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Outer Islands Study: Migration

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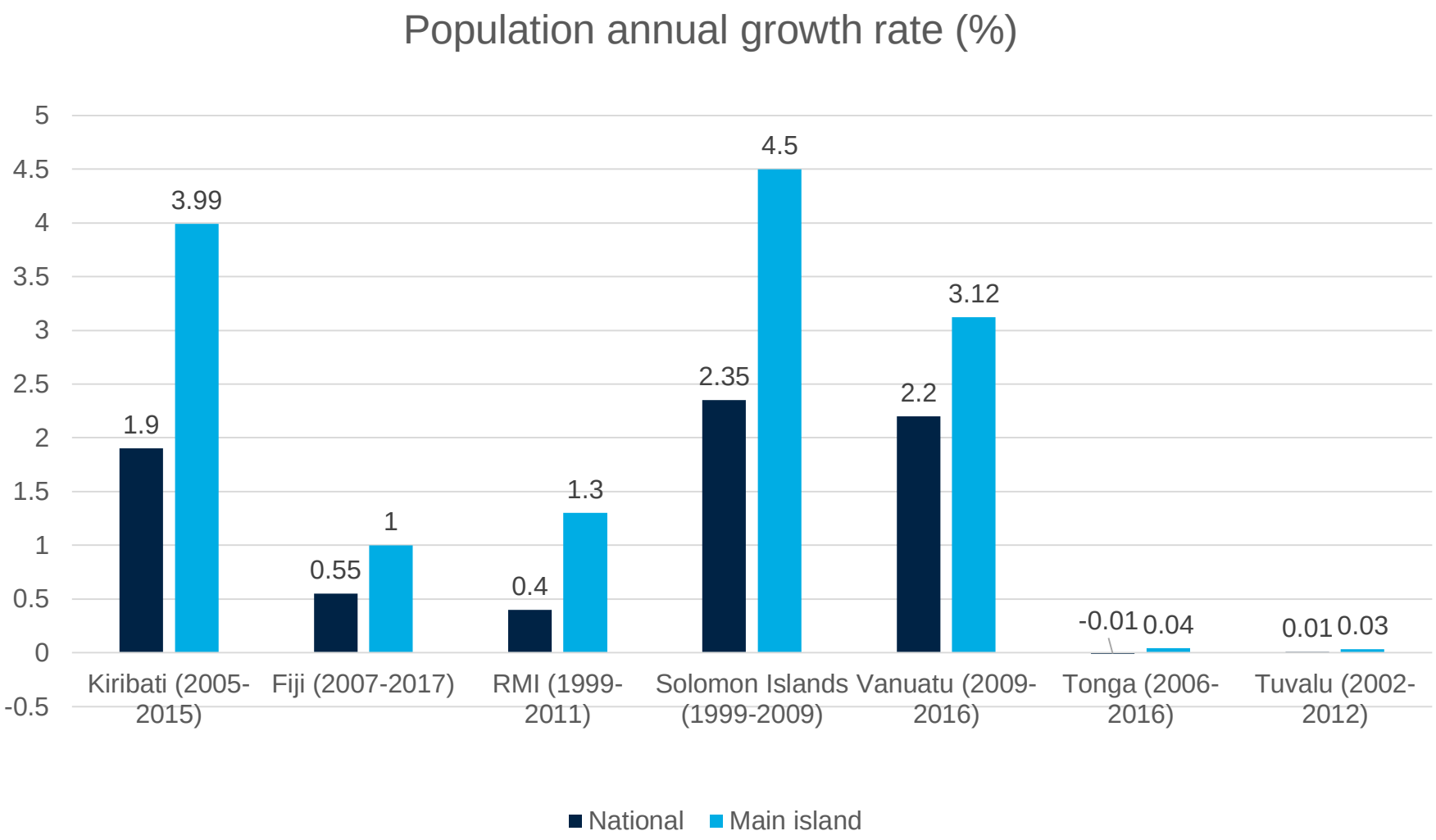
Migration and development

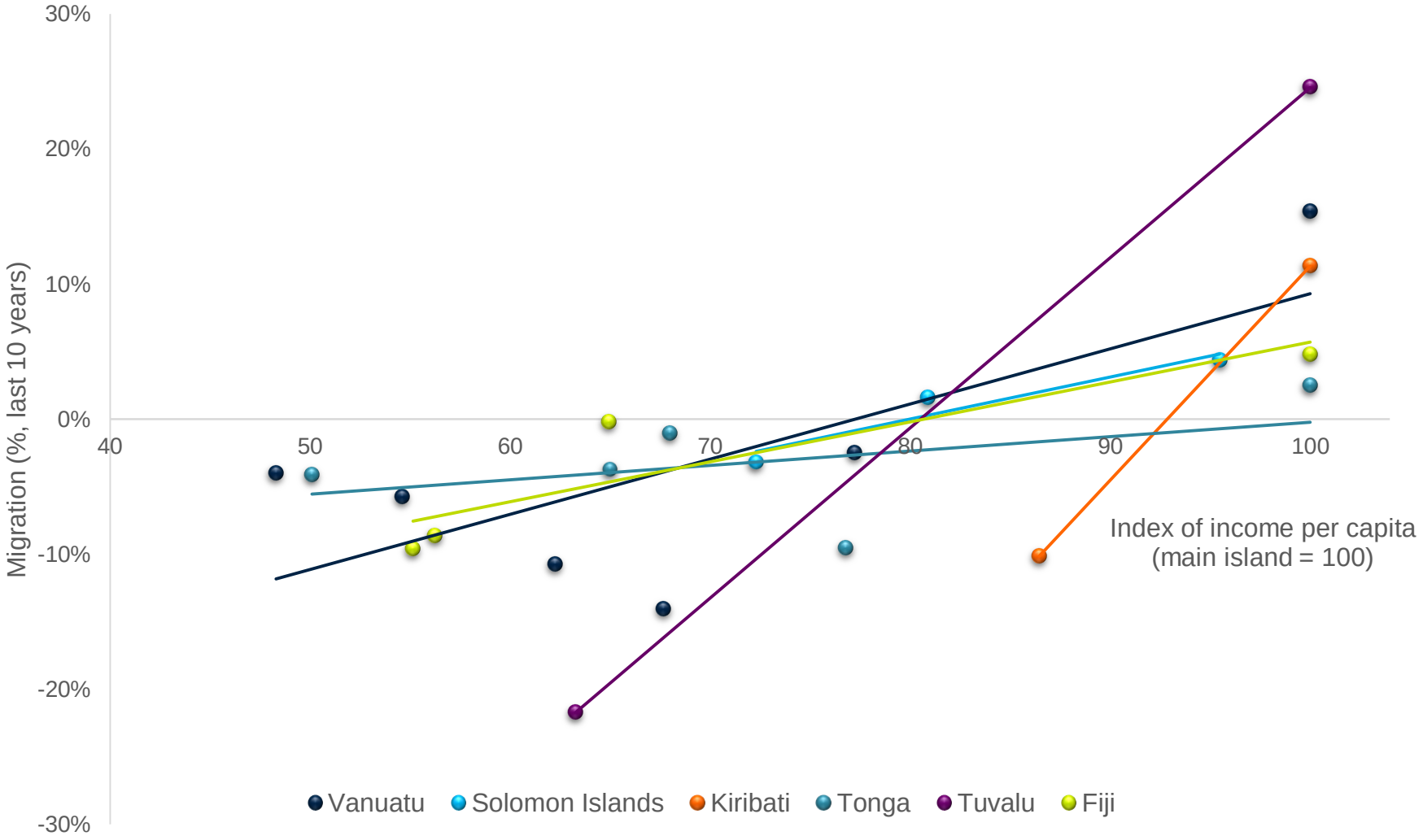
- **Migration is a rational economic strategy.** Households and individuals move to where there are economic opportunities – both between nations, and within nations
- **Such movement is a central part of the development process.** The movement from low productivity jobs to high productivity jobs increases incomes
  - In the USA, for example, 40% of the labour force was employed in the agriculture sector in 1900 (often in jobs with low levels of productivity and income). Today just 2% of the labour force works in agriculture

- **Migration in the Pacific takes the form of movement from:**
  (i) rural to urban areas, and
  (ii) islands/regions that are more remote and have smaller populations to those that are less remote and have larger populations/markets

Migration within PICs is occurring rapidly



Migrants move to islands where there is economic opportunity and incomes are higher



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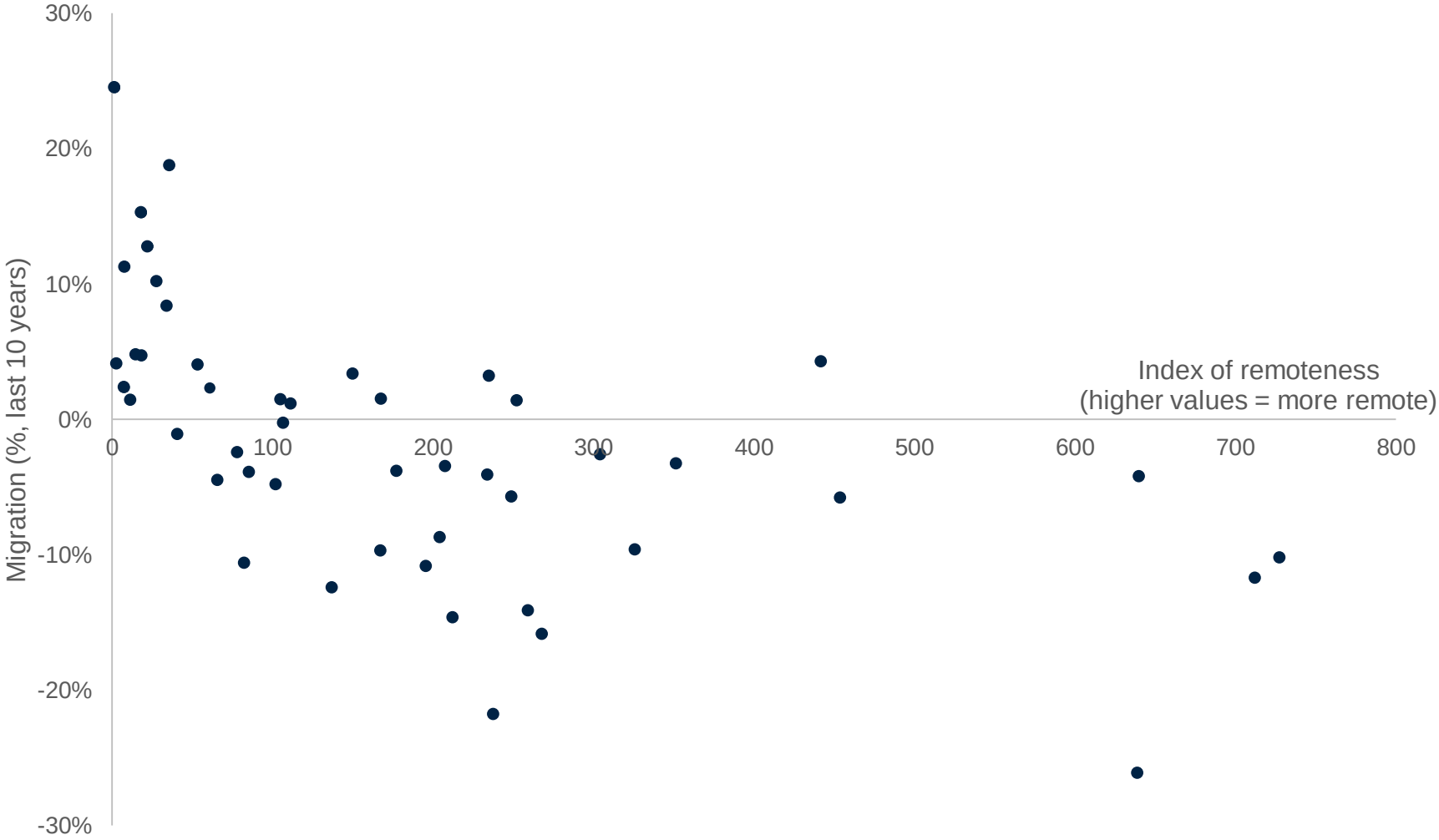
Migrants move to less remote islands



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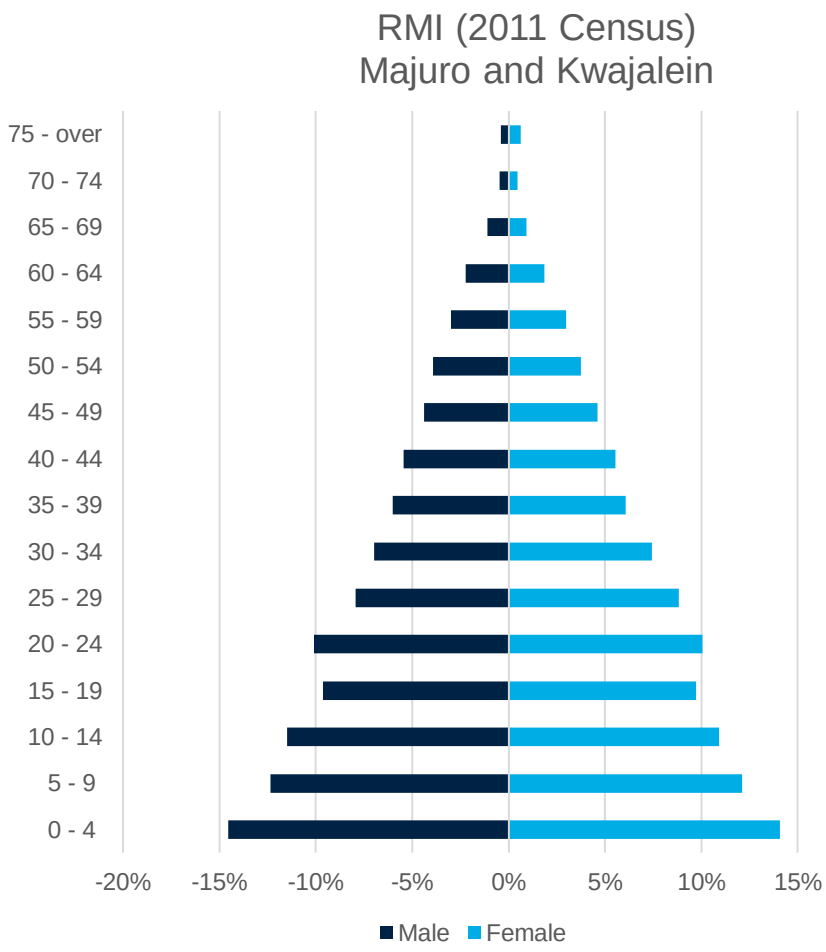
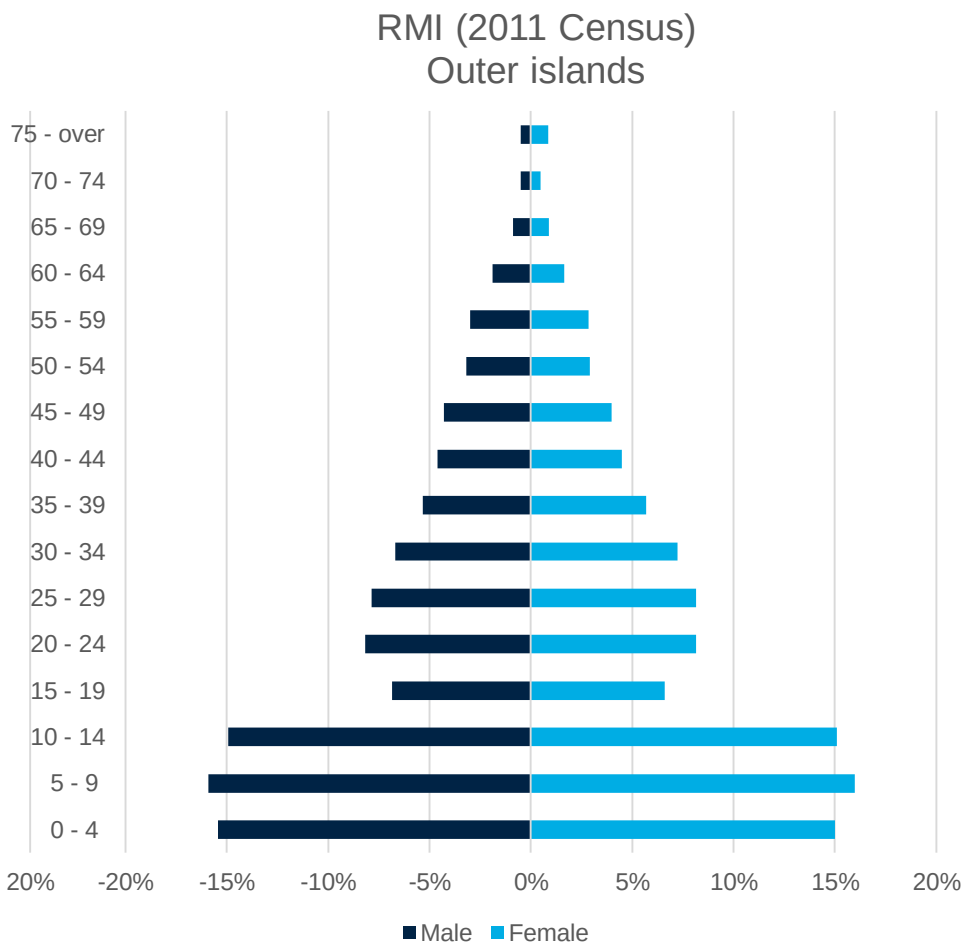
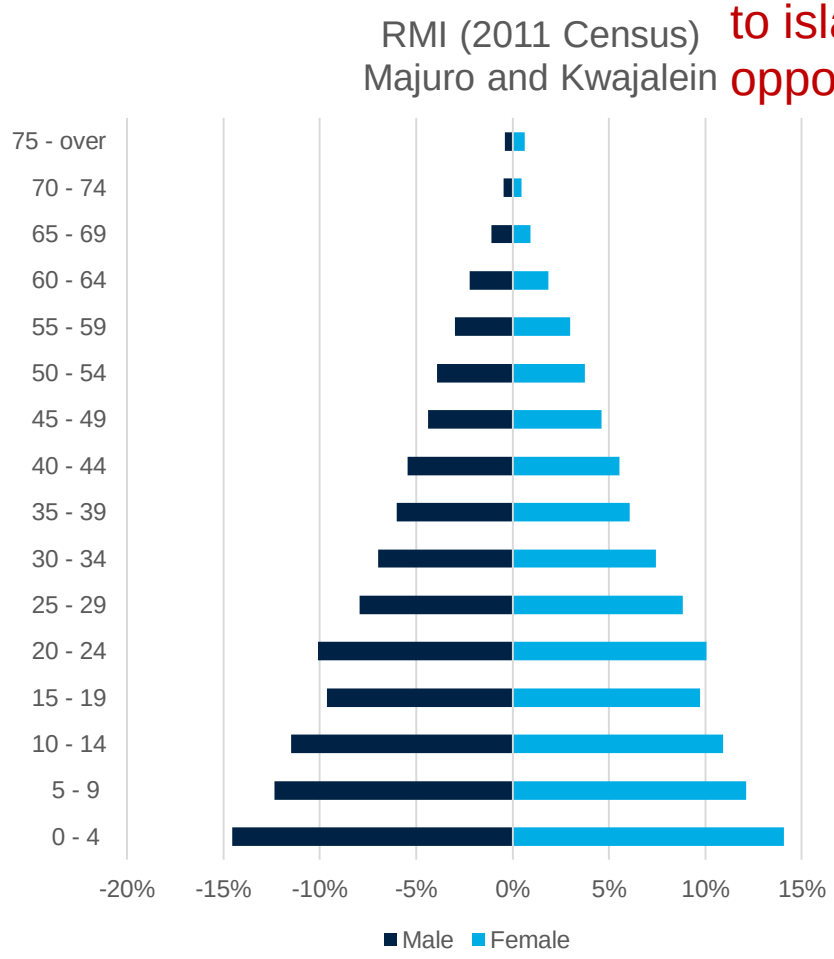
Migration affects population structures

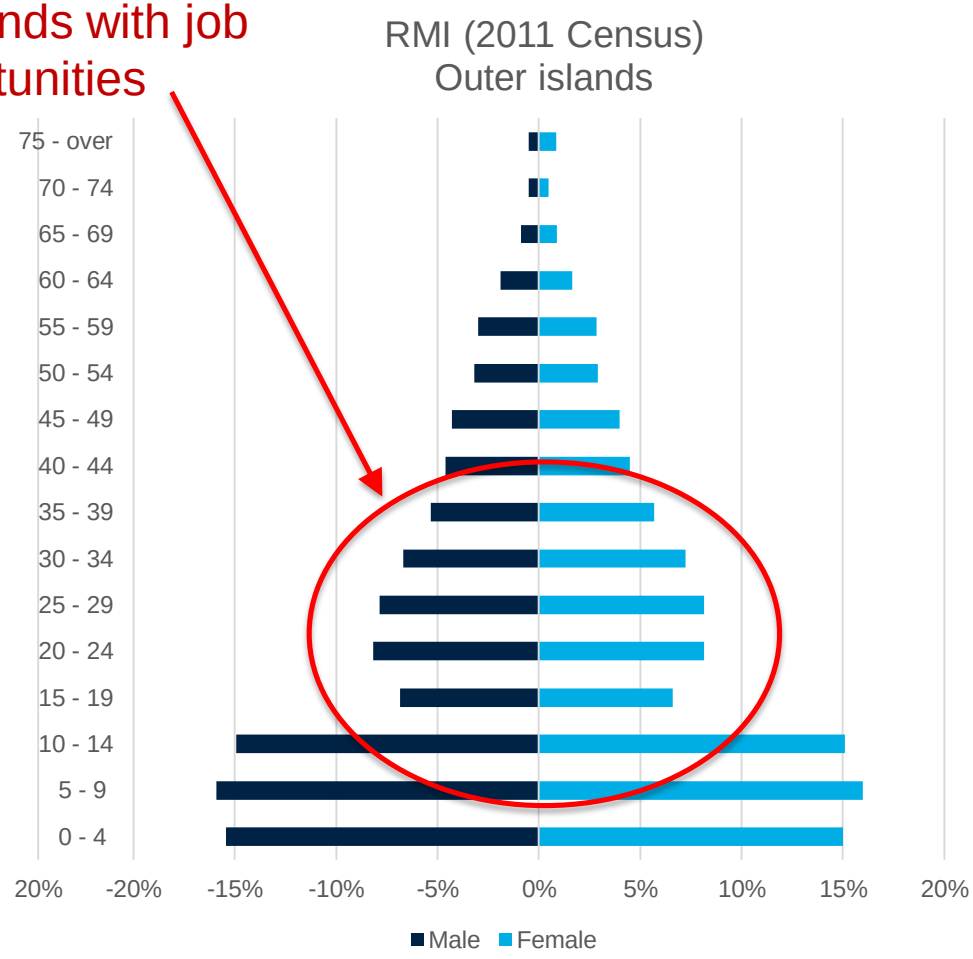




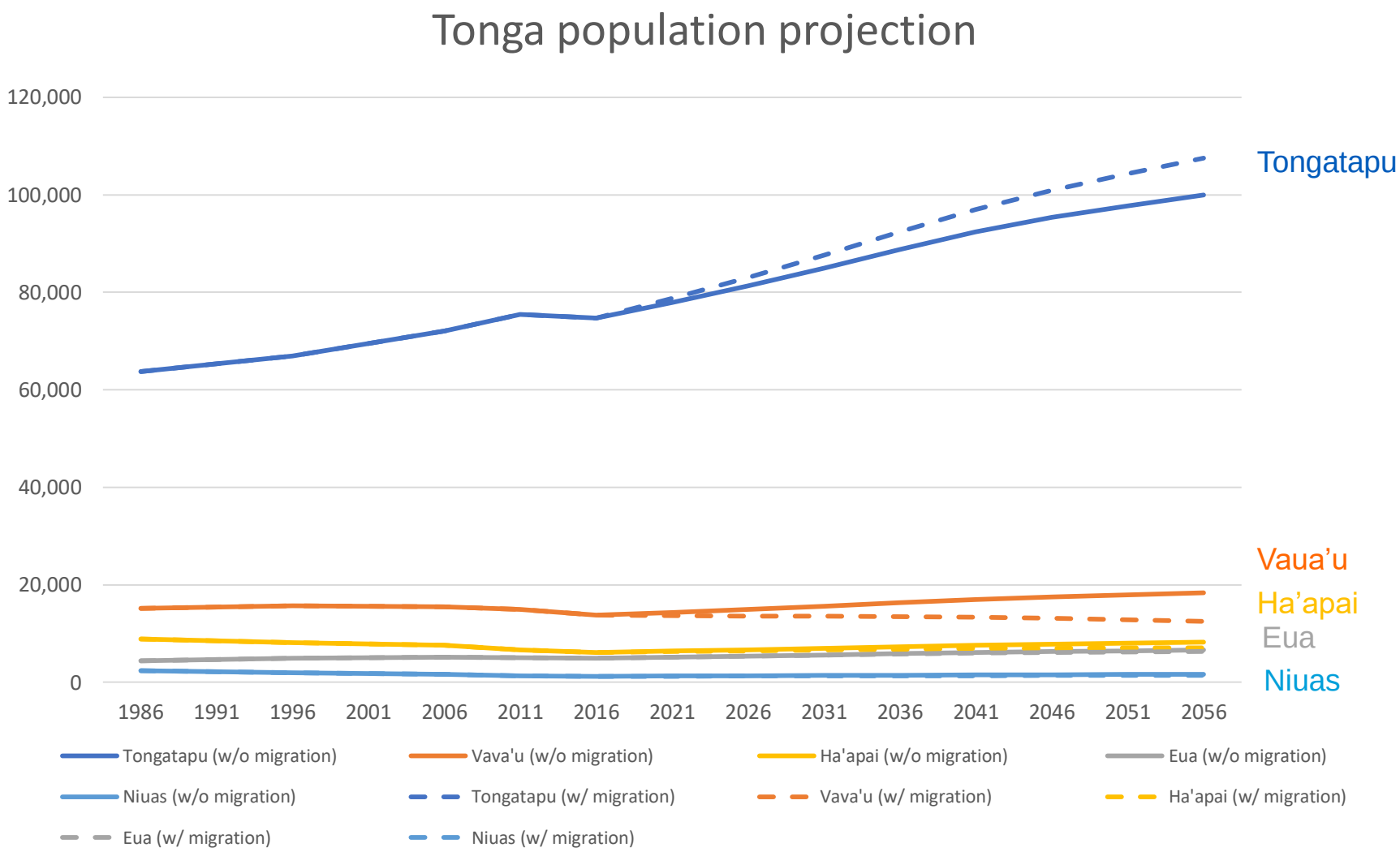
Migration affects population structures

Note the missing middle – people of working age migrate to islands with job opportunities

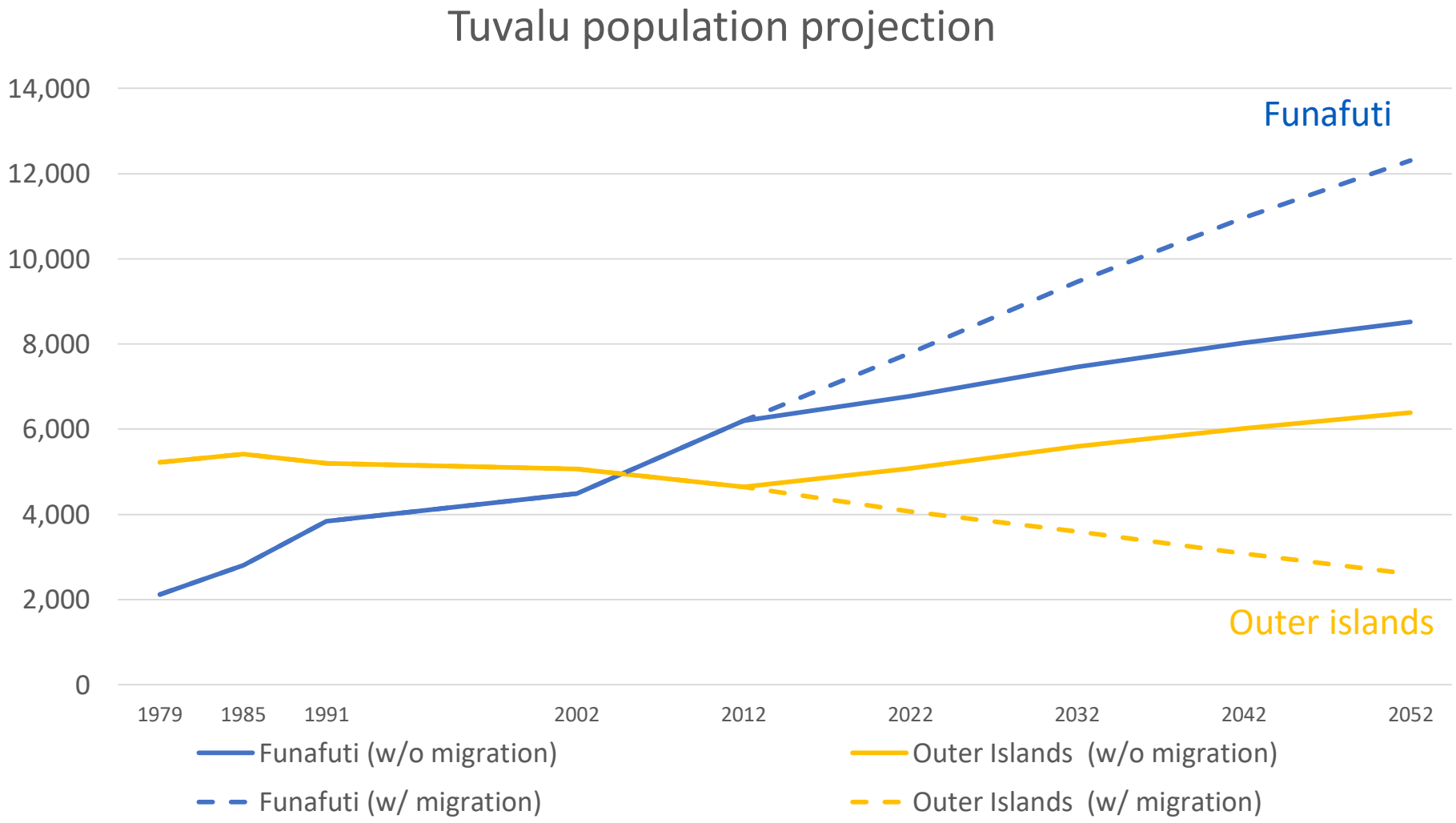




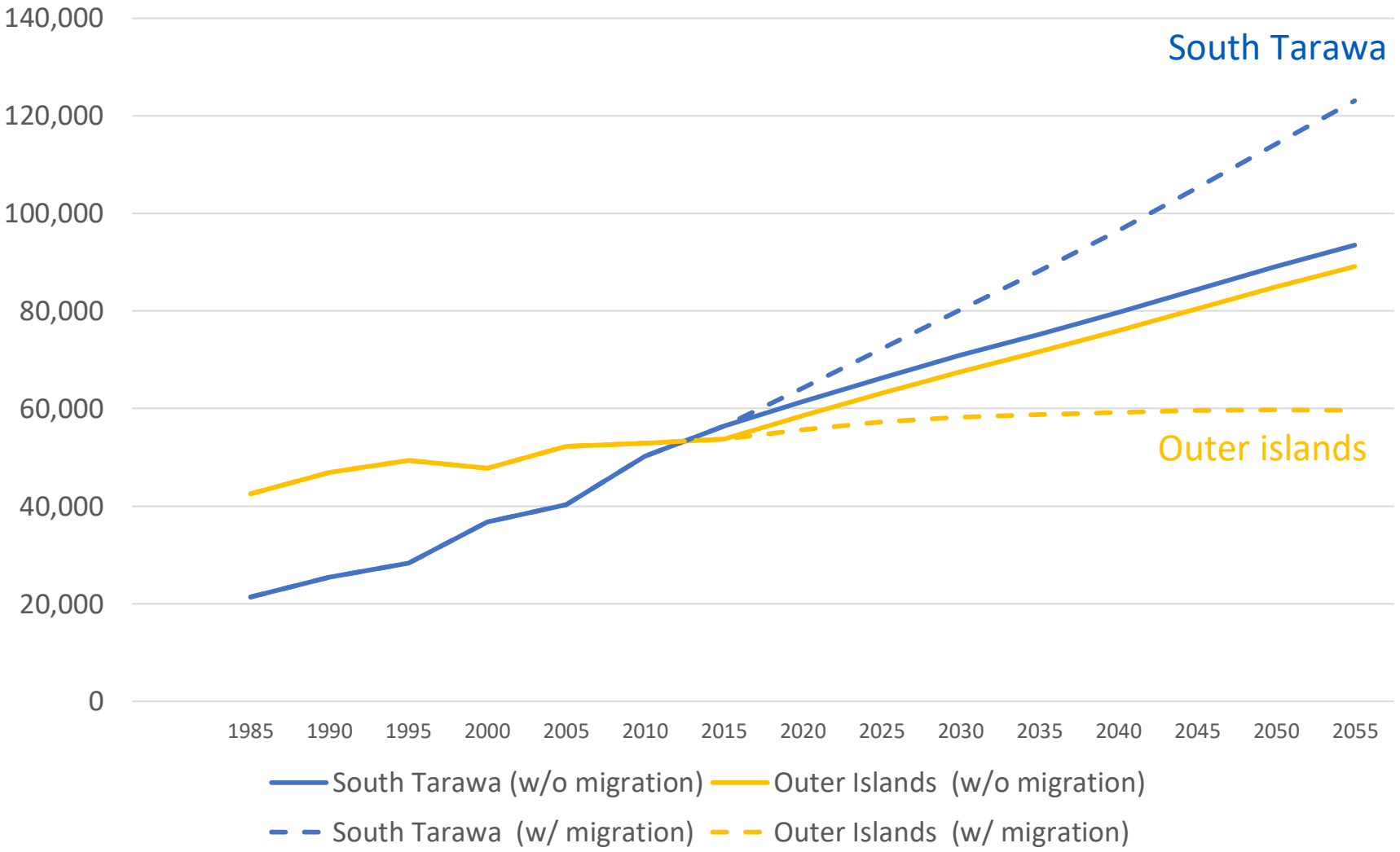
Migration will continue in the future, given inequalities in economic opportunity



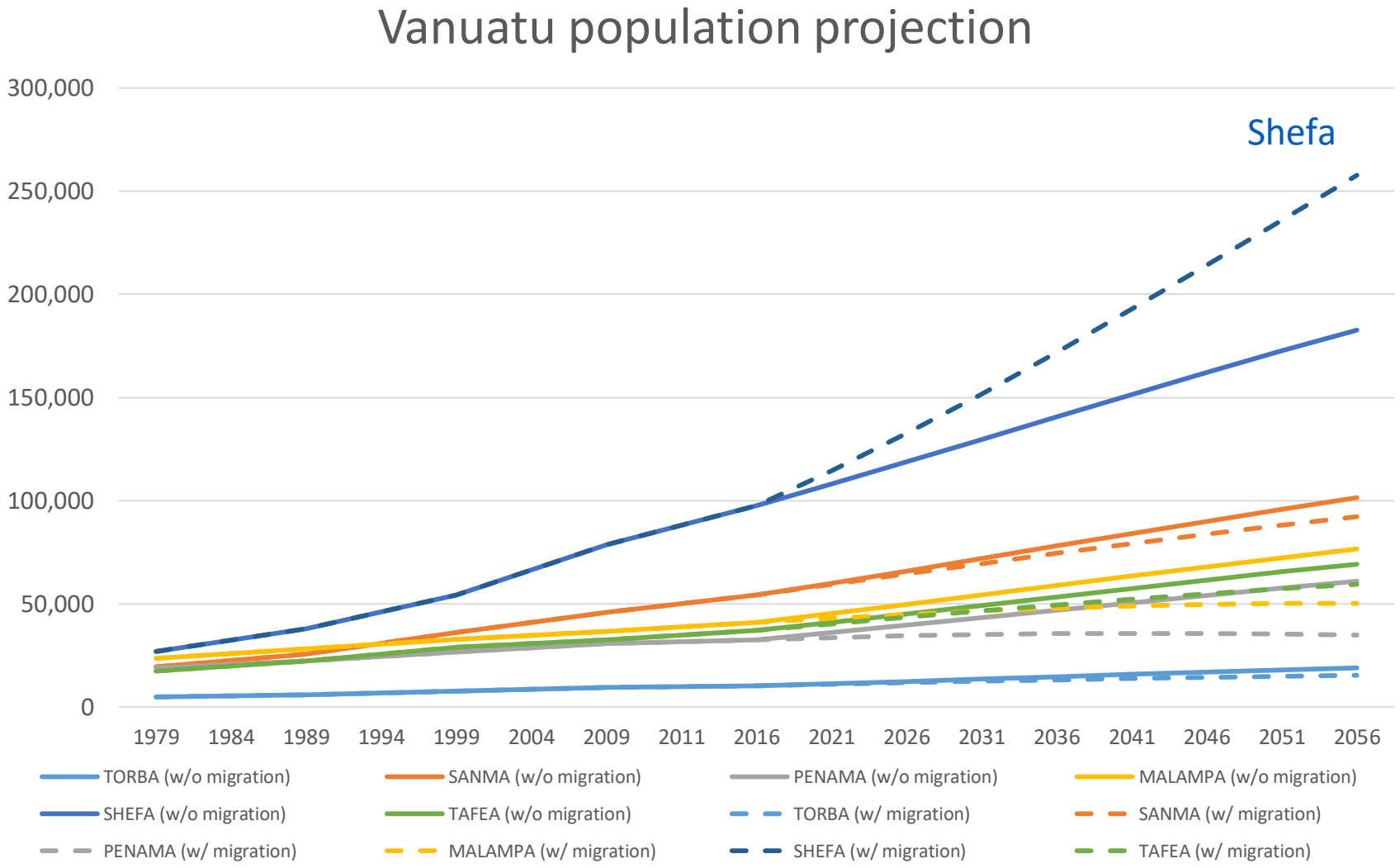
It will be highest in countries where economic opportunities in outer islands are limited



Kiribati population projection

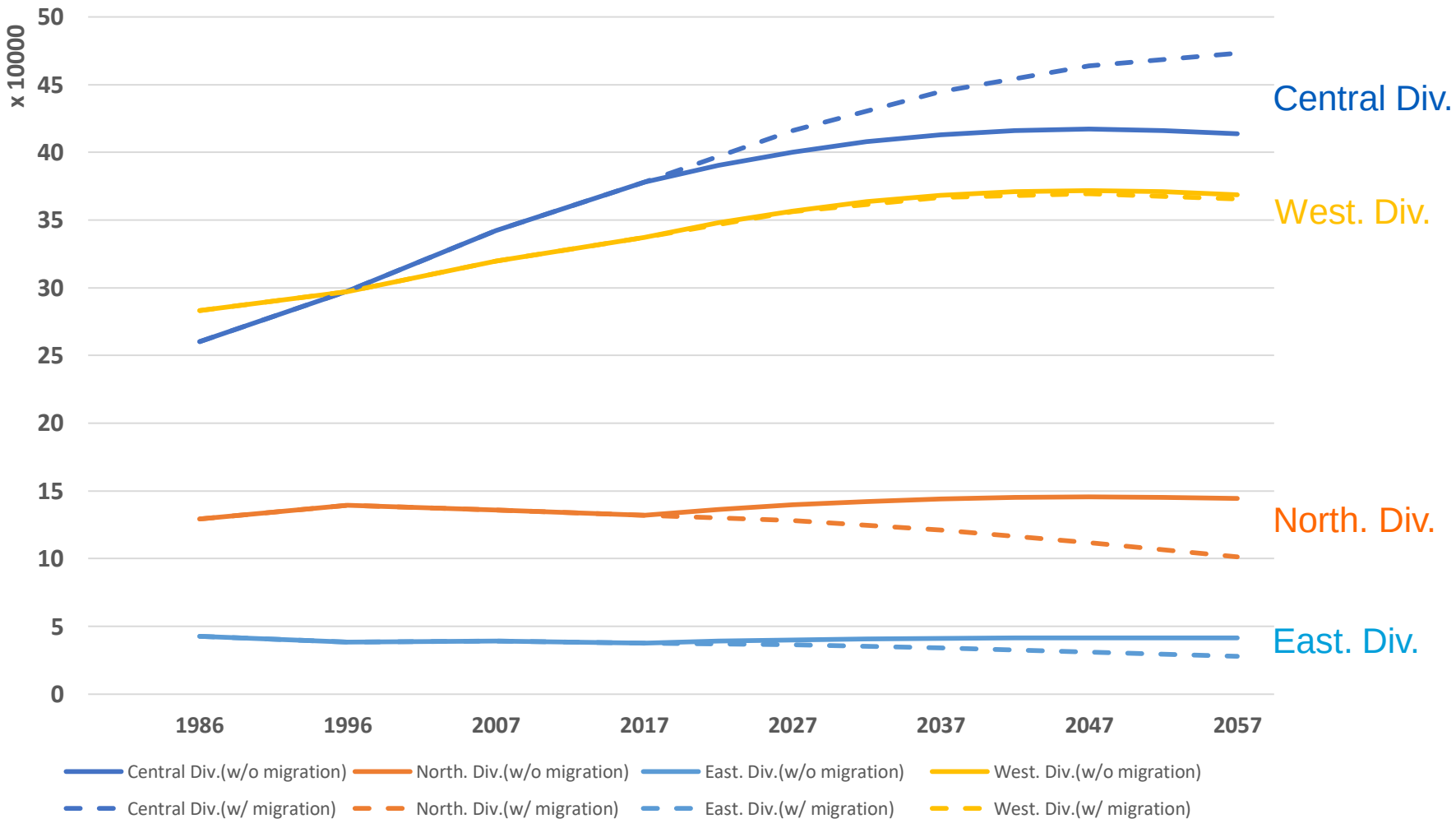


… and in countries with rapid population growth



Fiji

Fiji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What should be done?

- **Policy makers should not be aiming to stop such migration.** Movement to areas where there is economic opportunity increases incomes, both for migrants and the economy as a whole. Migration is a natural part of the development process.
- **However, policy-makers should focus on improving service delivery** in outer islands, in order to ensure that migrants are moving in pursuit of economic opportunities and not due to lack of services in their islands of origin.
- **This should not come at the expense of services for migrants** in main islands / urban and peri-urban areas. Failure to provide services to migrant communities limits the contribution they can make to the economy, and can lead to social issues
- **Better linking outer islands with main islands** can reduce regional inequalities and increase economic opportunities in outer islands.

Thank you

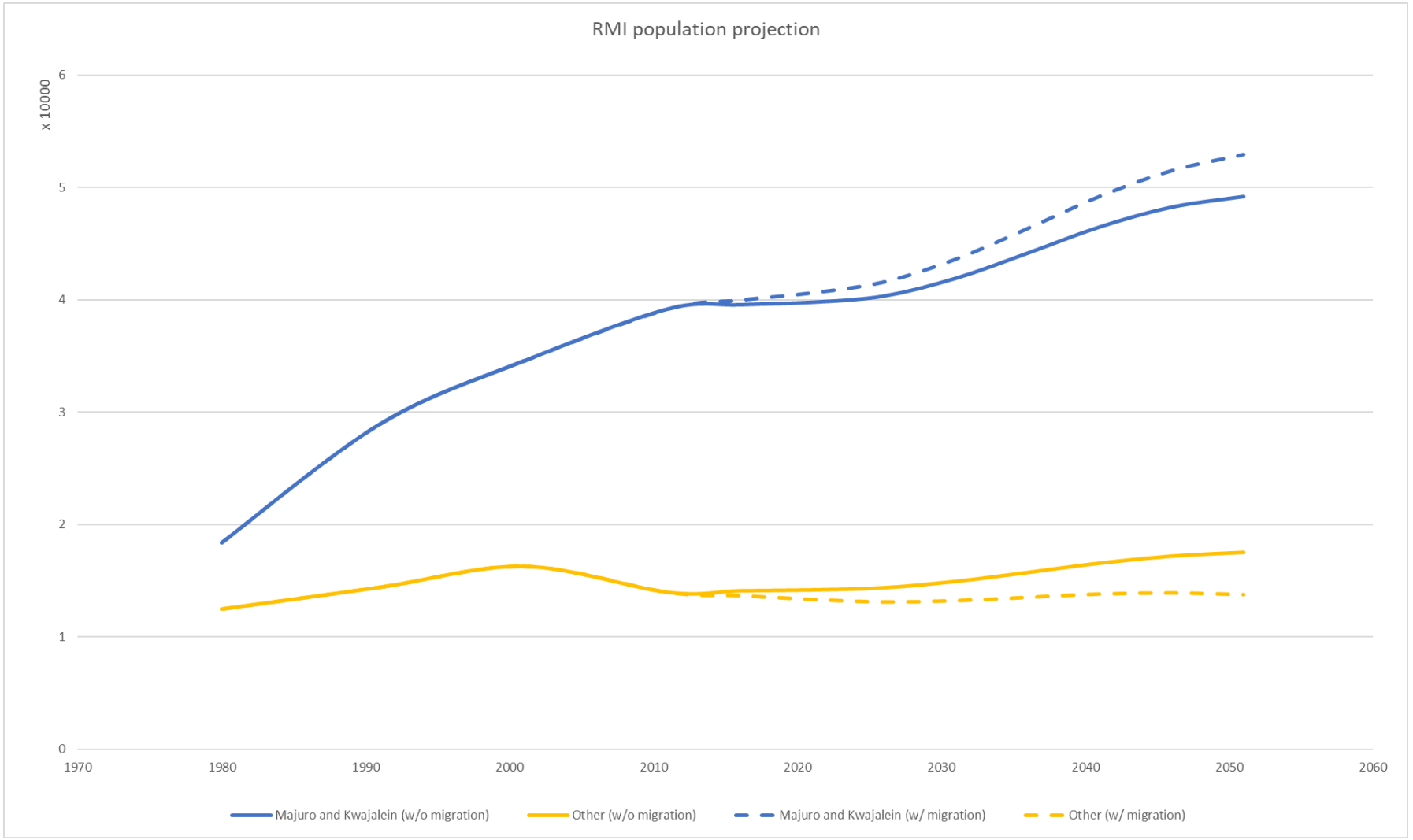
Additional graphs for Q&A

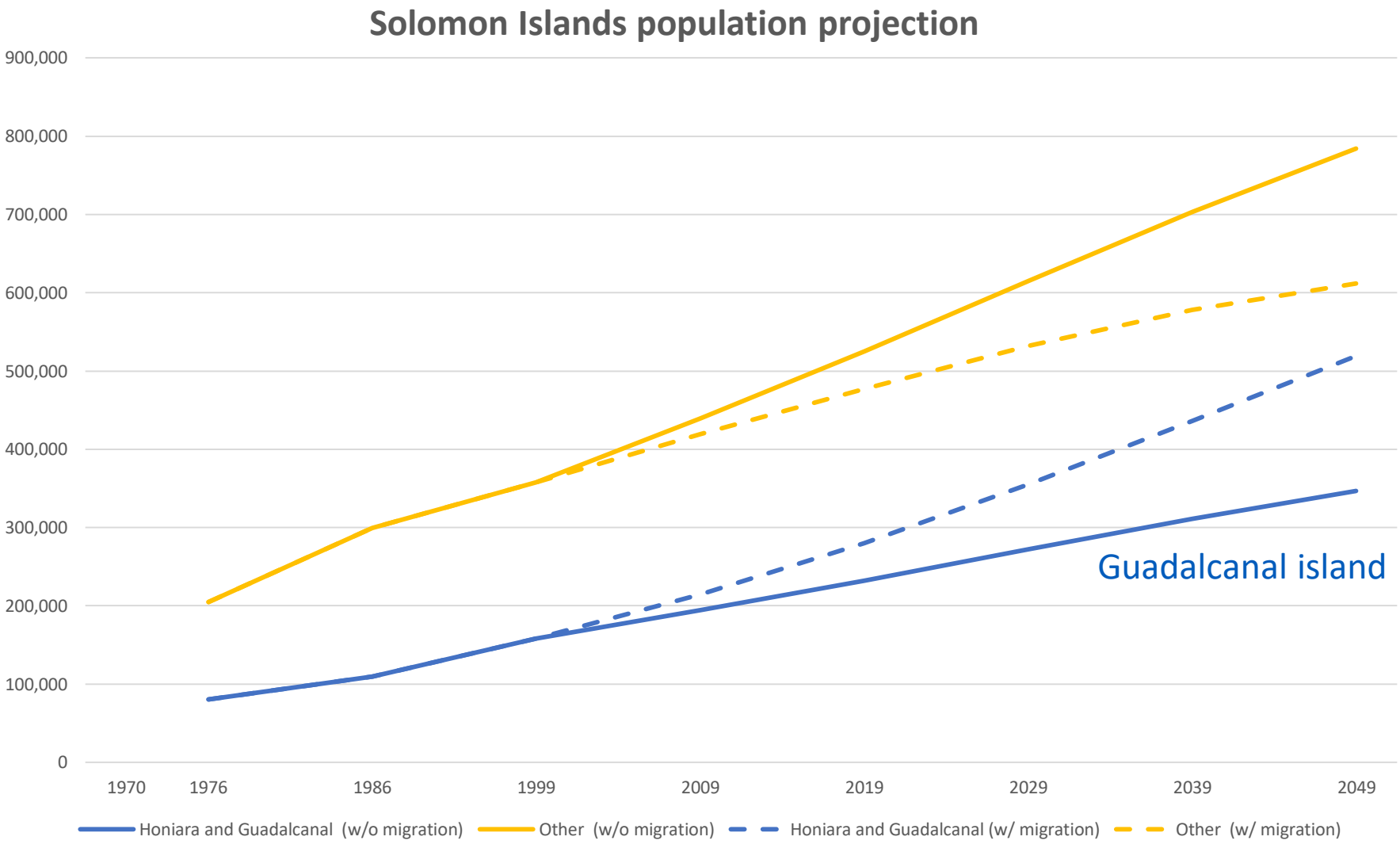
Migration within PICs is occurring rapidly

Population annual growth rate (%)

	Period	National	Main island
Kiribati	2005-2015	1.90	3.99
Fiji	2007-2017	0.55	1.00
RMI	1999-2011	0.40	1.30
Solomon Islands	1999-2009	2.35	4.50
Vanuatu	2009-2016	2.20	3.12
Tonga	2006-2016	-0.01	0.04
Tuvalu	2002-2012	0.01	0.03

Marshall Islands





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