

What can global and Pacific urban studies learn from each other?

by Nayahamui Michelle Rooney
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Urbanisation in the Pacific has long been an issue in the Pacific. Migration and increasing populations, costly housing, complexities with land tenure arrangements, environmental challenges and a dependence on waged employment are some of the key factors facing policymakers in urban areas. While many of these challenges are unique to the Pacific, there is plenty of scope for mutual learning between Pacific urban scholarship and global scholarship on urban areas.

Last week the [RMIT Centre for Global Research](#) convened a one-day workshop and panel discussion that brought together scholars, PhD students and practitioners working in urban areas in the Pacific and in urbanisation globally. The panel discussion focussed on “[Questions of Space and Place in the Pacific](#)”.

The highlight of the event for me as a PhD candidate was that it brought together people with deep and ongoing association with the Pacific context, and people with the global theoretical and international experience in urban studies and cities. The discussions were very stimulating in terms of what international urban theories and Pacific scholarship have to offer and learn from each other. For example, David Harvey’s ‘[right to the city](#)’ concept has great relevance for cities like Port Moresby and for the design of inclusive policies. Cities as sites where citizenship is exercised is another concept that is yet to be fully explored in the urban Pacific context. On the other hand, unique land tenure arrangements and people’s connections to land and place in the Pacific raise interesting questions for international theories.

This is an exciting space and one in which there is great potential for mutual learning and for debates and conversations to shape urban policies in the Pacific.

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