Ni-Vanuatu understanding of mane in terms of traditional exchanges and as a resource to obtain material things. Cummings (2013a) acknowledges that the role of

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23 Jolly relates her findings to men’s agency in Hagen ceremonies, in which work becomes wealth in the process of male-male transaction (Strathern, 1988).

24 The braed praes has been criticised by local Christians, among them RSE workers in this study, feminists, and policy makers behind the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) reports, among others. Macintyre’s (2011) study in Papua New Guinea, explains how men linked the notion of their own labour as their source of wealth while women criticised the proprietary rights conferred by their bride price and strongly opposed the continuation of this practice.

25 Figures provided by the ESU for said timeframe show an average of 23 percent women participants from Efate and 33 percent from Santo. The overall average of visas granted to female workers from 2007 to April 30, 2018 is 14 percent (R. Bedford, 2018). For age disaggregated data see the latest Mini-census (VNSO, 2017).
money has become increasingly important in Vanuatu. Mobility from the outer islands to the capital, and now to New Zealand under the RSE scheme, are in response to expectations of waged labour. While *mane* circulates in Vanuatu around traditional ceremonies, for example in marriage ceremonies and to fulfil other customary obligations, the availability of an additional supply of money is acknowledged as conferring a higher status. *Mane* is intrinsically associated with personal value beyond its value as a resource for customary ceremonies and the payment of fees. Ni-Vanuatu have now incorporated *mane* in terms of its economic value, as a symbol of status, and also as a means to obtain non-material benefits which have created new notions of merit. Recent RSE research has observed (Craven, 2015; R. E. Smith, 2016) that when RSE workers return to Vanuatu, they often overlook their roles in gardening and housekeeping or, if asked to fulfil them, they ask for money in return. This speaks to their understanding of the economic model in which work is compensated with money. RSE workers consider themselves having fulfilled their obligations to the community through their monetary contributions.

*Mane* is used to fulfil traditional kin obligations that are a moral imperative, such as gift giving. Eriksen’s (2007) Ambrym study identifies kinship-based prestations as being transformed by introducing new obligations. Eriksen contrasts the reciprocal character of the *braed praes* which is funded by “societal funds” to which the clan participates in collecting and receiving, to obligations such as the *sakkem presen*, a ceremony associated with marriage which she believes was initiated in the 1960s. This ceremony aims to reinforce the connection between a brother and his sister and includes a monetary gift that “puts money to a social, kinship-based, use” (Eriksen, 2007: xii). She also points to an increase in the demand for money in this ceremony – often used for consumption – instead of the earlier gift of female pigs or yams which were given to grow. She argues that it is more feasible for urban residents to respond to such entailments and thus, such ceremony can become part of a process of differentiation signalling the emergence of new social classes and kinship arrangements resultant of migration and waged labour. There are notable differences between the presents given in villages, squatter settlements and in the urban context as between provinces (Eriksen, 2007).

In her account of the intentionality of gift giving, Strathern (1988) emphasised the importance of “agents”, as gifts can only be understood in this context. “Whether between exchange partners, spouses, or between kin, the circulation of things and persons in this sense leads to comparisons between the agents. Items cannot be disposed without reference to such relations” (1988: 161). As such, property and *mane* is construed as a relation between persons. She argues
that “possession constructs the possessor as a unitary social entity […] Whether property is ‘private’ or ‘communal’, the possessor is the singular author or proprietor. Thus, communal property would be owned by a community and in this sense, would be analogous to private property…” (1988: 104). Tensions can therefore be anticipated in the RSE workers’ communities with the introduction of large amounts of money and ownership of goods, since these more individualist behaviours can be deemed antisocial (Fowler, 2004).

I argue that a nuanced analysis of the traditional role of chiefs, kin obligations, and gender understandings of social relations is unavoidable in a governmentality analysis of the RSE in order to identify how participants’ subjectivities are transformed, both in New Zealand and Vanuatu. Other studies and my own research have informed my understanding of Ni-Vanuatu workers’ relations at home – and some of the transformations have been documented. While some transformations can be traced to their participation in the RSE scheme, investigating how they emerged requires a deeper engagement with participants and Vanuatu. Extensive longitudinal research was not feasible in this study because of the amount of time I had for fieldwork was limited by the relatively late decision to undertake the study in Vanuatu rather than the Solomon Islands, as initially planned.26 The next section elaborates on existing criticism of poststructural theories in Vanuatu and its South Pacific region.

2.3.6 Post structuralism in the South Pacific

For political economists, issues of materiality and representation are at the core of their critiques of poststructuralism, as these culturally contingent understanding of economic practices seem to relativise material issues such as poverty and wealth. Encounters between scholars from both academic backgrounds have been scarce but antagonistic (De Goede, 2006), although there is some common ground regarding topics such as the economic practices of states, and power, and inequality – with insights on discursive representation.27 The vein of critique I develop here draws on earlier studies (Bamford, 2007; Hirsch, 2014; Mimica, 2010) that question the applicability of a post structuralist approach to the particular context of the

26 See section 4.2.1 for additional details.
27 See De Goede (2006) for poststructuralist contributions to the study of International Political Economy.
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Pacific. I present the arguments against the use of Western concepts and their applicability to understanding non-Western societies, while at the same time justifying my decision to use a post structuralist analysis to shed light on the complexities of the relations of Ni-Vanuatu working as seasonal migrants.

Hirsch (2014), following Mimica (2010), argues that anthropological understanding must avoid being uncritical when using concepts and academic frameworks of knowledge produced by Western scholars which are a product of a specific historical context. He considers that Western ideas are rooted in different social and cosmological forms and cannot be directly extrapolated to a society with different social and historical antecedents. For example, he argues that Western concepts such as policing and disciplining should not be understood in Western terms. This research uses the concept of discipline to approach the transformations of Ni-Vanuatu subjectivities, but considers it as derived from their relation with a seasonal migration scheme based on the neoliberal premise of encouraging productivity and entrepreneurship. I consider that local Ni-Vanuatu understandings are intertwined with neoliberal knowledge and produce neoliberal subjectivities.

Hirsch (2014) also criticises Foucauldian methodologies such as discourse and document analysis – that transform the conduct of individuals – for their “top down” approach to social understandings. He considers these methodologies as inadequate to portray the complexity of social life as it is found in local institutions that are not structured, or do not exist, in a similar way as in a Western context. Hirsch emphasises the need for “bottom-up” perspectives of “actual men and women living within specific institutional constraints and with respect to local conventions” (2014: 75). This research acknowledges the strong oral tradition in Vanuatu social life. As an independent country it has also written policy documents, many of which were written with the support of international organisations’ representatives to manage the RSE. However, this thesis analysis is largely based on qualitative interviews with RSE workers in certain time and place as constitutive of individuals’ subjectivities.

Analyses of Western concepts in non-Western societies have already been criticised because they represent culture as ahistorical (Macintyre, 1995). Similarly, the application of Marxist analysis to the Pacific (Josephides, 1985; Leacock, 1981) has also been criticised in relation to the structure of the government and the nature of its presence. I consider a Marxist analysis more specific and limited than a Foucauldian one. Foucault’s assumption is that specific forms of power, social practices and relations constitute different subjectivities, and in turn these
subjectivities transform social relations, a view which sits in clear opposition to the modern subject empowered by reason to dispose freely of the structural conditions that determine the predicament of man and history. I agree with Hirsch (2014) that neither Marxist nor Foucauldian ideas are necessarily inapplicable or inappropriate to the study of countries in the South Pacific. This thesis interrogates the relations of individual participants in a Western policy that entails neoliberal features in its management, and is not a study of a Ni-Vanuatu community per se.

Street’s (2012) ethnographic study in the Madang General Hospital, on the north-east coast of nearby Papua New Guinea, identified “transactional items” – such as medical cards used by individuals – as not indicative of being governed by the state, but rather as facilitating their claims of recognition from their government. She points to the government not being structured like a Western bureaucratic institution. This contrasts with arguments that propose transactional items as potentially being used to govern subjects, from earlier research into the different ways individuals engage with “foreign” transactional items. Strathern, following Jolly’s description of the Sa from Pentecost, argues that “(t)hey turn European things to their own ends rather than seek to encompass European ends; in other words, they Vanuatize things derived from the European world rather than Europeanize themselves” (1988: 81). From a Foucauldian standpoint, all understandings are mediated and are thus appropriations; what is important is to understand the elements that are introduced to social relations and practices, and how individuals and communities appropriate new elements.

Foucauldian inspired analyses in the region (J. Clark, 1997; Eves, 2011; Jacka, 2007) have also been criticised due to their introduction of Western models of thinking to understanding societies lacking similar social structures and conceptualisations. For example, it is not clear if the conceptualisation of policing used by Eves (2011) to characterise Pentecostalism for the Papua New Guinean Lelet is the best way to characterise their local perceptions (Hirsch, 2014). Following Mimica, I acknowledge the importance of researchers knowing “the actualities of the Western categories in their Western cultural context” (2010: 221) and not engaging in a “Western megapolitan academic enterprise of textual post/modernisation of Melanesia” (Hirsch, 2014: 77). This has implications for researchers’ representation in that she/he “constitutes her/himself in time and place while at the same moment constituting the people that s/he lived among and has come to represent” (Hirsch, 2014: 77). This can be applied to any theoretical framework because every comprehension is already an appropriation. There is
no “other” but only how we comprehend others. The challenge for the researcher then is to present the diversity of locals’ points of view as immersed in their current social realities.

This research uses a governmentality framework of analysis in considering that multiple forms of power – beyond neoliberal political rationalities – coalesce in any society. Thus, the focus is on understanding Ni-Vanuatu participating in the RSE, not as a version of a disciplinary society, but as individuals who have gradually incorporated neoliberal rationalities into their social relations which are intertwined with local understandings (T. Li, 2014). This research aims to understand seasonal migration to New Zealand, a Western country – in which governmental aspirations regarding the management of labour migration are exercised. This study does not instrumentalise Foucauldian concepts to draw an anthropological account of Vanuatu. Instead, I use rationalities as a concept to draw attention to and identify differently located elements in the formation of subjectivities; thus, the terms “neoliberal subjectivities” and “customary subjectivities” are used for easier reference. My intention is to analyse the practices and relations, derived from each of these subjectivities to account for and delineate how current economic systems are changing social relations in Vanuatu. Acknowledging that these transformations are part of long standing social changes and are not solely affected by peoples’ engagement with seasonal migration, the focus is on understanding not only the transformation of subjectivities at an individual level, but also their transformation in social practices such as traditional ceremonies, child rearing, and mobility as influenced by the influx of money.

2.3.7 Summary of section

In this section I have discussed important theoretical underpinnings in relation to historical processes in Vanuatu. I have drawn attention to Ni-Vanuatu social relations, and kinship and authority figures such as chiefs, to provide a framework within which a governmentality analysis can occur. I have described gendered relations and the use of kastom, as well as understandings of money and property. I have also engaged with current criticism of post structural studies in the Pacific to explain how my research acknowledges the RSE as a migration management scheme underpinned by a Western neoliberal rationality for which a governmentality analysis is useful. The following section brings together discussion from the
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earlier sections of the chapter to present my understanding of the RSE as a migration management model for Vanuatu.

2.4. Framing this thesis

In this section I briefly discuss earlier academic research that has been instrumental for this thesis, particularly studies using qualitative and/or mixed-methods approaches to provide a nuanced view of participants. The section concludes by framing this study based on the research gaps I have identified, and the research questions that guide it. The governmentality framework of analysis identifies the RSE scheme as a response to the conceptualisation of migration management, which encourages governments to cooperate to manage migration in an orderly way. This influences the practices through which the RSE scheme is operationalised and at the same time transforms individuals’ subjectivities because of the expectations that workers become productive and entrepreneurial. These dimensions are co-constitutive and encompass the totality of a particular rationality (Kunz, 2008). By using this frame, I provide a different angle to understanding the RSE scheme and identify future areas of research.

2.4.1 Previous research on the RSE scheme

Research on the outcomes of the RSE has been carried out by the New Zealand government through independent consultancies and by the World Bank who brokered this project in the region. I consider these final reports as belonging to the grey literature that informs the management of the RSE. For that reason, they will be analysed separately in Chapter 5. Rather at this point, I will be describing academic research, including doctoral and master theses,28 that have informed this study. C. Bedford (2013) used critical realism as a theoretical framework and mixed methods in considering the RSE scheme as a whole beyond the sum of its parts. She analysed how the multiple actors in the RSE, governments, pastoral care workers,

28 See Lepon (2010) and Taneka (2013) for additional research from New Zealand Universities.
employers and employees interact to keep the RSE scheme working as a system in which equilibrium is only achieved by the correct functioning of each of its parts. She gained privileged access to other data beyond her fieldwork, which allowed her to see different facets of the scheme. Based on her structural approach to systems theory, she distinguishes three levels according to scale: high-level (governments), meso-level (employers, pastoral workers, industry stakeholders, among others), and micro-level (employers, RSE workers and their families). My analysis also encompasses a similar macro- to micro-level scale, from international organisations to RSE workers focusing on the conceptual expressions, the ways of acting and the new forms of subjectivities from a particular way of governing.

The RSE scheme has also been subject of ethnographic research. Bailey’s micro study of Ambrymese RSE workers (2014b) claims that they have been achieving their goal of “working for the community good”, as material remittances as well as monetary ones maintain traditional social practices such as *kastom* ceremonies. In her doctoral thesis (2014b) she moved away from her earlier discussion (2009), now regarding workers’ “unfreedom” as a condition for the success of the RSE scheme. She defined “unfreedom” as structural labour market restrictions such as the lack of flexibility to work for anyone other than the hiring employer, workers’ conditions as laid out in employment contracts, visa regulations, and informal pressures to behave “good” at work and during their free time.

Prochazkova’s (2012) ethnography of a transient workplace, explored how temporary labour policies shape workers’ experiences and the treatment they received from their employers. Both Prochazkova and Bailey lived and worked with the RSE workers during their fieldwork. Prochazkova studied Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers, as well as other workers in the same orchard working under other types of arrangements, such as working holiday visas and temporary contractors. This allowed for an interesting comparison of their different experiences and perceptions according to the different managerial arrangements of the interviewees. Prochazkova (2012) identifies questionable employment practices such as the misuse of the piece rate system, stereotypes in division of labour, racial assumptions per country of origin, and a lack of awareness by workers of their labour rights in the management of the scheme.

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29 Note that New Zealand is a signatory of Convention 97 (ILO, 1949) which articulates the principle of migrants’ equal treatment with national workers regarding working conditions and benefits.
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Smith’s (2016) work is significant because of the duration of her ethnographic study in Vanuatu. She unpacked the meaning of having a “good house” in an Epi Island village which had been engaged for several years in the RSE. She explored the context of Ni-Vanuatu RSE remittances and how individuals connect them to their aspirations for a “better living”. She also draws attention to the contradictions existing in the communities, as not everyone is benefiting from the scheme. In doing so, she points at behaviours that have changed in recent years and the subsequent commoditisation and division of labour (2018) and the social relations changes derived from new spatial configurations of “the good house.” Similarly to Craven (2015) and Rockell (2015), she showcases some unintended consequences of the scheme which may be debilitating the social fabric, such as RSE workers requesting payment when asked to help to build new houses. Additionally, Craven (2015) draws attention to new vulnerabilities in communities and the further implications of the RSE for labour supply, food security, migrant attitudes, underdevelopment, and institutional viability.

Ericsson (2009) used a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data to inform her analysis on earnings, savings, spending patterns and remittance possibilities of workers, finding a lack of autonomy in decision making over their incomes with negative implications for sending remittances during the working period. She draws attention to common employer practices, such as the creation of a savings account to which workers have access only when they are back in Vanuatu (C. Bedford, 2013). She concluded that this practice determines the amount of remittances sent while in New Zealand, rather than individual differences in availability of work, earnings, savings or spending patterns. She makes a case for the inequality of power relations between receiving and sending countries, inverting the aid and development arguments by arguing the horticulture and viticulture industries seem to be the real beneficiaries of the scheme, profiting from the “aid” of a foreign workforce. In contrast, she sees the gains for RSE workers as questionable at best.

Hao’uli (2014) uses a post-colonial Third World Approach to International Law (TWAIL) framework, to argue that the “underlying economic logic of the RSE scheme, (which) exerts an influence that undermines its potential as a development initiative”. She questions whether the RSE is being used as a “Trojan horse” in the Pacific, pointing out that indicators of success are restricted to economic gains and concluding that RSE workers are being used to serve others’ economic ends, which is the antithesis of achieving positive development outcomes in her opinion. Further, she questions the triple win argument and raises the social costs of the scheme. Her fieldwork was with Tongans in the beginning of the RSE, so her research did not
account for circularity and although we both draw attention to the limited understanding achieved by purely economic measurements, I address this by focusing on the flows of power that transform social relations. I argue that the development narratives behind the creation of the RSE have guaranteed its continuation, and in doing so have contributed to processes of subjectivation.

Morrison (2011) adopted a relational approach to explore the narratives of success within the RSE in Northland from a post structural theoretical perspective. He argues that the RSE has created a transnational moral economy sustained by these narratives of success, meaning that because of the contradictions in these new relations for RSE actors there is an emerging economic space that “needs to be performed and re-performed to prolong its survival” (2011: ii). He analyses RSE narratives performativity based on Callon’s (2009; 2010) understanding that economic narratives construct and perform actions. Thus, each actor needs agency to allow for their discursive struggle to maintain the RSE as a moral economy. He interviewed all accredited RSE employers in Northland including CEOs and labour managers, but only a few employees, so workers’ narratives are not fully unpacked. Although he uses Foucauldian concepts such as governmental strategies, his analysis focuses on the assemblage that brings people together who otherwise would not come into relation. He argues that the triple wins have been normalised and come to be accepted by workers, communities and governments through narratives of success (Morrison, 2011) in a way that allows the scheme to function.

My research does not necessarily pick up where earlier research left off. Instead it provides a different angle to the study of the RSE, as my focus is mainly on the construction and transformation of social relations and subjectivities in relation to a migration management programme connected to a larger development agenda. My analysis aims to link macro level discourses from international organisations to those at local and individual levels to uncover how the subjects are transformed in their relation with different bodies of knowledge. The next section summarises the research framework of this thesis.

2.4.2 Research framework

This research builds on former anthropological research because of my ethnographic approach to studying social relations at the micro level. This allows me to understand participants in
relation to others, by analysing how some people decide to participate in the scheme and others do not. While previous research examined employment practices (Ericsson, 2009; Prochazkova, 2012; Rockell, 2015), these researchers did not emphasise the prominence of social relations and how these are also transforming the RSE workers’ families and communities. Recent anthropological research (Bailey, 2014b; R. E. Smith, 2016) draws attention to more permanent changes in social relations, for example, arguing that RSE earnings “maintain current forms of relationships that involve reciprocity and social obligations” (Bailey, 2014b: 254) by means of traditional and customary ceremonies. This aligns with the approach of migration theories such as the NELM that propose migration as increasing individuals’ human capital, and with the scholarship of the migration-development nexus which proposes that remittances can be channelled for development purposes. In contrast, this study is interested in the construction of individual subjectivities and how these are changing over the course of individuals’ engagement with the RSE.

Although power relations between employers and workers have been previously identified through success narratives (Morrison, 2011), this research also addresses the silences in these narratives. These silences were not only apparent when interviewees deemed a question too difficult to answer, but through active listening I was also able to reflect on what people say they do, and what they actually do – but do not talk about (Underhill-Sem, 2015). This multisited study draws attention to how workers’ social relations and practices are transformed, both by migration management policy discourses and practices, and also by their embodied participation in the RSE. This research seeks to better understand how social relations unfold and transform workers’ subjectivities by focusing on RSE workers’ social relations from a governmentality perspective, and at different stages of the RSE process, including recruitment, migration and return, in New Zealand and in Vanuatu.

In the case of workers who are in their first or second seasons, it may be too early to gauge how these subjectivities are being transformed; while for others, particularly for individuals who are “only workers” sometimes and workers’ leaders other times, the transformation of their subjectivities is more evident. For example, they may be a “disciplinarian leader” one day and helping to further a productivity agenda, and a “docile worker” the next. I therefore use a governmentality framework to identify which political rationalities have been rendered actionable. In doing so, I identify how governmental techniques operate in the multiple relations that workers engage in when participating in the RSE. Workers do not autonomously create social relations; it is their subjectivities that are transformed by social practices and
relations that guide their conduct and enable specific rationalities. The interrogation undertaken in this research regarding the operation of governmental techniques, addresses the freedoms and constraints experienced by Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers at different points along their participation in the scheme. I focus on the specific ways of acting, intervening and directing to identify a variety of governmental techniques that are underpinned by particular types of knowledge – and which transform workers’ subjectivities.

It is important to acknowledge that past colonisation, Christianity, and labour trade have created dramatic effects on relations between women and men in Vanuatu’s villages (Jolly, 1987; Jolly, 1991) because of the reconfiguration of leadership and gender relations. Complex social relations are continuously being transformed. In Vanuatu, traditional roles have been evolving since the arrival of Europeans in the 17th century, encompassing ambiguous interrelations between religion, kastom, and gender. The introduction of a decade long engagement in the RSE has also transformed workers’ social relations, and in significant ways. This research links the practices emerging from international migration management policies to the operationalisation of the RSE, to bridge the divide between governmentality analysis at macro and micro levels and the transformation of individuals’ subjectivities.

People move away from their village life for long periods of time for different reasons. In this case, I argue that RSE policies are producing subjectivities underpinned by a neoliberal framework which may bring a disempowering character. Thus, the adjustments needed may be more problematic than the ones required by earlier mobility. This research will outline how these subjectivities are transformed by local neoliberal rationalities and customary rationalities, as in traditional understandings. The discourses that have linked migration to development can easily be considered apolitical, and as practical justifications for migration management as ultimately being for the sake of workers, their families and the success of the scheme. By incorporating workers’ perspectives, I also identify instances of resistance which remain largely ignored in policy making circles.

2.4.3 Research questions

This research focuses on the following research questions:
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- Which “migration management narratives” made the emergence of the RSE scheme possible, and how did this happen?
- How do neoliberal rationalities, narratives, and practices construct new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and what are the implications of such transformations for Ni-Vanuatu social relations?
- How do customary rationalities and practices transform new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and what are the implications for Ni-Vanuatu most permanent social relations with their families and communities?

To address these research questions, I analyse qualitative interviews with RSE participants, including workers’ leaders, officials from the governments of New Zealand and Vanuatu, and other stakeholders such as consultants involved in programmes allied to the RSE who are key actors in the scheme. These interviews and data complement the analysis of policy, grey literature, and academic publications which have created narratives to guide the development of Pacific peoples by constructing knowledge, problems and solutions. I use the term narrative to account for discourses or arguments with a premise and a conclusion that frame a problem in a particular way, and to create distance from other notions derived from different theoretical frameworks, such as ideology for example.

I examine how power flows, and the political rationalities underpinning them, transform the subjectivities of Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers by moving them away from behaviours deemed unproductive. I identify discursive manifestations – narratives – as well as their operationalisation – practices – which ‘conduct the conduct’ of the different RSE stakeholders. Following Rose & Miller (2010) I analyse the knowledge underlying the conception of what is good, productive, efficient, or profitable, as framed by the RSE policy and interpreted by its main stakeholders. Following Lemke (2015), it is also possible to interrogate the “government of things” by interrogating how things affect humans; in this thesis I briefly focus on money. I draw attention to the constraints, as well as the productive ways in which individuals use their freedom to take care of themselves – and for the common good of the population.

For practical purposes, I have named the subjectivities identified in this research, based on workers’ verbal expressions, to be able to articulate them in terms of the specific rationalities that have produced them. I draw attention to the transformation of social relations in regional labour markets, to contribute to the discussion on seasonal migration and labour mobility in
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the Pacific. This research highlights the pressing task of interrogating what kind of
development Ni-Vanuatu want, and concludes with general recommendations.

2.5. Summary of Chapter

This chapter set out to engage with current theoretical approaches to migration and lay out how
the option of migration management in international development circles was formed and how
it responded to security concerns regarding irregular migration. I first argued that migration
management schemes are a product of the business-like approach to public management that
emerged in the 1990s with the NPM agenda, and which encompasses features of neoliberalism.
This framework emphasises data at the population level and renders social domains as
economic at the risk of oversimplifying the understanding of problems and its solutions.
Second, I explained my understanding of the governmentality framework guiding this research
(Geiger & Pécoud, 2015; Larner & Walters, 2004; Lemke, 2001) to outline how governmental
aspirations for the welfare of populations operate (Foucault, 2008); this entails a change in
forms of government.

Third, I have also engaged with theories of the Pacific to provide a framework within which to
situate my cultural understanding of Ni-Vanuatu social relations. This provides more than
contextual information, as I also questioned the applicability of a poststructural framework to
the analysis that I am undertaking. Finally, I concluded with a brief review of the studies that
have been influential in the formulation of this research and outlined how my study contributes
in furthering the discussion regarding seasonal migration and development. Understanding
power as a relational concept, this research acknowledges the historical and political contexts
in which Ni-Vanuatu subjectivities are transformed in New Zealand and Vanuatu. Chapter 3
provides contextual information about the RSE policy and Vanuatu, before engaging in the
specifics of the analysis.
Chapter 3. Contextualising the RSE scheme

This chapter provides background information on the context within which the RSE scheme was formed. First, it discusses the context of the horticulture and viticulture sectors in need for temporary labour. Second, it explores the context in Vanuatu before and around the launch of the RSE scheme, as well as discussing some relevant historical, and economic characteristics of the country that facilitated the introduction of the scheme. Third, it focuses on the basic characteristics of the scheme, along with its future directions. In doing so, I draw attention to the associations between institutions and the practices of authority, mainly by employers and worker leaders to advance the arguments of this thesis argument about how individuals are connected to governmental aspirations.

The purpose of this chapter is to take the first step in illustrating how the management of the RSE requires the involvement of several formal and informal institutions as well as authority figures, and how the RSE has been perceived as an ideal solution by governments and employers alike. This frames the seasonal migration context for Ni-Vanuatu working in the RSE. This chapter identifies the multiple stakeholders, from government officials to villagers in Vanuatu, and the interests at play in the creation and the maintenance of the scheme, while at the same time exploring the regulations that operationalise the scheme and possibilities for its later expansion to other sectors.

3.1. Contextualising the RSE in New Zealand

The intention of this section is to provide the context for the introduction of the RSE scheme in New Zealand. First, I describe the horticulture and viticulture industries in New Zealand to acknowledge their significance for the national economy. In doing so, I expect to provide a glimpse of the scope of the contribution of Ni-Vanuatu labour to the horticulture and viticulture export industry. I then continue with a brief recounting of the historical context in New Zealand in relation to labour migration, which is not a new policy. In this regard, I identify some common characteristics that previous and current labour migration schemes share with the
RSE, concluding that the RSE scheme has explicitly incorporated development objectives for migration management, in tune with the migration and development narratives already discussed in Chapter 2.

3.1.1 The Horticulture and Viticulture Industries in New Zealand

One of the purposes behind the implementation of the RSE scheme by the New Zealand government has been to keep the horticulture and viticulture industries competitive in international markets. Since the 1980s the government has been removing subsidies, tax concessions and price supports in order to align with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). However, the horticulture and viticulture industries in other countries continue to receive subsidies, which is considered one of the reasons limiting industry growth and preventing industry competitiveness in international markets. The following sections describe how the horticulture and viticulture industries have evolved in the recent years since the inception of the RSE, before moving on to discuss labour migration to New Zealand and concluding with a brief account of New Zealand’s structural reform, specific to market deregulation and New Public Management (NPM).

3.1.1.1 Horticulture and Viticulture

When the RSE was introduced in 2007, it was conceived as a solution for labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture sectors. Both sectors lobbied for the implementation of the scheme through the Horticulture and Viticulture Seasonal Working Group Partnership formed in 2005 which led to the National Horticulture and Viticulture Season Labour Strategy (OECD, 2014b; SriRamaratnam, 2008) to request access to global labour (HortNZ, 2007a). The RSE policy was led by the industry (HortNZ, 2007b) to respond to specific labour demands (Ramasamy et al., 2008) and tight profit margins (Whatman & van Beek, 2008). By then, some companies were already using temporary migration policies in place to access labour from the

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30 In New Zealand, the viticulture sector, although part of the horticulture industry, is treated separately for accounting and regulatory purposes.
Pacific and were keenly aware of their needs to advocate for a tailored scheme (R. Bedford et al., 2017) and participate in its design as a sector initiative (Curtain et al., 2018).

At that time, there were industry complaints about significant losses in output and value added, among other issues, which reduced their ability to invest in and sustain their competitiveness. The New Zealand government promoted the RSE scheme as a way to meet seasonal labour requirements at times of intensive need requiring heavy physical work (Mannering, 2014) such as thinning, pruning and harvesting, and as a sustainable solution at the same time. Sustainability in this context is understood as the ability to maintain certain behaviour indefinitely to achieve sustainable economic growth, rather than as sustainable development.

Horticulture New Zealand, an industry association that represents commercial fruit and vegetable growers, pursued the introduction of a labour migration scheme. More recently they advocated for the latest increases in the RSE seasonal cap jointly with New Zealand Winegrowers (New Zealand Winegrowers, 2015). Both associations form part of the National Labour Governance Group that engages with relevant government departments on issues affecting the supply of labour in the horticultural sector. Representing over five thousand producers, Horticulture New Zealand has the goal of becoming a NZ$10 billion industry by 2020 (Mannering, 2014) and is behind the organisation of the annual RSE Conference in which the different stakeholders of the scheme discuss challenges and subsequent improvements to existing partnerships (HortNZ, 2011). Each year the conference has a different topic. The last one was untitled “Resilient Sustainable Ethical” following the acronym of the scheme.

In 2015, horticultural exports increased to a record NZ$4.3 billion, due to increases in productivity, new cultivars, and strong branding and marketing for fresh produce (Plant & Food Research, 2016). Wine and kiwifruit, which has export values in excess of NZ$1 billion, are the largest exports in the New Zealand horticultural sector by value (Plant & Food Research, 2016). According to Horticulture New Zealand, the horticulture sector is experiencing growth largely through exports; as approximately 60 percent of fresh fruit and vegetables are exported annually and horticultural exports grew 40 percent in the two years since June 2014 (Chapman, 2017a). In the pipfruit sector, in which all participants in this research were engaged, the RSE

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31 C. Bedford (2013) develops the systemic challenges of the industry.
32 Sustainable development encompasses living within the means of our natural systems and not jeopardising the potential for people in the future to meet their needs.
has been acknowledged as making a significant contribution, as fruit is now harvested at its optimal maturity.

Particularly in the Hawke’s Bay, where this research took place, confidence in the industry growth has increased, leading to investment. The integrated grower-packer-marketer businesses have opted for growing more apple varieties (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2016) and increasing their planted areas (Plant & Food Research, 2016). In 2011, it was estimated that around 25 percent of the workforce employed in Hawke’s Bay at peak periods were RSE workers (Collin, 2011). These workers are part of the international seasonal work migrants comprising 15 percent of the region’s seasonal labour requirements (Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, 2013). Importantly, the industry reliance on RSE workers has changed producer’s perceptions. For example, in light of growers’ recognition that the increasing global apple supply will drive prices down in the near future, one of the perceived threats to the pipfruit industry are the potential restrictions to the RSE scheme (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2016).

The export-oriented viticulture industry accounts for New Zealand’s largest horticultural export by value. Despite wine production contributing less than 1 percent of total world production, New Zealand wine was exported to over 80 countries at the time this research was designed (International Organisation of Vine and Wine, 2012). The industry achieved a production record in 2014, which was almost equalled in 2016. By 2016, New Zealand was the 8th largest wine exporter by value, climbing to 7th by 2017 and at the same time holding its ranking of 11th by volume (International Organisation of Vine and Wine, 2016a; International Organisation of Vine and Wine, 2016b), all indicative of an upward trend. Additionally, the industry in New Zealand has experienced a 22 percent increase in the value of its exports since 2009 and is one of the top three fastest growing wine industries in the world. Sales were estimated at around NZ$1.424 billion in 2015 (New Zealand Winegrowers, 2015).

The extent of viticulture employers’ participation in the RSE seems to be related to the size of the business in that the majority of employers have farms of less than 20 hectares. In 2014,

33 It is estimated that over 1,000 RSE workers are employed in Nelson at peak times (State Services Commission New Zealand, 2013). RSE workers comprise around 25 percent of the apple workforce (Mannering, 2014) and 20 percent of the kiwifruit workforce (Board, 2015).
34 By value, New Zealand wine is exported mainly to Australia, the USA, and the United Kingdom (New Zealand Winegrowers, 2013).
35 The acceptance of the RSE is associated with a growth of the industry as hectares of productive vineyards have increased over 58 percent and total exports from $698,303 in 2006 to $1.6 billion (New Zealand Wine, 2017).
when most the fieldwork for this study was carried out, there were 148 employers registered with the RSE scheme (INZ, 2014b). In 2011, the number of RSE employers was equivalent to 11 percent of the total number farms over 20 hectares in size. Over 10 percent of the large companies recruiting for the RSE recruit more than 500 workers each, and one alone accounted for 12.5 percent of the total number of workers recruited over the 2007–2011 period (C. Bedford, 2013). RSE employers represent a small share of national horticulture and viticulture operations. The size of orchards and farms that recruit using the RSE varies, ranging from family businesses to large scale agroindustrial export companies. However, over a third of employers recruit less than 20 workers each (Mannering, 2016).

Government officials and other stakeholders argue that the initial uptake of the RSE scheme was favoured by the context of New Zealand’s labour force shortages and low unemployment rate, the considerable efforts of the industry to include local communities (HortNZ, 2007a; HortNZ, 2007b) and industry interest (HortNZ, 2007c), alongside an increased concern about illegal workforce scams in the horticulture and viticulture sectors. Before the RSE was implemented, trafficking of foreign workers in the industry was an “open secret” (Coppedge, 2006; Courtney, 2008; Lovelock & Leopold, 2008; Sharpe, 2010) mostly affecting the largest growing areas.36 Although the general perception of RSE employers and the New Zealand government is that this situation has improved, it is important to acknowledge that RSE employers are not the majority of growers and contractors in the horticulture and viticulture sectors and some already had Pacific employees as part of their staff” (R. Bedford et al., 2017). Additionally, recent research continues to draw attention to exploitative recruitment and employment practices in the agricultural sector (Stringer, 2016).

3.1.1.2. The Hawke’s Bay region

Hawke’s Bay, jointly with Nelson, is New Zealand’s main pipfruit growing areas as well as one of the major grape producing areas, together with Marlborough (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Hawke’s Bay is located in the North Island (see Figure 1) and it is the oldest wine region with beginnings in 1851 (Hawke's Bay Wine, 2017). Vineyards in Hawke’s Bay are concentrated in 1,500 kms² around the cities of Hastings and Napier, though their expansion continues to a larger area of 8,400 kms² to their North and South. Hawke’s Bay is considered

36 In 2002, it was estimated that approximately 17,000 individuals were working illegally in the sector (C. Bedford, 2013).
the second largest wine growing region in New Zealand and the region most active in exporting wine to China, thus supplying a growing demand in an expanding market (Q. Li, 2013).

Figure 1: Map of New Zealand and Hawke’s Bay
Source: Encarta Encyclopedia Plus (2009)

The region’s wine industry has experienced rapid growth over the past decades. The 30 percent increase in horticulture and viticulture exports from the Hawke’s Bay between the 2000–2004 seasons is attributed to the hire of labour contractors (Beer & Lewis, 2006), whose poor and illegal business practices were highly publicised in national media. 37 Because of its horticultural sector, Hawke’s Bay is known as the country’s “Fruit Bowl” – though the reach of horticultural and viticultural products transcends national borders through the export industry, with an increasing demand from Asian markets (Mannering, 2013). To remain competitive producers need to minimise the costs of meeting international quality standards and guarantee productivity (Mannering, 2014), reasons for the industry advocacy for the introduction and continuation of the RSE.

37 This media release from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (2010) uses a Hawke’s Bay case as an example of the consequences of such dealings.
The horticultural sector remains labour intensive. Despite large technological advances in agribusinesses, waged labour has been the norm in medium sized and large scale horticultural industries in the area since its beginnings (Mikic, 2004). Since the 1940s, when most companies were family businesses, Hawke’s Bay had fewer but larger companies compared to other New Zealand regions. Companies in this area are oriented to specialisation and large-scale production and use distribution channels for sales. Some companies externalise risks by using non-wage contract farming (Workman, 1993). Over 80 percent of jobs in the horticulture sector are short-term and related to specific tasks due to the seasonality of crops, which provides the basis for the RSE scheme. The types of produce harvested and exported with the help of the RSE scheme include pipfruit, stonefruit, and citrus. This creates a particular dynamic in the regions where the RSE is in place, based on labour needs at determined times in the agricultural cycle.

Overton and Murray (2013) are critical of certain practices in the New Zealand wine industry, arguing that wine consumption and production contribute to a process of class formation. They note that the evolving relationship between class and capital is contributing to a form of “bourgeoisisation” of the countryside. They claim that sector practices such as workers being lodged inside the premises of the companies they work for and having sporadic or no contact with the local communities, especially if they live in isolated rural areas, results in a “sanitised” wine landscape, where worker households are far removed from their countries of origin. Migrant workers are only visible when they are working and not at other moments when they are off-work, a situation exacerbated when workers are housed together, but separately from local communities, or do not have access to transportation as the lack of public transport in rural areas restricts workers’ possibilities of engaging with the communities in the areas they work.

Conversely, Bailey notes in her study in Central Otago that the relatively large number of seasonal migrants is changing the landscape of the vineyards. She sees seasonal migrant workers as a necessity for viticulture production, although they are considered a non-primary labour force because they represent only 13 percent of the overall workforce in the region (Bailey, 2014a). Because of the distance, between the romantic portrayal of living in the vineyards promoted to tourists and potential vineyard buyers (Bailey, 2014a; Howland, 2014), and the reality of seasonal labour needs, during the first years of the RSE scheme it was important to introduce the newcomers to their receiving communities. The industry efforts in socialising the scheme through roadshows (HortNZ, 2007a; HortNZ, 2007b) and other
activities were assisted by local media (C. Smith, 2008).\(^{38}\) To further understand the foundations of the RSE, the next section describes the contemporary history of labour migration to New Zealand, which encompasses distinct types of arrangements and temporary visas for Pacific Island people participating in schemes that co-exist with the RSE.

3.1.2 Labour Migration to New Zealand

This section focuses on the last half century, during which time temporary work schemes were introduced between New Zealand and Pacific Island countries. These original schemes influenced the design of the RSE and the preferential status given to Pacific workers (C. Bedford, 2013; Lovelock & Leopold, 2008). For accounts of historical Pacific labour migration in the 19th century, as precursors of the RSE, see C. Bedford (2013) and Taneka (2013). Both theses review labour migration in the region from different perspectives. Taneka (2013) traces the history of migration to New Zealand since the early European settlers, covering the time of assisted migration to identify issues of selectiveness and preference for a particular type of European, and also the time around the economic depression in which she argues migrants acted as “a classic employment buffer” (2013: 48). C. Bedford (2013) focuses instead on the management of migration schemes. This research draws attention to the power dynamics involved in the formation of New Zealand as a nation state.

Temporary work schemes between the Pacific countries and New Zealand started in the 1960s, though labour market participation existed at different stages in the last two centuries (Hugo & Bedford, 2013). Such schemes are primarily based on the need for workers in New Zealand and the freedom of entry that some countries have as part of New Zealand’s decolonisation processes (Hugo & Bedford, 2017). In 1964 a quota for short-time work permits was given to Samoans on visitor permits, which was later called the “Samoan Quota”. By 1967 the Temporary Employment Certificate (TEC) for Fiji was introduced to regulate the flow of people seeking employment, in line with a migration management rationale that migration needs to be managed to prevent undesired outcomes. The TEC was suspended in 1969 because

\(^{38}\) In this regard, Prochazkova (2012) provides an interesting summary of the variety of community perceptions regarding Ni-Vanuatu workers in Nelson and the treatment they received from the media as reported by the participants in her study with different visa holders working in the Marlborough vines.
of increasing unemployment and an economic downturn in New Zealand (Māhina-Tuai, 2012). However, soon after TEC’s suspension the first work permit scheme was introduced to regulate migration: the Fiji Rural Work Permit Scheme (FRWPS). This scheme allowed Fijians to work in agriculture and later in halal slaughtering. A similarity between this scheme and the RSE is the requirement of “satisfactory” accommodation to be provided for workers. Later, these schemes will grant visas for working in the then booming manufacturing sector.

The FRWPS assumed the return of the workers to their countries of origin, however this was loosely enforced, and “tolerated by successive governments and encouraged by employers for as long as the excess labour demand continued” (Anae, 2012: 223). The first work permit scheme allowed workers to stay for only four months to ensure their return home afterwards. In 1971 small urban work permit schemes were introduced for Tongans for up to six months so they could recoup their higher mobility costs of travelling to New Zealand (Levick & Bedford, 1988; Levick, 1988). In the mid-1970s the Fiji Urban Work Permit Scheme (FUWPS) was introduced, as well as work permit schemes for Samoans (De Bres, Campbell, & Harris, 1974). The existing disregard for overstaying during economic post-war prosperity times was later replaced with government initiatives to enforce immigration legislation that allowed the deportation of people overstaying their work permits at times of economic downturn, when their labour was no longer required and unemployment increased. Pacific overstayers were the main targets of the infamous Dawn Raids39 which profiled and racialised anyone who looked like an illegal migrant, specifically people with Polynesian features (Sinclair & Dalziel, 2000), conflating appearance with “illegality”.

In 1977 the South Pacific Work Permit Scheme (SPWPS) was created to regulate the flow of Fijians, Samoans, and Tongans. The government of New Zealand later extended the agreement to Tuvalu and Kiribati. While numbers fluctuated, an average of 450 permits per year was granted in the early 1980s (Levick, 1988). At that time, Samoa already had access to the Samoan Quota (INZ, 2015b) for permanent residence and thus did not use the SPWPS (Levick & Bedford, 1988; Macpherson, 1981). These state initiatives, as well as the Pacific Islands Industrial Development Scheme (PIIDS), were intended to regulate and formalise the movement of workers and illustrate a relationship between temporary migration and

39The raids were conducted by New Zealand Police, who jointly with the immigration officers, victimised Pacific Islanders with intimidation and aggressive tactics in their homes during the early morning hours as well as in the streets, when they were asked to produce documents to substantiate their legal presence in the country.
development initiatives in the region (Lovelock & Leopold, 2008). The SPWPS programme’s arrangements with Fiji ended in 1987 following the coup d’état, and with Tonga and Samoa in 1991. By 2001, the programme had been terminated, mainly due to Tuvaluans and I-Kiribati overstaying (C. Bedford, Bedford, & Ho, 2010). Hayes (2010) considers the SPWPS as somewhat of a precursor of the RSE, because the responsibilities of employers and of the sending and receiving governments were specified in formal agreements.

Nowadays, the RSE coexists with other New Zealand migration schemes that target Pacific Islanders on a regular basis, some of which grant residence in New Zealand (R. Bedford, 2005). For example, the Pacific Access Category (PAC) in place since 2002 (INZ, 2016e) selects, via a lottery, a predetermined number of people from Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Tonga to permanently migrate to New Zealand. Likewise, Samoan citizens can access the Samoan Quota scheme, which uses a ballot system providing residence class visas to New Zealand for up to 1,100 Samoans yearly (INZ, 2015b). Of the five kick-start states that first initiated the RSE, only Vanuatu lacked an institutionalised migration programme when the scheme started (Ramasamy et al., 2008). This highlights the relevance of focusing on the changes and new kinds of subjectivities created after the implementation of the RSE scheme in a country from which migration before the scheme was negligible.

This section has shown that several other schemes involving Pacific peoples co-exist with the RSE, and are based on a long history of managed migration aimed at regulating migratory flows. Some of them are evident precursors of the RSE scheme, as their provision of limited visas, requirement for employers to provide accommodation for workers, and international cooperation agreements are features that have been incorporated into the RSE. For that reason, researchers do not consider the RSE as a new approach to temporary labour migration in the Pacific, but rather a continuation of the use of Pacific temporary labour (C. Bedford et al., 2010; C. Bedford, 2013; Hayes, 2010). This research draws attention to the coupling of migration management purposes with so-called development objectives in the participant countries.

40 The New Zealand government included Fiji’s participation in the scheme in the package of sanctions, though the programme was already losing favour amongst policy makers (Levick & Bedford, 1988).
41 The eligibility for ballots was suspended after the 2006 military coup (R. Bedford & Hugo, 2008).
42 See Gibson, McKenzie, Rohorua & Stillman (2016) for a recent evaluation of this programme, which identifies that the PAC has affected economic beliefs, preferences and efficiency in decision making along with changes in economic institutions.
43 See Barker (2010) for details on other temporary migration schemes that are not extended to Pacific islanders.
3.2. Contextualising the RSE in Vanuatu

Vanuatu is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) located in the South Pacific, roughly 2000 km NE (1903 km) of Australia and NW from New Zealand (2210 km). Geographically, Vanuatu is a Y-shaped archipelago of 83 islands. It is considered one of the most diverse nations worldwide in terms of the number of indigenous languages per capita (Crowley, 2000), which speaks to both linguistic and cultural diversity. Vanuatu has also a long history of a rich oral cultural tradition. There are three official languages in the country: French, English, and Bislama, which is a creole language based in English. Bislama derives from “bêche de mer” as it is thought to have started as product of sea slug trade and later used to bridge the linguistic differences during the times of labour recruitment (Crowley, 2000). The New Hebrides, as Vanuatu was known before its independence, was colonised by France and England, and an arrangement known as the Anglo-French Condominium was formed in 1906. Vanuatu gained its independence in 1980 after the formation of a nationalist movement.

Figure 2: Maps of Vanuatu and New Zealand
Source: Encarta Encyclopedia Plus (2009)
Vanuatu has approximately 272,500 inhabitants (VNSO, 2017). According to the last census, about 75 percent of the population live in rural areas, mostly in villages where they rely on traditional methods of resource utilisation managed under customary law. This traditional economy encompasses the political, economic and social foundations of Vanuatu’s contemporary society determining how resources are shared and the values which maintain this economy (Regenvanu, 2010). The urban population also mobilise their kinship networks to access resources such as food, labour, and care, traditionally within the realm of extended kin and family networks, while also relying on subsistence gardening to provide daily food. Paid labour is often limited to the capital Port Vila and to the urban centre of Luganville in Santo. Revenues are mainly from activities associated with tourism, as tourism services contribute around 80 percent to Vanuatu’s exports (Vanuatu Government, 2012).

As presented in Chapter 2, with the end of the labour trading for Australia and Fiji sugar plantations and the later recruitment for whaling and the extraction of rare commodities in the late 1800s, Vanuatu had practically abandoned international migration in the 20th century and migration was negligible in the early 2000s (VNSO, 2011). Before the RSE, Vanuatu did not have any formal “migration outlet” (R. Bedford & Hugo, 2008; Ramasamy et al., 2008) and migration was carried out similarly as it had been done for generations.44 The introduction of the RSE scheme, thus required some adjustments. The most common coping mechanisms for RSE households in Vanuatu in dealing with absent family members is to seek help from neighbours or friends, stop some activities such as subsistence gardening and studying, and change household composition to accommodate looking after children (Rohorua, Gibson, McKenzie, & Garcia Martinez, 2009). Commonly, spouses and children move in with their parents or, if it happens that both parents depart for New Zealand, children move in with grandparents or other relatives.

It is commonly acknowledged that the RSE scheme, as well as being a response to lobbying by the horticulture and viticulture sectors in New Zealand (SriRamaratnam, 2008), was responding to a call from Pacific Island Forum (PIF) countries. PIF countries were advocating for increased labour opportunities in the New Zealand market, which could provide income to spur development in the Pacific Islands (R. Bedford & Hugo, 2008; PCF, 2013). Slatter argues that the PIF “has played a key role in regional economic restructuring, functioning as a channel for

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the diffusion of neo-liberal economic ideas and thinking among Pacific Island leaders” (2006: 27).

The prevalent mainstream understanding of development in the Pacific as material advancement in life styles is grounded in modernisation theory and assumes that these material benefits are derived from economic growth (Sillitoe, 2000). Alongside this comprehension of peoples’ needs, notions of “aid” from developed countries have strongly influenced development policies. Within this logic, the involvement of Ni-Vanuatu from different islands in the RSE, as a form of overseas employment, is seen as essential for local development, understood in relation to material prosperity. When the RSE was being designed in preparatory discussions prior to its implementation, policy makers from New Zealand and Pacific countries gathered in a Pacific Cooperation Foundation45 Forum to discuss overseas employment as a solution to unstable and weak governance, public sector inefficiencies, and the high aid dependency of Pacific countries. Aligned with a neoliberal approach, widening the reach of labour opportunities is seen as a solution for public sector deficits which are behind the trend towards the downsizing of aid. Plimmer (2006) compiled the most relevant presentations during that forum, which will be object of analysis in the following chapters.

In terms of international economic relations, access to Australian and New Zealand labour markets of unskilled workers has historically been one of the central topics of interest for Forum Island Countries (FICs) in regional trade talks under PICTA (Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement), PACER46 (Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations) and PACER Plus (Hugo & Bedford, 2017; Maclellan & Mares, 2006). The long negotiations towards the signature of PACER Plus had commitments on labour mobility and development assistance as important inclusion points from FICs. Both issues have been contentious as non-legally binding commitments were undertaken to benefit Pacific countries while, at the same time, Australia and New Zealand developed their counterproposals based on not legally enforceable best endeavour provisions. It has been argued that Australia and New Zealand did not want to create a precedent for other free trade agreements, so labour mobility was excluded from the PACER Plus (Wallis & Powles, 2018). This evidences the power differentials in trade negotiations, and the willingness to protect developed countries’ economic interests and maintain their

45 The Pacific Cooperation Foundation is an independent partnership between public and private sectors in New Zealand and other Pacific Island countries. It is funded by New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).
46 The PACER is operational since 2002 when seven members of the PIF ratified it.
sovereignty in a key area of international agreement, while at the same time PIF countries are requested to maintain their bound commitments on trade in goods and services (Kelsey, 2004). There is “a certain degree of consensus about the social and political world of migration being constituted by power relations that connect sending and receiving countries and areas” (Truong, Gasper, & Handmaker, 2013: 6). The next section outlines some of these relations alongside the basic features of the RSE scheme, how it was designed and its future development.

3.3. The RSE origins and future

This section presents how the RSE was operationalised, including important features that will later be part of the analysis undertaken. I draw attention to the lack of focus on workers as individuals but rather as a numeric workforce, and how this is connected to practices that are part and parcel of the scheme. Some of these practices in relation to civil liberties and labour rights, among others, remain absent from a regulatory standpoint and from the RSE scheme’s own regulatory framework that allows for discretionality on the part of authority figures such as government officials. This section explains some of the most important relations between stakeholders from the World Bank, as the main international organisation that supported the design of the scheme, and the governments of Vanuatu and New Zealand. I conclude this section by presenting the new directions that have been envisioned for the RSE scheme in the coming years, and briefly mention pilot studies carried out to further its expansion to other sectors, such as dairying, construction, and fisheries.

3.3.1 The Operationalisation of the RSE

The World Bank supported the Seasonal Solutions Central Otago (SSCO) pilot programme (King, 2015; Maclellan, 2008) involving 45 Ni-Vanuatu workers recruited under the approval-in-principle (AIP) process (McKenzie, Garcia Martinez, & Winters, 2008). The AIP was managed by Immigration New Zealand (INZ) and already available as an option for recruiting
foreign workers since 2004 (INZ, 2016a). Employers who proved that their labour needs could not be met locally could sponsor foreign workers, conditional to meeting INZ conditions. This pilot encouraged and consolidated the ties “that led to Vanuatu ultimately being the largest participant in the scheme” (Gibson & McKenzie, 2014: 5). To date, over 75,000 visas have been granted under the RSE scheme, over three-quarters to Pacific Islanders, mainly from Vanuatu, Tonga, and Samoa (INZ, 2017).

The largest number of visas to date has been granted to workers from Vanuatu. Although the RSE migration from Pacific Island countries appears to be small scale in terms of numbers, it is important to consider the number of migrants as a percentage of the total population, because this has implications for the burdens faced by the ones staying in Vanuatu who may face the negative consequences of families being separated (Bailey, Bumseng, & Bumseng, 2016; Clear Horizon, 2016). The national figures show that 83 percent of participants are male and only 17 percent are female (VNSO, 2017). Most women participants are between 30 to 39 years old, while most men are between 20 to 29 (R. Bedford, 2018). Table 1 below illustrates the number of visas granted in the first decade of the scheme, compared to the total estimated population of the five kick-start countries.

Table 1: RSE visas granted (2007-2017) and Estimated Population of kick-start countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vanuatu</th>
<th>Tonga</th>
<th>Samoa</th>
<th>Kiribati</th>
<th>Tuvalu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated population (mid 2016)</td>
<td>289,700</td>
<td>100,600</td>
<td>194,000</td>
<td>109,693</td>
<td>10,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Immigration New Zealand (2017) and Prism Pacific Islands Population (Pacific Community, 2016)

Initially, five Pacific countries were selected to kick-start the scheme: Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, and Tuvalu. Fiji was also initially considered, but after the military coup it was removed as part of the sanctions against the regime (Ramasamy et al., 2008). Later on, the

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47 The creation of the AIP was also supported by the industry (Hampshire, 2015). Other earlier initiatives to address issues of labour supply in the sectors include the Pure Business Project in 2004 carried out in Hawke’s Bay (C. Bedford, 2013).
48 The number of visas is based on statistics collected by New Zealand Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (INZ, 2017) and reflects RSE mobility. However, a worker returning every year is counted several times in the total number of visas. For example, approximately 13,900 workers had participated in the first four RSE seasons while the number of visas was around 24,600 (HortNZ, 2012).
scheme was extended to nationals from other countries in the Pacific region, such as the Solomon Islands (2010) and Fiji (2014). Papua New Guinea nationals were working in the RSE scheme without a bilateral commitment until 2013, when an Interagency Understanding between Papua New Guinea and New Zealand was signed. RSE workers outside of the Pacific are mainly from Asian countries. Most recently Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia originally eligible for the RSE (Connell, 2015) have been incorporated in the scheme. Non-Pacific workers represent approximately 20 percent of the total number of RSE participants to date. It has been argued that if East Asian governments were to respond to lobby groups within the industry “that have little investment in the aid dimensions of the scheme” (Morrison, 2011: 133), Pacific workers could be replaced by workers from East Asia.

Management of the RSE is based on formal bi-lateral agreements between governments which outline the conditions under which the scheme operates. These inter-agency understandings emphasise restrictions for workers from abroad. Similarly, there is a strong focus on obligations, the importance of compliance, and work ethic in pre-departure briefings (MFAT, 2007). Pre-departure trainings are mandatory sessions for all participant workers and worker leaders covering the basics of the RSE, including characteristics of the job and behavioural recommendations provided in the span of two hours. Around this time workers carry out the paper work associated with having their visa processed. While they prepare to return to New Zealand they may be hosted by members of their extended family in Port Vila. In Vanuatu, the Employment Services Unit (ESU) tries to accommodate these briefings as much as possible to workers’ departure time frames. Most of the time these sessions are carried out just a few days before the planned departure date. Sometimes, workers who do not live in Port Vila, travel from their islands to attend the trainings and then return to their island, which can result in additional personal costs and become an additional expense for the family members in town who have to accommodate them.

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49 Nationals from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam comprise the majority of non-Pacific RSE workers.

50 Note that besides the official briefings, workers can also receive information at other stages and from different parties. One pre-departure training I attended was combined with a training on sexually transmitted diseases. Contrary to their behaviour during the RSE briefing, the same silent individuals engaged in direct questions with the facilitator.

51 This happened in one of the companies I worked with. The company hires two different groups of workers on different dates but provides the orientation before the first group departs. At least three interviewees were planning to return to their home islands before departing to New Zealand.

52 Workers may have to provide up to NZ$ 2,000 to comply with administrative requirements of the application including immigration documents, medical insurance, domestic travel, and international airfares, among other associated expenses (Bailey, 2014b; Jolly, Lee, Lepani, Naupa, & Rooney, 2015; Rockell, 2015).
The RSE scheme is loosely modelled on a similar Canadian seasonal migration programme, the Canada Seasonal Agricultural Work (CSWAP) (J. Hammond & Connell, 2009; Plimmer, 2006; World Bank, 2006a) which began over five decades ago.\(^53\) Before the RSE was designed the CSWAP had received mixed reviews. From the point of view of the World Bank, it was then considered a promising but unproven policy for young people (World Bank, 2006b), though at the same time its longevity was perceived as evidence of its success. Nonetheless, Canadian unions and academic researchers had raised issues such as the vulnerability of workers in the farming industry.\(^54\)

It is argued that the design of temporary migration schemes has been “almost wholly based on a priori reasoning or casual empiricism. There is almost no formal empirical evidence about what works in temporary migration schemes or why it works” (McKenzie et al., 2008: 205). The RSE design aimed to distance from such models by using an empirically based approach. The main aspects of the RSE scheme are (IMSED Research, 2010; INZ, 2014c):

- **Employer recognition** – employers need to apply for RSE status, which involves qualifying as a “good employer”. Attributes needed to qualify are financial viability, high standard human resource policies and workplace practices, capacity to provide “suitable” accommodation for workers, and compliance with employment laws. Once employers achieve RSE status, they may apply for an Agreement to Recruit (ATR) specifying the number of overseas workers needed, location, time-frame, and tasks.

- **New Zealanders first** – Employers have to demonstrate they have made sensible efforts to recruit New Zealanders before recruiting resident or foreign workers. The number of workers approved in ATRs is subject to the availability of national workers.

- **Employer driven** – The employers select who to employ as well as who to re-employ in successive seasons, depending on their own criteria. They usually based this selection on workers’ behaviour.

- **Short-term migration** – RSE participants are granted a limited purpose visa for the duration of work established in their employer’s ATR. The limited visas\(^55\) match the worker with the employer and workers are not able to change employers while in New Zealand unless

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\(^{53}\) See section 5.3. for details on how the 4Cs, part of the strict criteria used in the CSAWP (Plimmer, 2006), have been replicated in the RSE.

\(^{54}\) See Basok (2002) and Binford (2013) for ethnographic studies on Mexican seasonal migrants in the CSWAP.

\(^{55}\) RSE participants were initially granted a work permit, but in August 2007, it was changed to a limited purpose entry visa to prevent workers from trying to extend their stay (IMSED Research, 2010).
they have been recruited by a joint ATR\textsuperscript{56}. Visas are valid for a maximum of seven months of an eleven-month period. Periods may encompass two calendar years according to the agricultural season, which starts in July and finishes in June of the next calendar year. Kiribati and Tuvalu are exceptions to the case. Nationals from these countries are allowed to stay up to nine months because of the additional travel costs involved.

- **Circular migration** – The scheme promotes the return of workers to benefit employers from productivity gains derived from training and experience in previous seasons. To be able to travel to New Zealand workers should have an offer of employment and meet immigration requirements, such as good character, health (testing negative for TBC and HIV/AIDS), and meeting acceptance criteria for medical insurance for the first and subsequent times, to be granted a visa.

- **Pastoral care** – The employer is responsible for guidance and support of workers in different situations they may find themselves. This could be done in house or by the hiring of a third party. Pastoral care workers are often in charge of coordinating transportation (to and from the port of arrival and departure and worksite), providing suitable accommodation and onsite facilities, access to personal banking, and personal protective equipment. In addition to logistical support they also deal with grievances that may arise and have to provide language translation when needed.

The launch of RSE was followed by the Transitional Recognised Seasonal Employer (TRSE), which aimed to provide an opportunity for potential employers – including contractors – to shift to RSE status over a two-year period. Thus, allowing additional time to meet the conditions to become RSE employers. The TRSE was in place from November 2007 until November 2009 (R. Bedford, 2008a) when it was replaced by the Supplementary Seasonal Employment (SSE) policy effective since July 2009 (van Beek, 2009).

Since the inception of the RSE scheme, the majority of workers from Vanuatu have been brought to New Zealand by private agents in Vanuatu, involved in workforce recruitment.

\textsuperscript{56} Because ATRs connect a worker to a specific employer, they were initially considered to prevent turnover (Chapman & Pretorius, 2008). In 2007, joint ATRs were established for employers to share the overall cost of workers and to allocate workers’ time more efficiently according to different seasonal needs (van Beek, 2007; van Beek, 2008). Its use has been increasing in the latest seasons (Tipples & Rawlinson, 2014) and it is common for many workers to have joint ATRs with different types of work in the North and South islands (Rockell, 2015). In 2015, already a third of employers used joint ATRs (Woodhouse, 2015) which has raised concerns about the social costs for workers (Hampshire, 2015) while savings for employers increase.
However, in the first year of the RSE, work-ready pools of workers were also used, including workers from urban areas who registered directly in the Employment Service Unit (ESU) in Vanuatu (Gibson & McKenzie, 2010). Agents liaise and contract directly with employers after obtaining a license from the Commissioner of Labour and are not allowed to operate without a permit supervised by the ESU. These recruiters help potential workers with the visa applications. Visa applications are usually revised by recruiters and later pre-vetted by the New Zealand Visa Application Centre. On the one hand, recruiters are facilitators for workers who want to improve their chances of selection and on the other they serve management purposes when pre-screening applications.

Being the first contact for potential workers, unauthorised agents have often taken advantage of applicants, ultimately resulting in economic loses for potential participants. The Vanuatu government, aware of these situations, monitors compliance with the Seasonal Employment Act of 2007, through the Labour Inspectorate Division of the ESU in Vanuatu, and is entitled to suspend agents who are at fault. The ESU provides a telephone information service to confirm the licencing of agents and has the authority to initiate prosecutions against agents reported to have collected fees for their services. However, ESU’s limited capacity to reach workers in New Zealand and the lack of formal complaints make this very difficult. Similarly, the designation of an honorary consul to act as mediator in employment disputes in New Zealand was not functioning properly at the time of this research.

Rockell (2015) argues that recruitment is mostly carried out by employers and not agents or churches. Most employers have moved to direct “community-based” recruitment, which poses a challenge for providing equal opportunities to potential new workers as employers tend to return to the same communities (Clear Horizon, 2016). Often employers appoint a team leader to be in charge of overseeing the recruitment. Though not directly involved in recruitment, the ESU also remains instrumental in the application process. All these different relationships unfold particular dynamics and power relations. The recruitment of seasonal workers is also co-ordinated in communities and villages by workers’ leaders, chiefs and church leaders.

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57 Though the latter is part of the process of obtaining a visa, this research will not include the Visa Application Centre, as this research is intentionally situated at the margins of private sector interventions in the scheme. In the same vein, interviews with recruiters or employers are not part of this research. Further reasons for these decisions will be explained in Chapter 4.
58 Recruiters are not supposed to charge fees for their services, as these fees are expected to be covered by the employers in New Zealand who are interested in hiring from Vanuatu.
59 Until I finished my field research the designee was not remunerated, thus lacked resources and time to address workers’ concerns.
(McKenzie et al., 2008), with the effect of boundaries between government, community, and individual responsibilities becoming blurred as it will be developed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

Workers are always grouped under the supervision of a team leader, who will be in charge of resolving day to day issues and also liaising with the employers, if required. In some companies with large numbers of RSE workers, several leaders can be in charge of the same group. These team leaders can be selected by the ESU, by workers themselves, or by employers based on personal qualities they consider necessary for a leadership role. In this research employers selected various leaders per company. Leader selection can be a source of contention as complexities emerge depending on the leader’s behaviour (Bailey, 2014b; Rockell, 2015).

Among workers and their communities, there is also strong social pressure not to threaten the continuation of the scheme and diminish future possibilities for others (Gibson & McKenzie, 2008). Discipline, good behaviour, and work ethic are treated as tools to achieve competitive advantage over other participant countries, since it is assumed that employers can change their preference for one country to another. Sending countries are acutely aware of demonstrating their workers as dependable and reliable. “This occurs both at the source country level, and at the village level within countries” (Gibson & McKenzie, 2014: 10).

The emphasis on the development aspect of the scheme promoted the inclusion of complementary training programmes for RSE stakeholders under two initiatives: Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP), and the Vakameasina programme. The SPP is funded by New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) through the New Zealand Aid Programme (NZAid) and focuses on supporting Pacific states to strengthen management capacities within the RSE scheme in the areas of information management, knowledge, processes, communications, and marketing. A third initiative related to the management of remittances has also been piloted for workers from Samoa and Tonga, with the aim of providing “baseline evidence on economic benefits of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) policy and its role in assisting development in RSE sending states” (MBIE, 2014; MBIE, 2015a). This initiative is jointly funded by the MFAT and the Ministry of

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60 For an example of community recruitment in Vanuatu, see the Lolihor Development Council case in Maclellan (2008).
61 The programme is named in Samoan, after vaka (canoe) and measina (treasures of learning).
Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) in the expectation it will provide evidence on the scope of remittances.

While the SPP is heavily inclined towards government officials, the *Vakameasina* Learning for Pacific Growth is intended to “enhance the development gains” from RSE for workers (OECD, 2011). It focuses on the workers’ English literacy, financial literacy, and numeracy, alongside additional topics according to workers’ requests. Workers attend these sessions after their regular working hours (J. Taylor & Scarrow, 2010). Despite the programme being available, worker participation depends on the employer request for the training, and facilitators’ and workers’ availability. After long working days, particularly in summer time, it can be difficult for workers to attend the scheduled sessions because they are tired and/or lack funds for transportation, among other reasons.

Vanuatu government officials, assisted by the SPP, developed the Work Ready Vanuatu website in 2012 to assist employers in the recruitment of national workers. It has been revamped in the last year. The productivity of workers and skills acquired in previous seasons are marketed as advantages for repeat employers. Other worker characteristics highlighted in the website are work attitudes, willingness to work hard, physical capacities, flexibility in performing a variety of tasks reliably, communal spirit, having good communication skills, and willingness to learn new tasks and master them quickly (ESU, 2014b). This initiative clearly defines quality standards required, which could influence worker recruitment and promote more rigorous controls over worker behaviours abroad. The Vanuatu government is among the kick-start countries that have placed stronger emphasis on limiting or policing their citizens’ behaviour when abroad. The government has created a “Stand Down” list on which workers who commit offenses while participating in the RSE scheme are placed and “banned” from participating in seasonal programmes – in New Zealand and Australia – for five years or indefinitely, depending on the offense (ESU, 2014b). If discovered, the punishment is directed towards individuals and does not necessarily involve entire villages as it happens in Samoa or Fiji (Arbon, 2017; B. Clark, 2013; Doyle, 2013; Hardie, 2017; Tuilaepa-Taylor & Moera, 2013). Other participant countries also have vetting procedures (Chambers & Chambers, 2018).

The links between migration and development have not previously been systematically explored for any other migration scheme in New Zealand, as is now being carried out for the
RSE. RSE monitoring includes key performance indicators for capacity building, production and productivity, and economic contributions (MFAT, 2014). Remittances have been substantial to the Vanuatu economy and have increased since the beginning of the programme. According to the Trade Policy Framework of the Vanuatu Government (Vanuatu Government, 2012: 12) “RSE remittances grew from Vt 106 million in 2007 to Vt 828 million in 2011”. Remittances from the first five years involving 11,000 RSE workers, and estimated at Vt. 3.8 billion, are considered second only to tourism in Vanuatu as a source of income (Marango, 2012). In New Zealand, it is considered that RSE workers “contribute more than $40 million per annum to the Pacific” (Woodhouse, 2017b). However, it is important to note the lower incidence of remitting by Ni-Vanuatu compared to Samoans or Tongans (R. Bedford & C. Bedford, 2017).

Although income has increased, the participation of Ni-Vanuatu in the RSE scheme has not been exempt from tensions between primary commitments to family and island, understood as an extended family. There are also a variety of claims on the RSE income, including from chiefs, churches and congregations, and social groups such as island-based networks that are sustained with these earnings (Bailey, 2013). As RSE incomes have also funded a number of weddings, new obligations to contribute to kastom ceremonies have been created in return. These kinds of outcomes reveal the complexity of workers’ social relations, which transcend purely economic outcomes, and so require research other than that based on quantitative methodologies and analysis. The next section develops the directions that the RSE expects to undertake and the future engagements with specific sectors and countries.

3.3.2 The RSE, business as usual?

Following the launch of the RSE, the management of the complex interrelations among its stakeholders has prevented the scheme from becoming “business as usual” (R. Bedford et al.,

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62 Burke’s Review of Immigration policy (1986) justifies the expansion of the SPWPS to Kiribati and Tuvalu because of their limited developmental and employment prospects and on the basis of New Zealand’s “special responsibility to assist with their development efforts” (para. 4.4.2). However, development links were not explicitly assessed.

63 One hundred Vatu (Vt.) was approximately 1.33 NZ$ at the time of this study.

64 An example from the Lolihor Development Council in North Ambrym showcases how the development of community infrastructure with remittances was prioritised instead of waiting for an intervention from the central government (Maclellan, 2008).
In the previous section I outlined the main policy features such as employer recognition, New Zealanders first, employer driven, short-term migration, circularity, and pastoral care. Since its pilot in 2006, and after gaining public and private sector recognition, the RSE has been functioning in several regions in New Zealand. Though some practical issues have been adjusted since the first season, the core of the policy has not been modified or changed (Tipple & Rawlinson, 2014). This section points to where the scheme will be heading in the next years.

This section briefly describes how the scheme is currently accepted as the new normal. Practices derived from the RSE policy – even the ones that may be questionable from a human rights, labour rights, or civil liberties perspective – such as the alcohol ban, restrictions on mobility and interpersonal relations, and blacklisting – have been normalised through discourses of management, control, and discipline. These discourses are telling regarding the historical context of mobility in the Pacific and the neoliberal approach to the RSE scheme, which is evident in both receiving and sending countries. For Ni-Vanuatu workers, the RSE has introduced a particularly disruptive and disempowering dimension into their social relations, requiring of specific adjustments that will be discussed in the analytical chapters.

Shortly after inception of RSE, the ILO recognised the scheme as a model for fair recruitment, policy coherence (Whatman & van Beek, 2008), and regional labour mobility (ILO, 2015b). Additionally, in Vanuatu, the RSE has been targeted through ILO’s Decent Work Country Programme since 2009 (ILO, 2010), to maximise opportunities derived from the scheme with programmes that encourage productive activities such as enterprise creation using the income obtained. In New Zealand, the former Department of Labour was a joint recipient of the Institute of Public Administration New Zealand Award for Working Together for Better Services in 2011 (OECD, 2013). The OECD (2011) also contributed to this international recognition by including the Vakameasina programme as a Case Story of an Aid for Trade experience that was working to increase opportunities and choices for Pacific RSE workers contributing “to achieving sustainable economic development and can be a potential catalyst for increased trade in goods and services” (WTO, 2011: 57).

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This ban is imposed only to Ni-Vanuatu as part of the requirements to participate in the RSE scheme. I detail its use in section 7.2.3.1.

Policy coherence refers to domestic policy and actions in international processes that impact development outcomes in developing countries (OECD, 2014a).
The RSE scheme has been promoted as a successful initiative due to the collaborative effort between the horticultural and viticultural industry, several government agencies aligned with an NPM approach, and because of the money transferred to PICs (OECD, 2013; OECD, 2014b). The rational coordination of interests leading to the scheme from the perspective of the governments involved, and the international organisations that have praised the programme, convey the “illusion of “pareto optimality” that “depoliticizes and naturalises” (Murphy, 2015: 399) the management of the scheme. However, it is important to remember that the relations derived from bilateral agreements, even if represented as reciprocal, “can be used to obscure the inequality of the exchange” (Clapp, 1988: 28). Thus, this thesis draws attention to the depoliticised coordination of the economic interests that sustain the RSE scheme.

As Piper notes, migration patterns “are not only a reflection of economic variations at the global but also at the regional level” (Piper, 2009: 94). Migration flows respond to a variety of conditions in neighbouring countries or regions. In this case, the context of labour shortages in the horticultural and viticultural sectors in New Zealand and PIF’s countries interest in securing access to foreign markets drove the negotiations that led to the RSE. By incorporating migration as part of broader regional processes, governments have become enmeshed within processes to which they contribute, which go beyond the neutral management of labour migration. There are also divergent opinions among government and industry representatives regarding the activities that RSE workers are permitted to engage in during off-hours, their mobility entitlements, and holiday breaks (Board, 2008a; Board, 2008b).

The RSE was initially proposed as a temporary solution, but it seems that RSE workers have become “permanently temporary” (Rajkumar, Berkowitz, Vosko, Preston, & Latham, 2012), as most of them will continue their participation in the scheme year after year because employers privilege contracting workers they already know. This may set a trap and lock them in low-skilled and low-paid jobs (R. Bedford et al., 2017). Thus, the importance of considering a long-term scenario for their engagement with the RSE scheme. The issue of temporariness entails implications related to labour rights, in that seasonal programmes and the “temporary

67 In early 2014, the Immigration Ministry confirmed that RSE visa rules do not allow busking after an inquiry of Tasman-Nelson Labour MP who declared: “This decision is abhorrent. These workers are being denied basic human rights and freedom of choice and expression.” (Deverall & Marwick, 2014; ONE News, 2014).

68 Workers who have relatives living permanently in New Zealand are not allowed to live with them (Board, 2008a).

69 In many countries temporariness is being institutionalized as an acceptable condition that legitimises temporary employment and the restrictions in civil and social rights that workers face associated to their visa category and legal residency status (De Genova, 2002).
worker” category should not be used as an “excuse to evade responsibilities to permanent members of the workforce” (2008: 435-7), as workers will continue engaging in work that not enough people are willing to do (Hampshire, 2015). It is not necessarily that there are no people available to do the work, but that there are not enough people who are willing to carry out seasonal work lacking labour stability, which implies moving outside urban areas, at the wages offered within the industry (Carens, 2008), or in working conditions that do not meet domestic workers’ expectations (Basok, 2002). Pathways to residence can address employment restrictions and lack of mobility in the destination country (R. Bedford et al., 2017; Hugo, 2009).

These issues are often overlooked in international reports on migration management, and worker exploitation, human rights abuses and other irregularities often appearing as unrelated to any specific causes in global policy reports, such as the ones discussed in the previous chapter. For example, the role of the private sector seems to be absent from pivotal reports on migration management from international organisations (Boucher, 2008). Rather, its role seems to have been taken for granted and remains unquestioned, just like the emergence of a global labour market, or the current economic system (Geiger & Pécoud, 2010). As the RSE scheme continues, the private sector will have access to the seasonal labour required to maintain the horticulture and viticulture sectors. Following the New Zealanders first requirement of the policy, investment in up-skilling New Zealanders (HortNZ, 2012) and reaching out to schools (Mannering, 2014; Tipples & Rawlinson, 2014), the Department of Corrections, iwi, and other engagement programmes (Hardie, 2017; Mannering, 2016) aim to encourage more locals to work in the sector. It is expected that gradually more New Zealanders benefit from the industry growth by their incorporation in skilled jobs (Mannering, 2015a; New Zealand Wine, 2017; Woodhouse & Tolley, 2016).

On the worker side, the RSE has been received with mixed feelings and resignation (Cummings, 2013a). During this research the expansion of other alternatives under the narrative of international development was being discussed for the dairy sector based on commissioned studies to assess the feasibility of repeating the experience of the horticulture and viticulture sectors (ADB, 2018).70 Discussions on a pilot implementation did not prosper

70 Two new labour mobility pilots for the construction and fisheries sectors were also being discussed (Mannering, 2016). The new Canterbury Reconstruction Employment pilot with skilled carpenters from Fiji, Tonga and Samoa under the Essential Skills Visa allows workers transition to residence under the skilled migrant category if skill level requirements are

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because of the lack of interest from the industry. Despite a central topic of ongoing discussions in relation to free trade agreements is mobility facilitation (Hugo & Bedford, 2017), potential PIC workers were not consulted in these early engagements regarding their interest in working in the dairy sector (Tipples & Rawlinson, 2014).

The potential workers are often treated as an available resource and as an investment (New Zealand Government, 2015; Taneka, 2013; Te Mata, 2016). At the same time they have limited agency as their bargaining rights are also grey-zoned by their migration status as their access to political structures and society depends on the employers.71 This is an area of concern in relation to labour rights, such as being able to decide whom to work for (Brickenstein, 2017). RSE workers are not offered options but rely on previously established networks, which limit the exercise of their labour rights and preferences, for example regarding the duration of their contracts, the type of work they carry out, or their workplace location. Additionally, the limited resources that the government of New Zealand has in terms of the number of inspectors compromises proper monitoring.72 It is thus important to question the type of development behind the triple wins and the methodologies used in the search for objective evidence.

3.4. Summary of Chapter

This chapter aimed to contextualise the RSE in Vanuatu and New Zealand. By providing some background on the contemporary history of labour migration in New Zealand and on the horticulture and viticulture sectors, I have situated the RSE in the historical context of mobility in the Pacific region. This backdrop highlights the scope of the industry that is employing RSE workers in economic terms and the existing practices in the sector towards migrant workers. I have also described the context in Vanuatu and the interest of PIF countries in having access met. The Fisheries Employment Initiative for trained fishing workers from Kiribati and Tuvalu for the New Zealand’s domestic offshore fishing fleet has yet to be piloted.

71 For example, Article 13 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families that grants migrants the right to hold opinions without interference (United Nations General Assembly, 1990). Neither New Zealand nor Vanuatu are signatories of this convention.

72 At the time of this research there were 5 inspectors working in the monitoring of the RSE scheme, which amounts to a ratio of 2,000 workers per inspector. The MBIE informed me that the ratio of inspectors is calculated according to the number of firms, in which case the RSE fares better than other industries.
to New Zealand labour market. I noted that this interest coupled with the demands of the horticulture and viticulture sectors are the drivers behind the RSE policy.

This chapter also described the main characteristics of the RSE which have only been slightly adjusted since its inception. I provided some information regarding current RSE participants and described how the RSE has been operationalised, and how it is being monitored. I drew attention to several practices in relation to activities that are allowed and not allowed while working in the RSE scheme. These practices will be discussed in the following chapters. This chapter concluded by exploring the initiatives for the expansion of the RSE to other sectors of the New Zealand economy such as dairy and fisheries, raising the importance of addressing the perceived objectivity and neutrality derived from a quantitative approach to the management of the RSE. The following chapter addresses the methodological approach of this research, which expects to address issues that quantitative approaches overlook. By bringing in a qualitative approach, I expect to move away from economic models that depoliticise the migration discourse and disembody people.
Chapter 4. Methodology

This thesis was designed as a multisited study, using a three-phased approach that aimed to understand the RSE participants’ experience of being a seasonal worker in New Zealand, and how this experience is considered in Vanuatu and at different points in time in both countries. In doing so, the methodology aimed to capture the nuanced manifold decision making processes of participants, by incorporating interviews with family and community members as well as interviews with RSE stakeholders – in a manner consistent with the theoretical framework which highlights the importance of the construction of social relations. The methodology involved qualitative interviews with workers and their relatives at different stages of their experience in the RSE scheme to understand how relations and subjectivities are transformed over time and place. Additional methods used were the analysis of policy documents and grey literature pertaining to the RSE scheme. The choice of semi-structured qualitative interviews and the analysis of the text of policy documents allowed for exploration of the underlying complexities in the lives of Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers – and how they are construed, maintained and transformed by larger flows of power. This chapter details the theoretical considerations and the process of using these methods.

The semi-structured qualitative interviews provided rich material for 38 RSE participants and six members of their communities. It was difficult to get more interviews for a variety of reasons: the recruitment approach, which conditioned participation to employer’s permission; the nature of contracts that impeded full engagement by workers, particularly when interviewed in the company’s premises; language limitations; and the geographical spread of Ni-Vanuatu workers in New Zealand and Vanuatu. This chapter will expand on these issues. Despite the shortcomings mentioned, the chosen methodology attempts to provide a unique understanding of how relations for Ni-Vanuatu workers have changed over time and space. Further, the detailed material from a small number of participants was insightful of the social discourses and power relations as they have emerged and transformed over time. This chapter also discusses my positionality as a researcher to make explicit the way I have approached the subject of this research, and the different ways my empirical observations reflect my own background. I also discuss issues that may be associated to my own positionality. Finally, the
Chapter 4

Chapter concludes with additional ethical considerations and the limitations to this research derived from the University’s stance in relation to ethical requirements.

4.1. Methods and analysis

Since 2013, when this research began, each year over 3,000 Ni-Vanuatu workers have arrived in New Zealand (INZ, 2017; VNSO, 2017). Unpublished academic research has provided useful insights into their experiences. Monitoring and evaluations sponsored by the New Zealand government have also been useful, but their focus is on management and numbers and not necessarily on the daily experience of the workers involved in the scheme. By numbers I mean the quantification of benefits of the RSE, employers’ perceptions, and remittances derived from the RSE scheme,73 including the number of people who have benefited from the scheme. Qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews provides a different way of illuminating understandings of social relations without essentialising them.74 Where numerical analysis aims for averages and trends, qualitative analysis may be seen as providing anecdotal evidence not deemed representative of the analysed phenomena or population. To bridge this divide, this thesis uses two methods to articulate the changes that the RSE has brought for participants in terms of the forms of power, knowledge and processes of subjectivation: qualitative interviews and document analysis.

Conscious of the epistemic perspective of a governmentality framework as able to influence the range of analysis and interpretations, I make explicit the theoretical understanding that has enabled me to think systematically about the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Dean, an analysis using a governmentality framework has four dimensions:

“First, it involves ontology, concerned with what we seek to act upon, the governed or ethical substance [...] Second, it involves ascetics, concerned with how we govern this substance, the

73 For example, ethnographic methods, though considered by sociologists as providing valuable insights, are “often suspected of not meeting the standards of empirical social science research and researchers are therefore expected to submit findings to further study, typically large N, quantitative empirical study” (Clough, 2010: 627). Clough also draws attention to the neoliberal state construction and warns about ethnographies as supplemental elaborations of statistical populations produced when policies have shifted to thinking about “poor individuals who can work, be family members, be moral, and individually responsible” (2010: 629). In this way attempts to humanise a population is not exempt from political effects.

74 Note that individuals’ interviews can also be considered “as part of modern governmentality [...] as one of the 20th century's most distinctive technologies of the self” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003: 26). See also Briggs (2007).
governing or ethical work [...] Third, it involves deontology, concerned with who we are when we are governed in such a manner, our 'mode of subjectification', or the governable or ethical subject [...] Fourth, it entails a teleology, concerned with why we govern or are governed, the ends or goal sought, what we hope to become or the world we hope to create, that which might be called the telos of governmental or ethical practices” (Dean, 1999: 17)

The qualitative methods chosen follow this theoretical framework. The methods aimed to understand participant’s social relations, experiences and their transformations alongside their participation in the RSE scheme; thus, these dimensions are examined in the analysis of the research material. In interviews, this can only be done through focused conversations and when the questions are also open enough to elucidate a person’s view of particular topics. Each interview is considered unique as participants shift between different subject positions, which in the process are transformed by their own unique experiences. Further, identifying patterns in relation to how the construction of subjectivities takes place moves the inquiry away from the reporting of anecdotal evidence, to a systematic qualitative analysis of responses.

A multi-phased approach was chosen, focusing on participants’ social relations and how they were shaped by external tensions at family, community, government, and international levels. A governmentality analysis is “concerned with thought as it becomes linked to and is embedded in technical means for the shaping and reshaping of conduct and in practices and institutions. Thus, to analyse mentalities of government is to analyse thought made practical and technical” (Dean, 1999:18). While initially this research contemplated an ethnographic study to account for these changes, this idea was discarded because of time constraints associated with changing the initially chosen country, my own language limitations, and University rules regarding absence periods and security concerns, among others. Document analysis was also undertaken focusing on content analysis of official government documents which provided further context for this study of RSE workers in relation to the four dimensions outlined above (Dean, 1999:18). Initial interviews and conversations with workers during the exploratory visit in the initial phase of this research had elucidated how the narratives of these policy documents affected participants’ behaviour.
Chapter 4

4.1.1 Qualitative Interviews

This research primarily used semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders: RSE workers, workers’ leaders, relatives and community members, and consultants and government officials working in the implementation of the scheme. These interviews contained discourses which were used to assemble a composition of the particular experience and relations of individuals participating in the RSE. Common experiences and insights were identified from the interviews. The importance of developing an appropriate rapport with the participants became evident through the fieldwork, particularly for the seasonal workers interviewed. Being tied to an employer’s contract and under the constant supervision of team leaders while in New Zealand, placed individuals in a vulnerable position, which constrained them in expressing their opinions. Most workers in the RSE scheme seemed to experience similar constrains.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method that allows for flexibility in the interview process. An interview schedule, prepared in advance for each group of participants, was used to establish information on RSE workers’ social relations before migration, the circumstances that motivated them to look for work abroad, how they were recruited, their preparation for departure and experience in New Zealand, and their return to Vanuatu. A wider analysis of migrants’ discourses, including family and community relations before and after migration was then undertaken, focusing on how workers’ relations are transformed in New Zealand and Vanuatu. From a governmentality framework, practices of government are analysed “in their complex and variable relations to the different ways in which ‘truth’ is produced in social, cultural and political practices” (Dean, 1999: 18). For this purpose, interviews with government officials and other RSE stakeholders provided complementary information on the implementation of the RSE scheme.

The participants of this study can be divided into several groups. The first one, the workers’ group, includes team leaders. This group is composed of people from Vanuatu, men and women between the ages of 20 and 60 years old, in line with the RSE age criteria. As outlined in the earlier chapters, workers have been arriving to New Zealand under the RSE scheme to work for around seven months every season on average since 2007, and are the main providers of

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75 See Figure 7, Table 4, and Table 5 for further details.
76 RSE workers are 18 or older (INZ, 2014a), however, leaders whom I spoke to mentioned they hardly recruit people younger than 20. See the latest Vanuatu census for participants’ ages, which span from 16 to 60 years (VNSO, 2017).
financial support for their families. The majority of RSE approvals are in Hawke’s Bay and approximately 600 Ni-Vanuatu workers arrive each season (C. Bedford, 2013). I interviewed 38 RSE participants.

As with any multisited study, some trade-offs between depth and breadth (Hannerz, 1998) were necessary as an entirely local study in New Zealand was discounted in the interest of understanding the dynamics of RSE workers’ relations and the shaping of their experiences. An analytics of governmentality aims to understand “how different locales are constituted as authoritative and powerful, how different agents are assembled with specific powers, and how different domains are constituted as governable and administrable” (Dean, 1999: 29). Undertaking such an analysis can allow for the understanding of power as resulting from changing governmental techniques, practices and rationalities. Despite being based on a small number of participants and not being specific about the cultural diversity represented in the different islands in Vanuatu, the individual narratives in the interviews showcase similar experiences and transformations from participants’ involvement in the RSE scheme.

Participants from the group of RSE workers were not self-selected. As per University advice, I contacted their employers to obtain authorisation to carry out this research. Some participants were initially uneasy about the purpose of the interviews and asked whether their employers or their team leaders had been informed. Previous research has noted similar experiences (Bailey, 2009; Prochazkova, 2012). Participants’ main concerns were about whether their opinions would be communicated to their employers, or whether the employer had effectively agreed to their participation. Some potential RSE workers had to confirm first with their team leaders that the interviews were “all good” before volunteering for this research. These issues are further addressed in section 4.2.1.2 which deals with selection and recruitment. Additional considerations were not to interrupt participants’ working hours and for interviews held in Vanuatu, to observe participants’ availability given the multiple commitments they had while in Vanuatu.

The second group of participants are the community and village members related to the RSE workers, which comprised people situated in different positions and roles: partners, pastors, sisters, and aspirant RSE candidates. I use the term community when referring to urban areas to differentiate it from villages in rural areas. Intentionally, no young relatives or community members under 18 were approached for the purposes of this research to protect them from potential harm and also due to the issue of securing a genuinely informed consent.
Interviews began by asking participants’ basic socio-demographic data related to education, previous work experience, and migration patterns to identify changes at the individual and family levels in terms of family composition and mobility. The interviews then examined former labour experiences and family relations that are important for subsistence and customary purposes. Family composition, number of children, and their strategies for subsistence, through both paid and informal economic activities, use of family networks, and relations with partners were also documented. Questions explored how the options for participating in the RSE were formed, and the range of experiences of workers coming to New Zealand for the first time, to finely interrogate changes related to their experiences and newly acquired learning. My effort to identify formal and informal learning experiences provided clues about how these experiences may have transformed relations back at home.

After building trust and rapport with respondents, a deeper level of questions was asked in the last two phases. These questions examined how the individual respondents perceived the differences between New Zealand and Vanuatu, the main contrasts between living in the two countries, and the relations they had established in both places. Based on the experiences and perceptions respondents shared, I was able to understand how they see their relationships to wider society and how they interpret their current situation in relation to their former experiences by linking them to the circumstances that have affected their lives (Angrosino, 2007). While initially questions were kept to a minimum to facilitate the free flow of conversation during the interviews, this strategy had to be adapted at times, particularly with participants less fluent in English. With these participants, I asked questions in different ways and provided context to clarify points as needed, or when participants indicated they could not find the words to express their answers in English or Bislama. The interviews also provided information on participants’ willingness to continue their engagement with the RSE scheme.

The third group of interviewees comprised RSE stakeholders from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment in New Zealand (MBIE), the Employment Services Unit (ESU) from the Vanuatu Department of Labour, and contractors from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Other stakeholders, such as pastoral care workers, private recruitment agents and employers, were intentionally left out of the fieldwork. This is not to say that they do not influence the transformation of Ni-Vanuatu subjectivities. Protecting the privacy of the participants and prevent potential conflicts of interest, or the possibility of retaliation was prioritised. The interviews with the government officials and other RSE stakeholders allowed further exploration of topics already raised by the workers and questions
were adapted according to each participant’s specific role in the RSE. Additionally, I explored the day-to-day implementation of the RSE with these interviewees, and possible improvements in the scheme. All interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. I believe that particularly for Ni-Vanuatu workers this increased the pressure to provide “correct” answers due to social desirability, as some of them mentioned that the interviews “have to be good”.77

I transcribed the interviews and carried out an item level of analysis to identify themes in the primary data sources, which were then coded (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). This inductive exercise led to the creation of a codebook. Using an excel spreadsheet the content of the interviews was grouped by theme categories. Field notes were used to provide additional insights into the already existing themes. Later, I examined how themes related to each other at the pattern level of analysis (Schensul et al., 1999). Patterns were identified for frequency and omission of themes. By identifying the key transformations in the specific social relations of Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers with their families, kin and communities, I expect to shed light on the transformative effects, such as in Ni-Vanuatu day to day practices that can be linked to engagement in the RSE scheme.

4.1.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis was carried out to elucidate how policy, grey literature, and other documents are connected to and guide actions that transcend the policy realm. It is important to acknowledge that every document operates beyond its actual and literal content as “each and every document enters into human projects in a dual relation” (Prior, 2008: 94). Documents are thus at the same time a receptacle of content (instructions, obligations, contracts, reports), and act as agents in their own right in networks, with effects beyond their creators and at the same time open to manipulation for different purposes. Documents in this research were analysed as “topic” (Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971) and as “resource”. As “topic” I focused on content and the ways in which documents came to assume their actual content and structure using an “archaeological approach” (Prior, 2008). Using this approach enabled a better

77 See also Section 4.3.3.
understanding of how the content of the documents behind the inception and implementation of the RSE was produced and came into being. It is commonly seen in studies of how statistics, official reports and policy documents among others are produced (Leavy, 2014).

Finally, the functioning of the selected documents in interactions within the RSE parameters is discussed, as “documents have to be studied as components in networks of action rather than as independent and inert ‘things’ that can be approached ‘unobtrusively’” (Prior, 2008: 98) to elucidate how they can shape social relations. This uncovering of the “archaeology” of documents has been an instructive experience in itself and allowed further understanding of power relations at play in the RSE scheme, and how political, legal, and economic processes had been influential in their making. Following Rose (1996), governmentalities should be analysed as practices because social interventions are rationalised by the body of knowledge that constitutes them. These complementary insights helped to account for a larger picture of the RSE and in unveiling the different tensions between each set of responses, depending on the participants and different aspects of their social relations. In parallel, I analysed the documents as “resource”, studying their use and functions in interaction for purposeful ends (Prior, 2008).

Accordingly, the analysis shown below lists documents by how they were produced, for which audiences, how they are used and how they can function in the RSE interactions – to discover what the documents “do”, instead of what they actually “say”. In this view documents are not static objects, but rather agents in historical processes. I also explain how the content of the document came to be classified in a particular way, as the allocation of content into one realm was neither random, nor based on common sense observations, but rather determined by their place in the interactions and power relations between the actors involved in producing said documents and motivated by a certain body of knowledge. To prevent any potential of workers being later identified, this research did not include private materials such as contracts, pay stubs, and bank account statements, among others. Instead, the document analysis carried out included only published materials, covering the period 2006 to 2016, as seen in the table below.

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78 Note that this analysis was not possible for all documents and has been privileged in cases when the information was available through the interviews RSE stakeholders provided.
**Table 2: Documentation analysed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorship</th>
<th>Material Name</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>Pacific Possible: Labour Mobility (World Bank, 2017b)</td>
<td>July, 2016</td>
<td>Research focused on “realistically possible” solutions for the Pacific region by the year 2040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKenzie, David and Gibson, John</td>
<td>Development through Seasonal Worker Programs: The Case of New Zealand's RSE Program Policy Research Working Paper (PRWP) 6762 (McKenzie &amp; Gibson, 2014)</td>
<td>January, 2014</td>
<td>Report of the evaluation using difference-in-differences (DD) and matching methods to estimate short-term impacts on household income and consumption. Published as part of the PRWP series, which disseminates the findings of works in progress. Authors are responsible for their ideas, which are not necessarily endorsed by the World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Research</td>
<td>Review of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) worker pilot training programme (Roorda, 2011)</td>
<td>February, 2011</td>
<td>Final evaluation report for New Zealand DoL by independent consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research New Zealand</td>
<td>Strengthening Pacific Partnership and Vakameasina Evaluation (Clear Horizon, 2016)</td>
<td>September, 2016</td>
<td>Evaluation report commissioned by New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Aid Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, Settlement New Zealand support</td>
<td>Recognised Seasonal Employer Get Ready DVD: Informesen blong ol wokman blong RSE (New Zealand Department of Labour &amp; Settlement Support New Zealand, 2011)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Informational video in Bislama, part of the pre-departure briefings for RSE workers covering basic characteristics of the job, an overview of New Zealand, size of companies, remuneration, and the services available for overseas workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment</td>
<td>RSE Policy Operational Manual (INZ, 2016b)</td>
<td>2007, updated in 2012</td>
<td>Operational Manual for RSE Work Instructions which includes the policy followed by migrant workers, and employers including criteria, requirements, and processes INZ follows to grant applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services Unit, Vanuatu Department of Labour</td>
<td>Work Ready Vanuatu website (Vanuatu DOL, 2017)</td>
<td>2012-2013, retrieved in 2014</td>
<td>Website from the Vanuatu Department of Labour containing checklists and promotional material to encourage Ni-Vanuatu seasonal migration to Australia and New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services Unit, Vanuatu Department of Labour</td>
<td>Worker Selection Standard (ESU, 2013a)</td>
<td>2013, retrieved in 2014</td>
<td>Guidelines for Seasonal Migration management to Australia and New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services Unit, Vanuatu Department of Labour</td>
<td>Stand-Down and Ban Policy Information Guide (ESU, 2013b)</td>
<td>2013, retrieved in 2014</td>
<td>Guidelines for Seasonal Migration management to Australia and New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services Unit, Vanuatu Department of Labour</td>
<td>Standard Required of Quality Ni-Vanu Workers (ESU, 2013c)</td>
<td>2013, retrieved in 2014</td>
<td>Guidelines for Seasonal Migration management to Australia and New Zealand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These documents cover specific time spans, and some pre-date the inception of the RSE scheme but are used to showcase different views and positions regarding the scheme from its inception.
through to its subsequent development. Although in some cases I used an NVivo frequency analysis to identify the most common topics in each document, the main unit of analysis was not the entire texts of documents. Instead, I focused in on the narratives in each document that identify problematisation and connect migration to development to trace how narratives have emerged and how do they function (Livholts & Tamboukou, 2015). The next section discusses the considerations taken into account in developing the research design.

4.2. Research Design

A three-phased approach was chosen for this research so that each RSE worker would be interviewed at different points in time and places. The different stages around seasonal migration – pre-departure, work placement and, return – and the varied interview locations provided a range of contexts in which a variety of meanings about social relations were conveyed. Additionally, conducting several interviews across time with the same person about similar topics made participants more aware of their experiences and perhaps could more easily acknowledge them.

Many times, participants mentioned that when doing the tok tok, as they called the interviews, they were thinking strael or that I had asked the right questions. This is relevant since “(h)uman stories are not static, meanings of experiences shift as consciousness changes.” (Riessman, 1993: 66). For example, the same questions may get different answers in different locations and at different points in time. In addition, because both interviewer and respondent construct the interview, my understanding depended “on recognizing how interviewers reformulate questions and how respondents frame answers in terms of their reciprocal understanding as meanings emerge during the course of an interview” (Mishler, 1991: 52). RSE seasonality allowed me to ask the participants similar questions about their experiences, and the participants to respond in different and nuanced ways each time they were interviewed.
Chapter 4

4.2.1 Fieldwork Phases and Recruitment of Participants

The three design phases of this research encompassed two agricultural seasons: 2013–2014 and 2014–2015. February and November are the months when the largest number of workers arrive in New Zealand for the next harvest period. Thus, February and March 2014 were chosen for initial contact with potential participants. See Figure 3 for the total distribution of monthly arrivals to New Zealand.

![Figure 3: Number of Workers per RSE financial year (2007-2014)](chart)

Source: Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE, 2015b)

An exploratory visit was carried out in March 2014 to adjust the research design and to select the area of New Zealand in which the research would take place. This visit provided valuable insights regarding potential participants, the areas they frequented and their availability for and disposition toward the planned research. It was also instrumental in the selection of the research locations and the arrangements made for the following phases, as detailed below.

4.2.1.1. Exploratory visit

The purpose of this visit was to identify the best way to approach workers, including public places they frequent where adverts for this research could be placed. It also allowed places

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79 According to New Zealand government statistics the average number of visa arrivals to New Zealand from 2007-2014 is 1,842 in February and 1,394 in November. Though the number of participants is not significantly different from the total number of visas per country (R. Bedford, 2018) a comprehensive sampling frame (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) based on the ability to enumerate all RSE workers was disregarded to prevent recruitment difficulties.
where subsequent interviews could be carried out to be identified. The Hawke’s Bay and Bay of Plenty\textsuperscript{80} were the two agricultural regions chosen because of their proximity and the number of RSE workers in the area. The Hawke’s Bay region had the largest number of Agreements to Recruit (ATRs)\textsuperscript{81} in the country; around 444 between 2007 and 2011 (C. Bedford, 2013), followed by the Bay of Plenty with 220, and Marlborough with 186. Choosing the regions with larger numbers of companies participating in the RSE scheme increased the probability of involving workers from different companies in the research, who could then speak to a wider range of experiences.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure4.png}
\caption{Approximate Location of RSE employers in Bay of Plenty}
\textit{Own elaboration based on: Land Information New Zealand, Eagle Technology (2016)}
\end{figure}

This visit also involved locating the RSE employers in the two regions. The contact information of RSE employers who voluntarily disclose their data is published on the Immigration New Zealand website (INZ, 2014b). I chose three cities to visit: Tauranga in the Bay of Plenty, and Napier and Hastings in the Hawke’s Bay because the largest number of companies were in

\textsuperscript{80} The initial selection of Hawkes’ Bay and Bay of Plenty was because the largest numbers of Solomon Islanders approved for recruitment came to these regions between 2007 and 2011 (C. Bedford, 2013).

\textsuperscript{81} Agreements to Recruit (ATRs) are granted to potential RSE employers every two years. Only after obtaining them can approved employers recruit workers.
these areas. The agricultural companies in the Tauranga area were located far away from each other\textsuperscript{82} as can be seen in Figure 4 and mostly off public transit routes, which meant workers were less likely to be able to move around freely (Waterhouse & Clow, 2016). I deemed it more difficult for workers to reach the city or have opportunities to meet each other in the Tauranga region compared to the Hawke’s Bay, where is common to see RSE workers attending religious services and afterwards gathering around the shopping areas.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure5.png}
\caption{Approximate Location of RSE employers in Hawke’s Bay
Own elaboration based on: Land Information New Zealand, Eagle Technology (2016)}
\end{figure}

Initially, this research aimed at engaging with workers from the Solomon Islands because it was the latest country to sign an Interagency Understanding to join the RSE. Thus, this research could serve as an exploratory study. However, after the scoping visit, a decision was made to instead focus on workers from Vanuatu with the Hawke’s Bay as a research location. The devastating flash floods in the Solomon Islands’ capital in early April 2014 had led to the government declaring a state of emergency in Honiara and Guadalcanal provinces. The flooding had a lasting impact on communities, and people who were potential research participants had much more pressing priorities.\textsuperscript{83} Second, the overall number of Ni-Vanuatu

\textsuperscript{82} In some cases, the published addresses corresponded to postal addresses and it was impossible to identify where companies’ offices were located as one company can own land in several areas.

\textsuperscript{83} Over 52,000 people were affected across the country, some of them losing their homes and livelihoods (WHO WPRO, 2014).
RSE workers in the selected region suited my research design, because there were many more potential participants for the broad research topic of interest. As I was conscious there may be loss of respondents through the duration of the study because of the research design, having a larger number of participants helped ensure the viability of the phased design. Third, there were many more Ni-Vanuatu women working in the Hawke’s Bay, increased the chances of having both men and women participants which could benefit a more nuanced analysis of the programme. Fourth, the Hawke’s Bay region had increased options for mobility within the area, as Napier and neighbouring Hastings could be accessed by RSE workers using public and private transport.

4.2.1.2. Participant’s Selection and Recruitment

It was initially planned that interviewees would self-select by responding to adverts placed in selected locations that workers commonly frequent, such as local second-hand shops, markets, etc. See Appendix A for the advert created for this purpose. While this method has been commonly and successfully used for other research in the social sciences, it did not work with Ni-Vanuatu working under the RSE scheme. In order to start interviewing workers, the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee's (UAHPEC), the review board that regulates university research based on established guidelines, required that their employers had to be informed about the research, receive a Participant Information Sheet (PIS), and sign a Consent Form (CF) to guarantee that the research would not negatively affect the participants, whether they decided to be interviewed or not. The corresponding CFs and PISs were approved by the UAHPEC. These considerations are part of the role of the committee, but the implementation of such decisions is questionable in terms of the trade-off. While it aimed to protect workers’ security and income, this decision implied that potential participants could not approach this research or withdraw from it freely, thereby encroaching their rights to free speech and privacy outside their duties as employees. This automatically precluded the RSE workers of non-interested employers in participating, so disregarding their individual interest. I had to exclude at least five potential participants from this study due to this reason, despite

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84 Only one call (in English) was received during Phase 1 of the research to schedule an interview. The interviews for the groups from the two companies that participated were coordinated with the help of one pastoral care worker and a team leader respectively. The option of using adverts in Bislama was discarded to privilege providing employers information about this research, as not all of them understood Bislama.

85 This runs the risk to implicitly legitimise the control and discretionality that employers use over RSE workers’ free time and working conditions which this thesis documents and discusses.
some suggesting they could do the interview without receiving any compensation,86 as they had understood that it was only available only for the employees of companies that had signed up for this research.

To widen the base of potential participants, I contacted all 25 RSE employers in the Hawke’s Bay whose names were published on the Immigration New Zealand (INZ, 2014b) website. This was done before starting the research, and the first contact with employers was via phone or e-mail.87 Less than 25 percent of employers in the area showed any interested in the research, although three asked to be contacted again the following season, as workers were too busy at that point,88 had moved to another area for work,89 or were completing arrangements to return to Vanuatu. Despite several attempts to contact the companies and the individuals in charge of human resources or pastoral care, whose names were given to me during my initial contact calls, only two companies signed the consent forms during this recruitment phase of the study. In one case the research documents sent out by e-mail were signed and returned by email, and in the other I was assured that the signature would be received on my arrival. In this way, all companies in the area were informed of the research taking place before adverts were placed in public places.

A different recruitment strategy was devised after employers voiced reservations about the feasibility of the study on my initial contact with them.90 Employers explained that workers were shy and calls from them to arrange an interview were “not going to happen” and offered to distribute the adverts among their employees themselves. Thus, most participants had the research adverts handed over by their employers. Incentives (koha) were provided for prospective interviewees in the form of phone credit. Offering alternative forms of compensation was anticipated for those participants not having a mobile phone, however, no participant chose a different option. It is important to note that the incentives also led some further uninterested workers in the research to request interviews.

86 In Phases 1 and 3 in New Zealand participants were compensated for their time with a NZ$10 phone card or top-up. In Phase 2 a Vt. 1,000 phone voucher in Vanuatu was given for each interview to workers as well as community and village members.
87 For the three companies with unavailable phone numbers the contact was initiated via e-mail.
88 One employer indicated that workers could not be interviewed because they worked every day of the week from early morning until late hours, and that they could not guarantee access to them.
89 This was because the company had work for them in several locations in the same region.
90 Particularly the ones in rural areas mentioned that this type of research would not be possible because workers do not read English and because adverts would not necessarily be placed in places they frequent, as it is sometimes hard for them to travel to the city centre. Interested employers offered their help, sometimes distributing the adverts.
For all participants, the purpose as well as the three different phases, locations, and overall duration of the research was described on our first contact. On the day of our first meeting they received a printed copy of the PIS,\textsuperscript{91} which provided the information on the research. Then they had the opportunity to ask questions about the research. As participation in this research is anonymised, participants were not pressured to provide a signed CF. Procedures for oral consent were put in place to accommodate participants’ preferences and allay suspicion and concerns about being identified when signing forms, or for participants who found it difficult to understand the reasons behind the need of a signed document. Non-RSE workers in particular were not confident in signing forms, as some of them had been out of school for some time, in which case they asked their relative or the researcher to complete the form, and then wrote their name on it. In the case of the RSE stakeholders interviewed, the first contact and following recruitment was mainly via e-mail. The government officials from Vanuatu were recruited during Phase 2, after approval for this research was obtained from the \textit{Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (VKS)}, the national authority that grants permission to foreign researchers and scholars to carry out research within Vanuatu. No incentives or \textit{koha} were provided for this group, and only one participant asked for a verbatim transcript.

4.2.1.3. Interviewing Phases

A three-phased approach to interviewing RSE workers and members of their family and community was chosen for this research. The phases corresponded to different moments in the workers’ participation in the RSE scheme, according to the circular nature of seasonal migration. The first phase aimed to engage workers while they were in New Zealand with clear expectations of going back to Vanuatu and reconnecting with their families. The second phase sought to explore how these social relations with relatives, communities, and villages were “resumed” after a separation of months, and how they may have been transformed in the interim. Finally, the third phase aimed to complete the understanding of the seasonal cycle of the transformations in workers’ relations that may have occurred over the duration of the three phases. Table 3 summarises the respective design arrangements and interviewees per phase.

\textsuperscript{91} The format and content of both PIS and CF have been simplified, as RSE workers in former research with Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers have described them as “incomprehensible, too scientific and boring” and usually preferred the researcher to read and explain the documents to them before signing (Prochazkova, 2012).
### Table 3: Interview schedule for the 3 Phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Number of Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 (October 2014 - November 2014)</td>
<td>Port Vila and Santo, Vanuatu</td>
<td>Return to Vanuatu and pre-departure preparation for the next agricultural season in New Zealand</td>
<td>21 RSE workers, 6 family, community, and village members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first round of the interviews was carried out after some of the workers said I could visit them and we could talk, “now that we are friends”. Further, some of the workers’ leaders offered to help me with the research, as well as inviting me to their houses in Vanuatu. Coincidentally, during the early stages of my research, my friendship with a Ni-Vanuatu colleague in Auckland became instrumental in guiding my cultural understanding and helping me work on certain language skills. All interviews with RSE workers and members of their families were carried out between May 2014 and March 2015. The interviews with other RSE stakeholders were carried out between November 2014 and March 2015, depending on their availability and my location, as I was away carrying out fieldwork at different times.

#### 4.2.1.4 Phase 1

Since the research design sought consecutive interviews with the same workers, the first round of interviews was critical to establish a rapport, as the following rounds of interviews would build on the relationships I established with the participants at this early stage. The interviews undertaken in Phase 1 were designed to learn why and how RSE workers decided to participate in the RSE, what material benefits they gained from the programme, as well as provide some clues as to their future plans. The interviews also enabled me to construct a basic socio-demographic profile. Most importantly they began the building of relationships which I hoped would sustain the workers’ involvement through the following interview phases.

Phase 1 interviews began after participants had been informed about the purpose of the research, and their rights as participants according the UAHPEC guidelines and signed their respective CFs. In total, 25 interviews were carried out during this phase, as seen in Figure 7. Three groups of interviews were undertaken – the first two, in May and June 2014, were with RSE workers.
from a single company who were preparing to return to Vanuatu. These workers had initially been approached during the exploratory visit in March 2014, and I made contact with them again later after obtaining permission from their employer to carry out the interviews. Some workers were interviewed around their accommodation area, while others were interviewed in public places. Despite my offer to buy them a coffee or drink, participants generally preferred not to go to a specific place and a couple of interviews were carried out in the street, or in parking lots. The outdoor interviews could be shorter – depending on the weather. There were both male and female participants, and while the majority had been engaged in the RSE for over five seasons, a few were in their first season. Both RSE workers and workers’ leaders92 were interviewed. This group had a particularly large number of leaders for the number of workers. One of the leaders had been instrumental in recruiting workers, as he went out of his way to ask people if they were interested in participating.

The third group of interviews was arranged with the help of a company employee in charge of pastoral care, who kindly volunteered the workers’ time and explained the purpose of the interviews, which were to be carried out over the weekend when their working day finished earlier. The interviews were carried out in the office attached to the dining area used by the workers. The pastoral care employee gathered the workers in front of the office, and I explained the scope of the research in general terms and outlined topics that would be discussed. Afterwards, this person stepped in to remind the workers to say everything is “all good because we want to keep you coming”, and that we had already signed a contract to do the interviews.93 When I asked about this, I was told that the workers are familiar with the idea of contracts and this was said so they would know the interviews were nothing to worry about. This is telling in terms of the limited space and choice workers had in relation to participating in the interviews – which may have influenced their responses. This shortcoming will be addressed in section 4.3.3.

Some of the interviews with the group from the second company were carried out with the workers’ leader in the same room. The pastoral care worker also felt the need to be there to help workers understand the questions and the kind of information the research was aiming to gather, expressing concern that their level of English would prevent them from responding to

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92 Leaders are usually in charge of looking after a group of 10 workers in average and are the point of contact between workers and their companies if problems arise.
93 This would later be analysed as part of the context for the interviews in the following chapters.
the questions. These interviews were significantly shorter than the interviews with the workers from the first company. While the participants’ level of English competence was carefully considered in phrasing the open questions, in some cases workers were not confident to express themselves and looked to their leader for a translation or explanation when they were not sure how to answer. These interviews took place at an orchard in a rural area, for which travelling arrangements had to be made in advance to guarantee access to company private property. Thus, it was not possible at least in this first phase to interact with the participants of one of the companies without an intermediary being present. Table 4 below presents some socio-demographic details of participants in Phase 1.

Table 4: Socio-demographic details of Phase 1 Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Total = 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and above</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School (including incomplete)</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School and above</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married or living together</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried (single or separated)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 and more</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruitment for Phase 2 was initiated at the end of each Phase 1 interview. I explained that I would be visiting Vanuatu later that year in October and November, and that I was interested in interviewing them again – as well as family members. I provided participants with my contact details in Vanuatu\(^4\) so they could also call me if they wanted to be visited and asked them to mention my research to their relatives and other village and community members. Participants were surprised that I had already set up a phone number in Vanuatu. Some of them checked twice I had written down their Vanuatu phone numbers and recommended that I persevere if I was not able to initially make contact. Others living in the outer islands were

\(^4\) This was possible thanks to the help of a graduate student from Vanuatu, who kindly got a local SIM card for this purpose. However, by the time Phase 2 took place most of the workers had already returned to their villages which do not have good phone reception, making connecting by phone difficult.
informed that it may not be possible for me to visit them there, and some offered the contact of a relative in Port Vila who could be able to inform me about their whereabouts in case they were in town. Most participants were eager to receive outside visitors, and some offered their homes for me to stay with them while in Vanuatu.

4.2.1.5 Phase 2
Phase 2 interviewing involved these same participants, and their families, and took place back in their home islands. Of the workers from the first company, seven lived in villages neighbouring Port Vila, three were spread throughout Efate and four lived in other islands. However, the majority of the RSE workers interviewed in Phase 1 were from villages and islands outside Port Vila, so the research had to include at least one other island. Santo was chosen as 12 of the Phase 1 participants who were willing to participate in Phases 2 and 3 were living in Luganville and surrounding villages. Further, as an urban area, Luganville had more chances of being transited by participants living on Santo. See Figure 6 for the approximate location of interviews.

To fully understand social relations of workers’ participating in the RSE, it was important to involve members of their families and villages as their kin and non-kin based networks in their home islands. By this means, the broader analysis of the workers’ interviews includes family and community relations before and after temporary migration in the RSE scheme. My focus was on family relations between parents and children in particular, and the implications for other relatives left behind in terms of whether these relations have changed because of workers’ engagement in the RSE scheme. While I had hoped that each RSE participant would be able to refer one family or community member to be interviewed in Vanuatu, this did not happen for a variety of reasons – from logistical to personal. Some of the workers were not available in Port Vila or Santo as they had travelled to visit their islands of origin. Others had family or work obligations to attend to when I visited, particularly the ones who were getting ready to return to New Zealand, and others could not be reached by phone. Consequently, with the help of their respective leaders who introduced them to me, 13 additional workers from the same two companies were recruited in Phase 2.
During Phase 2, eight of the initial participants from Phase 1 were interviewed in their home villages in Vanuatu, along with six other people (see Figure 7) who met the following criteria: an adult who had a significant relationship with a particular RSE worker. These six family or community members comprised two partners, one parent, two siblings, and one neighbour. There were issues regarding finding some workers at home in their villages, as it was impossible to know in advance whether they would be there before arriving. Access was also difficult due to the rainy season, and language barriers that prevented me interviewing village members in Santo, particularly the women, as they mainly spoke local languages and I only spoke rudimentary Bislama. As this phase coincided with the time workers in one company were preparing their return to New Zealand, there was more mobility than expected, as people were busy gathering the required paperwork for their next visa and finishing family related arrangements in their villages, so appointments were re-scheduled many times – and some never happened.

Fortunately, in Port Vila, I was assisted by a workers’ leader from one company, who had volunteered in New Zealand during Phase 1 to assist in contacting workers from his group. They kindly provided contact details for the other workers living in the area whose numbers
had changed in the meantime, either because of the length of their stay in New Zealand or because they had misplaced their SIM card. In Santo, I was assisted by another leader who made the necessary arrangements to visit the villages, while at the same time informing workers resident in the city of Lunganville about the interviews. These leaders became key informants as well and were unexpectedly important to securing interviews. They knew about the arrangements that had to be made, or whom to ask to find someone. This is telling of how relations are transformed in Vanuatu, as although some leaders had only recently met the workers before departing for New Zealand, they were already familiar with their whereabouts; “We all know each other now”, they used to say.

The focus of the interviews in Phase 2 was to build on themes mentioned in Phase 1 as a way of understanding how the lives of RSE workers, their families and kin have changed as a result of the workers’ participation in the RSE, and further to establish a rapport with family, community and village members to facilitate recruitment for further interviews. Although RSE participants in Phase 1 had suggested I interview a specific family member, the designated person was not necessarily interested in engaging with the research. Fewer interviews than expected were carried out with family members, mainly due to my ignorance of local languages, but also because those approached claimed they had nothing to say. As most of the workers I had interviewed in Phase 1 were men, it was their wives or female partners who were introduced to me. In contrast to their husbands/partners, they did not know me and were unsure of what they were going to be asked. These women mostly limited themselves to responding “all good” when referring to the RSE, while at the same time pointing out their newly built houses, water wells, etc. This explains why there are only relative interviews for three participants out of six interviewed in all three phases, as illustrated in Figure 7. This will be further addressed in section 4.3.3. Additionally, I had expected to interview a few community chiefs in the five villages I visited, but this was not possible mainly because of language limitations.

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95 Less than a third of workers were contacted via cellphone and some participants where not at home when visited, which speaks of the difficulties of carrying out this type of fieldwork.
96 I found this was not true in all the cases, especially with younger workers.
97 See Bailey (2014b) for additional reflections on the use of different languages as a methodological concern.
When I was not introduced by the leaders, I was at first perceived as a recruiter in the villages, which worked to increase interest in my presence. After the purpose of the research had been explained and the villagers understood that I was a student, the attitudes and approach changed. Other brief inquiries carried out informally in conversations (not included in the total account of interviews) with family members, chiefs, pastors, leaders, among other important figures such as fathers and bosses and potential applicants for RSE workers. These key informants – three of them during one on one interactions – provided information to complement the insights from the experiences narrated by the workers. Their observations shed more light on how
options for migration were formed as a family or community strategy. Interviews also inquired about participants’ life in relation to other community members, both relatives and non-relatives, to collect data on common economic activities prior to and following RSE involvement. These informal background interviews provided additional information, both historic and comparative, regarding the events communicated by the participants.

Some of the interviews with family and community members were superficial, I believe because they did not know me, and focused mostly on perceptions of the material benefits of RSE. In contrast, the follow-up interviews with RSE workers further explored relevant topics mentioned earlier in Phase 1 and completed the demographic data that had not come up in the narratives in the first phase. Holding the Phase 2 interviews in Vanuatu further facilitated relationship building and rapport with workers, and although they had more family demands, they were more confident and appreciated my interest in getting to know their families, their villages, and their achievements. The Phase 2 workers’ interviews provided useful insights about Ni-Vanuatu social relations and their experiences before and after RSE.

In terms of the rapport achieved with the interviewees, my relation with the participants, and particularly with leaders, was cemented during our first encounters in Vanuatu. In spite of the interest originally shown by four workers, they excused themselves on the grounds of not having the time to accommodate interviews even though they had told their families to be prepared for my visit. In general, the workers appreciated my interest in travelling to Vanuatu and learning more about their families, experiences, and culture. Most of the interviews were carried out in the villages on a one-to-one basis, but some took place on the side of the main road, as I ran into some workers on their way to some other place. Only one interview was carried out in a cafe.

4.2.1.6 Phase 3

The last phase took place back in the Hawke’s Bay and involved the same workers recruited in the two previous phases. The interviews were carried out in common areas inside the workers’ accommodation facilities; no interviews were conducted in public places. Five of the workers interviewed in Phases 1 and 2 had not returned to New Zealand for a variety of reasons including health, family commitments, or due their employer’s decision not to re-employ them. As can be seen in Figure 7, 17 RSE workers took part in two phases, while only six participated in all three phases. During the last round of interviews, some participants who had not been
available for interviews in Vanuatu asked if there would be another chance to be interviewed back home. I explained that this was not possible. Others explained they had not believed I was going to travel to Vanuatu or expressed surprise that I had been unable to locate them in Vanuatu, questioning whether I had followed the instructions they gave in Phase 1.

As previous interviewees were interviewed again, Phase 3 provided the most extensive information of all the phases, and complemented insights from the earlier rounds of interviewing. They also addressed some topics that were not previously been discussed. This included some unprompted issues such as sexual and reproductive health, and negative events around some workers’ relationships affected by their involvement in the RSE.98 This phase was used to complement data obtained from the interviews with family, community and village members and to deepen my understanding of their relationships with people I had now met. Though some questions were repeated, they elicited different responses, as I was no longer a stranger after visiting their country and meeting their family. Participants related much better to my questions and had a better grasp of the information that I was looking for. The interviewees appreciated that I had achieved some understanding of Vanuatu because “you have been there, and you know how it is, how we live”. They seemed more confident in drawing comparisons between Vanuatu and New Zealand, acknowledging both positive and negative aspects of their specific experiences. Additionally, I asked workers for recommendations for improvements to RSE in the future.

The phased design proved fruitful for the purposes of this research as it allowed me to form a detailed picture of the workers’ social relations alongside their participation in the RSE scheme. In the first round of interviews with workers in New Zealand I gained inside knowledge about Ni-Vanuatu experiences, such as the introduction of electricity to villages, which I then saw first-hand when I visited Vanuatu for the second phase of interviewing. A total of 75 interviews were carried out with the workers and family and community members. As seen in Figure 7 above, the ideal scenario of having three interviews with each worker, and then one additional interview with a family member, or other person significant to the worker in the community or village, was only achieved in three cases. This methodological issue is also addressed in section 4.3.3. Although all research phases were designed to be carried out in English, in an effort to

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98 Topics that were not initially discussed appeared in the interviews, such as separation or divorce, child custody, sexuality, gender-based violence, among others.
encourage participation I asked participants to use Bislama or French words as needed, to facilitate the flow of interviews; only a few took up this option.

4.2.2 Interviews with RSE stakeholders

Interviews were conducted with key people involved in the RSE in New Zealand and Vanuatu, including staff and labour inspectors from the MBIE in New Zealand, staff at the Employment Service Unit (ESU) in the Vanuatu Department of Labour, and other stakeholders and contractors working directly with some specific aspects of the RSE, such as the Vakameasina programme. All these stakeholders were selected because they had specific roles and responsibilities in activities associated with RSE workers. Some supervised the recruitment of workers, others were labour inspectors, and others ran training workshops not directly related to workers’ economic activities.99 Nine interviews were carried out in total, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Grouping for RSE stakeholders’ interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Total = 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour Inspectors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Officers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews with these RSE stakeholders took place between November 2014 and March 2015. The timing of the interviews – following the Phase 1 interviews with workers – allowed me to tailor stakeholders’ interviews, based on preliminary findings, to address specific issues pertinent to their role in the RSE. The semi-structured interviews followed an interview schedule approved by the UAHPEC. This schedule was adjusted at the time of the interview, since it was not always possible to know in advance the extent of each participants’ knowledge and involvement with current RSE workers and/or the design or implementation of the training

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99 As mentioned before, apart from the workers’ regular working hours, some of them attend Vakameasina “Learning for Pacific Growth” workshops.
sessions they provided. Interviews were carried out in person at their workplaces or in local cafes close by and were in English.

### 4.3. Research Considerations

The design and fieldwork for this research prioritised ethical considerations. The study was approved by the UAHPEC and the *Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta*. Every effort was made to adhere as closely as possible to both sets of regulations in carrying out this research. In relation to the methodological framework used, it is important to acknowledge the different positions of the participants of this research, which were changing alongside the growing rapport and trust developed with myself as the researcher. Thus, expectations that grew out of this research – in part from the role I played as the researcher – had to be managed by pointing out official channels when concerns beyond the scope of this study were raised.

#### 4.3.1 The Researcher: *Askem blong save*

The ways in which I approached participants, to understand their experiences and the theoretical framework used, differs from previous research carried out with RSE workers and other key informants. According to Marcus “multisited fieldwork is thus always conducted with a keen awareness of being with the landscape, and as the landscape changes across sites, the identity of the ethnographer requires renegotiation” (1995: 112). As such, remaining aware of and renegotiating my identity as the study unfolded over the three phases, and between countries, was paramount when rephrasing questions, managing expectations and prompting with additional questions when unsure of what participants were expressing. In this regard, before producing knowledge, I had to first interrogate my motivations and positionality as a researcher.

The motivation to carry out this research stemmed from previous work experience as a development practitioner for local and international organisations. I had previously worked with the indigenous population in my home country Peru, carrying out field research in Andean...
and Coastal areas. One of these experiences brought me close to subsistence farmers with whom I estimated representative monthly quantities for values of production, sales, production destiny, and commercial channels for main crops. My first-hand appreciation of the challenges of policy design based on primary data collection with qualified informants has been nuanced over the last eight years in my work for the International Finance Corporation.

Monitoring and evaluation have been at the core of my previous work practice, in which capacity I have supported the design and evaluation of development interventions. In the course of this work I have increasingly questioned the use of standard research instruments and methodologies for communities to whom surveying methods are alien, and whose practices and understanding of themselves make these methodologies inappropriate. My academic studies have also moved me away from the positivist approach to the social sciences imparted during my undergraduate studies, to a broader understanding of individuals and social phenomena. In acknowledging that quantitative approaches, whilst carefully based in a theory of change, are insufficient to account for the impact of development projects and its unintended consequences, my understanding of development has matured and become more complex and critical. As a trained and licensed psychologist who has worked extensively in developing countries, I have learned to be self-aware in relation to my own culture and sensitivities, and to interrogate how they have shaped my values, attitudes and biases – and identify how they may influence how I approach any research topic. The knowledge and respect for how family structures, communities, hierarchies, values, and beliefs affecting these participants’ worldviews is also ingrained in my own worldview. Finally, through my work in the human resources arena, I understand how life experiences and cultural background create differences in workplaces.

Although I have a degree in Anthropology, the Phase 2 interviews in Vanuatu were my first experience of working in the field, and my own language limitations in terms of English, French, and Bislama were the backdrop of my fieldwork. As I often explained to the participants in this study, coming from a developing country on the other side of the very same Pacific Ocean, and being a woman working within a culture that values the differentiation of gender roles, meant fielding personal questions was commonplace for me. Before being perceived as trustworthy, I was asked questions ranging from my religious beliefs and age to my civil status and my knowledge about Vanuatu; this also happened sooner than I expected – sometimes in our first encounter. As a woman, my access to specific places and socially regulated spaces was limited, and particularly when carrying a recording device. In this sense,
Chapter 4

being with my male partner during some parts of the fieldwork, widened my own understandings as he was able to engage in the local *tok tok* with males and with village chiefs.

My motivation for undertaking this study has come from living in five different countries in the last 15 years, both because of my work and post graduate studies in The Netherlands and the USA, along with early work in my academic life that explored the local outcomes of transnational migration, and now the ongoing debates about migration management within the north-south divide. My previous academic research addressed cultural identity and resilience in the Peruvian diaspora in Patterson, New Jersey in the USA, the largest community of Peruvians living outside Peru – and migrant labour issues in rural-urban migration from the Andean regions to the capital of Peru, including domestic child labour, among others. All these experiences, alongside with my own family migration experiences, have both motivated me and informed my own perceptions as a social scientist and academic researcher, and also drastically altered my understanding of other peoples’ experiences.

I was educated in a Catholic school, and the resulting awareness of the different Christian values of various congregations and churches, as experienced by myself and different members of my family, has provided me with a critical viewpoint in relation to how religion can and has been instrumentalised in diverse indigenous contexts in my home country and other places in Latin America. Additionally, my friendship with a Ni-Vanuatu colleague at the time this research was being designed has had ongoing benefits in the study. I have been able to more easily bridge the divide with participants, who gradually became more accepting towards me personally and my position as a researcher. First, participants referred to me as a “friend” but soon some of the female participants started calling me “sister”, and one of the leaders even called me “the boss”. When asked, he clarified this appellative was because he thought of me as “understanding everything” and “asking the right questions”. All of these past experiences that form parts of my personal, social, and cultural baggage have provided me with clues and insights for the collection and understanding of relevant information, and shaped my understanding and interpretation of the relationships of Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers in their specific context in Vanuatu and New Zealand.
4.3.2 Ethical Considerations

After obtaining signed consent forms from their employers, participants were recruited and interviewed during their free time. It was emphasised at the time that this research is not related to any employer or government agency. I strongly believe that being an independent non-white academic researcher from a developing country meant workers were favourably disposed to interacting and connecting with me. After employers gave their permission for workers to participate in this study, assurances were sought from employers that workers would not be adversely affected by their participation in this research. To protect Ni-Vanuatu and prevent tensions between employers and workers, no questions directly addressing participants’ relations with their employers were asked, and the names of the employers are not disclosed to prevent identification when workers made unprompted comments about them. Rather than a study about RSE workers working for a specific employer, the focus of this study is individuals’ understandings and experiences working within the RSE scheme, which certainly had implications for research decisions and practice. However, the fact that employers had to authorise workers’ participation, per the UAHPEC recommendations, also set significant boundaries for the fieldwork.

Anonymity has been granted to all participants; neither their names nor any other information that may identify them is disclosed; instead I use pseudonyms to identify quotes and I have included vignettes to provide a brief portrait of participants and their experiences. Descriptions provided are very general to avoid identification when analysing interviews; for example, male respondents are differentiated from females. Using a coding system means I am the only person able to identify the participants by their names; all other information, including consent forms and digital recordings, are securely stored and have not been provided to any other party. Published results have not identified specific research participants or communities of origin, and participants’ islands of provenance are only mentioned in relation to the research design.

100 Previous doctoral academic research with Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers (Bailey, 2009; Prochazkova, 2012) involving participant observation in workplaces, reported that workers perceived researchers as being associated with firms’ management

101 Previous academic research with Ni-Vanuatu described employers as the absent topic in interviews – probably because workers did not want to affect their employment (Bailey, 2009; Prochazkova, 2012). Nonetheless, later doctoral theses have documented workers’ relationships with employers (Bailey, 2014b; Rockell, 2015).
This is intentional to prevent identification of the participants but does not ignore the reality that Vanuatu is far from a homogeneous country.

For the Vanuatu component of the study, I applied for an “Extended Visa”, which permits visits to Vanuatu for more than 30 days but less than four months for the purposes of undertaking research. Before applying for this visa, I liaised with the VKS to inform them about this research and apply for a research authorisation. Importantly, the VKS had recently lifted a year moratorium on cultural research, in place between 2013 and 2014 after which a new research policy ensured research was beneficial for Ni-Vanuatu. In abiding by all local laws relating to research, privacy and data collection, I committed to behaving in a manner not prejudicial to peace, good order, good government or public morality in Vanuatu – as established in the conditions of the visa. This research was approached as a collaborative endeavour between local communities, community leaders, as well as government institutions, and at all times respected Vanuatu’s cultural research policy.

4.3.3 **Limitations of the Research**

When reflecting about what could have been done differently for this research, four main points come to mind. I could have included participant observation in the research design; facilitated participation by not conditioning it to employer’s permission and interest in the research; carried out interviews in Bislama; and widened the distribution of interviews in Vanuatu. In terms of workers’ approach to the research, I believe the initial interviews were affected by social desirability bias, as workers responded according to what they thought I wanted them to say. This was evident with in the “all good” response, the silences when asked about sensitive issues such as leaving family behind, and the comparative richn ess of the Phase 3 interviews. For example, in relation to development in Vanuatu or in their communities due to the RSE scheme, workers who emphasised positive outcomes in the initial interviews, later articulated a critical position towards it. Other participants approached the recording device as if they were in a media interview and recited an almost scripted response that strongly resembled what I had read in the promotional material: “RSE brings development”, and further, “it is very good what you are doing here for your studies to show the development”. My exploration of their understanding of development referred mainly to infrastructure and material benefits. To try to
nuance this, I continuously emphasised that there were no right or wrong answers and that the purpose of this research was to understand what they thought about their own experiences.

A major limitation of this research derived from the multiple constraints on gaining approval for the core fieldwork (Haggerty, 2004). The UAHPEC limited the research design, participant recruitment, and participation. While I appreciate the UAHPEC’s consideration of the university’s responsibility regarding potential harm to the RSE workers as a result of participating in my research – fears that were partially confirmed by the employers’ early responses to my research\textsuperscript{102} – I disagree with the indirect restriction of the RSE worker’s freedom of speech and liberty to engage in the activities of their own choosing in their free time. Additionally, a traditional ethnography based on “thick description”, implying a deeper involvement with participants’ everyday life and practice, was not feasible due to time constraints and UAHPEC concerns regarding participant observation. The UAHPEC committee considered that potential participants would not necessarily be able to guarantee voluntary participation and their social and cultural sensitivity could be affected\textsuperscript{103} by the presence of observing foreign fieldworkers. I abided by the ethics committee’s recommendation, instead observing through listening, as ethnographers have to be “more participant listener than observer” (Forsey, 2010: 560). This use of ethnographic methods allows for a focus on other factors shaping social life and change (Brady, 2014).

UAHPEC also expressed concerns in relation to RSE participants being contracted to work directly for an employer. Accordingly, they requested that workers be assured by their direct employers that their position within the companies they work for will not be affected by their participation in this research. While this may guarantee on paper that no harm will be ensue,\textsuperscript{104} it allowed the employers to identify which employees were going to volunteer for the research and therefore may have influenced the interviews to a certain extent. Additionally, this prevented other willing individuals from participating in this research. As participants were not self-selected, but rather selected based on their employer’s interest in the research, they could

\textsuperscript{102} When explaining my research to the employers, I was often met with questions regarding the reasons I wanted to meet with their employees. One employer mentioned that I had chosen “the wrong country” and that my research would have been easier with Samoans participating in the scheme, because they were “easier to work with” than Ni-Vanuatu.

\textsuperscript{103} Initial concerns of the UAHPEC were directed towards the effectiveness “for a woman to conduct research of this nature with men” (UAHPEC Administrators, 2014) which focuses attention in the preventative activities undertaken by the University to manage potential risks.

\textsuperscript{104} UAHPEC aimed for participants to “be protected by seeking assurance of this from the direct employer.” (UAHPEC Administrators, 2014)
not freely decide whether they would like to participate in the research, thus employers acted as gatekeepers.

Despite my emphasis from the inception of this research on the workers’ vulnerable position, my initial proposal based on a recruitment method that did not rely on first appealing to the employers, because of the inherent power relations implied, was rejected by the UAHPEC. This, coupled with their risk averseness in relation to allowing foreign researchers to work in the Pacific limited the scope of this research. I agree with Haggerty, who considers that ethics boards have the “potential to introduce ever more regulations to manage potentially undesirable eventualities, the true likelihood of which is routinely unknown” (2004: 412). I believe these types of restrictions affect academic freedom and knowledge production by framing research as dangerous (Dingwall, 2008; Guta, Nixon, & Wilson, 2013), and set significant boundaries for this piece of academic research.

As another caveat, approaching the workers through their leaders sometimes backfired. One leader asked me to be his “spy” and report back on workers’ perceptions. I was also often asked to write “all good” in my thesis. While this may have been seen by leaders as reciprocating their assistance, I explained to them that I could not do that because of my own principles and reminded individuals about the anonymity granted to research participants in this research. Later self-reflection led to me acknowledge my own position of authority and how it may have affected the research.

I have taken great care to account for biases that may have involuntarily occurred, due to the unequal power relations between employers, workers’ leaders and participants and also between the participants and myself as the researcher. This imbalance could have been exacerbated in the second group of participants, as explained earlier in section 4.2.1.4. Participants’ motivation to take part in the study were also explored during the interviews. For example, participants may have volunteered themselves because they wanted to raise an issue with the expectation that this research may help in following up. Some workers were confident that I was “here to help …”. I explained that this research aimed to contribute to understanding their experiences in the RSE and beyond and directed them to take their specific concerns to other instances such as health centres and labour inspectors.

Conscious of the short-comings implied by interviewing participants in English, which is neither their nor my native language, this research has not focused on a detailed discourse analysis that privileges structure of expressions. Instead, in an effort to include participants’
structures of meanings, I have provided context to their quotes by using vignettes to focus on their descriptions and overall topics. Finally, due to constraints derived from the geographical setting and the resources available to support this research, Phase 2 of the research had to be limited only to two island locations and the period of time available had to be allocated as best as possible. The research had to be straightforward within the constraints that influenced its design. These restrictions resulted in some participants, who had asked to be visited in their home villages, only being interviewed in Phases 1 and 3. This compromise was also made with the intention of privileging depth rather than breadth.

4.4. Summary of Chapter

This chapter has dealt with the methodological approach used for this research. This research is a multisited three-phased study, which encompasses interviews with RSE workers in different locations in the Hawke’s Bay and Port Vila and Luganville surrounding villages, and over two agricultural seasons. The worker interviews were complemented with interviews with relatives and other members of their communities and villages. To align with the theoretical framework and also to complement existing anthropological studies of the RSE, I opted for a qualitative framework and document analysis to illustrate how policy narratives construct the experiences of workers in the RSE scheme. For that purpose, I interviewed key RSE stakeholders regarding their roles in the implementation of the RSE and the practices that the scheme entails.

I have described the rationale behind each of the three interview phases and how each phase was linked to a specific timeframe within the RSE cycle in relation to the agricultural season in New Zealand. I also provided the background to the process used to select each of the research sites and their importance in relation to the overall number of research participants in the study. Details of the selection and recruitment of participants were then provided along with descriptions of their basic socio-demographic characteristics. I concluded the chapter by critically examining important research considerations raised in the course of the study regarding my own positionality, ethics, and the limitations of this research. The following three chapters comprise the analysis derived from the methods used.
Chapter 5. The RSE and Seasonal Migration as a Development Policy

This chapter responds to the first research question aimed at identifying the discourses and bodies of knowledge that made the emergence of the RSE scheme possible. I discuss the “migration narratives” (Pécoud, 2015) at international and national levels that facilitated the emergence of the RSE as the solution of choice to the consensuated pressing problems in the Pacific. I analyse the RSE as a seasonal migration management scheme that is a product of the model supported in the last decades by international organisations such as the International Organization of Migration (IOM). A specific policy shift to migration management in the 1990s entailed the “orderly” management of migration for development. A feature of this shift is the temporary movement of persons (TMP), managed according to a business-like model that strives for a positive cost benefit analysis. The TMP emerged as a way of promoting economic development by capitalising on waged employment translated to remittances returned to sending countries (GCIM, 2005; Ghosh, 2000b).

To respond to the second part of the first question, I trace the storyline in the migration and development narratives identifying their premises and conclusions (Roe, 1991) that made possible the emergence of the RSE scheme. I interrogate the discourses underlying the RSE scheme and the legitimating role of international organisations such as International Labour Organization (ILO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank (ILO, 2015b; OECD, 2010; OECD, 2011; World Bank, 2012) in maintaining such narratives. I draw attention to the grey literature put out by the World Bank (World Bank, 2006a; World Bank, 2006b; World Bank, 2012), on which the RSE scheme is based, and to endorsements from the ILO and the OECD which supported to the scheme’s continuation. I articulate how the shared understanding of the RSE scheme as a development programme has constituted it as an object of technical expertise regarding pressing issues in the Pacific. The underlying narrative logic to problems of overpopulation and security by some scholars working in the South Pacific (Duncan & Chand, 2002; May, 2003; Ware, 2005; Ware, 2004), the World Bank, and other government stakeholders framed and contributed to the simplification of problems and solutions by excluding discussions on political issues.
I analyse how the RSE was designed based on the “4 Cs” – choice of workers, circular movement, cost-sharing of travel related costs, and commercial viability – as “best practice”, and how specific social practices, by both sending and receiving countries, are incorporated into the scheme. In doing so, I show how the current RSE policy was logically derived from a depoliticised migration management approach. To draw attention to how discourses construct migration management narratives and official policies and practices, I give examples of how the employer requirement of providing workers with accommodation and pastoral care can result in apparently legitimate constraints on workers’ social rights. Constructing RSE workers as less able “others”, as individuals with special needs and requiring instruction, care, and protection, can easily be translated into the need for oversight and control. This chapter interrogates the views of development that go hand in hand with the depolitisation of seasonal migration by international organisations and governments alike. It is not my intention to diminish the economic achievements of New Zealand companies and the individuals participating in the scheme (IMSED Research, 2010; McKenzie & Gibson, 2014). Rather I want to draw attention to the consequences of exclusive reliance on monetary and measurable gains as sufficient justification for maintaining temporal migration programmes.

5.1. Narratives and Bodies of Knowledge underpinning the RSE policy

“The best contemporary myth is the idea of a science purged of all myths”.
(Serres & Latour, 1995: 128)

In this section I discuss how New Zealand adopted the 1990s’ international policy shift to migration management that linked migration to development. While migration schemes for Pacific peoples have existed since the mid 1960s, they fall outside the scope of this thesis because development was not a concern in their design. My focus is on the linkages between temporary migration management and development occurring in New Zealand with the RSE scheme. I highlight that knowledge is never free from the political and historical context in

105 I come back to these in Chapter 6 where I analyse the RSE practices that lie outside international “best practice” but have been adapted from existing social practices/habits in New Zealand and Vanuatu.
106 Refer to section 3.1.2.
which it is produced, as demonstrated by the problematisation of being unemployed and young in the Pacific. I discuss the premises (Roe, 1991) entwined in the discourses of security and belittlement around Pacific countries and peoples.

5.1.1 The Demographics of (In)security

“If ‘failed states’ themselves present a security concern for surrounding industrialised nations, then any policy that reduces the fragility of these small states-and indeed of the most vulnerable sections of these fragile states—should be seriously considered.”

(World Bank, 2006a: 20)

The argument for security has a long history as a political strategy for imposing policies. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss this further, apart from highlighting international migration as an instrument used to guarantee security in the South Pacific region. Documents discussing migration management are significantly concerned with the prevention of incidents that could compromise security.107 Australia and later New Zealand had growing security concerns as Pacific economies were becoming integrated into international processes of global connection (Craig et al., 2014; Hoadley, 2005). Interventionism in domestic affairs could then be justified on the grounds of the “failed state” paradigm, as described by Wesley Smith (2007) in referring to Australia’s cooperative “hands on” intervention in Solomon Islands.

The term “arc of instability” was coined in the late 1990s (Dibb et al., 1999) to describe the “Pacific arc”, which referred to countries in the Western Pacific. This turned the geographical descriptor and concerns about Indonesia and East Timor’s path to independence into a strategic concept in Australian defence planning (Wallis, 2012). This characterisation influenced political discourse in the region and provided a justification for interventionism (Fraenkel, 2004; Wesley-Smith, 2007).108 Potential for state failure in the South Pacific was attributed to the fragmentation of Melanesian polities (Dinnen, Porter, & Sage, 2010; Reilly, 2000) which

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107 Some of the seminal reports from international organisations that link migration to security (GCHS, 2003; GCIM, 2005; WCSDG, 2004) have been analysed by Pécoud (2015).

108 See Wallis (2015) for an analysis on how the regional order evolved from the late 1990s until the mid-2010s.
caused states to fail (Reilly, 2000). Internal conflicts and ethnic structure which generated
loyalties to local kinship groups were “associated with specific political and economic
outcomes, including variation in political stability, economic development, and internal
conflict from country to country” (Reilly, 2000: 479). All of this warned of the potential for
moving from state weakness to state collapse (Ayson, 2007).

At the turn of the century, the South Pacific was still being portrayed as in need of a “safety
valve” to prevent unrest and address the challenges of this diverse region (AusAID, 2006;
Duncan & Chand, 2002; May, 2003; Ware, 2005; Ware, 2004). Despite this diversity,
Australian national security interests have placed concerns with Pacific regionalism, alongside
“neoliberal development as the panacea for conflict resolution” (Fry, 2004: 19). Concerns
about the use of aid for the delivery of public goods and services or the lack of private sector
markets were seen as having regional spill-over effects (Dinnen et al., 2010). Hence,
imperatives of regional security displaced policy responses from the complexity of local
realities.

Trends in economic indicators such as paid employment juxtaposed with demographic data on
fertility and mortality rates anticipated that a growing portion of the young population would
be unemployed. Hoadley suggests there was an international reassessment of Western laissez
faire policies in the 1990s, which motivated analysts in New Zealand and Australia to record
and analyse the “apparently growing frequency and severity of poverty, corruption, crime,
ethnic and secessionist violence, and military coups” (2005: 6), particularly in Melanesia. Thus,
managed temporary mobility was justified as a proactive intervention because Pacific countries
lacked the capacity to take care of their own economic growth and development. I believe this
belittlement discourse has been extended to Pacific peoples, as I will discuss later in this
chapter.

Unemployment and security concerns are closely linked in the South Pacific. Unemployment has arisen primarily from rural-urban migration – and increased urbanisation – but is also, and emphatically, tied to criminality and security. Duncan and Chand have argued that: “The combination of limited growth in output, trade and employment opportunities,

109 See also arguments related to the “Pacific Paradox” (Ogden, 1989) a term coined by the World Bank (1993) in another
influential report.
110 See Dardot and Laval (2014) and Beck (1992) for other cases in which social risks were derived from the functioning of
the economy and society in their causes and effects.
together with high population growth and poor emigration prospects for those seeking employment, provides fertile ground for conflict” (2002: 8). Civil unrest and criminality are commonly associated with a significant proportion of young, male and unemployed in the population. It is therefore assumed that guaranteeing employment opportunities can reduce potential violence outbursts. The section below provides the background to these premises.

5.1.2 Unemployment and Rural-Urban Migration

“Urbanization in the Pacific is linked to conflict because it creates concentrations of unemployed youths who otherwise might still have been underemployed in the rural areas, but would not have been grouped together standing on the street corners with nothing much to do”

(Ware, 2004: 2).

Political concern in New Zealand about migration and poverty in the South Pacific can be traced back to the 1960s. More recently, since the 1990s, Australia and New Zealand increased their involvement in the region (Craig et al., 2014; Hoadley, 2005). A link between the demographic “youth bulge” and unemployment in Melanesia was attributed to an increase in rural-urban mobility leading to the establishment of squatter settlements in urban areas. The shift from living in rural to urban areas meant having to adapt to changes associated with moving away from an agrarian based way of life. This was occurring alongside an increasing trend in youth unemployment since the previous decades (AusAID, 2006; Ware, 2004).

Estimating unemployment in the region has been challenging since the first half of the 1980s, as statistics are based on a variety of census data categories, such as “seeking work”, which mask the real dimensions of unemployment (Connell, 1984). In Vanuatu, the Urban Census of 1985 tried to formalise unemployment for census purposes, using a definition based on usual activity to assess whether a person was unemployed or not (VNPSO, 1986). However, in the following 1989 census, the definition was revised from usual activity to current activity. Thus, employment was defined as having worked for one hour or more during the last week. People

111 In 1966 the Tokelau Islands Resettlement Scheme encouraged migration because of demographic concerns (Connell, 2009). In 1962, following the Treaty of Friendship between New Zealand and Samoa (1962) an annual quota for Samoan migrants was introduced, which is still in place (see also section 3.1.2).
without work but actively seeking employment were described as unemployed. Under this new
definition, subsistence farmers were considered as employed if they sold or gathered produce
for their own consumption (VNPSO, 1991). Applying the concept of unemployment to
individuals mostly operating in a semi-subsistence economy in countries such as Vanuatu is,
at the very least, debatable.

The last Vanuatu mini-census (VNSO, 2017) estimates that 3.4 percent of the population is
economically inactive. Of this total, 25 percent in urban and 75 percent in rural areas were not
economically active in the last 15 days. This latest census has a separate category for
individuals working in the production of goods and as family workers, estimated at 35.1 percent
and 29.9 percent respectively. However, if subsistence workers were included in the
unemployed category, as it was argued in the 2009 census (VNSO, 2011) – on the grounds that
people would look for work if they believed cash work was available – the total unemployment
rate would increase to 65 percent in 2016 compared to 47 percent in 2009. As acknowledged
in the latter census report: “Depending on the assumptions a user of these data may wish to
use, the resulting unemployment rate would fall somewhere between 4.6% and 47%” (VNSO,
2011: xiii). The construction of the “unemployed” category according to different definitions
influences how policies are enacted, and how individuals and specific groups understand
themselves in relation to others. At the higher end, the figures reflect the untapped potential
of a segment of the population that could become productive if the right policies were in place.

In 2006, the World Bank published a report, funded by the Australian government, which has
been pivotal to the RSE (HortNZ, 2009). This report conveyed institutionally endorsed
recommendations (World Bank, 2017a) and generated momentum for the launch of the
scheme. Although authored by World Bank staff and consultants, “Pacific Islands: At Home &
Away” (World Bank, 2006a: iii) represents the formal opinion of a World Bank technical unit
on the topic of labour mobility. Acknowledging that Vanuatu data on aggregate employment
does not provide a basis for projections of formal employment growth, the report uses GDP
based trends as “guesstimates of formal sector employment growth” (World Bank, 2006a: 35)
to estimate the potential number of people that could seek overseas employment. In this sense,

112 Note that the last census (VNSO, 2011) reflects surveys undertaken after the RSE was launched. Then, the national
unemployment rate was estimated at 4.6 percent overall but as high as 12 percent in urban areas.
113 See Chapter 7 for my analysis on the subjectivities from RSE workers compared to the “unemployed” back at home.
114 The Economic and Sectoral Work (ESW) studies are part of the original World Bank analytic reports (World Bank,
2017a).
the inclusion of Ni-Vanuatu in the RSE pilot is questionable because of the lack of reliable data.

### 5.1.3 The responsibilisation of young people

“[…] there are increasing numbers of long-term, unemployed, under-employed, and illegally employed youth. Because of the lack of investment and job creation, the countries are foregoing the economic advantages that they would otherwise be able to reap through the employment of these potential workers. On the contrary, the large numbers of under-employed youth have been linked to increasing social problems and also provide one of the ingredients for civil unrest. Hence, they become one of the factors behind the low levels of investment and job creation.”

(World Bank, 2006a: 27)

The above excerpt reflects how the World Bank report transferred the problem of unemployment to “the young and the restless” (World Bank, 2006a: 27). Young people were portrayed as being behind the outbreaks of disorder which were a factor in the low levels of investment, which was in turn impacting employment opportunities. This type of statement reinforces an understanding of a vicious cycle in relation to security created by being young and unemployed which can hide the root causes of development issues – or misrepresent them.

The lack of economic development in the Pacific, due to a variety of internal factors, was linked to unemployment and the lack of local jobs because of limited economic growth. A decade earlier, Wesley Smith had argued that “Analyses of economic development problems in the Pacific Islands […] typically emphasize internal “barriers” or “impediments” to growth while managing to ignore the global forces that have structured island economies for centuries” (1995: 121). Along the same lines, the body of knowledge produced before the RSE was launched, through reports and conferences, emphasises the limitations of Pacific Islands’ governments and their local economies in coping with the youth bulge.

In contrast, migration narratives reveal the “solution” to “problems”, underpinned by the knowledge created by social scientists working in the region. Pécoud (2015) argues that while these narratives rely on research and evidence, the underlying problems or their origins are barely problematised. At the same time, the interests of New Zealand and Pacific countries
seemingly resonated with each other. New Zealand’s growing horticulture and viticulture export sector faced a pressing need for a reliable work force, and Pacific nations such as Vanuatu were pushing for access to labour markets in New Zealand and Australia.

I have presented a certain consensus among scholars and policy makers in the region regarding the issues in the South Pacific. The next section unfolds how the migration and development narratives that allowed the RSE to emerge as a solution are expression of the global shift in migration management. There is a governmental aspect in governments being encouraged to pilot such an initiative to ensure economic and socio-political stability in the region by addressing unemployment and the associated security risks.

### 5.2. Migration and Development Narratives

“In many Pacific island countries the remittances that flow from international migrants are a prominent feature of the national economy [...] existing information has been inadequate in informing us on the use of remittances, on their real and potential contribution to domestic incomes and economic development, on their influence on social change or continuity, and the extent to which migration and remittances contribute to inequality or on their ability to constitute a safety net.”

*(World Bank, 2006a: 42)*

I have traced the construction of the problems in the South Pacific region via a double discourse. First, a discourse on security originated in policy management discussion among the developed countries in the region that is intertwined with a second belittlement discourse towards their less developed neighbours. Below, I discuss how these narratives contribute to setting the basis for the management of migration by shaping the “norms and forms” (Andrijasevic & Walters, 2010) applied to the international government of borders via interventionism. Following Hoadley (2005), I understand interventionism as the proactive policies undertaken to prevent the occurrence of “failed states”. By addressing the political dimensions of migration, and how migration is governed at international, national and individual levels, I draw attention to how the depoliticisation of migration operates and the particular kinds of transformations in social relations based on such “neutral” arrangements. This study describes the depoliticisation brought by migration management in the form of the claimed truths and expert knowledge used as tools to manage the RSE scheme.
The global shift towards “new guest worker regimes” (Samers, 2016) implies changes in how temporary migration is managed. The management of the RSE scheme incorporates these changes in the form of the technologies and rationalities of migration management. In my analysis, I highlight how neoliberal rationalities have become normalised forms of power that constitute forms of domination (Miller & Rose, 1990). While the objective of this thesis is not to identify whether seasonal migration is part of a “global mobility regime” (Koslowski, 2011), I will explain how the RSE has been positioned as a preferred alternative by using the “triple win” notion that portrays the scheme as beneficial to all stakeholders.

The development narratives that consider the RSE as a best practice scheme in labour migration may prevent policy makers from actively exploring the other options for Ni-Vanuatu to migrate to New Zealand, such as the Pacific Access visa. The global narratives around migration management that emanate from international organisations such as the IOM or the World Bank, consider such management apolitical processes. This apolitical approach can also be detected in the narratives contributing to the continuation of the RSE. I argue that when such narratives are ultimately linked to a global framework for development such as the SDGs, the concerns of workers involved can be overlooked.

These migration and development narratives are not necessarily transmitted in a top down manner. In the RSE, private sector needs were transferred to government officials who “partnered” in the National Labour Governance Group to achieve success (Hampshire, 2015), ultimately transferring these narratives to employers (Mannerinng, 2008), workers, and their relatives. Starting with the World Bank, which facilitated the pilot of the scheme, and supported by the ILO and OECD’s recognition of the scheme as best practice, Pacific governments and other stakeholders have contributed to the legitimation of these migration management and development narratives, sometimes overlooking workers’ concerns.

5.2.1 Consensus in narratives

“It is not so much a question of what a word or a text ‘means’ […] but of analysing the way a word or a book functions in connection with other things, what it makes possible, the

The success of narratives and their reification depends on a variety of factors beyond their discursive iteration and echoing by scholars and the official reports of international organisations. According to Boswell, Geddes & Scholten (2011), narratives are likely to be more successful when they meet three criteria. They need to be: 1) cognitively plausible; 2) dramatically or morally compelling; and 3) converge with predominant perceived interests. In this sense, narratives capitalise on the “special relationship” that New Zealand has with the Pacific, from earlier colonial ties and its domestic and international interests, which provide a “historical–ideological explanation” to the choice of labour pools (Barker, 2010). The first section of this chapter outlined how different bodies of knowledge constructed the problems of Pacific countries in a cognitively plausible and simplified way, so setting the basis for finding solutions. I now explain the moral imperative and the convergence of interests.

New Zealand’s relationship with its neighbours in the Pacific is understood in a moral way as there is a sense of responsibility for development in the region. As the Parliamentary Inquiry into New Zealand’s relationships with South Pacific countries states:

“[...] many of the poorest Pacific societies are to be found in Melanesia, rather than Polynesia. Our desire to progress the sustainable development of countries in our immediate region of the Pacific should therefore be tempered by the need to simultaneously address very low standards of living [my emphasis] in parts of Melanesia.” (New Zealand House of Representatives, 2010: 22)

This logical solution carries the moral obligation of transforming the “arc of instability” into an “arc of responsibility” (Dobell, 2012; Wallis, 2012). The next logical step to preventing problems in the “arc of instability” was to intervene to address the problem that insecurity posed. As Hoadley argues, since the 1990s:

“[...] the governments of New Zealand and Australia increasingly took the responsibility of managing South Pacific affairs in order to bolster government stability, keep public order, and
However, because Melanesian states were constituted during colonial times, they were never states in a Western sense and so therefore not prone to falling apart or failing in the way feared by New Zealand and Australia. Colonial divisions overlaid traditional indigenous social and political organisation and so a Western-style model of state was never consolidated (Fraenkel, 2004; Wesley-Smith, 2007).

Additionally, development can be presented as a “technology of security” (Duffield, 2001), creating a biopolitical distinction between development and underdevelopment, both “connected but separate assemblages of institutions, techniques and interventions by which life is supported and distinguished internationally. […] Reflecting its organic ties with racism, development embodies a biopolitical separation of the human species into developed and underdeveloped species-life” (Duffield, 2001: 217). Similarly, the “governmentalization of the aid industry” can reterritorialise weak and fragile states through “administrative arrangements allowing aid and politics to work together in the interests of peace and stability” (Duffield, 2001: 223).

The moral imperative to assist in the development of the Pacific and behave as good neighbours (HortNZ, 2007b), evident in the narratives of development and migration,116 aligned neatly with the interests of other RSE stakeholders. First, the private sector in New Zealand had been lobbying the government for a solution to securing a reliable labour force (Chapman, 2017b) and considered the RSE as partly fulfilling their social obligation to assist with employment opportunities (HortNZ, 2007a). Second, the New Zealand Government has a stated aim “to support economic growth and productivity of the industry as a whole” (INZ, 2016b: 1). The participatory approach taken by policy makers working on a Medium-Long-Term Horticulture and Viticulture Seasonal Labour Strategy paved the way for the RSE scheme, which chimed with the interests of the main parties involved (OECD, 2014b). The third factor was South Pacific countries’ historical and ongoing advocacy for access to labour markets in Australia and New Zealand.

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116 Lewis (2014) notes that the official discourse during the inception of the RSE was focused on regulations to manage risks.
Politicians in the South Pacific have been advocating for labour mobility since before the signing of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) in 2001. The PACER agreement committed to integrating labour markets and labour mobility – considered a central element in economic integration between the Forum Island Countries and Australia and New Zealand (Noonan, 2011). The focus of discussions was shifting away from deploying development aid and towards accessing employment, as it was already acknowledged that the Pacific local economies could not generate enough jobs for the young and unskilled.

In the mid 2000s, the focus of negotiations between New Zealand and Pacific Island Countries (PICs) was on managing the excess supply of unskilled labour. Because young people lacked skills, they fared worse in comparison to “skilled” workers who, in theory, had more employment options. Greater labour mobility for unskilled youth was favoured, as it was argued mobility could expand employment options. Pacific governments would therefore no longer be dependent on increasing access to education, traditionally considered as the way to mitigate unemployment (Booth, 1994).

The next phase of Pacific governments’ advocacy for increased labour mobility opportunities can be traced to the Pacific Plan documents in 2005. Labour mobility is a component of the economic growth pillar in the Kalibobo Roadmap (PIFS, 2005). The roadmap document aims to give practical effect to the Pacific Plan by highlighting key priorities and implementation requirements during the first three years of its implementation. Labour mobility is one of the 24 initiatives identified for immediate implementation between 2005 and 2014: “The key objective is improved income earnings and livelihoods through better access [their emphasis] to goods, services, employment and other development opportunities. The Plan includes initiatives for better access to markets and goods, trade in services including labour” (PIFS, 2005: 9). Pacific leaders attempted to extend the regional integration framework beyond the trade in goods and sought guarantees of labour mobility (Barker, 2010). Temporary movement of labour for the unskilled was subsequently included in the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Economic Partnerships Agreement (EPA), and later in PACER Plus (Maclellan & Mares, 2006).

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117 The Pacific Plan was the PIF regional strategy for strengthening cooperation and integration between Pacific countries. Among its objectives was achieving “a region of peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity” (PIF, 2017: 1). Nonetheless, Hoadley (2005) draws attention to the earlier passing of the Biketawa Declaration (PIF, 2000), led by New Zealand and Australia, which had established their regional responsibility to intervene during crises in any of the member countries.
The RSE scheme responds to a strong lobby for temporal labour from the horticulture and viticulture industry associations in New Zealand (Chapman, 2017b) grounded on data that informed its design (World Bank, 2006a) and international agreements that supported its emergence. Policy makers from the participating governments had engaged in preparatory discussions prior to the launch of the scheme. In June 2006, before the official launch of the RSE, the Pacific Cooperation Foundation (PCF) collaborated with the World Bank to hold a conference (Whatman & van Beek, 2008) where research was presented to inform the development of the RSE policy and generate media attention on the subject (PCF, 2013; Plimmer, 2006). The PCF, funded by New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), is an independent partnership between the public and private sectors in New Zealand, and Pacific Island countries. Stakeholders at this conference considered overseas employment as an alternative for Pacific countries, by which unstable and weak governance, public sector inefficiencies, and high aid dependency could be addressed (Plimmer, 2006).

The choice of labour mobility was plausible because international migration was considered as being less dependent on local economies than on the destination countries. Regional scholars argued that access to external opportunities for paid employment was crucial to preventing conflict, as creating new jobs would not be possible for Pacific economies (Duncan, 2008; Ware, 2007). In this way increases in unemployment rates could be prevented by providing access to labour markets in New Zealand and Australia (R. Bedford, 2008b; Stahl & Appleyard, 2007). Private sector representatives from the horticulture and viticulture sectors in New Zealand also stressed that access to jobs through increased labour mobility was essential to their sector development.

Similarly, the World Bank, “motivated by the need for jobs for the Pacific Islanders who cannot source them domestically” (World Bank, 2006a: iii), had discussed seasonal migration and a variety of possible arrangements for TMP, drawing on examples from other countries. The most frequently occurring word in that report is “remittances”, although the lack of empirical evidence to support the relationship between remittances and development is acknowledged at the same time. The evidence needed to connect migration, remittances and development was

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118 See Freeman’s (1995) work with government officials for a discussion of how clientelism drives the liberalisation of migration policies in liberal democracies.
119 The OECD (2014b) considers the RSE as an example of a co-produced policy within a participatory policy-making process. See also Whatman and Van Beek (2008).
120 Plimmer has compiled the speeches and sessions that were discussed during the Pacific Cooperation Foundation Forum in 2006.
provided by a case study of a small region in Australia as part of an analysis of Fiji migration programmes. In this report, migration is understood as a household strategy for allocating individuals on the basis of a causal inter-relationship between remittances and human capital (World Bank, 2006a), which is aligned with the new economics of labour migration theories (J. E. Taylor, 1996). If other options for job creation had been proposed, the report could have questioned the type of human capital created by circular migration programmes and presented potential alternatives to the TMP.

Barker (2010) argues that the RSE aimed not only at addressing the “migration-democratic development nexus” but also foreign policy goals of regional integration and stability. Migration management brings along with it a set of values that are transferred through the narratives of migration and development in policies, discourses, and technical proposals. Despite the small number of workers, the scheme has high political symbolism (Barker, 2010). The RSE is presented as a technical solution of choice for managing the existing problems in the region because of the triple wins expected. At the same time, labour mobility has become commonplace in policy planning in New Zealand and in Vanuatu. The documents analysed follow a similar storyline, showcasing the problems such as population growth, civil unrest, unemployment, insecurity and the preventative nature of the TMP. This solution is set forth as seemingly exempt from competing values and interests (Boswell et al., 2011). However, presenting the TMP as a neutral and technical solution, precludes a discussion of political issues at the core of the perceived problems and solutions while they are formulated. These data driven solutions therefore exclude other potential alternatives from being taken into consideration.

5.2.2 The “triple win” as narrative conclusion

“IMN [international migration narratives] are eager to demonstrate that their recommendations are in the interests of all parties (sending and receiving countries, and migrants themselves), which is indeed a condition for their universality […] The ’in the same boat’ and ’triple-win’ arguments pave the way for the sensitive argument concerning the need for cooperation.”

(Pécoud, 2015: 68-69)

121 See Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan (2016).
Migration management and employment had become linked, and TMP by seasonal migration was the chosen instrument for achieving development. The World Bank’s argument that “[…] the features highlighted as being essential to a successful TMP scheme have universal applicability” (World Bank, 2006a: 20) presupposes its neutral and depoliticised nature as a solution. Accordingly, this specific form of development is naturalised as a technically feasible solution which can be implemented through direct or indirect policy initiatives (Geiger & Pécoud, 2013).

Certain modes of problematisation – such as unemployment and security – are dependent on how social reality is represented. The supposed pragmatism brought by migration management ultimately depoliticises such problematisations (Pécoud, 2015). According to Escobar, “a certain order of discourse produces permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible” (2012: 5). In this case, the goal of development and the promise of a triple win, alongside the reduction of a population to its economic and demographic indicators engendered temporal migration as a solution. Demographic analysis, hand in hand with statistics, constituted the reality of insecurity, overpopulation and unemployment in the Pacific, or, borrowing from Escobar, “colonised the reality”. Conversely, the paradigms of economic development and growth are not problematised as economic benefits can supposedly be “objectively” measured to assure the neutrality of policy making. This assumption is problematic in that it depoliticises the decision making behind policies, which can ultimately prevent such decisions being questioned.

The origins of the “triple win” scenario can be seen in the IOM’s (2004) support of proper migration management for the benefit of all stakeholders involved: the countries of origin and destination, migrants and their communities. The RSE was designed to align with this temporary migration management argument (Ramasamy et al., 2008). The IOM supports TMP as favourable when it occurs voluntarily and it is orderly and well managed (IOM, 2011). Under this logic, developing countries opt for labour opportunities in developed countries where there is an “objective” statistical mismatch of labour demand and supply. In this way, the labour needs of countries of origin and destination are linked; destination countries facing labour shortages can address labour scarcity through temporary migration, while the temporary migrants are incentivised by monetary gains to move temporarily to provide their labour. Since

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122 Lewis (2014) refers to the crafting of a triple win discourse as part of the RSE imaginary.
no policy outcomes can be neutral, the need to raise questions about whose interests are enhanced or threatened by these particular events or trends becomes evident.

The circularity of seasonal migration guarantees that participants do not fully leave their countries of origin. Instead, workers are turned into positive and responsible “agents of change”. This change is brought about by remittances, knowledge transfer, and the creation of businesses and trade networks derived as benefits of the scheme. RSE workers are expected to establish a flow of remittances to encourage development activity in their own communities, and economic development for their country as a whole. At this point, the justification of the RSE scheme as a neutral economic development solution suddenly disappears, as the entire political, social and economic responsibility for development is placed on the shoulders of the workers who are responsible for their own development. This responsibility does not even fall to the sending countries’ governments, but rather on those individuals who produce the benefits.

Therefore, the triple win scenario is contradicted by the operationalisation of the programme, and its neutrality by the highly unequal sharing of benefits. The reliance on RSE workers’ remittances to promote development, as articulated in the triple win argument, is based on a purely cost-benefit analysis (Ramasamy et al., 2008). This analysis presents relatively similar levels of benefit for the involved parties, shifting attention away from any potential imbalance in the “wins”, or the conditions under which they are produced, as if the end of development justifies the means used to achieve it. When assessed according to these criteria, up until 2013 the RSE had “resulted in direct financial benefits for workers, stabilized labour supply to the horticultural industry that has grown by $2 billion in exports over the period, and regularized illegal labour supply in the sector” (PCF, 2013). This last assertion needs to be carefully considered in light of the recently publicised cases of RSE employers breaching RSE policy (Chapman, 2017a; Dateline Pacific, 2017; Hardie, 2017; TVNZ Q+A, 2017), and because contractors still represent an issue in the industry (Stringer, 2016).

Following the money is outside the scope of this thesis, although this could be done if all the gains from the scheme were accounted for in the same way, and publicly disclosed, as are the workers’ remittances (R. Bedford & Bedford, 2017; Woodhouse, 2017a). Instead, I contrast the clear and measurable gains for the New Zealand industry, which does not have equivalent dimensions in terms of the economic development achieved in the sending countries. For example, the last three annual surveys of RSE scheme employers’ surveys showcase significant
advances in the hiring of New Zealand workers in the viticulture and horticulture sectors. The most recent survey report states that “79 percent of employers were able to employ more permanent New Zealand workers, in addition to RSE workers” (Research New Zealand, 2016: 8). Employers reported having employed in average six permanent and 20 seasonal workers because of their participation in the RSE scheme. Employers have also invested in up-skilling New Zealanders in different regions (Tipples and Rawlinson, 2014) and are constantly urged to continue this trend (Grant-Mackie, 2014; Hardie, 2017; Woodhouse & Tolley, 2016). Nonetheless, I question why these gains in job opportunities could not also benefit some Ni-Vanuatu participating in the scheme in different ways, as some of them would also like to have a different or more permanent job opportunity.

Governments seeking to solve the problem of unemployment and insecurity under the New Public Management (NPM) model, need to do so based on expert knowledge, statistics and other tools that render the problem manageable. In this way, the core issues are simplified and standard policy recommendations justified (Ferguson, 1990; Roe, 1994). I have discussed the effects of the problematisation underpinning the narratives that link migration to development, and their instrumentalisation. The next section focuses on uptake of knowledge in highlighting the different techniques used in knowledge transfer of the universally accepted features of a temporary migration scheme. Following my theoretical framework, I call these governmental techniques as they can be considered as components of the mundane programmes that give effect to governmental ambitions (Rose & Miller, 2010). I focus on the specificities of those techniques and on the narratives that are used to manage and legitimise the RSE as a solution to address PICs problems.

5.3. The adoption of the “4 Cs” of migration management

“It is also perceptible in the managerial/technical language used by migration management actors. In their view, there are policies that work and policies that don’t work – hence the popularity of notions such as ‘good’ (or even ‘best’) practices. This evacuates questions of power, principles, interests or conflicts”.

(Pécoud, 2015: 11)

123 Common locals’ jobs include supervisory roles in quality control and phytosanitary inspections, truck drivers, and packhouse workers (Mackay, 2009).
An analysis from a governmentality perspective is concerned with the historical and political dimensions underpinning the problematisation of conduct. I have already identified the bodies of knowledge that engendered the problematisation of insecurity and unemployment, along with the various actors and interests involved. The participation of the World Bank through providing policy advice and technical assistance to the RSE was pivotal in its design and operationalisation (Winters, 2016). In the following sections I outline World Bank recommendations on the design of incentives for the RSE scheme, following the “4Cs” that have guided the previous programmes in deriving economic gains: choice of workers, circular movement, cost-sharing of travel related costs, and commercial viability (McKenzie et al., 2008; World Bank, 2006a).

5.3.1 Choice of workers

“Choice of workers to ensure that hiring is skill-appropriate rather than hiring over-qualified workers who are likely to use the scheme as a stepping stone”

(World Bank, 2006a: v)

Choice of workers means identifying which skills are appropriate – no more and no less – for the job. Accordingly, recruiters should discriminate among applicants to identify individuals with the right skills. The initial “work ready pool” that allowed potential workers to register directly (Gibson & McKenzie, 2010; Maclellan, 2008) in a database is not used anymore in Vanuatu. Nowadays, the recruitment of Ni-Vanuatu is carried out by private agents. This is partly because the Department of Labour Employment Services Unit (ESU) did not have the necessary human resources to carry out this role, and by the second season employers had started shifting away from using agents to recruiting directly (IMSED Research, 2010). Employers realised that “groups sourced from the same community are more cohesive, work better together, and have recognised leaders who can support and monitor the group” (IMSED Research, 2010: x). In the two companies involved in this study, recruitment was carried out directly by the New Zealand employers who contracted the workers with the assistance of workers’ leaders.
Chapter 5

The first RSE evaluation stated that recruitment should be managed so as to prevent risks “to New Zealand’s public health through seriously ill workers arriving in New Zealand and risks to New Zealand’s border security and public safety through people with a criminal conviction or an unlawful immigration history being recruited” (IMSED Research, 2010: 71). The regulation of recruitment and other immigration requirements guaranteed that workers with a certain profile migrated. Similarly to earlier labour migration experiences, governments have promoted recruitment systems which incorporate existing networks into new institutions (Goss & Lindquist, 2000). Variations in the volume and composition of international migration through the RSE can be traced in first instance to the World Bank. Next in line, are the New Zealand and Vanuatu governments and third, other authority figures from the church and local communities in Vanuatu, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

This selectivity in recruitment encourages the portrayal of temporary migrants as a threat to local labour; thus, the associated need to emphasise the New Zealanders first criteria to provide assurance that migrants do not take jobs from locals. By choosing who will migrate, governments, communities, workers’ leaders, churches, private agents and employers actively engage with Ni-Vanuatu before they migrate, both through recruitment and selection. The workers are also assessed according to an array of personal traits and character criteria, such as productivity, work ethic, etc. as will be discussed in the following chapters. Behaving according to the above-mentioned guidelines can also contribute to workers being selected for a next season, thereby enabling engagement in the circularity of the scheme.

5.3.2 Circular movement

“Circular movement of workers to allow good employees to return in subsequent years rather than be offered a one-time only chance at off-shore employment thereby reducing the incentive to violate the arrangement”

(World Bank, 2006a: v).

124 See Taneka (2013) for an exploration of the role of nationalism in the construction of the temporal migrant in the RSE. She argues that this category has led to regulation of the use of a labour force that is in excess in Pacific countries by naturalising the discriminatory nature of national border control against the free movement of people and has also legitimised the differential inclusion of Pacific workers, which has implications for workers’ exercise of labour rights.

125 In the context of a buyer driven horticultural supply chain, growers are pressured to keep cost down. Thus, the displacement of locals from the industry has been linked to lower wages in the sector. New Zealanders compare their wages previous to the RSE and blame wages’ shrinkage on the availability of foreigners as a cheap source of labour (TVNZ Q+A, 2017).
The circular movement of workers implies good employees need to be aware of their behaviour to improve their chances of returning. Previous research had discussed workers’ retention in terms of minimising retraining and increasing productivity (Bailey, 2014b; Rockell, 2015) to which leaders can contribute, thus securing successive employment opportunities for workers (Bailey, 2017b). Additionally, workers’ time is determined by the circularity of the RSE scheme. The agricultural seasons in New Zealand and the produce that the employer cultivates affect workers’ decision-making and time management if they are to return to New Zealand. They need to plan in advance who will look after their gardens while they are away; depending on their contracts’ timing workers will decide whether they should hire someone to tend their gardens, or if they can rely on a relative. In New Zealand, they plan according to their chances of return. For example, most of my interviewees knew before departing from New Zealand whether they had been selected for the next season, with some deciding to leave their things stored until their return. Noticeably, the most difficult time to manage is the time spent in New Zealand, as it is overseen from workers’ arrival to their departure as I detail in Chapter 6.

For many workers who may have initially approached the scheme as a way of making ends meet, participating in the RSE becomes a cycle of leaving and returning. The RSE policy remains silent about the topic of integration in New Zealand, as it would be contradictory to advocate for temporary labour migration and at the same time be concerned with integrating migrants. For example, the Strengthening Pacific Partnership (SPP) is “geared towards ensuring that New Zealand employers have better access to labour, which is understood but not well received in some PICs” (Clear Horizon, 2016: vi). The Vakameasina programme’s literacy and numeracy training does not necessarily address integration or re-integration, and only involves a fraction of RSE participants.126

For some participants, the circularity of the RSE has transformed parenting to weekly phone calls and routine departures. This has also created new needs that make labour stability a continuous struggle. Some of my interviewees can now afford to hire temporary workers to take care of the hardest gardening tasks, or they may pay their “sisters” to take care of their children – including arranging for them to attend private schools. School fees are then a recurring expense, which motivates RSE workers to do their best to be selected for return.

126 Ni-Vanuatu represent 44 percent of the RSE participants but 59 percent of Vakameasina participants are Ni-Vanuatu (Scarrow, 2017). Some soft skills learned in the program are used to address communication issues (Scarrow & Carter, 2016). See also Bailey, Bumseng and Bumseng (2016) for a Ni-Vanuatu initiative which addresses integration and couples’ separation issues.
Circularity is favoured to prevent “brain drain”, as temporary workers in migration management schemes should ideally return to their home countries to contribute to their communities’ development; this would simultaneously reduce their incentives for overstaying.

5.3.3 Cost-sharing of travel related costs

“Cost-sharing on travel-related costs with employers so that fixed costs borne by migrants are not so large that they make overstaying attractive”

(World Bank, 2006a: v)

Sharing the cost of travel between employers and workers is a strategy to discourage overstaying, which had been an issue with previous migration schemes to New Zealand (as seen in Chapter 3). Regulation of incentives to reduce overstaying is a characteristic of migration management which influences both employers and workers alike. Employers are required to pay repatriation costs to the MBIE resulting from any breach of the terms and conditions of the RSE limited visa (INZ, 2016d). For the employers, this is one additional regulation they must comply with. For the RSE workers, this requires financial management skills, as they must save in advance to return to New Zealand if they have been selected. Employers have nicknamed the RSE “Recognised Social Engineering” because the scheme demands change on their part; they have had to learn about regulations in relation to providing accommodation, pastoral care, and other matters that do not affect their employment of other temporary workers, such as backpackers or New Zealanders (Hardie, 2017). The “set of criteria which h/v [horticulture/viticulture] growers have had to meet in order to get the RSE workers has helped to alter their behaviour” (Tipples & Rawlinson, 2014: 41), a change from their previous situation when they were not so regulated. However, employer behaviour is not as closely monitored as that of the RSE workers.

Responsibility and productivity in managing money are inextricably linked, particularly when workers are paid by piece. Workers paid by piece understand that by working quickly they can earn more pay. However, this may not be possible as agricultural labour is dependent

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127 Note that the number of working holiday makers is not driven by industry demands (Barker, 2010).
128 Becoming a productive worker will be developed as a part of the neoliberal rationality in section 6.2.2.
on weather, availability of and market demand for produce. For example, I observed that in the aftermath of Cyclone Pam in early March 2015, some workers wanted to return home to look after their families. Participants commented that their workers’ leader had emphasised the importance of being able to continue working. Being able to earn more money was seen as a responsible behaviour so they could help their families with the money they would bring home. Horticulture New Zealand (2015) also reported that most workers chose to remain in New Zealand, and less than 150 returned immediately (Mannering, 2015b) to assist in the reconstruction efforts.

5.3.4 Commercial viability

“Commercial viability so that the scheme remains private-sector driven and reflects labour market conditions in host countries rather than by arbitrary quotas that become outdated if labour market conditions in destination countries change.”

(World Bank, 2006a: v).

Basing the numbers of workers admitted on commercial viability removes the idea of quotas – instead it is called a seasonal cap. By making the numbers adjustable from season to season, according to the estimated needs of the viticulture and horticulture sectors for a particular year, removes political tensions around set quotas. The yearly increases to 12,850 workers in late 2018 responded to industry demand, as would be any decreases, which speaks to the sustainability of the triple win scenario.

In accordance with this, the social sphere of RSE workers is adjusted year by year. Political interventions set the conditions that transform social relations. Observance of the rules of the game relies on individuals making rational choices from among the available options within the controlled environment in which stakeholders interact. When economic practice is

129 In 2009, the annual cap was increased from 5,000 to 8,000 based on the capacity of the New Zealand labour market, after a review from the New Zealand Cabinet (Trevett, 2014). In 2014, the cap was lifted again to 9,000 in preparation for the incorporation of Fiji, as participating countries were concerned about potential reductions in their workers’ quota (Bennett & Woodhouse, 2014). In late 2015, the cap was increased to 9,500, which was acknowledged by the Office of the Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA) as a positive response “to the demands of the Pacific Island Countries in the PACER Plus” (OCTA, 2015; MFAT, 2014). Nonetheless, the scheme remains private sector driven. This is telling of how the RSE can be seen from different stakeholders’ perspective as cap increases reflect projected sectoral needs and political decisions (Hampshire, 2015; Mannering, 2016).
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intertwined with governmental techniques, new forms of subjectivation can be produced. These techniques are expressed in what Lemke calls “the entrepreneurial self.” He argues that neoliberalism “posits an artificially arranged liberty: in the entrepreneurial and competitive behaviour of economic-rational individuals” (Lemke, 2001: 200) who to be productive and competitive become entrepreneurs of themselves, as will be developed in the next chapter.

By actively participating in the solution to problems, in this case opting for development, individuals take responsibility in what was previously the domain of state agencies. The costs of this participation imply that individuals assume the risks and responsibility of their entrepreneurial activities, and their potential failure. Individuals adapt their behaviour to the conditions they find, to become “the correlative of a governmentality which systematically changes the variables of the ‘environment’ and can count on the ‘rational choice’ of the individuals” (Lemke, 2001: 200). From the workers’ perspective, they have been fortunate to access the RSE because of the opportunity it provides to earn waged income. However, workers still have a limited understanding that it is sectoral demand that drives the seasonal cap, and that the RSE workers’ quota does not necessarily respond to their own government’s requests or their personal interests.

5.4. Summary of Chapter

This chapter set out to describe the bodies of knowledge articulated through the migration and development narratives from which the RSE scheme has emerged. In proposing the TMP as a solution to issues of insecurity and unemployment, young people were made responsible for potential problems. I have followed the reasoning behind these premises to their encapsulation in the arguments presented in the triple win scenario, as the natural conclusion of the migration and development narratives storyline. I then linked the use of the “4 Cs” to the knowledge behind the management of the RSE scheme, highlighting the design of incentives to regulate its management. The next chapter focuses on local practices in New Zealand and Vanuatu that have become incorporated into the RSE management, as I analyse how government and individuals’ actions are underpinned by a neoliberal rationality related to productivity, competitiveness, and entrepreneurship.
Chapter 6. The construction of neoliberal subjectivities

This chapter analyses how do neoliberal rationalities and practices construct new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and what are the implication of such transformations for their social relations. After presenting my understanding of both neoliberal and “customary” rationalities, I examine how certain types of discourses and rationalities, alongside local practices, both frame and allow the continuation of the RSE scheme. I expand the previous chapter to specific practices resultant of the operationalisation of the RSE scheme, occurring in New Zealand and Vanuatu such as saving schemes, the RSE bond, and other less formal practices that signal how the scheme is governed. I draw attention to how the migration and development narratives are underpinned by a neoliberal rationality that engenders specific practices and procedures. Following Lemke (2001), I understand rationalities as a specific form of reasoning which underpins the actions and means required to govern and which are based in commonly accepted knowledge that has obtained the status of truth. I have identified two main rationalities which are in constant interplay in the management of the RSE scheme: neoliberal rationalities and customary rationalities. The latter will be developed in Chapter 7.

In this research, neoliberalism is understood not as political ideology, but as a set of practices underpinned by the political knowledge embedded in the purported universal application of specific principles to temporary migration management. While competitiveness is the main principle of neoliberalism, my analysis focuses on two related elements: productivity and the transformation of the entrepreneurial self, as both emphasise profit maximising discourses as a way of governing subjects. In doing so, neoliberal rationalities encourage the emergence of new subjectivities by deeming the social domain as economic so the social can become intelligible (Foucault, 2008). Producing subjects of capital merges responsible and moral individuals and economic rational individuals. This transformation come about not by means of coercion, but rather by subjects exercising free will and self-determined decisions. Thus, the consequences of these decisions are borne by the subject alone and not by others.
6.1. Political rationalities

“How do liberal forms of government make use of corporeal techniques and forms of self-guidance? How do they form interests, needs, and structures of preference? How do present technologies model individuals as active and free citizens, as members of self-managing communities and organizations, as autonomous actors who are in the position – or at least should be – to rationally calculate their own life risks? In neoliberal theories, what is the relationship between the concept of the responsible and rational subject and that of human life as human capital?”

(Lemke, 2011: 49 - 50)

Drawing on the Foucauldian framework of governmentality (2001), and his conceptualisation of biopolitics (2008) in particular, I explore how the different migration managers in New Zealand and Vanuatu construct migrants’ subjectivities beyond national borders through relationships and practices. Political rationalities have a distinctive idiom and are articulated as “a kind of intellectual machinery or apparatus for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that it is amenable to political deliberations” (Rose & Miller, 2010: 277). My analysis focuses on how governmental techniques in RSE management practices have engendered new subjectivities that are underpinned by certain forms of knowledge. I address how the diverse new relations formed as a consequence of individuals’ participation in the scheme are transforming relations with their family and community, among others. I believe that while neoliberal rationalities may be influential at macro levels, there are other factors shaping customary subjectivities at an individual or community level, such as kastom, religion, and gender roles. Following Rose (1999) I first deal with how these political rationalities can be distinguished by a shared vocabulary that allows different positions to communicate with each other using a broad discourse. This does not mean there is complete consensus among the RSE stakeholders, but does acknowledge “the existence of generally accepted facts and agreements on central problems” (Geiger & Pécoud, 2015: 28). In my analysis, I deal with how rationalities have produced new forms of knowledge that function as truths and thus are not questioned.
Although Dean (1999) describes more than one type of neoliberalism, for the purpose of this thesis, I consider neoliberalism as a political rationality that deems the social domain as economic and aims to govern it accordingly, by emphasising competitiveness, productivity, and entrepreneurship.\(^{130}\) One of the central features of this rationality is its coupling of a responsible moral individual with the economic-rational individual (Lemke, 2001). Thus, individuals use their free choice to make decisions in a self-determined manner, while the moral dimension assumes that individuals assess both the costs and benefits of their actions before acting. The choices individuals make and the consequences of deciding to act in a certain way, and not in another, are therefore borne by the subject alone, who is also solely responsible for them. Neoliberal rationalities transform RSE workers’ social relations by providing individuals with more choice and responsibility for their own life decisions. Neoliberalism makes workers subjects of capital. They are transformed into “entrepreneurial selves”, engaged in private sector visions because “making profit makes better people and vice-versa” (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014: 12). In turn, public sector employees in the sending and receiving governments become migration managers, while institutions and individuals are encouraged to conform to the market norms (Larner, 2000).

I understand migration management in the case of RSE as concerned with the mobility and life of the population, and thus related to biopolitics because it is underpinned by certain kinds of knowledge about the characteristics of Ni-Vanuatu as a population. Existing seasonal migration discourses are built on a common and “neutral” understanding of concepts such as labour, competitiveness, productivity, and entrepreneurship, among others. These types of models assume that by producing economic growth, benefits will trickle down to all the population. However, the outcomes of this engagement will be determined by the individuals’ capacity to embrace these new opportunities. It is here that governmental techniques are used by the different stakeholders to achieve the desired “triple wins”. I will now use the concept of governmentality to help in tracing the techniques used to govern migration management and construct neoliberal subjectivities.

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\(^{130}\) Olssen (2003) explains neoliberalism as the marketisation of the state whereby it becomes subjected to the laws of supply and demand and competition in which social relations are represented as relations of exchange.
6.1.2 Customary rationalities

I have proposed the term customary rationalities to differentiate the rationalities based on kastom, from the neoliberal rationalities that underpin practices in the management of the RSE scheme. I have chosen to call these rationalities customary and not kastomary because the underlying values and beliefs stem from both kastom practices and local understandings that are not directly related to kastom – but are considered customary. In my understanding, customary rationalities are based on knowledge of customary values and beliefs, such as respect to authority figures and kin and differentiated gender roles, among others, that are held by Ni-Vanuatu as truths. I consider this rationality as underpinned by traditional forms of knowledge situated in historical practices and social relations, including religion, and particularly Christianity, already existent in Vanuatu before the RSE scheme.

I analyse changes around social practices such as leadership and chieftaincy in relation to the new subjectivities that are constructed from the articulation of customary rationalities and neoliberal rationalities. This does not mean that there is no other type of rationality underpinning the RSE scheme. I have focused on these two rationalities as they are the ones more clearly expressed by interviewees. My concern is to explain how these rationalities have produced new forms of knowledge that function as truths and contribute to governing autonomous subjects. This chapter continues the analysis of neoliberal subjectivities related to productivity and the construction of the entrepreneurial self. Chapter 7 develops the notion of customary subjectivities and their negotiation.

6.2. Neoliberal subjectivities

“[…] discipline allows for the increase of the economic productivity of the body, while at the same time weakening its forces to assure political subjection. It is exactly this coupling of economic and political imperatives that define discipline and establish its status as a technology.”

(Lemke, 2011: 36)
The rationalities underpinning the management of the RSE are producing new Ni-Vanuatu subjectivities. From a governmentality perspective, RSE workers’ subjectivities are produced by social practices and relations that guide their conduct and enable these particular rationalities. In focusing on governmentality techniques, I interrogate the continuum between coercion – discipline and supervision – and freedom – self-care and regulatory control – as opposed but also complementary (Lemke, 2011). This allows for a nuanced analysis beyond the direct intervention of RSE managers and points to indirect techniques that produce new subjectivities. The complex relations created when individuals have to stay at the premises of their employers, sometimes adjacent to their workplaces, can blur the lines between working and non-working hours, as Ni-Vanuatu live where they work and work where they live. This differs from their lives in their own villages, as in New Zealand workplace and accommodation each have their own set of rules and schedules which are enforced.

Guiding the “conduct of conduct” in these circumstances implies constructing notions of time and place as to how people are expected to behave in a determined situation. The normative elements and expectations stipulated in guidelines, training sessions and instructions regarding the self-control of the migrant workers, such as hygiene, sexuality, cohabitation, consumption of alcohol and other substances, health risks, cooking, contact with and relationship to the local population, odour, demeanour, leisure time and so on can be more easily governed if the workers are closely observed.131 In this sense, discipline as a governmental technique operates to control workers in a non-violent way. While discipline is not the only technique in operation in the management of the RSE scheme, it is the most salient while Ni-Vanuatu are living in New Zealand. Additionally, this section draws attention to de facto practices used to manage the RSE scheme. I point to the ambiguity and discretionality in the application of the RSE Operational Manual, and its guidelines and checklists, in Vanuatu and New Zealand. I also discuss the link between the governmental techniques of discipline and “self-care” and the manner in which their operation is underpinned by a neoliberal rationality that validates certain practices to the end of development. Additionally, I note how the dynamics of the group to which individuals belong allows political alliances and resistance that can shape social change.

131 Some of the recommendations workers were given during pre-departure trainings prompting workers to “look good” and “smell good” when arriving to New Zealand. See Cummings (2013b) for some meanings of “looking good” for Ni-Vanuatu.
6.2.1 The Entrepreneurial subjects

“In Vanuatu, here, we don’t... the time for us, when we are home is not really important, like, we just relax. In the work, it is important, you have to follow the time [...] I have to follow the timing, the timing [in New Zealand] is strictly important. Also, I have to wake up in time in the morning, to make sure I don’t miss the van to go to the work (sic). Put everything, very neatly my bed, do the changing [...] I have to discipline myself to do everything in... right here, put everything in the right place [...] I prepare in advance [...] they said [in the pre-departure training] we have to discipline ourselves, we have to behave also.”

Rose (34 years, 1st season)

Rose had only been in New Zealand for one season when we first met, but she already understood the requirements of her participation in the scheme, and that she needed to be mindful of timing. Time management is part of the “good behaviour” encouraged in RSE workers to ensure their success in the scheme. Rose is glad to have met a friend by chance while running some errands in Port Vila who asked her if she would be interested in applying for the RSE. While preparing to return to New Zealand for a second season she was told her employer may have another job offer for her, doing administrative work. She had told me she liked being in the packing house and also outside in the orchard if her employer asked her, because she has “the willing heart to do everything [and] experience every job”. She is motivated to engage in the RSE scheme because as a single mother she understands the difficulties that women who do not work face. “If you don’t work and you are separated, how you can survive? [But] especially when you are [living] in town.” She sees her participation in the RSE as an opportunity to earn an income, which she does not have on a regular basis in Vanuatu and is determined to show her employer that she is a “good worker” and can be hired for the subsequent seasons.

Discourses about giving economic opportunities to individuals transfers responsibility to RSE workers in behaving as agents of their own prosperity (Kapur, 2004). For newcomers to the RSE, understanding the new and unfamiliar information in the pre-departure training can be challenging, and it may not be until their arrival in New Zealand that they fully understand what the scheme entails. However, part of the orientation workers receive before arriving in New Zealand pertains to the behaviour required “to succeed”. The pre-departure training emphasises the importance of being ready to take advantage of the “opportunity” that the RSE
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represents. The pre-departure video introduction outlines self-control as a requirement to succeed in the RSE:

“We call it “Get Ready” because for anyone’s time to be successful in New Zealand, people must prepare and get ready […] Some RSE workers before were successful and some were not. […] It is an opportunity for you to use this chance. It is up to you to use this opportunity.” Get Ready video (New Zealand Department of Labour & Settlement Support New Zealand, 2011, 2:57), free translation from Bislama

Kaltac was also a new recruit. I met him during Phase 2 in Vanuatu before his first arrival in New Zealand. He had been recruited by a relative, who was one of the workers’ leaders in the company. He was nervous but curious about travelling as he was intrigued about getting on the plane and the work that others were doing. Former RSE workers had explained to him that the work was going to be hard: “They told me: strong work, but good money”. He was looking forward to earning some money. He was aware he needed to do as he was told, as he did not understand what the work entailed yet. During his first season, in Phase 3 of this research, I saw that, as the youngest in their group, he was looked after by his colleagues. Some RSE workers were looking forward to seeing if he changed his opinion after his first season, as they considered he sometimes acted as if he were on a holiday – or just “walking around”. Obtaining money was Kaltac’s priority, although he did not know how he would spend it. His leader was not confident he could earn much in his first year, because newcomers do not usually make much money during their first season (Hawkins, 2018). Kaltac was self-driven in that he had requested authorisation from his parents – and their letters of reference¹³² – to work in New Zealand. Despite his departure being some months away, he had already moved from his island of origin to his extended family island, from where he would follow in the footsteps of many others.

The above are two examples of RSE workers’ willingness to adapt their behaviours to the requirements of a new job opportunity they feel lucky to have, and in which they voluntarily engage. The employee-employer relation is something most interviewees experience for the first time with the RSE scheme, as most of them did not have a paid job while in Vanuatu.¹³³

¹³² I discuss reference letters in Chapter 7.
¹³³ Some interviewees living in Port Vila had previous paid employment experience, but very few of them on a salary or with a contract – and most commonly on a temporary basis. Less than half of the men have had some form of temporary paid job, and two women have had salaried jobs. Another two women had temporary jobs, and one woman obtained income by selling clothing she sewed.
Their participation in the scheme implies workers are assuming responsibility for their own behaviour, time and money management. Interviewees often mentioned they would do anything to guarantee their continuation in the scheme. In this sense, caring for their own behaviour and that of others is emphasised as a way to succeed.

Self-care transcends individuals’ drive to obtain money. Discourses of self-help and “taking advantage of the opportunity” align with the migration and development narratives and help define the acceptable behaviours for participating in the RSE scheme. In the words of one of the leaders, “It depends on us Ni-Van if we behave, and conduct ourselves in respectful manners, comply with … the New Zealand laws, and keep the farmer happy, I don’t think anybody would have problem(s).” These messages, which may be idiosyncratic, are reinforced at different stages, by employers, workers’ leaders, co-workers, and family members alike. One worker recalled what his employer told him on his first year:

“If you want to get money, you must work on time. If you [are] absent from work, that’s… I’m gonna… I will not pay you. He told us. So, every day, we must work, he told me […] Because I learned here in New Zealand that if you walk around it’s a big waste of time. So, I must try to improve what I learned here back at home.”

Geoffrey (34 years, 5th RSE season)

Some RSE workers instead compared Ni-Vanuatu to other workers they had met in New Zealand:

“They [Maori women] work with us inside the pack house, the girls…they drink a lot here… I look at them, what I knew is new for me, the ladies, they drink a lot. As for Vanuatu no, only in special time, in special event we drink, we don’t smoke a lot, some of them they smoke when they drink kava\textsuperscript{134}, and they drink alcohol. But here [for] them [alcohol] is like a tea…”

Rose (34 years, 1st season)

By being aware of their own behaviour, individuals consciously take care not to jeopardise their opportunity to continue in the scheme.\textsuperscript{135} Some practices that follow a governmental technology of self-care imply that individuals have to know themselves, as in being self-regulated – what Cummings (2013a) calls “self-surveillance” – and at the same time know the behavioural rules that will allow them to succeed in the RSE (Laurenson, 2011).

\textsuperscript{134} Kava is a traditional fermented drink based on the roots of the plant used to produce a drink with psychoactive properties traditionally known also for having medicinal qualities.

\textsuperscript{135} For example, the stereotype of Pacific “island time”, to which employers referred to describe Pacific workers waiting in an idle manner for the day to pass has been contested by RSE workers’ work ethics (Bailey, 2016; Bailey, 2017a)
In the village – the chiefs or extended families – often take care of and provide for individuals. I was told many times that “no one is hungry” in the village. Instead, for RSE workers, this new engagement in labour relations may be transforming individuals’ subjectivities as their capacity for self-control is linked to a neoliberal rationality. To achieve the desired national development, individuals need to choose to “do good”. For example, when RSE workers obey their leaders, they regulate themselves to follow behavioural guidelines to be more productive, earn additional income, and achieve the expected development.

6.2.2 The Productive workers

“Most of the boys, they were picking fruits and they were faster than the women. So, I think farmers, they won’t waste their time employing a lady not able to catch up with the boys. So, that is where the opportunity comes to employ more men. Not because of discrimination, but because of the work that they see in the field. I think the work in the field for men is ok, but for women, maybe a bit hard for the women [...] but in the field, the men are suitable because in what type of weather (sic), whether it’s raining or fairly hot sun, the boys can take up the work.”

Harry (workers’ leader, 5th RSE season)

Harry, one of the workers’ leaders, is also a pastor back in his village, from where he has recruited several workers, including his own son. He recently spent over 150,000 Vt.\(^{136}\) enlarging his house. He used his last RSE season’s income to pay locals and people from other islands to add a new veranda and enlarge his garden. His group respects him and listens to his recommendations because of his age and his resource to biblical quotes. Harry always recommends to all “RSE”, as he calls the workers he supervises, that they build a house. He is sometimes considered an authoritarian leader, which has created tensions with other workers and his family. His son does not want to return to work in New Zealand the next season because he is angry with his father’s behaviour towards others. However, Naila, his mother, supports Harry and asks me to disregard what their son says, and that he will return because she will “send him back”; she is currently organising her son’s wedding and needs the money to pay for it. As Christian converts, they do not support the payment of the *braed praes*, because it is

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\(^{136}\) Approximately NZ$ 2,000.
not included “anywhere in the Bible”. Instead they will use the money to cater for all the wedding attendees.

Harry argues that compared to men, women are often seen as being less productive. This view resonates with the response of an ESU worker regarding the limited involvement of women in the RSE, because “there are only limited numbers [of available jobs] in the pack house”. Female pack house workers consider they have been given easier work than men. Contrary to the pay gap that contract work often entails for women, female workers in one of the companies participating in this research initially earned more than their male co-workers. This occurred because both groups, the women working inside the packing house and the men working in the orchard, were earning the same minimum wage although there was a difference in the number of hours worked. This was perceived as unfair for men, whose working hours depended on the weather and piece rates and involved more demanding physical work compared to “staying [my emphasis] the whole day in the pack house”.

Workers at the orchard had started to complain about the type of work women carried out, which they said was easier and better remunerated in comparison to men’s work which was deemed hard but more productive. This was troublesome for leaders. As this company initially paid piece rates to workers during the harvest season, the men noticed that women – though working the same number of hours – were being paid more than the men working in the orchards. The men raised this issue with the leaders who passed on their concerns to the employer. One of the leaders told me he requested a change to an hourly rate and was happy with the outcome of the negotiation:

“When we first came here we all worked in contract, but I am the one that fight strong [with] my boss for us to go on an hourly rate. [Be]cause compared with the [female] workers that they work in the pack house; they are getting more than us. So, I told the boss, then my boss agree[d] and now everyone works now at an hourly rate.”

Randolf (workers’ leader, 7th season)

The complaints of the male workers and their leader’s agency brought a resolution to this situation with the result that the employer now better compensates the male workers for their hard work in the fields. Leaders in that company claimed that the women agreed to this

137 Hourly rates are generally more convenient for workers than piece rates for apple picking. Workers who are paid by piece in the viticulture sector run into difficulties when the weather is bad because the price per plant harvested fluctuates between 0.35 and 0.45 NZS cents (according to the workers).

138 It was not clear to me if this implied that the hourly rate had to be adjusted to allow for this change.
decision, although when I asked the female research participants, three of them did not recall the incident and two others had not yet joined the group so were unaware of this change. In some companies, the rates are non-negotiable, while in others, leaders come to an agreement with employers about harvesting fruit faster and in larger quantities. This can backfire when the season is just starting, because the fruit may not yet be the “right colour to pick”, and so workers do not earn as much as they were expecting. The awareness of what is entailed in productivity is evident in these accounts of negotiating over hourly rates and “profit maximising” strategies.

Some of the more experienced RSE workers are aware of how they can maximise their earnings, and also of their employers’ attempts to maximise profits or reduce losses. For example, one employer restricted the use of vans to when there were enough people to fill them to encourage more efficient utilisation of the transportation he provides. ¹³⁹ Similarly, introducing rosters for cleaning and cooking in groups of workers facilitates better use of resources such as power and cleaning supplies. Although workers are not always happy about being the last ones to eat, the leaders make sure that this system works without giving rise to complaints. Some leaders have carte blanche to establish guidelines in the living quarters. In one case, the leader had banned the use of the television after 9 PM and he also vetted the programmes watched. None of the accommodation I visited had internet access.¹⁴⁰ A pastoral care worker mentioned companies do not connect lodges to the Internet because it could lead to workers watching pornography and open the door for other problems, thereby becoming a liability for the company. Leaders had also prohibited the workers from playing sports to prevent injuries which would affect their productivity and earnings. The interviewees compared this to Vanuatu, where individuals are their “own boss.” As the wife of one worker commented:

“... [in Vanuatu] you own your own work; you are just like a boss to yourself. Nobody else is the boss that is going to order you to do all those tasks. If I want to go to garden now, I can go or I am lazy and I want to stay at home, I can rest at home the whole day without going to [the] garden.”

Heilene (34 years, Tim’s wife)

¹³⁹ This is done with the purpose of optimising the use of fuel but can also cause difficulties for workers as they then need to convince enough people to fill the van before departing to run errands.
¹⁴⁰ Internet access could dramatically reduce the cost of communication for workers, as some of them had to visit cafes where they were not always welcome. However, they had already identified RSE worker “friendly” places where they could go without being asked to leave.
The leaders take preventative measures by restricting access to bars or advising the workers not to walk around alone, with the aim of ensuring workers’ safety so they remain productive. Safety can take on wider connotations in relation to criminal activity in the areas where Ni-Vanuatu work, when the argument of safety and security is wielded against workers. Pastoral care workers and employers’ discourses around security argue that Ni-Vanuatu can be “easy prey” for being sold counterfeit merchandise or drugs, some argue that workers should live close to their work (van Beek, 2008). The “outside” can be perceived as threatening, because of the presence of corrupting forces, thus potential crimes could be prevented if people stayed indoors and avoid walking around (Eriksen, 2016b). Cultural differences and the presence of young people are reasons for prohibitions, especially for women (Cummings, 2013b). I was told a couple of stories about workers who had fallen prey to a gang selling stolen phones, although I never met the respective workers. It seemed that when bad things had happened, interviewees would often refer to the incident as if it had happened in another company, or to workers that were no longer participating in the scheme.

Workers consider they are monitored during their free time (Bailey, 2009; Bailey, 2014b; Rockell, 2015). In the case of women, some of them mentioned they were treated “like children” even so by the female leaders.141 In alignment with what is expected from urban women in Vanuatu (Eriksen, 2016b), the restrictions put on mobility have gendered connotations related to values of domesticity142 or in new moral understandings of right and wrong (Rio, 2011). In Harry’s own words:

“We always brief everybody concerning this […] don’t touch stolen properties, don’t touch things like somebody [may be] selling in the streets like marijuana […] We also encourage everybody that ladies don’t walk around by themselves, they have to be accompanied by two men while walking on the streets. For their security, for themselves, we always remind themselves(sic) of this for security reasons and dangers. We always remind them: don’t do this, don’t do that, and when it comes to the time that someone breaks it and get into problems, I said you go home. I tell them [this] is not new to you, so don’t come and cry to me.”

Harry (workers’ leader, 5th RSE season)

The restrictions put on women are justified for the sake of their safety, and ultimately in the interests of their continued productivity. The women’s behaviour is monitored by workers’

141 The two female leaders I interviewed mentioned that they have to make others respect all the rules, and that they do not have much problem doing so. However, they also noted that supervising people from other nationalities, can often be challenging.

142 I interviewed five RSE women participants (see Figure 7), but after finishing the interviews it was mostly women whom stayed with me talking around their accommodation, sometimes while waiting for relatives or leaders to walk with them in the city.
leaders, relatives in New Zealand, and their male co-workers, and constrained by their apparent suitability for a work that requires precision, such as in the packing house.\footnote{Other RSE female workers I met were picking berries. I was told by one of the Vakameasina facilitators that employers consider women are better suited for this delicate type of work. This resembles the “nimble fingers” argument behind female employment in the manufacturing sector (Elson & Pearson, 1981) that excludes women from certain activities, and confines them to others. See Bailey (2017a) for how this was addressed in New Zealand as a cultural misrepresentation. She argues that workers’ selection responds instead to personal standards and attitudes.} The level of monitoring makes it difficult for women to contest such arrangements. For example, when one interviewee was banned from the scheme, she had no opportunity to argue against the rumours of her infidelity while working in New Zealand. Instead, she had to accept her leaders’ decision, stay in Vanuatu and be used as an example for other workers.\footnote{She attributes this to a misunderstanding because she left the accommodation alone and as a result rumours started about her having an extra-marital relationship.} This curtailment of freedoms is also questionable from a Western standpoint, where individual decisions such as having romantic relationships are private and not subject to disciplinary action from supervisors, and by extension from employers because of their support for the leaders’ decisions.

The single mothers I interviewed were concerned about what was expected of them, as many people had a say about how they should behave, and it was not clear what the boundaries for “good behaviour” were. They felt they were subject to many rules that were not applied to the men. This made women cautious about making friendships and relating to others outside the group of workers they were living with. This was partly to prevent gossip, and partly because the people they meet outside from Vanuatu seem very different to people in their country. As one female leader put it: “I meet friends, but […] they are different, like they are not friendly like [in] Vanuatu country; they are not friendly like us. So, I [have to] try my best to speak to them, to know me, and be friendly.” A single mother mentioned that she had friends, “but I don’t trust them; sometimes I keep trust in myself only.” I could not explore more about these new friendships as women often said that they did not know others too much.

Employers also compare RSE workers’ quality of work (Hardie, 2016) and productivity to other non-RSE workers: “Not always everybody is keen to do this sort of work, it’s not everybody’s cup of tea. But most of them, look at them, they are enjoying themselves, working hard, and working very fast. Actually, they are really good!” (New Zealand Department of Labour & Settlement Support New Zealand, 2011, 14:41). However, it is not necessarily true that there are no New Zealand workers available, as there has been recent media coverage of the displacement of locals from the industry because of the low wages, which is blamed on the

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availability of RSE workers as a cheap source of labour (TVNZ Q+A, 2017). Growers believed the greatest strength of Pacific workers’ is their reliability and willingness to work, as they can be up as twice productive than other labour sources (MFAT & Trade New Zealand, 2010). However, some interviewees noted that they earn less than New Zealanders despite their hard work and productivity, but they do not complain about it as they want to secure their chance to return in the following seasons. As one of the leaders mentioned:

“Now we are getting about NZ$ 15.50, whereas when [this] is compared with the locals here, they [are] getting more than us. But we are working really harder (sic) than the locals. Because in the wet weather we work... and the locals don’t... and we work long hours and whereas the locals work, as long as they make 3 bins then they go, or 4 bins and they go home. But we make about... in one day we make about 100 bins, bins a day [among 20 individuals] so we [do] work!”

Randolf (workers’ leader, 7th season)

Comparisons between RSE workers and New Zealanders are often made in terms of productivity, although it seems that New Zealanders expectations are misaligned regarding the availability of jobs (IMSED Research, 2010). It may also be that not enough individuals are willing to do this work at the pay level offered (Carens, 2008), or working conditions do not meet domestic workers’ expectations (Basok, 2002; Sharma, 2006). Whatever the case, the productivity message reinforces the good worker image that Ni-Vanuatu workers aim to embody.

The fact that it is usually the most productive workers who are retained for the following season speaks to the techniques operating in most employment arrangements. This is not unique to migration management as competition is an historical objective of neoliberal governmentality encompassing social and political relations in economic activities (Foucault, 2008). Nonetheless, RSE workers – as well as Vanuatu as a country – need to demonstrate particular distinctive characteristics related to their productivity, some of them connected to their work ethic and personal character, such as reliability and hard work. In this way, they become attractive for employers and may be set apart from competing with other workers.

The instruments used to manage productivity are time tables on the employers’ side and workers’ paystubs on the leaders’ side. However, these same paystubs can be used by workers as instruments for recognition of their claims for grievances (Street, 2012). Thus, these disciplinary mechanisms are not unidirectional. For example, the standard practice of charging workers for transportation costs is often contested, as costs are higher for RSE workers from the same company who work far away from where they are lodged. Sometimes the
accommodation provided has different appliances that can incur additional costs such as coin-operated laundry machines and dryers. Other times, workers who did not have washing machines on-site complained about the time and cost of washing in the nearby town. In the case of companies that transfer workers between New Zealand North and South Island, individual workers can be charged for their bus and ferry ticket, which of course affects their total earnings. As one of the leaders described:

“The first time we arrive at New Zealand, the bosses give us some dollars, some money to start off, for two weeks. Then just after that, deductions! Deductions run about $1000, within that time. We have [deductions for] accommodation, protective clothes, we have buses, all vans, we have to pay for the vans. In [the company in the North Island] is ok, because we live in the farm, but when we go to [the company in the South Island] we have to pay 72 [NZ $] every fortnight [for transport], accommodation is 270 [NZ $] every fortnight [...] The main things that my people always complain about is the accommodation and the bus fare... They find it too expensive, too expensive and some of the accommodation have only half of the electric washing machine and no dryer.”

Taylor (workers’ leader, 3rd RSE reason)

Workers have calculated that the amount the group is charged more than pays for the cost of the trip. They have used their paystubs as evidence to protest these deductions as they believed their company was profiting from the transportation required by a joint Agreement to Recruit (ATR). Similarly, they complained about accommodation deductions, although more quietly because they understand that there are few options available.145

Productivity is a feature of economic government which aligns to a neoliberal rationality, as populations are disciplined with the aim of conserving and increasing their productivity. This discipline extends to various areas, such as time management, in which repetition and circularity are involving Ni-Vanuatu in new processes of subjectivation. Discipline works as a technique works by creating physical routines that enable workers to be more productive and to achieve their planned development goals. Additionally, official requirements from the Vanuatu government include productivity as part of the quality standards required from RSE workers (ESU, 2013a), as they are encouraged to “hit the ground running”. These standards are enforced in New Zealand. For example, one of the leaders encouraged his group to work faster to get more money each week, and the workers in turn complained as they felt more tired each succeeding week. While the effectiveness of these practices is outside of the scope of this

145 Since transport an accommodation are employers’ responsibility (INZ, 2016c) and thus mandatory for workers, companies can profit from deductions. In the case of larger companies that own their own facilities and employ several hundred workers, the amount deducted from workers’ pay checks amount to several thousands of dollars per season, which exceeds maintenance costs.
thesis, I have identified the implicit assumption that workers’ performance needs to improve to continue their participation in the scheme and achieve the development they are aiming for.

6.2.3 The Goal setting workers

“When you have money, you can do something... when you don't have any money in your pocket, it means that you are just thinking about it, but [your plans are] just finished. Then you have to get money to get that (sic) things done.”

Tim (38 years, 7th season)

Tim, a former leader, acknowledges the importance of leaders’ role as workers rely on them for many of their needs. He recalls his worries during his first RSE season because no one knew what to expect when working in New Zealand. Workers had many questions and he did not always have all the answers; or if he did have them, he found it hard to make his meaning clear even though he spoke in Bislama. Additionally, he had to use his own resources to ensure all workers complied with the application requirements and planned ahead before departing for New Zealand. His sense of responsibility went beyond what was required, according to his wife Heilene, who said he was always concerned with the wellbeing of the workers and their families. As a church leader in his community, he advised the workers to behave and to think ahead about what they would use their money for. He considers that you cannot start planning without money and rejects the idea of making plans when there is no certainty of obtaining an income. He appreciated how differently people in New Zealand live, in their concrete houses with rooms for different purposes and thinks he has learned a “different way to live”. His wife is puzzled by the changes she has seen in him.¹⁴⁶ For instance, she does not understand why he cares so much about having flowers to adorn their recently finished house and why he asks first about the flowers when calling her on the phone and later about his children.¹⁴⁷

When RSE workers compare living in New Zealand to living in Vanuatu, they often talk in terms of infrastructure, including access to services such as electricity, water, and education.

¹⁴⁶ Tim’s wife was one of two workers’ partners who articulated the changes they connect to their partners’ participation in the RSE, dedicating a significant part of the interview to explain how relevant these changes were for themselves.
¹⁴⁷ Smith has noted that new houses often have “secluded private yards with lawns and flower gardens” (2016: 333), though in Tim’s village there were no other visible flower gardens.
Similarly, their development goals relate to obtaining money and material things. As promoted in the Bislama version of the pre-departure video, it is ultimately up to them “to use this opportunity” to be able to contribute back at home. This speaks to Ni-Vanuatu assuming dual roles as both beneficiaries and agents of the scheme. RSE workers are advised to control themselves and save their money: “Those [RSE workers] who were successful worked hard and saved their money. They needed strong control and this is important too for working and staying in New Zealand” (New Zealand Department of Labour & Settlement Support New Zealand, 2011, 3:14). Control is exercised through several mechanisms, such as saving schemes, hard work, and honesty. These requirements for success contribute to the construction of compliant workers in the RSE scheme. As only self-controlled workers are portrayed as capable of succeeding, workers do their best to demonstrate their achievements, which in turn will be appreciated by their employers.

Beyond the messages in the official training, leaders encourage workers to save money to take care of their families and to build houses. This encouragement is supported by messages from the Employment Service Unit that promotes workers as “goal oriented” (ESU, 2014). For example, one of the leaders emphasised that the RSE is a new experience, particularly for young people “because that is a problem when they are young, they need to decide where the money goes first.” Another leader establishes clear requirements and verifies that workers are meeting goals, despite this making him unpopular:

“As leaders we make sure that the husband and wife send money back [...] but that depends on what type of leader you have in the company. That is why my son doesn’t want to come with me this year, because he is not happy about the way I treated everybody [...] you cannot come to New Zealand and enjoy everything when your children are suffering at home. If you don’t do that, with me you are not coming back [laughs] I won’t let you come back to New Zealand if you neglect your children. You come back to New Zealand, but you make sure that you send money back to your family.”

Harry (workers’ leader, 5th RSE season)

As familial responsibilities vary among workers, depending on age, gender and marital status, so too does their use of money. Thus, negotiation of the workers’ relations with others, which are the backdrop of their participation in the scheme, becomes important when deciding how to use their income.

The first goal for most of my interviewees was having “a concrete house”, though often it was a second house they could rent as some had already built a house with money saved during their first RSE seasons. Most participants in this research were seasoned workers and the ones who had recently joined the RSE either already had a house in an urban area, or were young
and lived with their parents. Having a house was thus more of an aspirational goal to be achieved in the long run, as the earning from several seasons need to be saved to complete it. Workers set time-bound goals for the accomplishment of material achievements such as buying land, or construction materials, and planned their participation in the RSE scheme depending on the completion of their houses. For example, workers planned to disengage from the RSE after one or two seasons according to the progress they had made towards their goals. As one worker mentioned, “If I complete my housing I stop [participating in the RSE].” This implied planning ahead on how to spend their income according to their identified priorities. Tim explained the reasons behind working towards a rental house:

“Most of them [RSE workers] they are just paying a piece of land in the middle of the town, and they need to build some houses. They build a house in the town and they do a house rental […] A lot of people have a job in the town, but they are running out of houses […] it’s a very good business.”

Tim (38 years, 7th season)

Tim’s statement was supported by comments from another leader:

“I want to build some guest house to do business, and sometimes I have to rent. I got the land near the main road… that’s just my aim. [In the] two months I have been here, I clean[ed] up the space, when I come back [after the following season] I will start building”

McKenna (workers’ leader, 3rd RSE season)

A young worker described similar aspirations:

“This year I make a big farm, and now I am trying to make a house. I am trying to clean up the place for the house […] And I buy (sic) timber, yesterday in the town, [I am] trying to build now… maybe when I am coming back I finish […] Next time I maybe buy a sawmill for cutting timber”

Harman (32 years, 3rd RSE season)

A single mother was saving to live alongside her sons in her own village:

“I started now [building a house] but [it is] not finished yet. I did not [finish] the house but the yard for next year to come back, hopefully save my best for the house.”

Berenice (38 years, 3rd RSE season)

RSE workers’ plans and willingness to participate in the RSE are also related to age. Some workers considered they were getting too old for the job. As one of the leaders said, “I am getting old now… I think three times more [I return to New Zealand], maybe then I stop.” Others planned their RSE engagement according to the time they estimated would be needed to reach their material goals; but then more goals were planned after each season.
During the last interview phase, more workers were planning their disengagement from the RSE scheme once their goals have been fulfilled, with some setting a time horizon. However, plans could change. For example, two interviewees who had planned not to return to New Zealand the following season did return. In explaining their change of plan, one did not know how to answer but then his leader mentioned he had encouraged him to return because the employer had included his name on “the list”. This may indicate that some form of discipline was taking place, as the leader did not want to disappoint the employer by replacing an already “chosen” worker.\footnote{Bailey (2017a) argues that common economic and social investments outside contractual relationships contribute to generating loyalty from Ni-Vanuatu to their employers.} The second worker felt he had lost too much of his income because of the exchange rate and unexpected expenses and so decided to return for more money. Some workers considered that, although exchange agencies gave them with preferential exchange rates on their earnings, they were also having to pay more for things they wanted to purchase because of increases in prices. As a result, they will need to return to New Zealand during the next season to continue saving.

Alongside the goal of a “good house” is the goal of providing for their children’s education as it is widely assumed that education will lead to the children having “better lives” and better jobs to support their families. Workers told me that “education is a key.” One father of three said: “If you don’t go to school, if you don’t know how to write, how to speak, you can’t get work.” While RSE workers expect their children to benefit from “better futures”, it is unclear how they reconcile these aspirations with traditional roles. For example, I was not able to unpack how girls’ schooling was understood, as all interviewees asserted they would send all their children to school if they had the money, which seems at odds with existing preferences not to encourage women to work. This is further developed in section 7.1 as I discuss the view that being a good provider means among other things being able to pay periodically education related expenses.

Making “good use” of money is emphasised by leaders, particularly for young people. For example, after I had mentioned that I met young Ni-Vanuatu in the city centre who were listening to music with their new headphones, they were harshly criticised as being too young and immature to participate in the RSE and know what to do with their money. Some of the leaders called them “crazy” because that kind of behaviour was not did not represent the standards encompassed by the RSE. When I asked whether RSE workers could choose to spend
their income in any way they chose, I was reminded that their salaries had to be earmarked towards development. It is evident that money management is strongly governed in the RSE, from the voluntary savings schemes led by the companies to prevent workers from wasteful spending, to leaders advising how money should be used and churches requesting contributions from the income received. Co-workers and family members can also be critical of money misused in unproductive activities, which can have consequences back home:

“Because lots of us when we come here, and some was (sic) drinking, they just played up with their money here in New Zealand, when they go home they have no money, and sometimes they have to divorce their wives [...] they didn’t look after them because of the money, they misused the moneys (sic) and when they go home some of them they divorce their families, their wives and children. That’s very bad.”

Betty (37 years, 6th RSE season)

Similarly, Tim’s wife noted:

“Some people when they get there [to New Zealand], they do not manage themselves properly... Some they want to go to town, buy all the stuff, or even drink alcohol, sometimes they spend their money now without thinking of their families back home.”

Heilene (34 years, Tim’s wife)

Because development will only be achieved through “good” use of money, behaviours that lead to saving and investing are encouraged and immediate consumption is discouraged. As the subjects of development, individuals have to pursue their material aspirations and demonstrate the contribution that international migration makes to their livelihoods and their communities.

These goal setting subjects also plan their financial independence. Some interviewees said they will buy a “transport”, by which they mean either a car or a truck to be used as a taxi to earn a more regular income while in Vanuatu. Others, who own more land, consider increasing the number of cattle they own. As this leader outlined:

“My plan is, I may be coming again maybe 2 or 3 more years, this year and next year I start my business because I have already buy my panel solar (sic), then I’ll go back and the freezer [I have already bought]. Then I can pay all this cows and bulls, then we kill it and put it, and just sell it. That it’s my main business I want to [do].”

Randolf (workers’ leader, 7th season).
Others, turn to cash crops, including copra, despite their complaints that growing it is labour intensive and the returns are low.149

"I am coming now this year [...] I buy like three hectares and then I build my house, and then I try to plant some white hood trees, and I will plant some sandalwood, and then I will plant some kava [...] because now we earn money with the kava [...] sandalwood is for export."

Chikau (36 years, 5th RSE season)

And others would like to own a grocery store:

"[I will go to New Zealand for] seven more years. I want to make a shop. I want to make a supermarket, a supermarket to sell the fuel, to sell like for example chicken, and some other stuff. I want to make a small supermarket like the supermarket store you see [here in the village]."

Kempes (28 years, 3rd season)

Growing cash crops and more intensive grazing of cattle have known environmental consequences which need further considerations but are beyond the scope of this research. It is also paradoxical that the financial independence workers strive for relies on export demand more than on the local market in Vanuatu, which will increase Ni-Vanuatu engagement with global markets. They may become financially independent from the RSE, but not from the variations in the demand for and price of cash crops.

Other younger RSE workers have the goal of funding their weddings – and other ceremonies (Bailey, 2014b). Some may already have children but been unable to pay for a kastom ceremony because of what it entails in terms of providing for the numerous attendees. It is important to know that despite many weddings taking place in rural areas, the use of imported food such as rice has special significance (Bailey, 2014b; R. E. Smith, 2016).150 As the expenses associated with marriage ceremonies are linked to customary traditions, this spending is not questioned by the leaders. Three of my interviewees were planning to spend their income in meeting that “pending” goal, and two out of them had had to save for at least three seasons to pay for their marriage ceremony. Tim recalls:

"I just paid my wife cash, like just by myself, no one helped me [...] Our traditional way is not like you over there, we have to get more food, more meat, we have to feed a lot of people like 500 or 600 people. I spent nearly 300,000 Vt. maybe like NZ$ 5,000? [...]"

149 “The copra business” is also regarded as undervalued because the hard work and time involved to produce it does not guarantee an equivalent pay due to the speculative variations of traders’ prices.

150 See also Jourdan and Philibert (2014) for a discussion on the reordered relationship between Western commodities and Pacific subjects according to local values and meanings.
I have (sic) that idea, I have to pay my wife and have to go to marriage, and then I am free now.”

Tim (38 years, 7th season)

His wife supports his view:

“...we got married, so he spent all the first money [earned during his first RSE season] in our marriage [...] it costs a lot because the braed praes is different and we have to do certain other kastom ceremonies towards our families so it costs a lot! [her emphasis] [...] the good thing is that he did everything by himself [...] If it comes back to the time that one [member of the family] gets married, so you have to pay back all those stuff [...] with your money, so it will cost [you]. But for us, he [Tim] did everything with his own money. He is free.”

Heilene (34 years, Tim’s wife)

The mother of a groom to be also respects his independence in aiming to pay for the ceremony on his own:

“He [my son] says he does not need [us] to help. He says, he wants to meet all his expenses by himself. He wants to be independent, which is good. I am really happy for that [...] It would be burdensome if I didn’t have the cash to do it. But if I had the cash, if I had the plans all in place, no.”

Naila (44 years, Harry’s wife)

I understood that pride was tied up with fulfilling material goals and customary obligations and being able to take care of one’s own family. However, it was unclear to me whether not having a debt to other villagers could signal a distancing from existing customary social relations or a withdrawal from kin networks, as it is through kastom ceremonies, among other traditions, that reciprocal relations are maintained and people who do not participate are often singled out. Smith (2016) points out to how the lack of reliance on reciprocal contributions undermines social relations and creates or accentuates differences between the “haves” and “have-nots” as she identifies that costs of rituals are increasingly borne by the household instead of kin and villages. Doing so, in a community that is increasingly economically differentiated, “raises dilemmas over the morality of indebting people who may not find it easy to repay” (2016: 307). She also acknowledges uncertainty regarding the continuation of this system of reciprocal contributions entailing different gendered, generational and kinship roles in fulfilling obligations. Next, I expand on other mechanisms that promote the incorporation of neoliberal values in relation to money management.

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151 Instead, Bailey (2014b) highlights that RSE incomes finance traditional systems that were in decline due to the introduction of cash, See also Gregory (2015) for an examination of theories of gifts, commodities and their transformations in ceremonial exchanges.

152 See also Dornan (2018) regarding wider issues of this increasing differentiation.
6.2.3.1 Saving schemes

RSE employers set up savings schemes to facilitate the accomplishment of workers’ goals. RSE regulations require that employers provide “access to personal banking” (INZ, 2015a). Allowed deductions need to be consented by workers, meet “a specified purpose and are for actual, reasonable, verifiable expenses in relation to that purpose” (INZ, 2010). Some of these deductions use part of workers’ savings. Workers can withdraw their consent to these deductions, but in practice this may not happen because of the different pressures they face to contribute to their own development. From a governmentality perspective, savings schemes can be seen as contributing to the governing of workers.153

It is common practice for employers to create savings accounts (C. Bedford, 2013). In some cases, workers are only given access to it when they are back in Vanuatu – or about to leave New Zealand. This practice determines the amount of remittances sent while in New Zealand, rather than relying on individual variations in availability of work, earnings, savings or spending patterns (Ericsson, 2009). Workers can access their earnings when they are getting ready to go back to Vanuatu, with some receiving cash at the airport; however, this varies depending on employer and their flexibility regarding requests for advances.154 The aim of the RSE is for most of the money to be used back in Vanuatu for development, which explains the emphasis on accounting for the amount of remittances sent back to the participating Pacific countries (Bailey, 2015b; MBIE, 2014; MBIE, 2015a). Sixty percent of workers’ pay is spent on deductions and remittances (Mannering, 2016). One of the leaders explained how the savings schemes work:

“They [employers] do everything for us. We have the bank account. For every week, we get a $100 for our food and the rest [of our income goes] for savings. That savings you can’t touch […] and if you want to buy clothes you have to use [your savings, that’s how we learned that […] I don’t spend much in New Zealand, because I need money in Vanuatu to do some business.”

Katherine (workers’ leader, 6th RSE reason)

Another highlighted differences between employers:

“…we used to work like every week, they have to give us allowance, but they just pay you to your bank account […] each and every one of us have (sic) two accounts like check[ing] accounts and savings account […]and they [in other companies], they just give you like 50$ or 100$, you can use it every week for your food and for some of the things that like you need. Some of the boys are saying […]

153 Savings schemes are not foreign to Ni-Vanuatu. See Eriksen (2012) and Thorarensen (2011) for saving schemes in Pentecostal churches and their relation to the prosperity gospel.

154 Participants used the word advances or allowances to refer to obtaining earnings that were already in their savings account. They consider it an advance on the total income they will receive on departure.
Chapter 6

when they were already in Auckland, they [their employers] have to give them their check, and they [workers] have to hand over their check again, because they [their employers] have already put all the money. And they [workers] come with their check [to Vanuatu], take out all of their money in Port Vila. Some of them say that when they are ready to go, then their boss just comes around to the accommodation and gives [them] their money [...] They take a lot of money in the plane…”

Tim (38 years, 7th season)

Savings schemes vary between companies; however, it is generally accepted that these schemes are the “only way” to achieve a high level of remittances or to avoid absconding (Board, 2012). As one employer mentioned: “…if we wouldn't do it this way, we wouldn't have the amount of remittances that we see now going back to the Pacific.” Similarly, recommendations of financial literacy including budgeting and reducing costs of transmitting remittances to amplify the benefits of the acquired income has been constant since the earlier evaluations of the scheme. In this way, quantifying remittances’ reach (R. Bedford & Bedford, 2017) or supplementing remittances with development grants (Clear Horizon, 2016; Maclellan, 2008) may also contribute to the encouragement of a “culture of savings” (Bailey, 2009). 155 Compulsory savings however are not the only mechanism used to encourage the fulfillment of development goals.

6.2.3.2. The RSE bond

To avoid returning RSE workers being unable to cover in-country costs prior to their arrival in New Zealand “mechanisms such as employer advances and loans and micro-credit facilities [were] being set up [by the second season] to help workers with up-front costs” (IMSED Research, 2010: x).156 The RSE bond is a savings practice used by one of the companies I visited.157 However, it is not concerned with remittances but with retaining earnings to cover workers’ return trip to New Zealand the following season. This particular company considered it a good way to encourage saving by workers. This bond is in addition to weekly deductions for taxes, insurance, transport, lodging and so on, and RSE workers disagreed with this practice as it affected the amount of money they could take home and they preferred to use their earnings

155 See also Ericsson (2009).
156 For an estimation of costs incurred before arriving to New Zealand see Bailey (2013) and Bedford (2011) for an estimation of employers’ costs.
157 In one of the companies, the pastoral care worker and workers mentioned during the last phase of this research, that the company will not deduct the RSE bond from that season onwards, a decision they felt relieved to hear about, but they had yet to see in their paystubs.
in Vanuatu rather than saving money in New Zealand. However, because the bond payment was included in their contracts, the workers felt they could not reverse this situation.

Interviewees also agreed that it could be a struggle during the first weeks after arrival, as they were just “spending money” while waiting for the fruit to be ready to be harvested. These are times when access to money is crucial as it can affect workers’ wellbeing. They mentioned that during these first weeks they have “only deductions”, meaning they lack money to send home, calling their families, and sometimes eating. This cost-recovery mechanism can affect particularly first-time workers. Interviewees also mentioned they preferred to use their earnings in Vanuatu instead of saving money in New Zealand.

The RSE operations manual stipulates that deductions are only permissible if approved by INZ, either at the same time of approving the ATR, or as a subsequently approved proposal (INZ, 2010; INZ, 2016c) because employers have to comply with the Wages Protection Act (Government of New Zealand, 1983). This Act protects workers from unlawful wage deductions, however it does not define what unreasonable deductions are. As RSE workers have to consent to the deductions toward a bond, their leader saw this as a way to “help them save” money for their costs for the next season. It was therefore justified on the grounds that workers struggled to save for their upfront costs, including air fares and medical examinations. While in theory RSE workers can withdraw their consent for the bond payments at any time, only two of my participants mentioned raising the issue with their leaders. I was not sure whether this was because they were not planning to return, or because they were more assertive.

6.2.3.3 Financial Training

Subjects also receive financial training in which they are encouraged to plan for their goals. The interviewees considered the training could help them manage their finances better. In the Vakameasina training programme they receive financial and personal goal setting advice. Terms which were previously foreign to them, such as opportunity, goals and future plans, have

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158 I was told that it is somewhat hard for employers to plan whether the harvest will be ready before they purchase the flights. Thus, some employers have previously fixed dates in every season when workers arrive and depart from New Zealand.

159 My fieldwork coincided with two of these periods in which workers were not working because the produce was not ready for harvesting or because of the weather and participants were anxious because they were spending their savings and not receiving any income, thus the koha was gladly welcomed.

160 See section 3.3.1. for more details on the Vakameasina programme.
been incorporated into the language Ni-Vanuatu use in relation to what they expect to achieve from the scheme (R. E. Smith, 2016). Leaders encourage the uptake of these sessions, although they are often not available for all the workers. As one leader noted: “It is a matter of choice, and if you are wise, go for it! Don’t say I just came here to pick apples.” The development narrative from the RSE policy underpins workers’ understanding of their contracts and labour relations. Their silences and words borrowed from the policy documents are both telling of how workers’ subjectivities are being constructed. One notable example is one former leader’s articulation of the “triple wins”: “Our job, [the] RSE scheme, is to help the New Zealand government and to all the farmers, and help to the Vanuatu government, everyone gets money for what we do over here.”

Similarly to earlier research, (Bailey, 2009; R. E. Smith, 2016) the aspiration to “improve” and the phrase “standard of living” were constant in the interviews – whether this meant “living like the waetman,” having a house made of concrete, buying solar panels or refrigerators, wearing foreign clothes, or eating imported food. Similar to earlier observations in Erakor (Jourdan & Philibert, 2014) my participants considered it natural to acquire goods to achieve a higher level of personal comfort if possible, disregarding that higher personal consumption might undermine the share contributed to the community. I found these aspirations and particularly the phrase “improve standards of living” often repeated in official interactions, industry communications (HortNZ, 2008b) and by workers’ leaders in the development narratives used to justify the scheme. Participants understand the RSE as an opportunity for new and improved livelihoods, and is highly appreciated by leaders and workers alike. One leader considered he had seen:

"...a big improvement in the RSE workers because they manage to get something that the local, other people here in the village they don’t have. They have managed because they are RSE [workers] [...] They improve their living [my emphasis] as well, they build better houses [...] Otherwise they will be struggling as usual."

Harry (workers’ leader, 5th RSE season)

Another leader acknowledged similar improvements, although his understanding of the RSE differs:

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161 Smith’s (2016) ethnography unpacks how the meanings of a “good house” influence perceptions of living standards and the motivation to engage in seasonal migration.
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“That is the good thing of [about] New Zealand, they are helping out the Ni-Vanuatu with their needs. That’s why we come all here, work, get money and get back. Just to help us, fill up our standard of our living [my emphasis].”

Vincent (workers’ leader, 7th RSE season)

Workers also considered they were learning better ways of living:

“I learn[ed] to live more comfortable, and cleanliness [...] so when we come back here [to Vanuatu] we change our living [my emphasis] [and] all the things here. New Zealand is very clean, here [in Vanuatu] is down [laughs].”

McKenna (workers’ leader, 3rd RSE season)

Other workers highlighted their conscious decision to improve:

“It’s not for you come [to New Zealand] and stay and [do] nothing more, you can do [that] back [at] your home, you can [have] your family and have your future for you. And then [what] you can get from [going to New Zealand]? It’s not to get... stuff for free, you can use the mind to lift your home, your living [my emphasis].”

Kevin (30 years, 3rd season)

This process was reinforced by their acknowledgment of the different way of living in New Zealand:

“When we go over there to New Zealand, our brain is open, we are going to see something different over there. Then, we come back here we can change the way of living, the way of talking, the way of meeting somebody else, like your friend, you have a good relation with somebody else [...] Lots of new things. The way of living [my emphasis] especially a new home, a new house, you are going to make a good food for your family, or you can decorate your house [...] We can see this man here. [In New Zealand], they build a good house and they put flowers around their home. They build this, they do this, they have this, maybe one day I am going to have this when I go back to my community... it started to change our system of living [my emphasis] in the community.”

Tim (38 years, 7th season)

The question of whether these new livelihoods are sustainable in the long run is often disregarded by workers and was not raised by my interviewees. However, Bailey (2014b) presents evidence that this may not be the case in all groups and that some are already questioning their engagement in the scheme. Intentions to disengage seem related to workers’ age, the strength they feel, and are also conditional on becoming financially independent after fulfilling some material goals at home. Sometimes this thinking is also encouraged by the leaders. Then, workers become entrepreneurial subjects and the architects of their own development (Kapur, 2004), with advice from co-workers and especially leaders. The next section develops how the subjectivities of the leaders are constructed, and the governmental techniques in operation in relation to their role.
6.2.4 The Disciplinarian leaders

“Before I am [was] not a leader [...] in 2008-2009 I [was] made a leader. I don’t know why [...] They [my employers] [...] just ring me and they said now we can trust you. I don’t understand what to do [...] I am very surprised, I don’t know why they choose me [...] [I think] when we make good for the group to the orchard, and almost you cannot hear any problem in our orchard”

Stephen (workers’ leader, 7th RSE season)

Leaders are authority figures for workers, but employers and pastoral care workers also rely heavily on them. It is assumed that leaders can easily interact with workers and explain things “in their own words” and language. However, as already mentioned, not all leaders have a complete understanding of issues such as wage deductions or additional payments, and need to clarify workers’ question, or complaints, with the employer. Other leaders consider they should not be bothering employers, so they try to do their best and wait until they have a certain number of questions and then request a meeting with their bosses. As one of the leaders described, “I address everything to the boss if necessary and some of the issues… I only deal with them myself, because it’s not necessary to waste the boss’ time.”

The background of leaders is diverse. Some are pastors or village chiefs, while others are those with more schooling who thus already have privileged status in their group. While participants were unsure how leaders were selected, they mentioned that disclosing previous employment experience in the RSE application forms increased the chances of being chosen as leaders. In line with the RSE purpose to provide employment opportunities for unskilled workers, having completed schooling is not a requirement for becoming a leader. However, the leaders acknowledged that they could have been chosen because of their educational credentials, their ability to speak English, their participation in meetings, or their good relationship with the bosses. Nonetheless, leaders have been credited with being one of the factors for the success of the RSE scheme (Bailey, 2017b) despite their varied background and responsibilities depending of each firm needs.

In addition, participants’ role in their home community can determine who is chosen as leaders. Some pastors have been made leaders because their respected position and connection to religious discourse makes their role more easily accepted by workers. When this has not been the case, workers can question a leader’s selection if it seems arbitrary to them. Sometimes
workers’ leaders are called *apuas*\(^{162}\) or mothers and fathers, which is indicative of the close relationship the workers have built with them. In other instances, the leaders are considered as having a similar status to chiefs, although this does not remain uncontested.

The new hierarchies being forged under the scheme have accommodated existing ones, but they are contested, particularly when workers have a complaint\(^{163}\) which they believe has been ignored by the leader. In turn, it seems that the same hierarchies created between leaders and workers in New Zealand are later reproduced to a certain extent in Vanuatu. One group of workers who lived in villages nearby to each other had developed an ambivalent relationship with their leader. These workers respected their leader in public, or in the presence of strangers, but they told jokes about him in private. It seems that workers who live close by each other in Vanuatu will interact frequently outside their engagement in the RSE scheme, sometimes creating tensions in their relations when they return to Vanuatu, especially when people from the same village work for the same company.

Further, workers’ leaders can assume leadership roles in Vanuatu. For example, Stephen was asked to become the next chief in his village, although there was already another RSE worker, born to the current chief, in line to assume the chiefdom. Stephen did not previously have a leadership role in his village, and he cannot explain why he was made a workers’ leader. However, since he has become a RSE leader, he is always involved in village affairs. Not all the RSE workers agree with this, some because of what *kastom* prescribes\(^{164}\) and others because they do not think he listens to their needs while in New Zealand. Employers’ designation can therefore bestow a status that empowers these selected individuals as leaders beyond the workplace, in influencing workers during their free time in New Zealand, and extending to their relationships in their villages in Vanuatu. Thus, my concern with the techniques that make these changes possible and the underlying assumptions that legitimise these changes for Ni-Vanuatu communities.

It is evident that new forms of authority and new skills can become more valued than traditional ones. In this case, demonstrating prowess in adapting to working in New Zealand to “succeed”

\(^{162}\) *Apua* is a term used to designate grandparents (maternal and paternal) and convey the respect they deserve.

\(^{163}\) As mentioned earlier, common complaints are related to transportation while in New Zealand and accommodation because workers calculate they will save money if they could arrange both by themselves, but they are not free to choose (INZ, 2016c).

\(^{164}\) Workers’ mentioned that according the *kastom* there was already someone chosen to be chief, when the current one passes away.
in the scheme can be considered deserving of a chiefdom, similarly to more traditional ways of becoming chief such as being the kin successor, or having the physical force required to kill a pig which was something Stephen was not sure he could do. When leaders legitimise their role through religion – or biblical references, they are less likely to be challenged. On occasions, I witnessed bible verses related to reaping and sowing being used to focus workers’ attention on being more responsible and productive. The transformations brought by a neoliberal rationality are therefore changing the understanding of merit and transforming social practices in relation to chieftaincy.

Companies usually pay higher hourly rates to the leaders compared to the workers, though most of them do not have contracts as leaders (Bailey, 2017b). Leaders also get additional benefits, such as subsidised flights and living expenses when they are in Port Vila preparing the required paperwork for their travel. I was told that I should not mention these benefits to others, to prevent misunderstandings. It later became clear there are a number of “unofficial” leaders who may feel entitled to such benefits. This speaks to how discipline is used to regulate the conduct of workers, as when they are selected as leaders, they are no longer able to raise complaints because they now represent the employers in ensuring that everyone gets to work, to eat, and goes to sleep on time. In this way, the workers become disciplined to comply with the rules.

6.2.4.1 Designating leaders

Leaders are among the main individuals disciplining RSE workers. Workers’ leaders can designate leaders themselves, sometimes with the assent of the company. In one of the companies I visited, almost a third of interviewees mentioned they were leaders, which was more than usual. It was explained to me that practice around who, and how many, are designated as leaders in New Zealand depends on the needs of the company. Leaders can sometimes be chosen by type of work. For example, a company can have leaders for quality control, or for working in the orchard, or in the packing house. Others may appoint leaders according to sex, who tend to issues pertaining to accommodation. As the criteria for choosing leaders is not clear, this can lead to speculation over why bosses favour some workers over

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165 Anecdotal evidence in Vanuatu, associates the appointment of individuals other than successors as a sign of respect for work undertaken.
166 Miles draws attention to how the status conferred by owning or killing a pig has been eroded by money as “the relevant index of wealth and power” (1997: 156) and to how leaders in the “modern sector” also seek status on the “traditional one”.
167 Bailey (2017b) draws attention to social relationships being affected by new forms of leadership and argues that non-traditional leaders are gaining social capital.
others. Employers and leaders do not necessarily inform workers about their reasons for such designations, which can become particularly sensitive if one leader is being replaced.

Workers within the same company can be leaders at different points in time. When workers are made temporary leaders of a smaller group, for example, leader of the bedroom or the camper van in which they live, they have to change their behaviour towards other workers to make sure they comply with expectations. In this way workers feel they are being disciplined, as they have to stop complaining because their role has changed. As one interviewee said, “Everyone is a leader here”, explaining that he thought he had been made a leader to stop him complaining. This is therefore a disciplining strategy used by some leaders to reduce the amount of complaints and grievances, while at the same time increasing levels of responsibility in the group. This interviewee described how some individuals are made the leaders of a room, with responsibility for ensuring that workers are ready to depart for work on time, keep the room clean, clean themselves, and take turns at cooking. In this case, these “unofficial” leaders did not feel they were real leaders because, unlike the leader who nominated them, they do not have the direct connection with the employer.

6.2.5 Summary of section

This section set out to identify how further to the “4 Cs” already developed in Chapter 5, RSE practices in New Zealand are underpinned by the neoliberal rationalities that allow for the continuation of the scheme. I have focused on discipline and self-care as governmental techniques transforming RSE workers’ subjectivities as they learn about how the RSE scheme works and the requirements for succeeding in it. Workers have learned to be beneficiaries of the scheme; thus, they adapt their behaviours to continue their participation. The knowledge acquired about the requirements for development is anything but neutral, as “ultimately the development impact of the program will depend in large part on who (and how many) of the Ni-Vanuatu participate” (McKenzie et al., 2008: 206). As a result, there is an associated emphasis on encouraging productive, goal-oriented and entrepreneurial behaviours, and on becoming authoritarian to guarantee productivity and realise development. The next section develops how migration and development narratives allow for the continuation of the RSE scheme.
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6.3. Sustaining Migration and Development Narratives

“In a typically technocratic and managerial fashion, the normative dimension of IMN [international migration narratives] is hidden behind a ‘technical’, ‘evidence-based’, or ‘scientific’ assessment of the ‘problems’, as well as behind the universal – and therefore apparently consensual – nature of their approach to migration. As a result, IMN never explicitly support a political position.”

(Pécoud, 2015: 93)

As already discussed, the regulatory structure of temporal migration schemes defines the framework within which individuals and stakeholders interact. The knowledge underpinning the problematisation of issues, and their solutions, can be created by means of academic research, grey literature (World Bank, 2006a; World Bank, 2006b; World Bank, 2012), evaluation papers/reports (Gibson & McKenzie, 2010; IMSED Research, 2010; Luthria, 2008; McKenzie & Gibson, 2014; Roorda, 2011), monitoring instruments such as the checklists incorporated in application forms (ESU, 2013a), and promotional and informational materials (ESU, 2014b; New Zealand Department of Labour & Settlement Support New Zealand, 2011), among others. This framework is supported by international organisations, governments, along with other actors to guarantee the continuation of the RSE scheme. First, norms and regulations based on data and research make the dynamics of migration intelligible. Second, data transforms migratory flows into separate problems that can be managed in “orderly” and “predictable” ways (Pécoud, 2015). Third, solutions become depoliticised because the migration narratives neutralise competing understandings. This section develops how migration and development narratives are intertwined in the RSE scheme and have become depoliticised accordingly to allow for the continuation and expansion of the scheme.

Again, I focus on discipline and self-care as governmentality techniques, and their expression through the migration and development narratives contained in the documents that have operationalised the RSE. This section draws attention to the materials specifically developed for the management of the scheme, including practices taken from other international seasonal migration schemes that are deemed universally applicable. Using the RSE operational manual, the guidelines, and the checklists produced to manage the RSE in New Zealand and Vanuatu, I highlight the ambiguity and discretionality embedded in most of the texts which serve to facilitate the disciplining RSE workers. The management of the RSE is analysed in terms of
“conducting the conduct” of workers in the interests of improving productivity, increasing income and promoting development, and ultimately economic growth.

6.3.1 Narratives in the RSE Management

The sections above have focused mostly on management practices for the RSE in New Zealand. However, creating the link between migration and development requires the intervention of various other actors. The Vanuatu DOL, through their promotional site for seasonal workers, helps sustain the development narratives linked to specific behaviours and characteristics of Ni-Vanuatu workers. The “Work Ready Vanuatu” website states: “Vanuatu seasonal workers are highly praised among employers for their excellent work attitudes, willingness to work hard and their flexibility” (ESU, 2014b). Workers are commended for their productivity and because they are invested in achieving “clear goals” ranging from building a new house, to funding children’s education or something for their community. This emphasis on goals and productivity speaks to the neoliberal rationalities underpinning the RSE scheme. The compliant, well behaved worker is a selling point for governments participating in the RSE scheme. However, these marketing efforts are not necessarily appreciated by employers (Hao'uli, 2013), as “worker performance (in and out of the workplace) is ‘what counts’” for them, “together with the ease and timeliness of their dealings with Pacific officials” (Analytic Matters, 2013: 13).

In New Zealand, the introduction of market and quasi market type mechanisms to government programmes reflect the move to New Public Management (NPM). A strong emphasis has been placed on the contractualisation of public services and pursuing systematic approaches to improve services (Pollitt, 1995). The Vakameasina Programme, which is administered by a consultant company, falls into this category. The effectiveness of the programme is measured in terms of its reach (number and distribution of participants, hours of training) and other key performance indicators (KPIs) used by MFAT to monitor to whether the consultancy is achieving key business objectives. Increasing numbers of participants and maintaining a positive balance in terms of operational costs is part of the strategy for legitimating the relationship between migration and development.
The development and migration narrative is also a way of justifying the international organisations’ role “of ‘selling’ the added value of their interventions” (Pécoud, 2015: 75). Before the RSE scheme was established in New Zealand, the World Bank viewed the establishment of a migration scheme as a policy decision for the New Zealand government. Their narrative however encouraged the New Zealand government to move away from inaction, as the sector was at that time in “a lose-lose-lose situation for employers, workers and government” (World Bank, 2006a: 134). Prior (2011) notes that relevant policy documents contain a similar storyline which argues that the current situation is bad, so there is an impending need for change which can be achieved by empowering different actors. In the case of the RSE, the situation before the scheme was putting different actors at risk. Employers were at risk of raids that might interrupt their peak harvest and they could be fined for employing undocumented immigrants. The undocumented workers were vulnerable to exploitation and detention, and New Zealand workers’ wages could be undermined by illegal employment. Finally, the New Zealand government was incurring big expenses in immigration compliance activities that were in turn affecting the horticulture and viticulture industries and local communities.

Looking more widely, other actors have contributed to the continuation of the RSE. In 2009, the Pacific Cooperation Foundation (PCF) was granted funds from a World Bank Institutional Development Fund (IDF) to implement the “Institutional Capacity Building for Labour Export in the Pacific” project. This project lasted 18 months and supported labour sending institutions to strengthen their institutional capacity. The PCF programme recommended regulatory changes for Vanuatu and introduced improvements in human resources such as “vision for service delivery, explicit service performance standards, comprehensive business planning, transparent budgeting, resource planning, staff training, performance development plans, processes for regular communication with staff and reporting to executive managers” (PCF, 2011: 19). The programme also supported the development of databases and information collection to streamline the supply process by maintaining accurate electronic profiles of workers, and for use in market studies of employers’ perceptions of RSE workers and the respective marketing plans used to market seasonal workers to potential employers.168 The PCF audited the expenditure and benefits of such programmes, asserting that the gains in the

168 The fact that the RSE seasonal cap is not controlled by Pacific governments but by New Zealand had created reservations about the marketing training among participants.
“sending capacity” of various countries toward labour mobility in the RSE had been achieved (2011; 2013). Additionally, other initiatives such as the Pacific Islands Labour Sending Countries (PaILS) Forum 169 focus on maintaining workers competitiveness in the employment market.

Once solutions to identified problems have been implemented, evaluations and audits can play a crucial role in policy making. In seasonal migration programmes, the systematic and periodic collection of data is a priority: “Knowledge and information are critical to formulate, implement, and evaluate labour migration policy and practice” (ILO, 2006: 9). The data collected serves first to reduce migration to smaller and more “manageable” problems, and second to legitimise the privileging of one course of action over another from a neutral and depoliticised standpoint (Pécoud, 2015). Considering data and information as neutral disregards the reality that the methods and theories behind data collection are situated in specific theoretical and political understandings.

6.3.2 Narratives in the RSE Evaluations

The first evaluation of the RSE scheme was commissioned by the New Zealand Department of Labour. It covered the first two years of the scheme. The “Final Evaluation Report of the Recognised Seasonal Employer Policy (2007-2009)” (IMSED Research, 2010) found that by the second season, Ni-Vanuatu workers had benefited financially, showing a positive balance after repaying airfares, debts, and living expenses, and also by gaining work related skills 170. The reported benefits for employers were in workers’ productivity and cost-savings in training. A major factor identified as contributing to these outcomes was the willingness of workers to carry out the “physically demanding manual work involved in harvesting crops in very hot, cold, or windy conditions […] [In addition they] were more willing to work long hours, weekends, and night shifts than New Zealand workers” (IMSED Research, 2010: xiii). Further, the quality of produce improved because the harvest was carried out at the right time, packing and processing improved, and New Zealand workers performed better due to “demonstration

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169 This forum periodically brings together ministries from PICs to discuss labour migration and opportunities to improve the RSE and SWP and potentially expanding to other markets (World Bank, 2016).
170 See also C. Bedford (2013) and McKenzie & Gibson (2014).
effects” from RSE workers. However, the demonstration effects on RSE workers of adopting a Western style of behaviour as a result of these interactions, and the implications for their traditions, were not explored.

Another example is the evaluation of the Vakameasina programme, one objective of which was to review the cost effectiveness of the results delivered. The recommendations of the evaluation included: “[…] to fully explore more cost-effective and potentially far reaching options for training delivery, such as train-the-trainer courses, intensive one-day sessions or webinars, and allowing for the provision of employer driven training” (Clear Horizon, 2016: vii). In this way government responsibilities can be transferred to private actors. As a way of reducing MFAT’s financial burden, the report recommends setting up mechanisms for capturing financial contributions from employers to improve the viability of the programme. Significantly, the World Bank had previously proposed the value of cost-benefit analysis, recommending that “(a)ny proposed seasonal labour scheme will only be viable if the numbers stack up” (World Bank, 2006a: 120). MFAT’s willingness to reduce the costs of one of its successful regional initiatives despite the benefits provided is worrisome, especially when they describe the RSE “as a triple win, benefiting the workers and the developing country economies, as well as meeting a labour needs in New Zealand (MFAT, 2017: 1). Their website also highlights the recognition the RSE has received: “In 2014 a World Bank report described RSE as “one of the most effective development interventions for which rigorous evaluations are available”” (MFAT, 2017: 1). This is an example of how evaluations can be used to universally justify or legitimise policy making based on the knowledge derived from data.

I have pointed out how the conduct of the different RSE stakeholders – government officials, employers, agents, and workers – is carried out using reports to transfer technical knowledge. By using data assumed to be neutral, practices are legitimised to achieve monetary gains by using corporate business approaches to manage migration from a cost-benefit perspective. Thus, to bring benefit to all the parties, “[…] the international mobility of the workforce also represents the result and the leverage of a form of knowledge that emphasizes growth, innovation, entrepreneurship, and mobility as the four strategic keywords of personal compliance with market dynamics and capital needs” (Tomei, 2016: 170). The external supply

171 Demonstration effects initially used to refer to consumer behaviour has been extended in economics to describe the behavioural effects that developments in one area can have as a catalyst in others.
172 The Vakameasina programme has been recently expanded under PACER plus (Brownlee & Woodhouse, 2017).
of knowledge from independent evaluators and international organisations influences solutions implemented in national policy and regulations by means of technical assistance and advice on good practice.

6.3.3 Narratives of the RSE International recognition

Soon after the scheme was officially launched, the RSE received recognition from international organisations as an example of best practice in a successful regional labour mobility programme (ILO, 2015a), and as a development intervention (McKenzie & Gibson, 2014). The ILO’s praise of the RSE as a model programme (Whatman & van Beek, 2008) recognises its recruitment practices and policy coherence. In this way, the management practices of the RSE are legitimised and maintained. This recognition is also supported by the evaluations carried out and the denominations of “good practice”. Demonstrating that the RSE is meeting the “4 Cs” of best international practice connotes that there is a universal way of designing migration schemes, and such an assumption disregards specificities of context.

Since it was first piloted, the Vakameasina programme has been recognised by the OECD (OECD, 2011) as an Aid-For-Trade Case, which is telling of the quid pro quo role that labour mobility has in trade agreements, as seen in the PACER Plus negotiations. This has contributed to the international recognition of the RSE as the Vakameasina enables the expansion of one of the triple wins, namely the “development benefits” for RSE workers and their communities, addressing at the same time employers’ concerns and workers’ needs. Similarly, the SPP has expanded the uptake of the RSE by increasing the range of actors responsible for labour mobility, with other agencies such as health and police officials now involved along with RSE operational staff and recruitment agents.

The final SPP evaluation’s argument that a “key message communicated to participants is the need for Pacific States to have a business-like approach to operating the RSE (rather than

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173 Development impact is understood in three different ways: as raising the income of people from poor countries, as increasing the utility of households, and as the long-term impacts on households beyond consumption (Gibson & McKenzie, 2013).

174 Evaluation practitioners had already argued for including the specific contexts in which programmes are evaluated and the criteria and perspective used (Kushner, 2017; Patton, 2015).
regarding RSE as an administrative activity)” (Analytic Matters, 2013: 13) aligns to the NPM approach. These resonates with a neoliberal rationality in which the link between development and migration achieved by the RSE should follow a business-like approach to be successful. Consequently, the training has been used as a “‘vehicle’ for influence by delivering key messages that are embedded in the workshop content” (Analytic Matters, 2013: 12-13). The same evaluation acknowledges the difficulties of influencing cultural practices in the sending countries, such as patriarchal work structures, but considers that the SPP is able to influence the restructuring of core RSE teams, staff transfers, and relationships between Pacific officials and RSE employers. According to Hao’uli (2013), this capacity building approach extends beyond the endorsement of a business-like approach to reflect an “ideologically driven development.” Similarly, I argue that development and migration narratives that aim to make productive individuals responsible for their own development are sustained through academic and grey literature, as well as through evaluation reports. Thus, the anchoring of solutions to problems in a data driven understanding of reality, as prescribed by NPM, is a manifestation of the neoliberal rationality that governs the management of the RSE scheme.

6.4. Summary of Chapter

This chapter set out to identify the policies and practices that allow for the continuation of the RSE scheme. I have explained how the governmental techniques of discipline and self-care operate to allow Ni-Vanuatu to earn money to contribute to their families’ development. When workers are told what and what not to do in ways that have been legitimised by training, leaders and employers, this contributes to their acceptance of that knowledge as truth. The narratives behind worker success highlight practices such as saving, setting proper goals, not consuming alcohol, and trying to maximise profits for the sake of development. Trying to protect workers from their own inexperience and from misusing their income can appear as a sensible cause for pastoral care workers and employers. This embodies the government discourse of a neighborhood obligation (Barker, 2010), although some individuals recognise the patronising nature of these messages. Discipline operates through formal recommendations and informal interactions, as a governmental technique to guide workers for their own benefit. Workers’ achievements are often compared favourably to disorganised spending, shaping a notion of
development that links individuals’ productivity specifically to productive investments such as building infrastructure and creating businesses, which are ultimately equated to development.

The development narratives which legitimise and justify the scheme (Plimmer, 2006) have become the main argument used by workers to explain the reasons for their participation in the scheme. In trying to unpack whether workers’ and their families’ notions of development go beyond what is transmitted to them via the official conduct of the RSE, I have drawn on examples from pre-departure training, induction sessions, and my conversations with employers, providers of pastoral care, and facilitators from the Vakameasina programme. The next section focuses on the Vanuatu context where the most important and permanent social relations take place. I unpack how employment and money are connected to a “customary rationality” which is regulated by workers’ leaders, their communities, and individuals’ self-control.
Chapter 7. Customary Subjectivities in the works

This chapter responds to the last research question about how customary rationalities and practices transform new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers under a migration management scheme. I focus on the negotiation of Ni-Vanuatu changing subjectivities in their social, political, and economic positions as they engage in the RSE scheme. I draw attention to “customary rationalities”, a term I have coined to group the subjectivities derived from an understanding of kastom and other Ni-Vanuatu local influences, and distinguish them, for analytical purposes, from the previously discussed neoliberal rationalities they occur alongside or in combination with. I analyse the policy, processes, practices, and discourses that underpin the RSE and shape these negotiations to reflect on these transformations at different points in time and place. I draw attention to the practices and the “migration narratives” that allow Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers to contest or accept new employment relations in New Zealand. To respond to the second part of the question regarding the implications for Ni-Vanuatu most permanent social relations with their families and communities I examine how particular conceptions produced through participation in the RSE may be later extended to Ni-Vanuatu workers’ day to day lives in their communities at home, where they become articulated to other social processes and customary practices such as weddings and other customary ceremonies.

I argued in Chapter 6 that the narratives of migration and development, as found in policy documents, highlight the importance of individual workers obtaining a continuous amount of income which requires them to become productive and implies assigning a value to their economic activity and constructing neoliberal subjectivities. This suggests a change from earlier migration patterns as to guarantee their access to money, individuals are subject to a variety of formal and informal practices they must respect to become at once the targets and producers of development. In this chapter, I address the use of mane (money) by RSE workers, the implications for their families and villages in terms of what they are able to achieve materially and in terms of status, and the associated transformation of subjectivities as neoliberal rationalities become connected to customary ones. As a new group in-the-making, RSE workers regard their respective positions in their communities in different ways after their participation in the RSE scheme. These understandings shape how RSE workers and their families approach the RSE and how subjectivities are constructed by rationalities – neoliberal
and customary – which allow individuals to connect “good behaviour” with money and success.

7.1. Customary subjectivities

“Customary rationalities” is the term I coined to distinguish rationalities based on *kastom*, from other types of rationalities I encountered in my interview analysis. I propose that customary rationalities – knowledge – is underpinned by customary values and beliefs such as respect for authority figures and kin and differentiated gender roles, among others. These rationalities are also tied to religion, and Christianity – and the so-called health and wealth gospel – in particular, which is part and parcel of customary understandings of how people should conduct themselves. These customary understandings are treated by individuals as truths, thus they adapt their behaviour accordingly. Ni-Vanuatu are influenced at the same time by ideologies from the world system and from the “world of *kastom*” (Jourdan & Philibert, 2014). The three subjectivities analysed in this section demonstrate how traditional forms of knowledge situated in historical practices and social relations already existent in Vanuatu are articulated alongside a neoliberal rationality. This process was already evident in Chapter 6 which dealt partly with gender roles. Exploring these negotiations provides a wider picture of how social relations can produce the new subjectivities evident in Vanuatu, particularly for workers from rural areas that are not fully connected to international markets.

7.1.1 The good provider

“The first thing that I do... I pay the school fee, and the other thing I build an accommodation for house, and the water tank [...] I have one [girl] in school at Tonga, on scholarship. The other [my second child, pays a school fee which] is 2,300 vatu, the other one [my third child] is [attending] year 9, [his school fee] is about 3,500 [Vt.] and the other one is [attending] year 2, just for 1,500 [Vt.]. [Before] I just sell (sic) the copra and marketing(sic) in the market. Sometimes, I am a carpenter [too], sometimes people come and see me to build their houses, and they pay me.”

*Taylor (workers’ leader, 3rd RSE reason)*
Taylor considers himself a good provider because he can pay school fees for his three children. He is proud that he was able to support his children’s education even before the RSE scheme, as his children were younger then and he did not need so much money to send them to school. Because he now has one child studying abroad, he needs money on a more regular basis. He is employed by two different companies that jointly share an ATR and works in both viticulture and horticulture. In the North Island, he works picking apples, which he considers very hard because of the strength needed to “climb up and down the ladder”. In comparison, his work in the South Island earns him more money. However, he complains that the weather is colder there and recalls he felt unwell the first time he went “because of the climate, [it was] too cold”. He reported that during that winter he was not free to walk outside the accommodation because of the weather. As a result, when the weather is bad his team “only works” and cannot do anything else, because after work they return to their accommodation straight away and remain inside. He thinks that “it’s ok” and is part of what he has to do to provide for his family. He is in contact with his family weekly, as he can send mobile top ups through his company so that his wife can call him. He envisions he will remain in the RSE for many years to come, since he wants his children to finish school. He is also envisioning ways of earning additional income by building an accommodation to rent back home.

Ni-Vanuatu who live in urban areas often look for paid work opportunities in order to be good providers. My interviewees, particularly the male workers, saw migration as natural and something their families are used to. As noted by Cummings (2013a), labour mobility from the outer islands to the capital – and now to New Zealand under the RSE scheme – is responding to expectations of waged labour in a context where the role of money has become increasingly important. Although RSE money also affects villages in other ways, I interrogated the subjectivities that RSE workers are constructing in relation to money. The instrumentalised use of money to acquire material things that are associated with status is transforming customary subjectivities.

Researchers had noted how a “good provider” nurtures the nuclear family and their material success, turning to the household more than towards the community (Rensel & Rodman, 1997). Thus, being a good provider and obtaining money for their families, particularly for their children’s education, means that RSE workers may be paying their relatives or “sisters” to take

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175 The above-mentioned fees are per semester.
care of their children, including arranging for them to attend private schools. Some workers mentioned that they pay school fees in advance and when they return they pay the balance for the rest of the year. Others remit money for this or other expenses their families request on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Thus, because of the high costs of educating their children, individuals who may have moved beyond making ends meet to generating some savings, engage in cycles of leaving and returning.

While in some villages education was reserved only for “big men” Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers are now prioritising their children’s education as they believe “only the future is [in] the education.” They acknowledged that for children to study longer, parents need to spend more. Interviewees believed that education leads to jobs, so educated children can later contribute to their families and in turn receive respect and status. However, there is little guarantee of children obtaining paid wage work in the future (R. E. Smith, 2018). Participants who can afford secondary and tertiary schooling do not see their children but for a few weeks when they return to Vanuatu, as children attend boarding schools in the city or in larger towns and holidays may not coincide with their time off from the RSE scheme. Parenting can be temporarily transformed during the months spent in New Zealand to weekly phone calls and frequent departures, creating new demands that make labour stability a continuous struggle. For example, Rose has a friend, whom she calls sister, to look after her children while she is away:

“…also my little sister she’s been here [in New Zealand, but] […] don’t (sic) have any more possibilities to come back, because of the [her] husband […] then she stay[ed] home, and [now] looks for the [my] kids to go to school […] When I’m not at home […] she looks after them [my children] […] I trust her, and then she looks after them, after my kids, I sent her money to pay. But my son goes to school; private school in Port Vila is very expensive above the other schools like government schools […] [it costs] 3,000 [Vt.] for a year.”

Rose (34 years, 1st season)

Other female workers with older children delegate their care to their parents:

“My children, the youngest is five and the other is 12. They stay with her grandparents every year. Before I stayed, but now I joined the RSE too [as my husband did earlier].”

Nancy (32 years, 4th RSE season)

176 Schooling in Vanuatu has retained characteristics of the colonial French and British systems and church sponsored institutions.
177 Big men have high rank and authority in the village, despite they are not necessarily chiefs.
178 Having to travel or staying away from home for extended periods is not uncommon as there are fewer secondary schools than primary school graduates (UNESCO, 2015).
179 Smith (2018) points to how this prevents children to learn the essential gardening skills traditional livelihoods entail.
This reliance on grandparents was confirmed by another married woman unable to take care of the children while her husband was away working in the RSE:

“The children are back home with their grandparents [...] when he [my husband] arrived here [to Port Vila] he was saying: I have to go back to Santo and see the kids. I said to him: Yes, please you have to go, it’s about a long time... and we don’t know how about our kids [during] this time, so I agreed. I said: It’s wonderful that you go back, so I can call you and I can talk to my kids again... I talked to them for only sometimes, maybe once a week [when they were staying with their grandparents].

Heilene (34 years, Tim’s wife)

Being a good provider also means that workers have to take care of their family affairs while they are away. Some of the male workers mentioned that they did not want to cause the women to have to “work more” in their absence. Others mentioned that they had the support of all the extended family and that women are “good” with their RSE participation. While none of the wives I interviewed contradicted this, they acknowledged the additional burden and complications caused by their husbands’ absence. In most of the cases, my interviewees sent money to “take care” of family needs, and only five of them waited until their return to take all their savings from working in the scheme.

I argue that the role of mane is changing – and possibly replacing – traditional practices such as taking care of children, gardening, and house building, as this can now be paid for and/or delegated to others. However, the full extent of this change may not be noticeable in the shorter term, or until it has acquired a more definitive shape. In the case of gardening, an activity that was originally carried out within the household sphere, the absence of a family member but the presence of mane is transforming social practices in the villages, not only when RSE workers are absent, but also when they have returned. Families with absent members can now hire temporary workers to take care of the hardest gardening tasks or to help with specific activities such as planting or harvesting depending on the season, in the same way they engage in seasonal labour with the RSE. This can be comparable to the intensively studied Philippine domestic workers, who leave behind their own caring roles and domestic responsibilities in their families in their home country, to take on the care of wealthier people while working abroad (Francisco & Rodriguez, 2014). In their case, the transnational family has become the rule rather than the exception. Some Ni-Vanuatu workers rely on their relatives, depending on their family composition:

180 Sometimes workers living in peri-urban areas leave money with their wives or sons to hire temporal workers for weeding or planting or they do the hiring themselves on their return.
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“[When I leave, my children] my [youngest] son stays with the mom. They do some work in the gardening, with the family.”

McKenna (workers’ leader, 3rd RSE season)

Others use a combination of relatives and temporary workers:

“Just my wife [takes care of the garden] with... some of the guidance. I have got two guidance (sic) [helpers] in the garden. They work for me, I employ them, I have to pay them.”

Taylor (workers’ leader, 3rd RSE reason)

In other cases, they ask their relatives to pay for workers with the remittances they receive:

“When I send money, they pay some people to take care of the garden”

Harman (32 years, 3rd RSE reason)

“My wife and my youngest brother [stay back at home]. They have to pay someone to look after the children. Because I live in the community, my family lives with my wife, so they help.”

Chikau (36 years, 5th RSE season)

In some cases, interviewees also reported hiring temporary workers even when RSE participants were back in Vanuatu.

“I actually hire people every time to work in my garden, because I can’t do it myself [...], I paid them like 10,000 Vt. The same group of men came and actually dug up, the readymade holes in the ground so I can plant, I paid them like 10,000 Vt. in a day. [...] There was this lady, she actually weeds the garden for me [...] she came, because she is just from the island, and they don’t have much clothing, so when she came and she said she wanted to weed my land, I said: What do you want to weed for? Money or clothing? Clothing [she answered]. So [...] she came and collected all the clothing for weeding my garden and for what she gathered this morning it will [be] compensated for cleaning all my garden.”

Naila (44 years, Harry’s wife)

For example, Naila had people working in her family garden despite her husband and son being back from New Zealand and Rose was paying a “house girl” to take care of her youngest daughter while she worked temporarily in Port Vila. Naila commented, “It would be burdensome if I didn’t have the cash to do it.” For her having money means she can pay someone else for the work her husband and son would have done prior to their involvement in the RSE.

One way in which the “good provider” subjectivity is maintained is through the reference letters that now are a common practice and included on the Vanuatu Department of Labour checklist (ESU, 2011) for RSE applications. In these letters the spouse or other close relative of the RSE applicant formally agree with their participation in the scheme, and senior
community leaders provide recommendations. These letters are not part of the official RSE documentation or required by the New Zealand government in order to process visa applications. As explained by an official from the Vanuatu DoL:

“We also want the chief or any community leader to write a letter to tell us that this person is a good person […] we also need a letter from the spouse, if the husband is going, the wife must write a consent letter to us […] If a chief cannot write the letter, then the pastor or any leader, [for example a] church leader can write the supporting letter for the members, [to send] with the applications […] most of the employers do the recruitment on the islands, they come here and go all the way to the island, so workers must take the[ir] letters from the[ir] island.”

ESU worker

Spouses or a parent if the applicant is single, and senior community members, such as pastors, of the future RSE workers have to write letters of support. After the pilot, the ESU institutionalised these letters as a requirement of the application process, to make them “standard practice”. The requirement for referrals legitimises the behavioural constraints placed on workers. The workers acknowledged that these letters imply a commitment:

“The letters from wife and chief, or pastor or leader [of] the church [say], they can allow me to go there I think […] when you come back here, you have time to do community works, in terms of donation to the community, [be]cause the RSE helps us a lot.”

McKenna (workers’ leader, 3rd RSE season)

This was confirmed by another worker:

“Your wife has to write a letter, a reference that your wife is happy to let you go to New Zealand, to let you go over there, to get some money, to come back and help your wife and your children, pay for the school fees, build new houses, get some water tank, or get some solar panel, or any reasons, a car or truck or transport […] Some of the wives don’t know how to write, even some of the boys here too, their wives don’t know how to write and read […] they just get one of the other woman to write the letter on their behalf, [saying] that the woman [wife] was agreeing, was happy for the husband to travel to New Zealand to work as part of the RSE scheme[…]

Tim (38 years, 7th season)

These letters also prevent complaints from family in relation to workers’ participation in the scheme. As one former leader put it: “Before some spouses [had] complaint, and now they can’t complain [be]cause they [have] signed.” Another leader mentioned that these letters may not always reflect what relatives feel:

“Maybe some of the chiefs [or the workers’ leaders] just write a note and the chiefs do the signing, the same with the church […] because maybe, not always [the wives are happy] [laughs].”

Taylor (workers’ leader, 3rd RSE reason).
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This requirement is a way of getting the RSE workers to self-regulate, while at the same time being disciplined in maintaining “good behaviour”. Each community is involved in deciding who will and will not migrate according to the criteria for selecting “good workers” which can change from one season to the next, as can their expected contributions.

The knowledge of what makes a “good worker” is communicated at several points in the RSE process in order to define behavioural boundaries, which include being a good provider. From the pre-departure trainings to informal practices in daily interactions with leaders and other workers what it is allowed is continually being reinforced. Thus, there are several ways in which subjectivities are transformed to regulate workers’ conduct. By observing, monitoring and disciplining RSE workers using certain narratives that reinforce the underlying purpose of not jeopardising Vanuatu’s involvement in the scheme, docile subjects are being formed. These letters contribute to the legitimation of this means of disciplining workers because the government made them a requirement for visa applications. The “good character” letters requested from church leaders or chiefs are used to vouch for the workers’ behaviour:

“They [pastors] have to know that you are very good, [that you had a Christian] conversion, [that] you are humble, that you are ok. That is why the pastor has to make the reference, the chief has also to make a reference in order that you are good(sic) recommended. You couldn’t have a bad background in the community […] information with [about] your obligations [are included in the letter] […] We need a letter from the church, from the church leader, another letter from the chief from the community, and another letter from your wife. If you are a young one, and don’t have any children or wife, maybe your mother or you father will write you a reference […] [saying] I am happy to let my son or my daughter to get over there [to New Zealand, saying] I believe that the money will help us a lot…”

Tim (38 years, 7th season)

The role of church officials is important, both in assisting in the selection of workers and also in assuring that the family members left behind are looked after. They also make requirements of returnees, such as financial contributions or commitments to support church initiatives with their newly acquired income (Bailey, 2013; Maclellan, 2008). Numerous denominational and non-denominational churches have proliferated in Vanuatu.181 While traditional churches – such as Anglican or Presbyterian – still receive missionaries from abroad, the non-denominational and Pentecostal churches are usually “break-away” churches. They have separated from traditional churches and integrated, to a certain extent, some Ni-Vanuatu “customary” values into their Christian doctrine. Some of these new churches insist on an

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181 Eriksen observes a dramatic increase in the number of Pentecostal churches in Port Vila and estimates that approximately one third of the total population has a connection to one of these new churches (Eriksen, 2009).
absolute break with the past and what they term “negative kastom” (Eriksen, 2009), such as the braed praes. When referring to her daughter’s wedding, Naila commented:

“Because I am a Christian, I don’t believe in bride price. Because… there is nowhere in the Bible where that talks about the bride price […]. I have my faith in the Bible, my faith in God so I take my stand, I go with what God wants, I am not selling my daughter, [with the wedding] what I am asking you to do is to take care of my daughter and my grandchildren, [be]cause if you don’t, I can take my daughter back.”

Naila (44 years, Harry’s wife)

As most RSE workers are Christians, they often participate in religious services and remain engaged with Christian values while they live in New Zealand. There was at least one pastor among the RSE workers I interviewed from both companies, and one of the companies had some church leaders as well. If the pastors are not leaders, they will usually guide the prayers on different occasions, ranging from blessing food to praying for prosperity and work. It is important to take the incorporation of so-called Christian values with a grain of salt, as in my view religion and kastom are often entangled in Ni-Vanuatu “customary rationalities”. In this way religion can be used as a way of ensuring conformity with the norms established in the management of the RSE scheme.

Changes of denomination can also be instrumental as individuals can exercise agency by making temporal alliances. Some interviewees changed churches after returning from the RSE scheme, as relatives had switched denominations in their absence in the pursuit of material benefits and the workers followed them into the new church. However, it is not uncommon for different family members to attend different churches. Following Eriksen (2009), when people cannot rely on a “rational” way of obtaining money through labour, “luck” and “probability” become the keys for prosperity, and thus spiritual empowerment becomes important. Carrete & King (2005) argued that Pentecostal Christianity, among other new forms of spirituality, is attractive because of its emphasis on leading prosperous lives. Similarly, one of my interviewees had just joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because they were American, had more money and he considered it was the church that “gives you more”. This is one strategy used by Ni-Vanuatu who want to acquire imported foods, such as rice or tinned fish, both seen as status symbols for daily and ceremonial consumption (Petrou & Connell, 2016). Before the RSE scheme, some interviewees had relied on churches or earning cash through scarce labour opportunities in Vanuatu to obtain these products. I was not able to

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182 See also Eriksen (2012).
unpack whether these changes were allied to the adoption of a liberal rationality, or whether they reflected a change in ethics. Further research is needed to explore this question.

The findings from the fieldwork shed light on important social dynamics taking place as a result of Vanuatu’s incorporation in the global markets for wine and produce. In a cash economy, people need paid labour to meet their needs, particularly the ones living in peri-urban areas which have already incorporated hybrid elements from a subsistence economy and a market economy (Jourdan & Philibert, 2014). Children’s education – for their own children or for their kin’s – is often considered as the first regular expense. Because most interviewees had young children and already had a house, regular expenses after education and paying for public utilities such as electricity, included looking after gardens while they were away.

As traditional social practices and the new social relations created by RSE waged employment convey different meanings and values, expectations and behaviours are also transformed. The necessity of being away for some months means workers need to make arrangements to provide for their immediate and extended families. Childcare had to be arranged for young children. In many cases, sisters – by kinship or friendship – took care of the children; at other times grandparents step up when both parents work in the RSE scheme. Some RSE workers paid for domestic labour in urban areas. Interviewees with young children reported paying for a house girl while they were working in New Zealand and also when engaging in other income generating activity while in Vanuatu. Being a good provider can be further extended to being a good kinsman – and is the focus of the next section.

7.1.2 The good kinsmen

“Because in my village, we are seven boys [who] come out from my village and came here to [New Zealand to work as] RSE workers... in different company[ies]... but everyone lives here [in the Hawke’s Bay]... When we [all] were here every end of March we have a meeting and each of us has to give 200 dollars each of us, towards our church house, to

183 Jourdan and Philibert’s study of Erakor, a peri-urban village identifies it as an “hybrid community in the sense that two economic rationalities are juxtaposed there: a non-market rationality applying to the village domain, and a market rationality for the domain outside the village.”(2014: 67).

184 Recent studies point to changes that this study has not developed such as paying for sex-services (Burry & Stupple, 2017).
build [...] We want to build a church, a permanent church house [...] so when we were all at home we will get all the tools for working.”

Geoffrey (34 years, 5th RSE season)

Geoffrey was the only interviewee who took the initiative and phoned me to indicate his interest in being interviewed. We set a time but the leaders told him to wait as they wanted to be interviewed first. Geoffrey and other workers from the same island have jointly decided to give money to their community church next time they return to Vanuatu. He says that no one in the church had asked for that money, but they wanted to contribute. He was glad they could build a “permanent church house” with their income, which otherwise would take a long time. Geoffrey is showing solidarity with his community. However, to his colleagues’ surprise, he is also critical of the alcohol ban. He thinks it is “not fair” that some companies allow drinking or do not monitor whether their employees have been drinking, while in his company all workers have to respect the alcohol ban. He already told his leaders, but as far as he can see, no action has been taken. He does not understand why he is not free to spend his earnings on alcohol in the same way he decided to contribute to the church. This apparent inconsistency points to the distinction made between using money for productive purposes, rather than on spending perceived as futile.

I argue that seasonal migration under the RSE can be understood as a family strategy, but not according to new economics of labour migration (NELM) theory. The latter perspective would say that families experiencing relative deprivation use migration to benefit from remittances (Skeldon, 2002; Stark & Taylor, 1989). In the case of Ni-Vanuatu working in the scheme, families and other community members have a strong say in deciding who will engage in the scheme. Thus, if several members of a given family are suitable candidates for recruitment, individuals may take turns to participate to try to distribute the workload and the benefits of the scheme between them. As families and communities can negotiate the selection process of Ni-Vanuatu in the scheme, they place expectations in relation to the circulation of money and reciprocal relations, as well as behaviours expected from the participants in the scheme.

This type of managed labour mobility also differentiates RSE workers from those not selected to participate in the scheme, who nonetheless vicariously engage with its material benefits. Depending on how selection for the RSE is understood – as based on merit, personal connections, or luck – participants will engage in the scheme in different ways, thereby
maintaining different relations in their communities. For example, if they consider their participation was by luck or by a random coincidence, or if they owe it to someone in their community, they are less inclined to question the scheme. Being among “the lucky ones” features in the shared discourse around Ni-Vanuatu participation in the scheme. As one of the workers put it: “I was very glad, when I heard (sic) from this agent that you are the lucky to go to New Zealand”. Similarly, Ni-Vanuatu strive to demonstrate that they are “good workers”. They feel it would not be smart to withdraw from the “opportunity” to participate in the RSE as it is a “gift from God” to benefit their families and communities with money. Similarly to Smith (2018) findings my participants considered their engagement responded to God’s plan.

As one female worker put it: “Thank you God for New Zealand, for giving us some money, for me is a big pleasure, a big opportunity for my life. I really enjoy it.” Unconvinced he could perform the role of leader, another man accepted it in the end because he thought God was behind such a designation:

“\text{That’s why, it take (sic) me one night to (sic) thinking [if I want to be a leader]. I think (sic) maybe not. Then [I] finish[ed thinking] ... I went to the manager and tell him very good you choose another man. Because I feel for me this thing on my shoulders [will be] very hard I [had] never tried before [...] That’s why when they choose me [as leader] I said ok, thank you very much. I thank God to choose me but nevermind, I just accepted [in the end].”

\text{Stephen (workers’ leader, 7th RSE season)}

There are a variety of claimants on RSE workers’ incomes beyond their immediate family. Chiefs, church leaders and social groups, for example island-based networks, are all sustained with these earnings (Bailey, 2013). This research confirms previous findings and notes that claimants include other people in towns and communities who think they can obtain money from RSE workers, such as the electricians installing solar panels or the builders who help construct the new houses. As one worker explained:

“\text{Everyone want[s] to make money, everyone want[s] to have money [...] Oh! RSE workers, so we have to get money out of them [...] You have to save. People [in the village] ask you for money. They know, this one is one of [the] RSE worker[s], they come asking for some money, asking for some money [...] [they say] why? [can’t you give me money?] you did not get a good job?”

\text{Tim (38 years, 7th season)}

My interviewees did not complain about their relatives’ claims for money in the sense of “forced remittances” (Bailey, 2009).\textsuperscript{185} They considered they could be generous and share their

\textsuperscript{185} For a study of different dynamics, see Martin’s (2013) research about Papua New Guinea “big shots” and their ambivalence between their desire for autonomy and relatedness and what he calls “the limits of reciprocity.”
money with others, and they considered it their responsibility to provide money for the development of their own communities. In some cases, communities had developed “codes of conduct” based on the standards each country has to which they adhere while living in New Zealand. ¹⁸⁶ Workers did express concerns in relation to increasing prices, the variable exchange rates, and people – other than their relatives – to whom the workers could not deny their help, which often meant they had unplanned expenses. Interviewees acknowledged that the price of land parcels in town had escalated, as for many buying land in urban areas to later rent out has become an alternative source of income to the RSE. They considered that the increase in land prices was a result of everyone in Vanuatu wanting some of the money they have earned.

The government is also involved in redirecting the money that workers receive.¹⁸⁷ Currently, revisions to the RSE Act are being planned whereby workers contribute a percentage of their earnings to a Seasonal Worker’s Development Fund with the aim of building a network of cooperatives to develop horticulture in the islands and market the produce (Garae, 2017).¹⁸⁸ It has been argued that the contribution of remittances to development can be enhanced by shifting the flow of money to formal institutions to encourage greater savings and improve resources allocation (Hernández-Coss, 2005). Religious groups can also set up contributions for local organisations in the form of donations linked to tithes (Roberts, 2017). Such initiatives contribute to producing an entrepreneurial culture among migrants, but they are not exempt from resistance (Kunz, 2008).

Although contributions are voluntary, it is hard for workers to question what is required from them by their communities or churches because of traditional power structures in Vanuatu and they feel compelled to obey. I heard references to voluntary and mandatory donations, whereby the voluntary component was the amount of the contribution. While government representatives intend to “cultivate positive character traits in young men including respect, perseverance, ability to listen and follow instructions and principles of non-violence” (Maclellan, 2008: 19), these aspirations may have unintended consequences. For example, workers may remain silent in the face of abuse of their rights to privilege their earnings, raising

¹⁸⁶ For an example of a self-prescribed Code of Conduct for Tanna (Whitesands) workers in New Zealand, see Connell & Hammond (2009).
¹⁸⁷ The Australian government also supports a fund for seasonal workers (DFAT, 2017).
¹⁸⁸ The grey and academic literature draw attention to similar examples of how governments are managing remittances (Goldring, 2002; Hernández-Coss, 2005).
questions about whether and how RSE workers understand their rights and how *de facto* norms and rules can be problematic for such understandings. RSE workers are thus dealing with a variety of expectations according to their government’s agenda and the demands of their families and communities. The “good behaviour” encouragement and restrictions placed on workers are in part to ensure compliance in meeting all these multiple claims.

Just as power relations and social practices produce and maintain subjectivities in their interaction with social processes and customary practices, I see disciplining as a governmental technique that is producing new kinds of subjectivities based on a shared knowledge. The knowledge that money needs to be used for productive activities to support their communities’ results in workers becoming productive subjects. This knowledge or truth produces a certain array of alternatives – and no others – for the forming of subjectivities. Thus, the possibilities are limited to certain positionings produced through the interplay of power and knowledge, which have privileged the appreciation of the *man blong mane*.

### 7.1.3 Summary of section

In this section, I have described how customary values combined with some of the practices entailed in the RSE has produced productive subjectivities. The good provider strives to support their family, and this responsibility can also be extended to their kin. By becoming good kinsmen, workers address the needs of their communities, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes in response to explicit requests from a range of claimants. Discipline and self-care are operationalised as workers become productive subjects able to contribute to their households and local development. These techniques extend beyond recruitment and selection and are sustained by certain knowledge of the participants’ behaviour, narratives from leaders, employers, and pastoral care workers – and the workers’ families and communities, as will be further discussed in the next section.
7.2. Becoming a Man Blong Mane

Following Cummings (2013a), I describe how the Ni-Vanuatu communities to which my participants belong have incorporated *mane* (money), both in economic terms and also as a symbol of status and a means to obtain non-material benefits which seem to have created new notions of merit. Based on a Foucauldian understanding, Moore (2013), considers changes associated to globalisation not as something happening to individuals. Thus, this new form of migration is something Ni-Vanuatu are shaping through their own choices and actions. Moore also highlights how new forms of subjectivation can lead to social transformation through the articulation of desires and the causal ontologies of individuals’ own account of how things came to be. Alongside the acquisition of status, the remittances, goods, and property obtained with RSE income also contribute to the creation of new subjectivities. I follow Lemke’s theorisation of the government of things\(^{189}\) (2015) to address how money exercises power over individuals’ subjectivities. This is reflected in how traditional social practices are incorporating *mane* as an increasingly important element, along with values such as individualism that bring new forms of knowledge and living.

This section discusses governmental techniques and their discursive manifestations of self-care and discipline as they reshape conduct in a space of regulated freedom (Rose, 1999) to adjust and adapt individuals to a certain standard of behaviour. Such techniques take form in strategies, tactics and ways of thinking and acting used in governing for the benefit of populations (Rose & Miller, 2010). Following Rose and Miller (2010), I identify the knowledge underlying the conception of what is good, productive, efficient, or profitable, as framed by the RSE policy and in its interpretation and operationalisation by the main stakeholders. Governmental techniques are not necessarily related to the state, as there are various modes of authority and they are not unidirectional. Instead, I interrogate the objectives that different stakeholders have pursued, the types of conduct targeted, and the techniques used.

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\(^{189}\) Foucault analysed how the interplay of history and biology is affected and modified by power relations, drawing attention to the intricacy of men and things (Foucault, 2007).
Chapter 7

7.2.1 The good worker as subject of development

This section addresses how neoliberal rationalities underpinning the RSE scheme have become intertwined with customary rationalities to produce different kinds of Ni-Vanuatu subjectivities. When established as legitimate and neutral, the specific forms of reasoning consistent with a neoliberal agenda can operate to change individual subjectivities by emphasising the need to become productive and entrepreneurial. Some of my interviewees acknowledged the transformation of Ni-Vanuatu men, women, and male church leaders to RSE workers with responsibilities to themselves and their families when explaining what they have learned in New Zealand. This is not to say that these responsibilities did not exist before their enrolment in the RSE. However, their scope has been transformed and they now have a different tenor as the migration narratives guide individuals to be responsible for their own well-being. This section also broadens Cummings’ analysis (2013a) of ways of being a man blong mane, a Ni-Vanuatu man, by looking at what is behind the “good character” that workers require to become providers for their families and subjects of development.

The migration and development narratives underpinning workers’ subjectivities are noticeable in the way RSE participants articulate “development” and their participation as workers in the scheme, using similar if not the same words used in official descriptions of RSE policy. For example, the phrase “to improve my standard of living” was a constant in my interviews, mimicking the discourse in the pre-departure briefing and other policy documents behind the scheme (Settlement Support New Zealand, 2011; World Bank, 2006a; World Bank, 2006b). By incorporating these narratives into their own discourses, workers’ subjectivities and those of their relatives are transformed. Through their participation in the production, extraction and processing of horticultural and viticultural produce for export, workers in the scheme become the first link in a global value chain. In this way, they are connected to a global market for produce and wine as “productive workers”.

The making of these new subjectivities relies on governmental techniques of discipline and self-care, which speak about the requirements RSE workers need to fulfil to improve their standards of living. This exercise of power relies primarily on individuals’ self-regulating, and not necessarily on coercion. The “mix of strategies to oversee workers outside of work hours” (IMSED Research, 2010: xiii) begins with the careful selection of workers and recruitment of workers from the same community or island, operating under the assumption
that a sense of community responsibility will make workers less prone to inappropriate behaviour.

7.2.1.1 Selection and Recruitment

Government policies articulate specific requirements and guidelines for the recruitment of workers that are augmented by local practices in Vanuatu. In New Zealand, screening workers for disease (TBC and HIV/AIDS)\(^{190}\) and checks of police and judicial records are formalities of the immigration process. In Vanuatu, as already explained, recommendation letters from traditional authority figures such as local chiefs and other community members and release letters from family have become standard practice as part of the recruitment process, as letters are not officially required by the New Zealand government to process a limited visa. The Information Guide for Employers, Agents and Others Recruiting Workers and Team Leaders also recommends “consultation with the Chiefs and/or Church Pastor to occur before selection” (ESU, 2013a: 1). Thus, each community contributes to decisions about who will and will not migrate.

Chiefs retain responsibility for village order, and can control mobility, particularly for women and youth.\(^{191}\) Lindstrom (1997) argues that “town chiefs” in urban settlements assume responsibility for their fellow islanders, particularly for unemployed young migrants. Accordingly, the authority of workers’ leader in the RSE can be understood as an extension of chiefly authority. When these leaders participate in the recruitment and selection of RSE workers, they can be in an ambivalent relationship with workers, as they represent at the same time the interests of the team and of the employer.\(^{192}\) Workers’ leaders can also involve other community members in selection of the workers, and employers can ask leaders to complete all the paperwork required to obtain a visa on behalf of the workers. For example, one group of participants had their leader draft all the letters that community chiefs and spouses or parents then signed to support their visa application.

\(^{190}\) Ni-Vanuatu are exempt from HIV/AIDS screening as Vanuatu is not considered a country with HIV risk factors.(INZ, 2014a)

\(^{191}\) Lindstrom refers to Articles 4 and 5 of kastom law in the book of kastom polisi, which “allow jifs to control people’s movement from village to village and from island to island” (1997: 226).

\(^{192}\) Recruitment practices can also create rumours of preferential treatment (Bailey & Rereman, 2018) depending of who participates in the selection.
Similarly, churches play an important role in recruitment\(^{193}\) and can also establish requirements from returnees. While the RSE does not formally recruit on the basis of a “church selection model”\(^{194}\), 31 percent of respondents in an RSE evaluation baseline survey reported they were engaged in the RSE because they had been asked by their community or church (McKenzie et al., 2008).\(^{195}\) The majority of Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers are Christian, which influences their thinking and behaviour when leaving their homeland (Eves, 2011). Previous research has argued that the community selection cases “are consistent with the idea that communities are trying to send very good workers in their initial recruiting to signal the quality of their members and to establish a reputation for future recruitment” (McKenzie et al., 2008: 222).

Lastly are the private Seasonal Employment Agents – individuals, firms, or employers themselves – who recruit most workers. Agents’ roles can also blur across boundaries, as they can assist workers in improving their chances of selection, while at the same time serving employers’ ends, or their own interests, when pre-screening applications. Workers often go into debt before their trip to New Zealand in covering shared costs with employers because they do not always have savings. Agents can provide them with loans over this period, thereby benefitting from the interest accrued. The community members interviewed told stories about unauthorised agents taking advantage of potential workers and of money and passports being lost, resulting in additional indebtedness due to RSE associated travelling costs. As often the first contact for potential workers, agents guide workers by communicating guidelines for acceptable behaviours when in New Zealand. The behaviours that participants mentioned as encouraged by their agents range from cleanliness and hygiene (self-care), to promoting responsibility and savings (financial management), and punctuality (time management). These attributes are all conducive to workers being more productive during their participation in the RSE.

Good behaviour encompasses both physical and behavioural attributes and workers discipline towards them can start while in Vanuatu. The main tenets of the mandatory pre-departure briefing focus on obligations, and the importance of compliance and a good work ethic (MFAT, 2007). The means of economic governance encompass institutions and practices alike, which

\(^{193}\) Vanuatu uses a recruitment mechanism managed by churches for the Australian Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP).

\(^{194}\) This “Church selection model” was encouraged when the SWP was officially launched in Vanuatu (Australian Embassy in Vanuatu, 2012). Church selection criteria for groups are dependent on their “excellent character” (ESU, 2013d), which is thought to help workers succeed in the programme.

\(^{195}\) This study notes the inconsistency with previous evidence suggesting “that for most workers it was an individual decision or was made largely at the household level” (McKenzie et al., 2008: 205).
enable governing the subjects according to a political rationality (Lemke, 2001). The ends of development and economic growth require that individuals become allies in achieving economic success. In this way, individuals will regulate themselves through assessing the costs and benefits of their actions. Subjects express their free will on a self-determined decision and assume the consequences of acting in a certain way, and not in others. Thus, the individual workers alone bear the consequences of their actions and are also made solely responsible for them. While I consider self-care and discipline to be in constant interaction, the focus of the next section is on self-care as producing subjectivities of strong workers through a variety of governmental technologies. I draw attention to the practices that are legitimised when labour is organised by gender, which in turn produces gender specific subjectivities.

7.2.2. The strong worker

“That is my first time, when I was here, I feel sad because of my families when they come and leave me at the airport, I was crying because, you know, sometimes we never suspect nothing can happen to us like accident[s]. So, I was crying, I missed them. When I reach here in New Zealand, I [was] always calling my husband to know that he stays properly. Yes. So, when I go [went] home I take him with me, so we [can] come together.”

Betty (37 years, 6th RSE season).

Betty is very talkative despite her sadness. When I first met her, her daughter had been killed in a car accident the previous week. She did not know much but shared how she had been told the terrible news in a phone call. She never thought an “accident can happen” while she was away. She was anxiously waiting to go back to Vanuatu. As there were only few weeks left before their scheduled return date, she and her husband decided they would work until the end of their contract and return on the originally planned date. They would then visit their daughter’s grave on another island before returning to their home. Betty mentions that it was very hard for her to adapt to New Zealand, and although her children were grown up, she missed her family a lot and had decided not to return unless her husband joined her. She was lucky to find work for her husband in the same company, where she works in the packing house and he picks apples. She took care of his paperwork while working in a restaurant in Port Vila, as he was working less frequently as a construction worker. She was therefore used to having
an income, which she sometimes spent on kava and smoking. She acknowledged that she had to change her habits while working in New Zealand as she needed more money for her expenses and higher prices meant her discretionary spending was no longer possible. Since working in the RSE scheme she has been considering going back to live in the island where she was born and has become critical of drinking and smoking. She and her husband have built a permanent house, bought a truck, and would like to start a business to buy their way out of the scheme.

Betty is demonstrating to the leaders and her Ni-Vanuatu colleagues that she is a “strong woman”. She continues to work despite the devastating news about her daughter and her decision is considered wise by the workers’ leaders. Particularly, when women travel without their husbands, their decisions are questioned as team leaders do not always understand the reasons behind women’s engagement in the scheme, which may be related to domestic roles expectations in an urban context (Eriksen, 2016b). Betty was happy to have brought her husband with her to New Zealand this time. When she first heard about the RSE, she completed her application and was in one of the first groups of workers to travel, which did not leave much time to reconsider her decision. Leaving home tends to be more acceptable for single mothers, whether they had pikinini blong rod (children outside of wedlock) or not. They are seen as needing an income to provide for their children because of lacking a partner to support them. Younger women who do not have children are also perceived as more suitable for the RSE, seemingly because they are yet to become mamas and achieve the respect conferred by maternity. As Cummings notes:

“The mama is a modest, ideally rural-dwelling, churchgoing, married mother who is respectful of Christian and kastom forms of male authority, and who can be recognized by her respectful island dress. Mamas forge a connection to the nation, to kastom, and therefore to the past, by bearing children, and are respected for producing the future citizens of Vanuatu.” (Cummings, 2013a: 387)

Ni-Vanuatu understandings of women RSE workers not as mamas but as something different are not exempt from challenges, thus my focus on the subjectivity of the strong women who overcome judgments from their relatives or fellow community members to participate in the RSE. I am not saying men do not need to be strong to engage in the scheme, as they often raised issues of saving on food, being tired after long days of work and other hardships faced associated to being separated from their families (Bailey, 2014b; Ericsson, 2009; Lepon, 2010; Prochazkova, 2012; Rockell, 2015; R. E. Smith, 2016). Nonetheless, women interviewees were
the ones who articulated the need to be strong to be able to cope – not in terms of physical strength but in relation to strength of character.

Leaders mentioned that, in accordance with *kastom*, not many women are interested in enrolling in the RSE because they have family responsibilities and have to stay at home with the children (Eriksen, 2016b). However, during my fieldwork I met women applying for the RSE on their own, others who were accompanied by their husbands or partners, women who were selected first and then brought their husband or brothers into the scheme, and separated women who saw in the RSE an income opportunity. In the companies I visited in New Zealand, many of the women were participating in the scheme jointly with their husbands and very few women were in New Zealand without a relative who was also working in the scheme. This was not the case for men. In some instances, it was the husband who encouraged his wife to participate, instead of the other way around. The frequent comments made to me about separated women made me wonder if they faced more pressure to “behave” in order to continue working in the scheme, despite their participation being less questioned than that of married women. One leader explained how firing workers ensure leaders’ advice is respected and good work performance:

“For example, if I send somebody back because he was disobeying my orders as the leader [...] if a workers (sic) doesn’t listen to their bosses, that’s to me is the business [the company] as well is losing itself. We all should be protective in our working time. For example, if I talk to someone when is the hour to start work[ing], we all move. But if somebody is relaxing and maybe an hour later goes to work, that is not good for the company. We have to sack them; we have to get someone who can perform(sic) better.”

*Harry (workers’ leader, 5th RSE season)*

Some of the women I interviewed had previously worked while they were in Vanuatu, although the jobs were on a temporary basis and without a contract. Most said they were “struggling” to find ways to provide for their families. For example, Rose had recently separated from her husband, a foreigner working abroad, and they had agreed that he would provide for the children’s education. This was the issue that worried her most. After being selected for the scheme, she faced difficulties related to the custody of their youngest child. Her husband accused her of abandonment and tried to take the child with him. These were difficult times for her, as she could not resolve the matter by phone because of her working hours in New Zealand, and the “sister” who looked after her child had to step up and argue with the husband to prevent him from taking their child away. Rose says she had to be a “very strong woman” to overcome
that situation: “I am independent and very strong woman. Sometimes I stayed with my husband and depend[ed] on him [not anymore]…”

Berenice, a single mother, saw the RSE as an opportunity to earn a cash income. At home, she has access to her family gardens, and so does not have to worry about going hungry. However, earning money in the RSE was a way of becoming more independent, and she had plans of living with her children in their own house, but on family owned land. However, she only participated in the RSE for one season because “there were rumours” that she was seeing a man in New Zealand.196 She was not invited to return by her employer as per a male leader’s advice.197 She felt she had to be strong for her children’s sake: “I am strong, if I feel strong. That depends on how I feel […] sometimes I am sick of [the] weather, I get cold. […] You feel homesick all the time, also […] it is very hard, especially for a single mom.” Though men acknowledged “people talked”, none of them mentioned rumours as reason for their blacklisting.

The women I interviewed mentioned spontaneously that they have had to be strong to cope with being away from their families for the sake of earning money and bringing it back home. In contrast, the male interviewees did not mention being away from their family as something that was difficult, but as something that “it’s ok”, as a sacrifice that has to be made for the sake of their families as their earlier work experiences were not as lucrative. Women related strength to feelings, while for men strength was more related to physical prowess. The women back home also referred to separation as a hardship, while unlike former research (Bailey, 2009; Lepon, 2010) only two men mentioned it was hard for their family to be separated, maybe because my interviewees were already seasoned workers. Most considered phone calls were enough. As one interviewee mentioned: “They [my family] only pray for me [laughs] […] I call maybe every two weeks I call one time…”. Another worker mentioned that his wife tried to negotiate the length of this stay with him, but he could not decide how long he is away:

“When we stay long time, my family maybe no like(sic), they want [me] to come back quick, maybe like [in] three months’ time or four months’ time, because maybe they need help also […] That’s why my wife says maybe now if you [can] try to stay short time? because long time [can be] good, but [it makes] kids and family very sours (sic). Long time no see their parents, [it’s] no good […] three months or four months is enough because somebody gets sick, because hard work you know, you are

196 Cummings (2013a) had noted the important role that gender norms had in toktok blong rod (gossip) about the RSE workers. She had also discussed sexual gossip and the importance of the appearance of “propriety” (Cummings, 2008).
197 I met her in Vanuatu for the first time and she was – perhaps not blacklisted as she could not tell me clearly – but certainly not selected to return the following season. Employers and leaders can use their own discretion and do not report the reasons for not hiring workers (Bailey, 2018a).
Women felt they were staying strong and have learned how to cope with the distance from their families. The single mothers in particular said they applied for the RSE to support their children. While in some cases their brothers have assumed responsibility for them, the women seemed to appreciate the possibility of living independently. In the case of the married women, both husband and wife are working to support their children and extended families, who take care of the children while the parents are away. Their concerns about leaving the children with grandparents, aunts or uncles were discussed in section 7.1.1. There are also markedly varied perceptions of “being strong” in relation to the different agricultural tasks that men and women perform.

The way women and men have been incorporated differently to meet the various agricultural tasks such as pruning, harvesting, quality control, and packing has set the scene for the development of gendered roles, and these are now contested by men and women alike. The women felt that their role was limited to working in the packing houses because of their inability to carry out some physical tasks at the same speed of men and because they are considered more delicate, but not, as some employers considered, because they are better suited to repetitive work (Elson & Pearson, 1981). As one female worker commented:

“At the end of the day when we asked all others, they were saying that the women they are too slow. The work outside in the field is to climb the tree. They were afraid of that women will fell down (sic) and have a problem with their body... [it] is more fragile [...] I was thinking I would work outside the field, but they told me you will work inside the pack house. Just the men go work in the field...”

Rose (34 years, 1st season)

Work in the packing house can be organised in shifts, especially when there is a large export order expected, so interviewees had to work around the clock. Smith (2016) found that women’s earnings tend to be lower than men’s because the packing-houses operate over shorter periods. My female interviewees did not raise this issue, however none of them were working “in the fields” and so they may have been unable to make such a comparison. Instead, it seems that the RSE female workers have found a niche where their abilities are valued, as reflected in the tasks assigned to them. At the time of this research 27 percent of RSE participants from Efate and Santo were women (ESU, 2014a), and they worked mainly in pack houses or in berry picking. However, the RSE scheme is considered to be gender neutral in that it aims to provide
the same opportunities for men and women (ILO, 2015b; McKenzie & Gibson, 2010). According to government representatives in New Zealand, this discrepancy is explained by the culture of Vanuatu where traditionally men have been the income providers. One of the leaders explained:

“I think in some islands, there is (sic) some cultures [in] that women are not expected to work. It doesn’t mean that... not to work at home [...] in the villages I think that women do more work than men [...] in gardening, cooking, taking care of the children.”

Harry workers’ leader (5th RSE season)

Besides having emotional strength, workers are promoted as being physically able, consistently and reliably productive, confident with handling a variety of produce, literate and numerate with good communication skills, and communally minded and goal oriented (ESU, 2014b). These characteristics of Ni-Vanuatu were identified in the findings of the first RSE evaluation (IMSED Research, 2010), and have informed subsequent evaluation reports and are used for marketing purposes on the Work Ready Vanuatu website. Living up to these attributes requires a variety of responses from workers and communities, as discussed in the next section.

7.2.3. The compliant worker

Under the RSE, individuals are responsibilised for life in their community. Self-care makes individuals responsible for their employment, their productivity, and ultimately for their community’s development. Self-care is an indirect technique that interacts with direct forms of discipline, as at times the choice of “doing good” and “behaving” is controlled not by individuals but by workers’ leaders, other workers, or employers. The governmental technique of discipline operates by directing workers’ goals towards achieving the expected development. Next, I draw attention to some RSE practices taking place in New Zealand that are supported in Vanuatu, and vice versa. Disciplining practices that operate in the management of the RSE scheme are: the alcohol-ban, “stand down”, “banning” and “blacklisting”, and also identifying misconduct and misdemeanours. I argue that such practices are possible because of the

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198 In early 2018 there were 106 workers on the ban list and 1,300 in the stand-down list that the ESU manages (Bailey, 2018a).
underpinning rationalities that emphasise individuals’ productivity and responsibility and make workers compliant.\textsuperscript{199}

Prior to 2013 when this study began, the scheme was managed with much more discretion in determining the measures to be undertaken in response to misbehaviour in New Zealand. Guidelines and additional structure for the management of the scheme were provided by the Pacific Cooperation Foundation’s “Institutional Capacity Building for Labour Export in the Pacific” project which provided recommendations and mapped processes for the management of the RSE scheme (ESU, 2012; ESU, 2013a). I argue that guidelines and operational manuals are part of the mundane migration management techniques that convey a neoliberal form of government and lead individuals without simultaneously being responsible for them. The varying interpretations of these guidelines and manuals and the limited reach of the New Zealand Labour inspectors provide the backdrop for the RSE management. The guidelines define the criteria used to penalise workers for wrongdoings, including definitions and penalties, and also encourage employers in New Zealand to contact the ESU to check the status of a worker and report “unacceptable” worker’s behaviour (ESU, 2013b; ESU, 2013c).

7.2.3.1 Alcohol Ban

The “alcohol-free brand” has been emphasised by the Vanuatu government to promote the hiring of Ni-Vanuatu over other nationalities. This means that workers are not allowed to drink alcohol (or \textit{kava}) while in New Zealand, despite the current Health and Safety Act (2015) not prohibiting alcohol consumption for similar occupations, apart from when working shifts or in workplaces. The alcohol ban is not about reducing workplace injuries; it is as a marketing strategy aimed at employers (ESU, 2014b) who prefer to avoid problems that consumption may cause. The ESU employees I spoke with mentioned that the ban was introduced after incidents with alcohol consumption in the early seasons led to deportations of workers.\textsuperscript{200} As one ESU worker mentioned: “Maybe because we had so many problems, so many issues with alcohol, that is why in 2011 the Commissioner decided to have this policy in place […] I think that we have less than hundred [deportations] in a year.”

\textsuperscript{199} Lewis had acknowledged that RSE measures “produce docile workers, and are at least in part designed to do so” (2014: 243).

\textsuperscript{200} It seems that when workers, employers, and ESU workers refer to deportation, they mean banning participation from the scheme. This thesis did not directly explore this because it was a sensitive topic, which was met with silences.
This regulation implies the transfer of responsibility for the conduct of RSE workers to private actors, namely leaders, employers, or pastoral care agents, seemingly in response to a cost-benefit calculation by state actors as private actors have advantages such as expertise and resources on the ground (Kunz, 2008).\textsuperscript{201} Interviewees from MBIE mentioned that New Zealand respects decisions made by Vanuatu, as a sovereign nation, about its citizens. Accordingly, both governments have empowered employers and leaders to use their discretion without considering existing legal principles. A leader explained the reasons behind the ban:

“So, when they came out here and with the opportunity to earn enough money, drinking was, probably got out of hands, people dranked (sic) a lot and at the end of the season they go home with nothing. Because they spend all their money here... in crock, yeah. And then, also they end up in few problems like fighting and destroying properties. And, probably they, some of us, or some of them, get [or] end up in jail, yeah. So, the Commissioner of Labour decided to stop liquor, ban liquor completely with the RSE workers. And I think, to my knowledge is the best decision ever made because now everybody were(sic) able to go back with what their future plans of their[s] was, to get enough money to do business, to pay for school fees and all [of] these. It’s much better now than when the first group were(sic) here, that’s way back in in 2008.”

Harry (workers’ leader, 5th RSE season)

As migration is considered to have the potential of creating crises, accepting this additional layer of management can avoid government liability by creating the impression this control is held in the private sector (Nyberg Sørensen & Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2013).

Guaranteeing workers’ rights is one of the benefits migration management is commonly credited with. Conversely, the alcohol ban is \textit{de facto} leading to the erosion of workers’ rights. In the Hawke’s Bay region, employers have a zero-tolerance policy to alcohol on the company premises and prohibit visits by partners or outsiders to accommodation facilities, though workers noted that this varies depending on the company, the pastoral care workers,\textsuperscript{202} and importantly on the team leaders. As employers are responsible for lodging RSE workers, employers have the prerogative to regulate, at their own discretion, the activities of workers while on their private property during off-work hours. This also has other implications because most RSE participants work where they live and they live where they work. In addition, the leaders are in charge of monitoring this behaviour to secure Ni-Vanuatu participation in the scheme:

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{201} Kunz (2008) also identifies that the involvement of other actors, and particularly the diaspora can be an attempt to provide legitimacy to certain courses of policy, or to follow international recommendations about increasing the involvement of civil society actors.
\item \textsuperscript{202} See Morrison (2018) for a case study of Maori pastoral care with RSE Tongan workers that capitalised on commonalities of both indigenous cultures.
\end{itemize}
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“For example, the labour department, even though is not the rule in New Zealand for stopping us to drink liquor and kava, it is our law that stop us from doing it. The [Labour] department [in Vanuatu] doesn’t want us to lose the opportunity to other countries […] if we lose those opportunities to say Solomon, if we lose 100 workers this year […] means that somebody else will get that 100 opportunities […] also the nation will lose the opportunity for the income we bring back to the country.”

Harry (workers’ leader, 5th RSE season)

The strict alcohol ban is discussed in the pre-departure briefing and warnings repeated at various induction sessions: any worker breaching the policy will be placed on a “stand down list” for five years (ESU, 2013b).

When discipline becomes institutionalised, by leaders or by community members, it is possible to identify the relations between the governmental techniques that have produced certain behaviours at the individual level. Their operation depends on who articulates them and on how the information is transmitted through these relations. The “alcohol ban” or “alcohol bisnis” as some leaders call it, is one of the main sources of concern for workers, creating tensions in New Zealand and in their communities. Some leaders are stricter and enforce the ban more actively than others. Interviewees mentioned that other companies in the area allowed workers to drink and complained about their own leaders being so strict; however, these complaints are not exempt from ambivalence. As one worker explained:

“One of the many issues with most of the guys here, is stacking around (sic) we are coming under one country Vanuatu. Then the Vanuatu government tells the Labour [Department], no drinking. No drinking alcohol here. But only we, us here in this lots [company] we follow the rules that [they] tell us. But all the other companies not(sic) […] that’s not fair, and we already tell some of our boss, our leaders here… maybe they want to bring it back [for consideration] to the… Vanuatu Labour [Department]… On the other [hand] is good, when you are here you spend money. So, it’s good that you are not drinking here, you can save your money, [your] allowance.”

Geoffrey (34 years, 5th RSE season)

This view was confirmed by another worker:

“Ni-Vanuatu in 2010, [were] drinking too much alcohol, making too much problem […] [In] another company [workers] drink alcohol, [and the] police no finden (sic) one. [But] every [time our] company [is] very strict, if they find only one [Ni-Vanuatu] then fine, or prison. You drank and they fine you, they only fine you one time, [the company] give[s] you [a] chance, number two, no more chance, you go [to] prison. [RSE employers say to] somebodys(sic) you must no work more, you go to prison, come back [to Vanuatu] … strict, strict.”

Nako (32 years, 3rd RSE season)

A leader who had seen the difference before and after the ban commented:
“For my first year, we had problem with alcohol, and they warned us not to do it again. We followed the instructions...”

Katherine (workers’ leader, 6th RSE reason)

A female worker provided further confirmation:

“Our first time when we was(sic) here, a lot of RSE workers was(sic) drinking. And sometimes they [were too] tired to go to work; maybe our employer [was] not angry, [or] maybe he was... yes, he is not happy with us, and when we go home to Vanuatu, our agent and our government put our laws, that when we are here in New Zealand, no more drinking again. So now we all stops (sic) no more drinking again. Until we go home in Vanuatu, [if] they want to... drinking, drinking in Vanuatu only, not in New Zealand.”

Betty (37 years, 6th RSE season).

If discovered drinking, individuals are disciplined accordingly. Their families and communities are affected, not only through the lack of remittances from the current season, but also because the worker will not be able to return in the following seasons. Further, relatives will know the worker’s reason for not returning, which can have implications for their social standing. The two interviewees who I knew were not returning to New Zealand were upset with their situation as they felt they had lost their group support the moment that they were banned from the scheme.

In administrative terms, the alcohol ban has allowed the Vanuatu Department of Labour to define alcohol consumption as an objective criterion for inclusion in the stand-down list. This list is commonly referred as “the blacklist”. It provides details of workers who have committed offenses while in New Zealand and are banned from participation in seasonal programmes for five years, or indefinitely (ESU, 2014b). The issue of alcohol consumption has become contentious and it is not uncommon to see it challenged, despite the boundaries of good behaviour being constantly reinforced by leaders.203

In this section, I have focused specifically on the alcohol ban, since I was told repeatedly that alcohol can be the source of many problems. While official procedural documentation highlights the sanctions on alcohol, different narratives are used to justify the ban – from maximising profits through saving money, to controlling behaviour as the selected “hard-working, willing and capable Ni-Vanuatu seasonal workers” (ESU, 2014b) should not have the habit of drinking and need to be “well-mannered.” I have used the ban as an example to show

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203 See also the Get Ready DVD (New Zealand Department of Labour & Settlement Support New Zealand, 2011, 15:10) for how problems with alcohol and drunkenness are handled while living in the employer’s property.
how it has been used to produce particular behaviours and subjectivities that are considered as enabling workers to direct their energies to productive activities.

7.2.3.2 Stand downs, Banning and Blacklisting

Stand downs are a measure taken by the ESU to penalise workers who have been reported by their leaders, or employer representatives, for “tarnishing Vanuatu’s reputation in New Zealand or Australia” (ESU, 2013b: 1). A worker can be on stand down for one to five seasons depending on the nature and seriousness of their misconduct. While the ESU guide refers to establishing the validity any reports against the worker, allegations are often based on hearsay, particularly when there is only the word of the leader against that of the worker. New Zealand labour regulations stipulate that in the interests of fairness and reasonableness, the employer has an obligation to advise the employee in the event of misconduct that a warning may follow. If there is an issue of serious misconduct the employer must advise the employee that their employment may be at risk, and a dismissal can be justified following a disciplinary investigation. In the three cases of banning I know of, no investigation had been undertaken. Instead the word of the leader was sufficient to prevent individuals from returning to New Zealand the following season.

The ESU guide (ESU, 2013b) states that a worker can be permanently banned from labour mobility schemes if their case is considered serious. Poor productivity and other misbehaviour result in one to two years stand down; and disruptive, uncooperative behaviour, and damage to property between three to four years. Fighting, consumption of alcohol or drugs, and sexual harassment are punishable by a five-year stand down. Finally, dishonesty, theft, sexual or physical assault and involvement with the New Zealand or Australian Police or Courts can lead to a permanent ban. If workers are reinstated after “serving their penalty”, their names are removed from the blacklist spreadsheet managed by the ESU. However, if reinstated workers misbehave following an earlier stand down, they automatically receive a permanent ban. The ESU keeps separate stand-down and ban lists, and the Department of Labour makes the

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204 New Zealand law allows the parties to an employment contract to formulate their own definition of serious misconduct. It was beyond the scope of this research to investigate whether New Zealand employers have included ESU definitions of misconduct and serious misconduct in RSE employment agreements.

205 Note that Article 22 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families that defines rights in case of expulsion (United Nations General Assembly, 1990). Neither New Zealand nor Vanuatu are signatories of this convention.
Chapter 7

decision to place a worker on either of the lists (Republic of Vanuatu, 2008), in consultation with their New Zealand RSE counterparts. These “blacklists” are circulated to recruiters “so that the risk of an unsuitable person being selected for RSE/SWP is minimized” (ESU, 2013b: 2). Being blacklisted is the term commonly used when workers have to stand down or are banned from the RSE scheme.

Previous to banning individuals from the scheme, leaders label workers as “trouble makers.” One of the leaders mentioned he always reminds workers how to behave. Then, if a person gets into trouble, he tells him or her to stay at home, reiterating that they have already informed about how to behave. In some cases, the misconduct may be unsubstantiated, but leaders have been known to ban people from the RSE based on rumours of extra-marital relations, alcohol drinking, etc. Individuals can be publicly named and shamed, or “called aside” to talk. This singling out contributes to the public shame, which can be incapacitating. One banned worker explained:

“I think that so many of my friends, they have been called and they [leaders] banned them and I don’t want them to do that. They banned them not to go for the next season. They banned them not to go to the scheme again. A friend from my company, friends of mine, my colleagues [...] maybe ten of them [...] very sad [cries].”

Berenice (38 years, 3rd RSE reason).

Employers also enforce the blacklisting of workers, and sometimes these workers are used as an example to others. When this type of incident gets media attention, opinion circulates resulting in the “production of publics”, whereby disciplining can become amplified due to the affective responses generated towards specific populations (Clough, 2010). In the words of one employer: “The fact that they [workers] have lost the chance to earn significant revenue while they're in New Zealand and send that back to both their families and into the country is a huge disadvantage to them so I’m extremely disappointed on their behalf and on their families (sic) behalf.” (Radio New Zealand, 2008).

Leaders are careful when they ban someone and prefer to minimise the times they recommend to their employers not retaining a worker. There is concern about causing an employer to retaliate against fellow co-nationals which could lead to companies preferring to hire workers from other countries in the future. In New Zealand, media coverage of these incidents also supports the disciplining of workers. On the other hand, the higher ratio of RSE applicants to vacancies perpetuates this form of disciplining, because so far leaders have found it easy to
replace non-retuning workers. Discipline operates through blacklisting, but leaders and workers deal with prohibitions in a differentiated manner.

7.2.3.3. Defining Misconduct and Misdemeanours

Compliance and discipline often extend to outside working hours, and beyond work premises. The RSE is subject to the New Zealand Employment Relations Act (2000) which protects all workers in New Zealand. However, because RSE workers often live on the employer’s premises, they have to behave as if they were at work during off-hours. Wilson argues that the Employment Relations Amendment Bill (2014) illustrates “the government’s support for the traditional subordination and control model of the employment relationship […] as the criterion for what is reasonable appears to relate only to the needs of the business and not the wellbeing of the employee” (2014: 27). Conditions of the current Employment Act can include employers defining not only the number, but also the distribution of breaks over the working day.

Additional rules are linked to the RSE requirement of the provision of rental accommodation pre-arranged by the employers, which prevent RSE workers from moving elsewhere. Living together as a group who have to manage their own time, implies waking up and going to bed at specific times, not watching movies or content not approved by the leader, not playing recreational sports to reduce the risk of injuries which could negatively impact their ability to work, and so on.\(^{206}\) RSE workers’ status and their expected behaviours overlap into their leisure time. Such prohibitions and behavioural guidelines which extend beyond working hours and the workplace can be controversial, as there are no clear boundaries regarding the activities allowed while in New Zealand, and workers’ perceptions vary from one company to the next. Apart from the prohibition on drinking alcohol during their free time, interviewees also mentioned prohibitions on cohabitating with their partner if they happened to be selected for the same company, and not being allowed to maintain intimate relations in the housing facilities rented by workers. This may have implications in terms of their rights and freedoms to decide what they do in their own time, as individuals can be disciplined at any time during their stay in New Zealand.

\(^{206}\) This differs from company to company as previous research has shown (Bailey, 2014b; Rockell, 2015).
The Employment Relations Act (2000) also outlines penalties for certain breaches of the duty of good faith. However, it was not clear from my interviews if misconduct resulting in the dismissal of workers was established according to a fair process. It is also important to note that legally the definition of “serious misconduct” cannot be left to the discretion of the employer. Workers and government officers alike made vague mentions of deportation in interviews. Drinking and inebriation are not crimes or sufficient cause for deportation under New Zealand law, although alcohol bans in public places can lead to prosecutions and have increasingly led to criminalisation (Webb, Marriott-Lloyd, & Grenfell, 2004). I have not been able to establish whether RSE workers are subject to different rules in relation to deportation, or the existence of a deportation regime as part of the programme, although some parallels can be drawn to notions of “deportability” (De Genova, 2002; De Genova, 2005; De Genova, 2006). De Genova draws attention to deportability – and not deportation – by which some workers are deported so others can remain as workers. This creates pressure for workers to perform to the employer’s satisfaction to prevent dismissal and deportation, as when their contract is rescinded they can no longer remain in the country, becoming “illegal” and thus must be “deported” (Binford, 2009). This is justified based on everyone being previously informed of the behavioural requirements, as explained by one ESU officer:

“When the workers are caught drinking, the employers just send them home; if they are caught drinking and they are doing things they are not supposed to be doing [...] During the pre-departure briefing, before they leave for New Zealand [...] the information is given out to them [...] most of the workers are returning workers, very, very few new workers, so everybody knows that they are not allowed to drink when they are out in New Zealand.”

ESU worker

The limited visa that the RSE provides restricts workers’ ability to work outside of the contract they were recruited for. There are no other explicit prohibitions beyond those related to their migration status and the laws of New Zealand. It therefore remains necessary to clarify what these additional provisions may be, if any. For example, New Zealand police officers cannot legally police or enforce an alcohol ban, or other restrictions imposed by Vanuatu on workers in New Zealand, as different rules apply for different countries. While most Ni-Vanuatu employers endorse the legally questionable “zero tolerance” policy of alcohol consumption, some also do not allow married couples to sleep together or share a bedroom, or single workers to have sexual partners in their rooms.

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207 Note that deportations require of an administrative or judicial decision or act ordering the removal of an individual (IOM, 2011).
Despite local rules may seem restrictive or unnecessary and disobeying them may lead to social sanctions (C. Bedford, Bedford, & Ho, 2009) workers meet discipline with consent, whether consciously or unconsciously. When their consent is conscious, this implies the exercise of self-care by which workers take care of themselves by adhering to the behavioural rules that are at once prescriptions and truths. Self-care implies an “autonomous” capacity for self-control based on adopting a specific understanding or knowledge that motivates and informs the conformity of behaviour with norms or expectations, and thus transform subjects. However, depending on the situation, there is also resistance. Some workers keep secrets from one another regarding the things they do when they are not on the employer’s premises. Some workers’ leaders have told workers that as long as leaders and nobody else know, workers can do whatever they want. Ambivalence and complicity are part and parcel of workers’ lives in New Zealand. Specific work ethics and guidelines are techniques that have been internalised by workers in order to comply and not lose the opportunity to return the following season – especially if they have also managed themselves financially.

The link between “good character” and employability is strengthened when workers are selected to return to New Zealand the following season. It means that they have proven to be reliable, hard-working, and well-behaved in conforming to the requirements of working and living in New Zealand (ESU, 2013a). In contrast, the ones who have to stay at home because their names were not on the employer’s return list, will be singled out because of having lost such an opportunity. Workers not asked to return have not necessarily been blacklisted; they may be poor performers. However, the discourse about banning and blacklisting will shape how their family perceives them, as they have been given an opportunity to “improve their living” but did not succeed. In one of the leaders’ own words:

“My only concern is the [Ni-]Vanuatu opportunity for the unemployed to be employed. Therefore, it is the role of everybody to make sure that it [the RSE] keeps going, we don’t have to jeopardise [this] by breaking up the laws [...] so we have to make sure that the government and the RSE members have to play their roles. The government has to put the awareness to the Ni-Vans and the RSE [workers] have to make sure, that when they go to New Zealand they don’t behave like they were here in Vanuatu, they will behave as ambassadors for Vanuatu in New Zealand, in that way to keep the image of Vanuatu high.”

Harry (workers’ leader, 5th RSE season)

The government of Vanuatu does not like opportunities for their workers to send remittances back home to be wasted, and at the same time considers workers as representing Vanuatu while abroad, which most workers have understood (J. Taylor & Scarrow, 2010). Following
Eriksen’s understanding of gendering the nation (2016b) the construction of Vanuatu within a Christian framework delineates at the same time moral borders for women and men.

The Vanuatu government has defined the following quality standards for RSE workers: productivity; work ethic (“positive attitudes” and loyalty to employers and colleagues); good character (“reputation for good conduct privately and publicly”); manageability (listening and following instructions and being open and rational when conflict arises); health and capacity to cope (with the physically demanding work under demanding weather and time conditions, including weekends and extra hours); being role models (complying with “reasonable” instructions about private and public behaviour away from work); and adequate English communication (talking to people from other cultures, expressing ideas or opinions, and raising issues/complaints “adequately”) (ESU, 2013a: 1). Several of these values such as positive attitude, good character, and good conduct can be interpreted by different people in different ways. Thus, resistance to leaders’ decisions can take the form of questioning them, hiding things from them, or ignoring their advice. Nonetheless, hardly any workers ask questions or dare to publicly criticise the official guidelines, or rules adopted at the leaders’ discretion.

The interviews revealed that discipline is exercised differently according to gender, age, and marital status. The silences, when discussing banning, were common with the women and men alike. I respected those silences, choosing not to ask intrusive questions about uncomfortable topics. Most interviewees told me I needed to ask the leader as they will be better informed about the real reasons for a person not returning. The silences around problematic and contested issues in regard the RSE scheme were consistent. I was unsure whether this was because workers wanted to portray an “all good” picture, because they had reservations on talking about such issues with me, or because they thought my research may not have a good – or positive in terms of my study – end-product. With time, the link between these silences and workers not wanting to undermine their participation in the scheme became clearer. The workers were protecting their interests and so, by implication, they could not contest leaders’ decisions, even though they may have been unfounded and based on rumours and/or prejudice.

A worker’s reputation, good standing, and social status in the village are at stake if they are not able to return.208 In this way, new subjectivities are formed by the discursive practices and

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208 Of the 38 interviewees in Phases 1 and 2, four participants did not return the following season, each for different reasons, ranging from medical, to a death in the family, to rumours that caused their “banning.” See also Bailey (2014b; 2018) for documentation of other cases.
governmental technologies of banning and blacklisting. Grounded in the knowledge of the ideal characteristics of participants in the scheme, workers are valued because of their employability, which is reflected in their ability to be selected for and maintain a position in the scheme. However, luck continues to be an explanatory factor in allowing people to distance themselves from a negative final decision made by the employer or workers’ leader. I argue that participants have been encouraged to “conduct their conduct’ through persuasion coming from their different relations with government officials, pastoral care workers, leaders, members of their communities, and other workers and by themselves producing informed behaviours that will allow their continued participation in the scheme.

Pastoral care also contributes to the construction of Ni-Vanuatu worker as different “others” in comparison with workers from other countries. Workers from countries who regularly engage with international migration, such as Samoans or Tongans, can be perceived differently from Ni-Vanuatu. It has been asserted that, Tongans adapt relatively easily to seasonal migration under the RSE in comparison to Ni-Vanuatu (Rohorua et al., 2009). Perhaps they can more easily identify the contradictions of the RSE, through their previous experiences (Hao'uli, 2013) to the extent that they have already been constructed as individuals, consumers and as workers with a notion of their power in the labour market, who do not readily accept but resist the conditions of the scheme. I am not saying that Ni-Vanuatu are unaware of being in a disadvantaged position, because some of them clearly articulate this issue, particularly long-term workers (Bailey, 2018a). Rather, they are conditioned by the scheme to respond to its requirements and so ensure its continuation. Discipline is established through a chain of command and reinforced with management practices from employers, government officials in Vanuatu, the RSE management documents and their own expectations of gaining money.

7.2.3.4. The use of money
The neoliberal rationalities underpinning the RSE scheme have been articulated with local customary rationalities to stress the importance of people having an opportunity to become employed, earn money, and use this money to help themselves and their families. This transforms workers’ subjectivities over the course of their involvement in the RSE scheme. In

209 In the case of a participant who did not return because of health reasons, his co-workers mentioned he was not very lucky, because he got sick in New Zealand. Unfortunately, I could not interview him and when asking about his whereabouts, his health, and insurance coverage, I was always met with an “all good” or “everything fine” for an answer.
210 See Bailey (2017a) for an explanation of some common cultural misrepresentations from employers.
understanding the social domain as economic, new forms of knowledge convey that RSE workers have to be at the same time responsible and moral, and economic-rational individuals (Lemke, 2001). Neoliberalism in this sense can be seen as a political strategy promoting a “new understanding of the means and ends of economic governance” (Larner, 1998), which follows the logic of providing jobs instead of aid and empowering migrants to achieve development by becoming agents of their own development (Kapur, 2004).

As has been discussed in earlier chapters, when Ni-Vanuatu become involved in the scheme, there are several instances from recruitment to return in which they are informed by the development discourse at policy level. These migration narratives operate as governmental techniques with effects at both the social and individual level. For example, the Get Ready video from the pre-departure briefing emphasises the importance of what workers do with their money. As workers are unfamiliar with the associated costs to living and working in New Zealand, there is a strong emphasis on savings:

“The main reason for you to come to New Zealand is to make money to send to your family or to take it back with you to Vanuatu […] Saving money […] is very important. Suppose you want to save a lot of money; you must exercise control […] Your employer can help you save money with one separate bank account.”

Get Ready video (2011, 10:30), free translation from Bislama

The use of money is associated with techniques of self-care, because one has to control oneself for the common good. The Get Ready (2011) video and workers’ leaders encourage the restriction of consumption and using earning for better purposes. This is specific and instrumental to the objective of having positive remittance flows in order to generate development. Workers are aware that the purpose of this money is not for spending in New Zealand. Their spending is controlled through saving mechanisms, as was described in section 6.2.3. This contrasts with a more liberal approach in which individuals can freely allocate their income.

The leaders I interviewed mentioned that they always advise workers to engage in employer’s savings schemes because it is better for them and their families. Despite the requirement for a voluntarily signed contract, these schemes are not always fully understood. My research participants knew about other Ni-Vanuatu working in other companies who did not have access to their earnings but only to their stipends, and that these workers received their money at the airport just before departure. Accordingly, saving mechanisms can function as disciplinary mechanisms in that employers, governments, and workers’ leaders alike collaborate to cover
the development needs of workers’ families and communities. The expectations of the villages and the congregations are also interesting, as they reinforce conformity. These practices are allowed to continue because development is the ultimate goal to be achieved for the RSE workers.

The knowledge transmission of migration and development narratives make workers compliant to maintain the scheme. The national level narratives in New Zealand and Vanuatu justify the RSE in terms of the need to increase remittances to promote development. Leaders often discourage ‘bothering’ the employer with complaints that may be legitimate. They do not want to be perceived as problematic and create a bad reputation for their teams because participating in the RSE is framed as a privilege. This was likened to the recruitment of good soldiers, who will fight to defend their country. Ultimately, RSE workers’ labour and sacrifice are endured for the good of the nation.

While Ni-Vanuatu identify themselves as RSE workers while in New Zealand, most of them do not identify their labour as their source of income. Instead, some relate work to aid and the good-will of New Zealanders who are giving them money that they would otherwise not have access to, as one of the leaders acknowledged: “One things (sic) about New Zealand is… New Zealand helps a lot, gives good, gives good money to Vanuatu […] That is the good thing of New Zealand, they are helping out the Ni-Vanuatu with their needs”. The aid and development approach to the RSE is reinforced in government and employer’s discourses, preventing a proper understanding of contract relationships in New Zealand workplaces, and their implications for individual workers’ rights and obligations as taxed workers in New Zealand. In this way, the migration and development narratives operate to set the boundaries for the expected behaviours from workers required to achieve the desired development. A variety of interests are at play in the management of the RSE from recruitment to return.

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211 One of my interviewees compared Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers at the airport with army recruits ready for deployment, which echoes the “reserve army of semi-skilled labour” thought to be found in the Western Pacific (R. Bedford, 2005).
7.2.4 Summary of section

In this section, I have provided insights on how Ni-Vanuatu workers are being transformed into subjects of development. Personal characteristics such as physical prowess and the emotional strength needed to be away from their families, particularly for women interviewees, are requirements that workers have internalised. Being away from home is especially hard for single mothers, who voiced their concerns about their family and children in Vanuatu. The decision to migrate and subsequent arrangements for children are changing social practices and familial responsibilities. Workers compensate for their absence by becoming good providers and good kinsmen, redistributing to their kin and sharing with their community the fruits of the opportunity others have not had. Learning to cope with the distance, along with the requirements of work and off-work hours, is justified because money will be obtained for development purposes such as children’s education or becoming financially independent. There is also a sense of achievement and pride when workers are able to pay for their own weddings without incurring debt or owing favours to their relatives, which gives them a different status when they return to their communities. To gain this status workers have to demonstrate good character and become compliant to the official and unofficial rules operationalised in the RSE scheme.

7.3. Summary of Chapter

This chapter set out to examine how Ni-Vanuatu are negotiating the transformations of their subjectivities as a result of the RSE scheme. As subjects of development, workers voluntarily engage in seasonal migration and negotiate their social, political and economic positions. I found that being a good worker entails more than just being productive. It encompasses behaving well during and in between contracts so as not to jeopardise the possibility of returning to work the next season (Bailey, 2009; Cummings, 2013a; Rockell, 2015). The problematisation of unemployment and of being idle implies that activities that do not use time wisely, such as “walking around”, are considered undesirable (R. E. Smith, 2016) and unproductive and thus can be punished. Similarly, behavioural guidelines and compliance with unofficial but accepted practices conduct workers’ conduct.
Workers become *man blong mane* and subjects of development after complex negotiations with themselves and with the managers of migration. Just as it is difficult to contest the development argument, under the same logic, compliance with financial and time management is barely contested. Workers’ efforts to demonstrate good behaviour and productivity speak to the neoliberal rationality underpinning the RSE scheme which has capitalised on elements from customary rationalities, whereby workers are expected to demonstrate they are good kinsmen and providers by attending to the needs of their families and having the strength to endure the separation from family and home and the hard agricultural work. Thus, to achieve development, workers have to be productive, share the benefits from their employment and become compliant with the formal and informal requirements entailed in working in the RSE.
Chapter 8. Conclusions

This thesis set out to understand the transformation of social relations of Ni-Vanuatu working in the RSE scheme. I reviewed how the scheme was designed as a migration management programme with a development agenda in mind, and how it grants migrant workers an active role in their own development (Kapur, 2004) by conferring on them the responsibility for their own – and their communities’ – wellbeing. I examined the transformation of Ni-Vanuatu workers’ and their families’ social relations, due to the rationalities and practices underpinning migration management and the operationalisation of the RSE scheme. Drawing on qualitative analysis of grey literature, documents, and open-ended interviews, I illustrated how power flows at the international level can also be observed at the individual level, and how the bodies of knowledge that allow for the continuation of the RSE scheme as a development intervention, can be traced to international migration narratives (Pécoud, 2015) which are later shared by RSE stakeholders guaranteeing the continuation of the scheme.

In this thesis, I identified how “best practices” borrowed from other migration programmes have unintended effects when “neutrally” transferred to different environments, drawing attention to the importance of contextualising migration policies. I pointed to how the RSE design replicated existing migration management models, such as the CSWAP, which did not have at the time empirical evidence to support its success (World Bank, 2006b). The practices based on the “4 Cs”: choice of workers, circular movement, cost-sharing of travel related costs, commercial viability were produced by specific knowledge which is constituted as truth relying on the assumption of data being neutral. This knowledge also serves as a means of legitimation of the scheme, as it relates to and is sustained by higher-level migration management and development narratives. I questioned the development model encouraged by the RSE and its underpinning neoliberal assumptions. The “neutral” evidence from evaluations and surveys that quantify the benefits of migration in terms of income and remittances (Clear Horizon, 2016; McKenzie & Gibson, 2014) and deemed the RSE and its objectives manageable, insufficiently assess the outcomes of the scheme. These mostly quantitative approaches and practices transform remittances into a neoliberal development tool (Bakker, 2015).
There is much more to the scheme than its quantifiable benefits. Just as the participation of multiple stakeholders is required to guarantee the functioning of the RSE (C. Bedford, 2013), RSE beneficiaries learning of what is required from them at different moments is essential to guarantee their continuation in the scheme. Interactions among stakeholders are not neutral but driven by different interests. In New Zealand, there is a strong emphasis on reducing costs, in Vanuatu the priority is increasing remittances and returns from migration, and RSE workers labour for material advancement. These agendas have been consolidated in the migration and development narratives analysed.

Departing from a different epistemological standpoint, an analysis of narratives and social relations provided insights to understanding Ni-Vanuatu development trajectories. These insights were key to identify how new and different subjectivities are constructed by means of the narratives and practices in the operationalisation of the RSE. Through the analysis of RSE workers’ discourses, I have explored the changes in social relations within families and communities that are transforming social practices. The analysis of experiences and individual understandings identifies how individual causal ontologies influence social relations. The intersections of neoliberal and “customary” political rationalities underlying the RSE scheme construct subjectivities with a particular disempowering character for Ni-Vanuatu workers and their communities. Because of the existing contradictions between these rationalities, as well as their connections to local Ni-Vanuatu understandings, adjustments to new labour mobility programmes can be as problematic as earlier forms of labour mobility in the Pacific under colonisation. Temporary absences and promises of development are yet to be fully understood against their effects on individuals’ wellbeing beyond economic indicators. This thesis contribution to identify how local understandings are intertwined with neoliberal knowledge to produce new subjectivities is a step in that direction.

Returning to my overarching research question, I have explored how the new subjectivities constructed by neoliberal migration management practices alongside Ni-Vanuatu worldviews contribute to development trajectories in Vanuatu. My conclusions are organised according to the research questions:

- Which “migration management narratives” made the emergence of the RSE scheme possible, and how did this happen?
Chapter 8

- How do neoliberal rationalities, narratives, and practices construct new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and what are the implications of such transformations for Ni-Vanuatu social relations?

- How do customary rationalities and practices transform new subjectivities for Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and what are the implications for Ni-Vanuatu most permanent social relations with their families and communities?

In responding to these questions from the chosen governmentality framework of analysis, bodies of knowledge and power flows are understood as constituted and produced by specific forms of social relations. Avoiding the essentialisation of knowledge or subjectivities, and instead trying to understand how they are produced by interrogating the underlying mechanisms and rationalities of specific forms of relations, becomes paramount (Foucault, 1978) for a nuanced analysis. In the same way, that power and knowledge do not exist in isolation or exempt from resistance; subjectivities are not autonomously or rationally determined, but rather constituted by the conditions and underlying rationalities that precede them, both historically and ontologically.

8.1. Migration and development: the influence of migration management narratives

I followed the literature on neoliberal governmentality based on Foucault’s work (2008). Larner and Walters (2004) argue that neoliberalism shapes both political programmes and individual subjectivities through governmental techniques. Techniques emerging from migration management transcend international borders by using a variety of forms of power to transfer technical knowledge. Though international migration literature suggests this transfer can be guided in a top-down manner (Newland, 2010), I have drawn attention to the governmental techniques at play to manage the RSE, and how migration narratives are shared between international organisations, government agencies and other stakeholders involved. My analysis focused on the narratives regarding efficiency and productivity derived from the New Public Management (NPM) approach and how workers and employers, striving for positive

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212 See also Larner (2000) and Walters (2015).
economic gains, engender the practices and knowledge that maintain the means and ends of the RSE.

Governmental techniques in the RSE encompass the strategies, tactics and ways of thinking and acting used to govern for the benefit of populations (Rose & Miller, 2010) and comprise “mundane” practices such as conferences, trainings, and operational manuals, along with specific mechanisms and practices to manage migration. I have emphasised the need to see power relations beyond a singular apparatus, but rather as transforming subjectivities from different locations and pointed to techniques ranging from self-care to discipline. Following Rose & Miller (2010), I have identified the knowledge underlying the conception of what is good, productive, efficient or profitable, as framed in the RSE policy and interpreted by its main stakeholders. Incorporating cultural sensitivities in my analysis, I showed that RSE neoliberal understandings, far from rigid, lacking contradiction or being disseminated only by economic and political groups, are transformed in their specific uptake in Vanuatu and New Zealand.

Migration management narratives are not neutral, but encompass assumptions about problem causes and solutions, and a variety of agendas. The perception of neutrality in the RSE legitimises particular interests. On the one hand, the interests of the New Zealand government in maintaining a productive agricultural sector aligned with private sector needs to increase productivity and remain competitive in international markets (Ramasamy et al., 2008). On the other hand, the interests of Pacific governments in benefitting from a cash influx aligned with workers’ material aspirations. Different stakeholders acknowledge the potential of the scheme for “encouraging economic development, regional integration and stability, alongside efforts by island states within the Pacific Islands Forum to strengthen their economies.” (Ramasamy et al., 2008: 171). This also contributes to New Zealand foreign policy goals related to trade and public diplomacy (Barker, 2010) as at the time of its design, the RSE scheme incorporated existing “best practice” in migration management (World Bank, 2006a) and it was subsequently recognised as a model development programme (McKenzie & Gibson, 2014).

The problematisation of youth unemployment and unrest in the Pacific as an impending “doomsday scenario” (Callick, 1993) encourages the search for tools to address issues of insecurity and over population in the Pacific. This solutionist approach to the perceived problems, resonated with scholars and experts in the region advocating for a “safety valve” to prevent security incidents in PICs (AusAID, 2006; Duncan & Chand, 2002; May, 2003; Ware,
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2005; Ware, 2004) and promote development (R. Bedford et al., 2007; World Bank, 2006a). Nonetheless, seasonal labour migration as the solution of choice does not equally work for all countries in the so-called “Arc of instability” (Dibb et al., 1999) where the RSE has not been equally encouraged. Within this frame, labour issues of over-supply on one side and under-supply due to declining fertility rates in Australia and New Zealand arguably provided the conditions for mutually beneficial labour movement from PICs (World Bank, 2006a: 95). This matching allowed for the emergence of the Vanuatu and New Zealand economies as objects of governance, subject to “the importation of governmental forms” (Walters, 2004: 11), and the reproduction of historical power imbalances.

Migration management aims to provide practical solutions to perceived or existing issues such as unemployment or insecurity (Pécoud, 2015). The solutions based on expert technical knowledge have depoliticised policy making consolidating migration management and development narratives and deeming knowledge as neutral. The emphasis on a technocratic approach avoids politicising or interrogating underlying causes of security concerns, or the limited capacity of states to create jobs internally. A solutionist approach that uses depoliticised narratives, supposedly ideologically unbiased, grounded in quantifiable and measurable facts, can be justified to further the economic interests of specific groups, because an a priori consensus has been established about the veracity of the notions on which it is based. Further, the universal application of standard solutions sets aside context specific considerations, and so overlooks the full extent to which livelihoods can be affected by the introduction of a migration scheme, or what happens when a state adopts a foreign development models. This is of concern, particularly in Vanuatu where international migration was negligible before the RSE introduction.

When policy makers assume the technical knowledge on which migration management is based as expert and apolitical (Pécoud, 2015), commissioned research privileges evaluations and surveys to monitor and quantify the contributions of migration schemes such as the value of remittances and levels of industry growth. In the RSE, remittances are used as means for development and the discipline required to maximise its amount has been accepted among the RSE stakeholders. RSE external evaluations, financed by key RSE stakeholders including the World Bank and NZAid (IMSED Research, 2010; McKenzie & Gibson, 2014) have produced and disseminated knowledge that contributes to the validation of the programme at an international level.
Following previous research regarding the development agenda of international organisations (Georgi, 2010; Kalm, 2010; Kalm, 2015; Pécoud, 2015), I noted that ‘order’ and ‘benefit’ are the keywords linked to fostering development through migration management. These words permeated RSE workers’ narratives. They have learned not only what a development programme encompasses and what development entails, but, most importantly, to behave as its beneficiaries. In this way, developmentalism contributes to the universalisation of “a version of modernity and its particular teleologies” (Raghuram, 2009: 111). Development becomes part of an apparatus of global governance aimed at managing risks and governing unruly populations (de Vries, 2007) through the securitisation of unstable areas imagined as spaces of breakdown and in need of re-ordering (Duffield, 2001).

The resulting portrayal of a temporal migration scheme from an OECD country which has “successfully” engaged in international migration management, opens the doors for future schemes to be modeled in the same fashion (McKenzie & Gibson, 2010). These narratives simplify the issues to be addressed and hide alternative perspectives to justify standard policy recommendations (Ferguson, 1990; Roe, 1994). In this sense, migration management and development narratives are two sides of the same coin strengthening each other to inform RSE practices. When the body of knowledge emerging from the routine monitoring of the RSE is presented as practical and neutral the political discussion about the need for migration and the reasons behind the adoption of certain policies and practices over others are more easily circumvented.

By relying on international expertise and privileging systematically collected quantitative statistical and socioeconomic evidence, the social sphere in which migration operates is viewed as having a predominantly economic character. The reasoning behind the notion of “triple wins” speaks to the adoption of a business-like model aligned with NPM which privileges an economic accounting of the benefits of the RSE scheme.213 The interrogation and politicisation of underlying root causes of problems, are left untouched by a pragmatism that focuses on what is measurable, or “what works”.214 When data is used to guarantee the neutrality and objectivity of the scheme as a development solution, practices and the prejudices that drive them operate without questioning, as they are not considered part of the solution. This model disregards the importance of social relations and their transformation in the design of development

213 See also Hao’uli (2013).
214 What Gregory (2015) had called “the modern economists’ problem” who see their theories as value-free.
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interventions. Nonetheless, without the pairing of migration management and development, the scheme would not be able to function. For the RSE to maintain its means and ends, it is necessary that all the stakeholders play their part: the leaders by disciplining the workers, the government of New Zealand by disciplining the employers, and the international organisations by legitimising the RSE scheme as best practice.

8.2. Being at Home and Away: Neoliberal rationalities

Some generations have passed since Ni-Vanuatu ancestors began engaging with international labour mobility, however the memories from earlier separations still colour the lives of their current days. Previously established connections between migration and power (Bonnemaison, 1985; Lindstrom, 2011) in earlier labour mobility in Vanuatu, seem to be taking a different turn with Ni-Vanuatu participation in the RSE scheme. These differences are due to the neoliberal rationality underpinning the RSE scheme. For example, as notions of merit are introduced, social values as competitiveness support the legitimation of meritocracy. Thus, the status acquired by RSE workers and leaders may facilitate access to positions of local authority not possible before. These shifts are not exempt from tensions, but indicative of the possibilities of “new ways of being” arising from Ni-Vanuatu engagement in the RSE (Cummings, 2013a).

Along with changes in status, traditional practices such as communal work (Craven, 2015; Rockell, 2015), tending to gardens (R. E. Smith, 2016), and child care (Rohorua et al., 2009) may also be changing because of this new type of migration. Such changes may be difficult to reverse because understandings of neoliberal rationalities are generalised to different aspects of living.

Before the RSE, most workers interviewed had deemed their possibilities for earning money and gaining access to material things was dependent on formal education and language skills or “good English.” Without education, securing a job in the government or with a private company in Vanuatu was almost impossible. Most interviewees considered they lacked “good education” which prevented them from obtaining a “good job.” Instead, with the RSE, status is gained by an individual’s ability to obtain money and re-circulate it, or by becoming a good leader (Bailey, 2017b). Individuals’ efforts to become employable – and then productive to
secure their employment and be invited to return in the subsequent agricultural seasons – match employers’ efforts to remain competitive in the sector.

My research confirms earlier findings on changes in customary everyday activities in Vanuatu, such as gardening (Craven, 2015). Some RSE workers believe they are already contributing to their communities by bringing in money, and some request monetary compensation for undertaking communal work such as helping to build other community members’ houses (R. E. Smith, 2016). In this research, the “young ones” were signalled as not wanting to work in their communities anymore, but “only rest” when they return to Vanuatu from a season in New Zealand. This may be indicative of wider changes in communities, because Ni-Vanuatu involvement in the RSE changes the pre-conditions for achieving a good material and social status enabling a different understanding of merit. Under the RSE, merit has become associated with a neoliberal work ethic in which workers take care of their own development and prosperity.

Different forms of labour can produce different kinds of individuals (Cummings, 2013a), however this is still dependant on non-voluntaristic factors such as nationality which provide differential entitlements to global mobility (Barker, 2010). RSE workers’ subjectivities incorporate understandings of the hierarchies established with the scheme, which are framed in the context of a neoliberal understanding of labour market relations. For example, the intentional differentiation between team leaders and RSE workers, locates workers in the least empowered and sometimes vulnerable situation while in New Zealand. The particular relations that are built, and within which governmental techniques of discipline and self-care operate, imply explicit and implicit rules that RSE workers follow to guarantee their permanence in the scheme.

In their efforts to retain employment, workers become productive and entrepreneurial subjects and separate themselves from being unemployed, which according to the dominant narratives, has the potential to create incidents leading to insecurity. I consider the categorising of people mostly living in a semi-subsistence economy as unemployed as problematic, especially when considered an issue of skills. This implies that individuals need to be educated to function as “good workers” and become employable in a Western economy. Encouraged by team leaders aiming to improve the productivity of the teams they lead (Bailey, 2017b), workers become productive to secure their engagement with the scheme (Rockell, 2015). Considering migrants as resources to be tapped (Brinkerhoff, 2008), in terms of remittances, and responsibilising
them for the development of their communities encourages their uptake of such transformations. Development has been reduced to achieving productive results and RSE workers have learnt that to be able to sell their labour, they have to forgo certain freedoms and personal prerogatives such as deciding how to spend their wages or their free time.

Some evidence of Ni-Vanuatu transformations arose when productive – paid work – was contrasted with unproductive – unpaid work. Most interviewees did not consider gardening as work in comparison to paid jobs which follow a schedule and entail a weekly monetary compensation. Interviewees compared having a daily schedule when working in New Zealand to going to the garden whenever they decided to, disregarding the fact that subsistence gardening requires awareness of seasonality in relation to planting and harvesting. Because gardening is unpaid, and only rarely is it possible for families to sell their produce, it was also compared unfavourably to selling copra, which is the most common though infrequent way to obtain cash in the villages. Noticeably, being “only gardener” was not seen as an occupation. Compared to waged labour in New Zealand, gardening was considered easy and its results distant. Instead, Ni-Vanuatu’s work in the orchards was deemed hard, but yielding weekly monetary returns despite the associated living expenses that workers face such as rent or transport.

The changes I identified in RSE workers’ subjectivities are not static in time and place, as individuals often change positions. For example, a disciplinarian leader in New Zealand can also be a good provider while in Vanuatu and then a compliant worker when returning to New Zealand. This speaks of the fluidity of social relations, but also of the emergence of new subjectivities that may have not existed before the RSE scheme. I am not saying Ni-Vanuatu were not disciplined before the RSE, but that the connotations of this technique may be different because of the considerable amounts of money involved. Particularly in rural areas, where paid work is rare, money is an incentive to accept the given working conditions. Following Lemke (2015) and his articulation of the government of things, money can also be considered as a form of governing people. Money – and remittances – have become part of the reality that includes specific networks between individuals, and can be considered as having power over life. The implications of such changes are still not fully apparent, particularly for

215 Note that earlier research has uncovered a turn to crops that require less maintenance (Craven, 2015; R. E. Smith, 2016).
previously unemployed individuals who have increasingly incorporated cash into their local livelihoods.

From a neoliberal perspective, the social domain is understood as economic, which means that the economy defines the regulation of social practices, such as the expansion of entrepreneurial forms. In striving for optimisation, individuals are encouraged to be productive, thus such policies emphasise the transformation of subjects into responsible and economic-rational individuals at the same time (Lemke, 2001). It is expected that individuals use their free will to make decisions in a self-determined, responsible and moral manner, so becoming rational actors. This means that subjects are expected to base their decision-making on a rational assessment of the costs and benefits of particular acts in comparison to other possible acts. Because these decisions are seemingly self-determined, the subject bears the consequences of these decisions alone and so social responsibility becomes a matter of personal precaution-taking (Lemke, 2001).

Foucault (2008) sees modes of government as situated in their historical context and defined by a configuration of knowledge or political rationalities, governmental technologies, and conceptions of the subject. The managerial approach to migration encompasses neoliberal notions of competitiveness, productivity, and entrepreneurship, which encourage the production of specific knowledge to support the practices required to achieve economic gains and make migrants agents of change (Kapur, 2004). I see these notions constituting a “neoliberal rationality.” Under this rationality, rational subjects are made responsible for using their human capital to achieve development for themselves and their communities. In this context, the migration and development narratives that construct policy knowledge become a depoliticised tool instrumental in problem solving, optimising production, and increasing competition (Ferguson, 1990; Ong, 2006), by encouraging an entrepreneurial subjectivity.

While workers and their families are rewarded with material benefits, the development narratives consider communities rather than individuals to be the ultimate beneficiaries of the RSE. This narrative is ad hoc the goals of the industry. Individuals strive to maintain “good behaviour” while in New Zealand, and avoid the punishments for non-compliance outlined in the established guidelines and norms. Participation in the RSE is conditional and opportunities restricted to the complying workers. Paradoxically, this culture of punishment does not align with the basic principle of competition, by which individuals have the right to make mistakes and get back on their feet relying on their own human capital. Human capital is essential to a
free market in which productivity leads to the achievement of growth and prosperity. Excluding individuals conditionally to an appropriate behaviour and attitudes, falls outside this logic under which opportunities are available only for the complying workers.

The neoliberal rationality underpinning the RSE scheme and other similar temporal mobility programmes creates productive individuals. Privileging monetary productivity can have serious implications for workers’ behaviour and exercise of rights as discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. I have drawn attention to the discursive manifestations of the governmental techniques of discipline and self-care that operate in the management of RSE scheme, and which aim to “conduct the conduct” of the different RSE stakeholders and transform Ni-Vanuatu subjectivities. International organisations govern governments, governments govern RSE employers, and RSE workers are governed by all of the above. Governmental techniques are underpinned by the transfer of technical knowledge through grey literature, other RSE associated programmes, and evaluations. This knowledge is reproduced via the use of narratives through feedback loops that sustain the solutionist approach embodied by the RSE.

8.3. No one wants to rock the boat: Customary rationalities

One of my interviewees gave this section its title. Based in Vanuatu, she was familiar with the operationalisation of the RSE scheme, its implications for Ni-Vanuatu living in New Zealand, and was concerned about the long-term consequences it may have for village life. She also had concerns about the lack of monitoring from the Vanuatu side while workers were in New Zealand, and the current mechanisms in place that prevent workers following up on any unnotified grievances after returning home. These shortfalls are often justified due to the lack of government capacity, including the economic and human resources to look after their citizens in a far away country. Thus, Ni-Vanuatu workers are limited to the channels offered by New Zealand to all other workers216 if they want to raise issues.

Understanding the knowledge framework which allows the continuation of the RSE scheme has enabled me to uncover the underlying power flows and how they are articulated alongside

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216 Labour inspectors interviewed noted that calls from Ni-Vanuatu were infrequent and one common way they receive complaints is through churches and members of the community.
previous knowledge held in Ni-Vanuatu worldviews. From a neoliberal perspective in which
the market and monetary benefits reign, the scheme may be a success, but not necessarily for all
Ni-Vanuatu on an individual basis. The neoliberal political rationality is transforming Ni-
Vanuatu subjectivities in ways that are disempowering compared to earlier types of migration.
This is not to say that all individuals are constrained in their exercise of civil liberties or rights
while they live in New Zealand, although the case of the alcohol ban and the practices of
banning and “deportation” are very telling in that regard (Bailey, 2018a). Individuals choose
to engage in the RSE, although not without pressure from family and community, they
voluntarily self-regulate in adapting their behaviours. This research has explored the continuum
between coercion – discipline and supervision – and freedom – self-care and regulatory control
– as opposed but also complementary (Lemke, 2011) governmental techniques.

The RSE functions on the assumption that individuals are rational beings who adhere to certain
behavioural standards to continue benefitting from the scheme, and ensure their families and
kin are provided for. These behavioural transformations imply that RSE workers’ relations to
themselves, their communities and family members are also being transformed by the
migration management narratives. Both workers and team leaders have learnt how to succeed
in the RSE through a variety of adaptations, which they acknowledge and exercise freely in
their desire to continue working in the RSE scheme. Such transformations make Ni-Vanuatu
productive subjects part of global value chains, which to remain competitive need to reduce
costs and maximise benefits.

I have drawn attention to the articulation of the narratives that the scheme brings about, how
their repetition among different stakeholders contributes to the construction of success stories
and discourses that maintain the scheme – and do not rock the boat. These discourses can be
observed from the micro level among Ni-Vanuatu, their families and communities to the macro
levels in international discourses that are retrofitted for the management of the scheme.
Interestingly, these discourses reflect how New Zealand promotes its achievements to the wider
OECD community (OECD, 2013; OECD, 2014a) and internationally. From a government
standpoint – and in a neoliberal sense – opening the labour market is the ultimate solution to
public sector deficits and cuts to international aid programs (Bakker, 2010). Politicians’ public
discourses (Bennett & Woodhouse, 2014; Brownlee & Woodhouse, 2017; Woodhouse, 2017a),
key notes from public officials (MFAT & Trade New Zealand, 2010; MFAT, 2017; New
Zealand Government, 2015; Te Mata, 2016), and other publications (New Zealand
Government, 2015) can be used as marketing tools to raise awareness on New Zealand’s role in assisting development in PICs.

I have also highlighted that pre-departure briefings are too short for workers, although they have been systemised and do provide a substantive amount of information. In particular, first time workers find it hard to fully comprehend the administrative procedures associated with the scheme, such as taxes (HortNZ, 2008a) and other deductions. Additionally, the ‘Get Ready’ video, produced jointly by the government of New Zealand and RSE participating governments, predominantly emphasises obligations and not rights, an approach supported by team leaders. This could be balanced if employers authorised trade unions to provide information sessions in their premises. Workers’ knowledge about labour rights depends largely on employers’ pre-employment training, and on the – sometimes conflicting – information they may receive from different sources. This reflects transference of government responsibilities to private actors.

While I did not expect workers to fully understand the implications of contracts, including rights and obligations, I found they understood the labour they supply goes hand in hand with the requirements of their employers. However, most of them did not understand how important their labour timeliness is at different stages of the season to meet the needs of the industry. For example, workers understand that when they have shipments scheduled, they need to work harder, but they did not connect their labour to the produce value chain. In most of the cases my interviewees had not noticed that the labour they provided at the right time adds value to the company’s exports increasing the quality and value of their produce.

Interviewees mostly repeated what they were told about the development rationale and the aid that New Zealand was giving to Vanuatu, narratives and notions they unlikely had access to before encountering the RSE scheme. In this regard, the interviews with team leaders, family and community members, and government officials are telling of authority figures that influence the practices that maintain the scheme. My analysis linked the specific ways of acting, intervening and directing – constituted by specific types of rationalities and knowledge – to a variety of techniques that construct and transform subjectivities. These techniques are particularly evident in the recruitment of workers, blacklistings, and other practices that have been institutionalised through the RSE scheme, such as savings schemes and contributions to local churches.
Individuals do not autonomously create social relations; rather, their relations are mediated by the material conditions that enable them. All individual actions and understandings are mediated by linguistic, historical, geographical, and political conditions, just as subjectivities are mediated by all the conditions that enable and precede them. In this sense, it is important to acknowledge how new subjectivities are contributing to Vanuatu development trajectories. RSE workers’ subjectivities are constructed by social practices and relations that guide their conduct and enable these specific rationalities. Complex social relations are continuously being transformed, and the transformations that come with mobility are no exception (Jolly, 1987). It has been argued that subjectivities have been in a process of transformation in Vanuatu, since the 17th century arrival of Europeans there, engendering different relations to religion, kastom, and gender, among others. In this research, I have developed how the involvement of Ni-Vanuatu in the RSE is transforming participants’ social relations within their communities with different meanings and in significant ways.

The RSE as a solution to the lack of a reliable local workforce for the horticulture and viticulture sectors in New Zealand is conditioned to controlling labour mobility to secure growth. If the scheme is to be productive, individual mobility choices and access to all the opportunities an open market offers need to be limited. For example, New Zealanders, who can decide who to work for have become “unreliable”, thus limitations need to be in place to prevent Pacific workers from becoming so too. Additionally, costs must remain low in the interest of maintaining the competitiveness of the sector, including the costs of allowing the exercise of some civil liberties. Developed countries need a labour force subject to terms and conditions of work that supports the competitiveness of their exports. This is part of the problem which should be incorporated as part of the solution that the RSE represents. Contrary to the neoliberal framework that defines the situation and conditions for workers, foreign citizens lack protections against working conditions that push over the limits of existing national regulations. “Good workers” have to become compliant and strong to endure the challenges that the RSE entails for them and their families.
8.4. Changing the discourse

This thesis has identified the different ways in which neoliberal migration management practices intertwine with Ni-Vanuatu worldviews to construct new subjectivities and some of the implications that adopting foreign rationalities can have. I have argued that the migration management and development narratives needed for the continuation of the scheme underlie and justify practices such as the alcohol-ban and other restrictions such as living inside the employer’s premises, or lacking the possibility to choose whom workers can sell their labour to, that would otherwise not be acceptable.

The strength of the RSE narratives and the apparent rigour of the evidence promulgated, make it difficult for anyone, especially team leaders who are responsible for other workers, to “rock the boat.” However, changing the discourse may be a first step to realising change in a positive direction, as “there is no single best practice in temporary labour migration which is suited to all or even most origin and/or destination countries” (Hugo, 2009: 47). Moving in that direction, I can envision some changes in the practices of the RSE scheme, based on the opinions of workers collected in this research, and the analysis of both freedoms and constraints experienced by Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers at different points along their participation in the scheme. The phased approach to the fieldwork and inclusion of different locations allowed to understand relations in a dynamic way over time and space, during and between seasons, in New Zealand and Vanuatu. The historical context of mobility in the Pacific, which is still on the minds of some workers, can colour their labour experiences and how they envision their own development trajectories from the standpoint of economies and subjectivities that have not been fully capitalistic (Rojas, 2007).

Migration management entails practices, stakeholders, and roles that interact in the interests of economic growth. My concern is that RSE workers are neither considered as individuals with full competitive capacity nor as knowledge holders (Dun et al., 2018) and thus are not offered the option to benefit from full labour mobility, or full and free participation in a free market. Besides voluntarily signing for the scheme, workers cannot choose where they work, who they sell their labour to, the type of work, such as pruning or harvesting, the type of produce they work with, or the duration of their contracts. The RSE business practice and visa conditions limits Ni-Vanuatu workers’ engagement to a framework which protects the national economy of New Zealand and the interests of its horticulture and viticulture sector. Workers understand
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this, and the preference given to nationals working in the sector “because it’s their country.” Nonetheless, the RSE has had consequences for New Zealanders working in temporary jobs in the sector, who have been displaced by the low wages that the industry pays to RSE workers (TVNZ Q+A, 2017). These wages, while having to comply with the minimum wage standard, are far from being living wages\(^{217}\) that could match the relatively high cost of living from three to seven months in New Zealand. In this regard, governments’ role is to ensure that the scheme regulations do not only favour the private sector.

Additionally, considering RSE workers as dependent on the pastoral care and on the accommodation they are provided, can situate them in a vulnerable position (Bailey, 2018b), despite being officially considered the most protected workers in the agricultural sector. Instead, employers should allow workers to exercise their agency and choose among different options, in line with current availability of housing in the towns they work in (Wilson, 2017). Workers expressed interest, not only in more permanent jobs, but also in choosing the duration of their seasonal engagement. For example, they would like to be able to work more one year and less in the next. In this way, they could adjust their work to their family and kinship demands. Workers with small children were concerned about leaving them for too long, and that they would lose their bond, especially if children were too young to remember their parents. Despite RSE workers are currently allowed to change employers, this is uncommon, because employers have already invested in them. Being allowed to choose employers, work location, contract duration, or the produce they work with would provide workers with greater flexibility in achieving their individual goals.

As migration provides new opportunities for individuals, individuals should be able to exercise their choice and power that comes with said agency. Most of the recommendations workers provided during my interviews were related to widening their choices – for the type of work they carry out, the amount of time away from home they are required to commit to each season, and the location of the places where they work. This shows that they are questioning the knowledge that the management of the scheme entails, although not openly. Participatory research should could shed light on workers’ voices as important stakeholders in the management of the RSE. With their decade-long experience, Ni-Vanuatu have appreciated first

\(^{217}\) The living wage for 2018 is NZ$20.55 (Living Wage Aoteaora, 2018).
hand the benefits and consequences the scheme has brought, and can inform its future development.

Recent research (Bailey, 2014b; Rockell, 2015) has focused on improving the “cultural contact” among the different actors involved in the scheme and anthropological research (Bailey, 2014b; R. E. Smith, 2016) has provided insights on social and cultural aspects of Ni-Vanuatu engagements with the RSE. However, I believe future research can introduce different perspectives. Research on migration from a governmentality perspective is incipient and there are few micro-level localised studies (Brady, 2014). It would be important that future research on the RSE incorporate political dimensions to the existing economic ones to provide fuller interpretations of complex and shifting relationships and examine the places through which migrants’ subjectivities are transformed (Lawson, 2000).

More sociological research is needed to grasp the realities of Ni-Vanuatu working in the scheme and the transformation of their subjectivities and social relations to address the potential unintended consequences of a development intervention. Future research can also contribute beyond improving the “cultural contact.” The construction and understanding of development itself, and the modernisation assumptions that are behind the current use of development in the RSE could be interrogated using different qualitative methodologies such as biographical approaches. This would allow to identify how the RSE fits in the lives of people rather than how people fit in a development intervention. Longitudinal studies with a transnational framework could also assess the implications of this labour engagement for future generations and identify recommendations towards a more inclusive design of the scheme.

I have demonstrated how some RSE practices are continued in the interests of competitiveness and productivity and how policy options follow as a result of the way a reality is grasped. When an explanation is accepted as a model explanation, it becomes a paradigm. However, it does not mean such an explanation has triumphed because of “its ‘goodness’, as determined by some neutral standard of what constitutes goodness of explanation” (Roth, 1989: 468), because often the explanation is not the only alternative. Just as there are competing understandings of migration related issues that do not allow for claims of universality in their interpretation, it follows that multiple kinds of policy can be envisaged (Pécoud, 2015). Thus, looking for alternatives is the way to move forward, as what is understood as “good” can change and be contested by Ni-Vanuatu (R. E. Smith, 2018).
Roe (1991) had noted the pressure for development narratives are proportional to the ambiguity decision makers experience over the development process. This means that the greater uncertainty at micro levels, the greater the tendency to use broad explanatory narratives operationalised in standard approaches with widespread application. Also, when development projects fail, more narratives are used aimed at reducing uncertainty. Roe recommends that instead of “continuing to focus on trying to undermine the [development] narrative evidentially, our efforts should shift to creating and engaging counternarratives to the more objectionable narrative or modifying that narrative to make it less objectionable” (Roe, 1994: 288). In this sense, incorporating workers’ preferences and recommendations into the RSE scheme could contribute to changing the discourse. As long as the dominant economic model that depoliticises migration narratives and disembodies people remains unchallenged, there is a risk that the migration management practices will remain unquestioned. Although, the RSE management and its eventual improvements are often discussed involving a variety of stakeholders, success stories built on the same narratives may prevent alternative approaches being sought to address perceived development constraints in PICs. Changing the current narratives by including workers perspectives may help reducing the social costs of this development intervention for Ni-Vanuatu livelihoods.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Advert for Ni-Vanuatu Workers in New Zealand

Are you working within the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme?
Do you come from Vanuatu?

Do you want to participate in a research study?

I am a Doctoral student at The University of Auckland, conducting a study on the Recognized Seasonal Employer's scheme (RSE) in New Zealand and in Vanuatu.

I want to understand how RSE workers decided to enroll in the program and their experiences before and after coming to New Zealand from their own perspectives.

Your time will be compensated with a NZ$10 phone card.
Appendices

Appendix B: Consent Form for RSE Employers

Consent Form (RSE Employers)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Seasons of change
Gendered practices in transnational migration, an analysis of the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme
Mainé Astonitas
Doctoral Student (ID 5571865)
Centre for Development Studies
Faculty of Arts
University of Auckland

I have read the Participant Information Sheet; have understood the nature of the research and why my company has been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

☐ I agree that RSE workers working in my company take part in a maximum of two 60 minutes’ interviews outside work hours.

☐ I agree that whether workers participate or not in this research it will not affect their positions within the company.

☐ I understand that the interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

☐ I understand that participants are free to withdraw participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to them up to February 28th, 2015. This can be done either verbally or in writing.

☐ I understand that interview recordings and other data will be stored securely for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.

☐ I agree that the researcher use the data in conference presentations and academic publications.

☐ I understand that I can give consent to participate in this project by having the researcher record my oral consent

☐ I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of findings.

Name ___________________________

Signature ___________________________ Date _________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 29-05-2014 FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 011443
Appendices

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet for RSE Employers

Participant Information Sheet (RSE Employers)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Seasons of change
Gendered practices in transnational migration, an analysis of the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme
Mainé Astonitas
Doctoral Student (ID 5571865)
Centre for Development Studies
Faculty of Arts
University of Auckland
Dear Mr/Ms __________________

My name is Mainé Astonitas, and I am a Doctoral student at the Centre for Development Studies at The University of Auckland in New Zealand.

As part of my research I am interested in interviewing Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) workers from Vanuatu to understand how they negotiate their social relationships as they move between their home villages and their place of work in New Zealand. My focus is particularly on social relations that relate to improving their livelihoods in their home villages or towns.

I am asking for your permission to conduct semi-structured interviews with some of the RSE workers working for your company. These interviews will take place outside of work hours. I expect to undertake these interviews in two time periods: May-June 2014 and January-March 2015. I would like to seek your assurance that whether they participate or not in my research will not affect their positions within your company.

My field research is partially funded by the NZIDRS - New Zealand International Doctoral Research Scholarship and the Faculty of Arts Doctoral Research Fund of The University of Auckland.

The research project
I am conducting a study on the RSE scheme in New Zealand and in Vanuatu. I want to understand how RSE worker negotiate their social relationships especially in relation to improving their livelihoods at home. It is because of this that I plan to interview workers at different RSE stages.

The project has three phases:
   II. Research in Vanuatu: Around pre-departure orientation (October 2014 - November 2014)
   III. Research in New Zealand: Peak of season 2015-2016 (January 2015 - March 2015)

The benefit of this research project
The possible benefits for the participants in the research include becoming aware of the positive impact the experiences gained while working in the RSE had in their daily lives in New Zealand and back at home. This impact can not only be accounted at an economic level, but also in terms of the learning experiences workers are taking home with them.
Appendices

This type of research is important to understand how workers may have been influenced by their experiences in the RSE, as productive social relationships positively impact workers’ livelihoods.

**The planned interviews**
Each interview will take approximately one hour. The exact date, time and location for the interviews will be agreed on between the workers and me, and will be conducted outside regular work hours. The interviews will not focus on job activities, but on the relationships workers experience in New Zealand and in Vanuatu.

**The outcome**
The information from the interview will be used in my academic work. Findings of this project will be published in my doctoral thesis and presented at conferences and in publications.

**Confidentiality**
All data will be confidential. No information that could identify your company will be shared with any other person. Findings will not include any other identifiable information.

**Data storage and destruction**
All data recorded or written will be stored in my office at The University of Auckland in a locked data storage cabinet. Only I and my supervisor will have access to the data. After 6 years, all data will be shredded and digital files deleted.

**Contact details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Supervisor / Head of Department</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainé Astonitas</td>
<td>Ass Prof Yvonne Underhill-Sem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Science Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Symonds Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auckland, New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+64 9 373 7599 ext. 82311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:last303@aucklanduni.ac.nz">last303@aucklanduni.ac.nz</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:y.underhill-sem@auckland.ac.nz">y.underhill-sem@auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Telephone +64 (0) 9 373-7599 ext. 87830/83761. email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 29-05-2014 for (3) years, Reference Number 011443
Appendices

**Appendix D: Research Documentation approved by UAHPEC**

<table>
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