

## Internal Migration in the Pacific Islands: a regional overview

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### ABSTRACT

*Internal migration in the Pacific islands, especially in Melanesia has become more widespread and intense over the last 50 years. However, this movement of people from smaller 'outer' islands and interior regions of the larger islands to 'main' islands and coastal towns and cities is less documented, and studied when compared to international migration from Pacific Island Countries (PICs). This paper seeks to provide an overview of internal migration in PICs using the apparently contradictory standpoints of urban bias theory, and new economic geography as well as by using historical and contemporary information to provide the context of current internal migration trends. It is shown that there are significant gaps in the provision of statistics relating to both inter-provincial migration and urbanization, particularly with regards to gendered information. The paper maintains that with modernization there has been on-going improvement in girls and women's access to education, and opportunities of employment in the formal sector. As both higher educational and employment opportunities are primarily found in urban areas, the previously male dominated migration patterns are being replaced by movements that exhibit greater gender parity.*

**Key words:** *Internal migration, urbanization, gendered migration, informal settlements, and ethnic enclaves*