

John Harré and Claudia Knapman, eds. *Living in Town: Problems and Priorities in Urban Planning in the South Pacific*. Suva: The Fiji Times and Herald Ltd., 1977. Pp. 132, bibliography.

Living in Town: Problems and Priorities in Urban Planning in the South Pacific is a collection of selected papers delivered at the second South Pacific Seminar held at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji in 1971. Edited by John Harré and Claudia Knapman, this 1977 second edition is a trimmer, more precise version of the 1973 original edition. The stated purpose of this small book is to provide a brief introduction to urbanization in the South Pacific.

The book is divided into three parts and thirteen articles. Part One on "the Process of Urbanization" looks at the general characteristics of South Pacific urbanization (J. R. McCreary), with case studies from French Polynesia (Claude Robineau) and Fiji (Muneshwar Sahadeo). Part Two on "The Urban Society--Problems and Solutions," deals with Pacific urban social life (Alexander Mamak), readjustment (A. L. Bais), squatter settlements (John Samy), delinquency (Subhas Chandra), malnutrition (S. V. Parkinson), and community development (Beth Mylius). The Third Part, "Urban Planning," contains articles on social and physical resource allocation (A. V. Hughes), administration (N. D. Oram), low cost housing (Rex Green), and an ecological approach to island housing (D. Stafford Woolard).

The book looks into some very interesting and important questions: Are urban planning problems in the Pacific uniquely 'Pacific' in character? If so, should planning continue to be modelled after Western ideas? Is it not possible to design towns and cities that are 'Pacific Island' in quality and character (i.e., can we not preserve the best of the old village life while at the same time design modern urban centers)? Anthropologist John H. Bodley would refer to this last pursuit as planners seeking the "paraprimitive solution"--choosing the best and eliminating the worst of both possible worlds.

The goal of trying to determine how an island society can preserve and adapt its traditional values, resource management systems, and characteristic housing and settlement patterns into modern town life is a worthy and admirable task. The editors must be commended for asking the right questions, and, consequently, searching in the right direction. More often than not, urban planners are simply asking the wrong questions, which, in turn, leads them into bad planning decisions that lack any attempt at historical and cultural preservation. Evidence of this is the preponderance of America's unvarying urban monocultures: townscapes devoid of art, aesthetic appreciation, historic depth, and cultural diversity.

On the whole, however, the book is a disappointment. All of the above questions are left unanswered; possible alternative paths towards

seeking a modern (but traditional) town design are few and not clearly stated. Since the book lacks a concluding chapter, one is left dangling after reading through the potpourri of articles, none of which are integrated into the volume by introductory editorial comments. The book does provide a brief introduction to South Pacific urbanization, but it is simply too brief, too fragmented, and too inconclusive.

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