

Stephen Henningham and R. J. May with Lulu Turner, eds.,
Resources, Development, and Politics in the Pacific Islands.
Bathurst, Australia: Crawford House Press, 1992. Pp. 323.

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As the title states, this is a book about resources: minerals, chemicals, timber, land, fish, water, and general environmental quality. The edi-

tors state in the introduction that the articles contain information, theoretical paradigms, and analyses that may lead to the solution of certain conflicts in commercial resource development in the Pacific Islands. This is a big expectation but problem solving is a pro forma pedagogical statement at the start of social-science research projects and conferences. However, I will review the book against the promise that the articles lead to a solution of some of the problems entailed with natural resource extraction.

This well-edited book issues from conference papers, most of which have been rewritten. Although most of the nineteen articles focus on Melanesia, some deal with resources, mainly land rights, in New Zealand and Australia. The two articles on fisheries, one by Waugh and the other by Rodwell, trace the migratory patterns of tuna, as well as local fishing, throughout the Pacific. The primary focus on Melanesia is natural because that is where most of the commercially viable resources are located.

The volume is split into six categories: "Mining and Oil Exploitation," "Forestry," "Fisheries," "The Environment," "Australia/New Zealand: Indigenous Peoples and Resources," and "Perspectives." I found the first section the most interesting. It deals with mining and oil extraction in Papua New Guinea, nickel mining and politics in New Caledonia, and how the forces of international capital, even when operating under the auspices of the state, foil the ability of the nation-state to control resource commerce. The excellent article by Hank Nelson on early surface mining in Papua New Guinea gives the flavor of a rough and tumble, dangerous era. It is followed by one of John Connell's exemplary expositions of the contradictions in capitalistic mining development in Papua New Guinea. This chapter is about monetary compensation of traditional landowners by mine owners and the ensuing social crisis in Bougainville. The article by Stewart MacPherson on oil exploration and production in the Southern Highlands is followed by a bright chapter by Stephen Henningham on the struggle between French settlers, international and French capital, and Kanak politics over the control of nickel. Finally, Richard Jackson discusses the instability of the state in the face of international development of natural resources.

The section on forestry is less impressive. It has chapters by T. E. Barnett on administering the forestry bureaucracy, Frances Deklin on forestry policy formation, and Rodney Taylor on forestry management, all in Papua New Guinea; as well as Maev O'Collins on logging in the Solomons and an all-too-short article on traditional ethnic Fijian culture and forestry by Ropate Qalo. With the exception of the Qalo arti-

cle, the approach to problems appears to be based on the notion that if we were only more rational, scientific, and comprehensive in forestry management, we would have present and future problems solved. Some of the articles read as if they were management audits. We have seen the same kind of management-audit mentality and great amounts of government effort to control the forest products industry in the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand; and still the amount of illegal logging and timber smuggling is significant. As I will suggest at the end of this review, I think the faith in ever more complex and comprehensive management matrices to control resource development is based on the wrong level of analysis of the problem. I will also suggest that the level of analysis in the chapters on mining, oil, land rights, fisheries, and the environment is at such an abstract level that the situated interactional details through which these industries are initiated, maintained, and terminated--through the course of months and years--are entirely lost. The chapters appear to ignore what I have come to call the situated achievements of business culture.

The two pieces on fisheries, by Geoffrey Waugh and Len Rodwell, report on the national and international economics of fishery harvesting, processing, and marketing and on the special problems of developing a tuna industry in Papua New Guinea. Both chapters are of the "top down" variety, describing the efforts of government, regional and international agencies, and international markets.

The article by Neva Wendt on environmental issues is split into two parts. The first discusses the work of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The second part illustrates specific environmental problems of pesticide use; hotel and airport development in Micronesia; logging in the Solomons, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Western Samoa; and phosphate mining in Nauru. Although Wendt describes the actual and potential harm to the environment from development, particularly to the attraction of "paradise" to tourists, the details of how important Pacific Islanders and outsiders would come to see and undertake development projects as an important activity are absent.

It was the section on land rights of the Maori in New Zealand and Aboriginal people in Australia that started me thinking that the entire book was devoid of the materials and theorization that would lead to solving the problems of resource development in the Pacific. When I read the articles by R. T. Mahuta, J. C. Altman, and John D. B. Williams, I immediately began to think of a 1985 book by Kenneth Liberman, *Understanding Interaction in Central Australia: An Ethnometh-*

Anthropological Study of Australian Aboriginal People (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985). Liberman describes the Aboriginal commonsense culture of interaction, emphasizing consensus; how Aboriginal interaction is sequentially and contextually constructed; and how this interactional culture is incommensurate with European-Australian interactional culture. One of the topics treated by Liberman is land-rights negotiation between Aboriginals and European-Australians.

The volume has no conclusion. There are three “sort of” concluding pieces by Brij V. Lal, Edward P. Wolfers, and Ciaran O’Faircheallaigh. The articles by Lal and O’Faircheallaigh go far beyond the preceding papers and do not stand in an overt critical relationship to those chapters. The “Perspective” pieces are too congenial, though the paper by the historian Lal and the attempt by O’Faircheallaigh, a political scientist, to formulate a model of the local politics of Pacific Island resource development are most intriguing. Wolfers criticizes natural resource development consultants.

Finally, does the volume fulfill the editors’ promise to formulate a problem-solving approach to the myriad challenges of natural resource development? First, I want to say the book and the reference section are essential reading and a real service. But to my question, I think the editors promised too much: The level of abstraction and the comprehensiveness of the chapters miss the contingent, interactional sequences in which resource business is carried out. The issue of cross-cultural business communication is not treated seriously. I think the essays in the book are an example of the paradigms of social-science writing getting in the way of reporting and analyzing the interactional business details that every one of these authors knows but considered irrelevant for this book and the preceding conference. This is not surprising as social science aspires to be a general, positive science. However, my brief involvement with exporting uncut logs and copra and my reading of Liberman’s excellent analysis of land-rights negotiation leads me to believe that social science, as seen in this book, has structurally insulated itself from the interactional sense-making details of business. Until social science focuses on business interaction, it has no hope of fulfilling the problem-solving promises of the editors.