

Margaret Critchlow Rodman, *Deep Water: Development and Change in Pacific Village Fisheries*. Development, Conflict, and Social Change Series. Pp. xii, 173, bibliography, index. Boulder, Colorado and London: Westview Press, 1989. US\$18.95.

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The "deep water" about which Margaret Rodman writes is the fishing ground for a development program in Vanuatu. The deep water off the reefs where the islands meet the sea is also a metaphor for the interaction between Melanesians and Westerners, and between rural people and the state in the process of development. This book is as much about foreign volunteers working in fisheries development as about the islanders, whose way of life Rodman has studied in a series of field trips beginning in 1969.

The book begins with an introduction in which Rodman contextualizes Vanuatu's quest for self-reliance in terms of the contemporary Pacific. She also points to the contradictions between national planners', foreign volunteers', and rural islanders' views of self-reliance. She observes that "if most village fishermen were expected to produce for export, self-reliance for the country measured in export dollars would mean a loss of self-reliance in the rural areas where the objective is to maintain one's social and economic options" (7). The context is expanded ethnographically, with a chapter on fieldwork and one on subsistence fishing. The relatively large village of Port Olry (population 600) on Santo Island and the scattered hamlets of the Longana district of Ambae Island are the two field sites central to the study. Their historical differences are compared in chapter 4, where the author notes that Port Olry is francophone, Catholic, and was a stronghold of the Santo

rebellion on the eve of independence in 1980, whereas Longana is anglophone, Anglican, and was Prime Minister Walter Lini's first parish.

The rest of the book (chapters 5-10) focuses on development issues, as these are manifested in village-level fisheries projects. Fisheries development for deep-water snappers offers islanders the possibility of catching about one hundred kilograms of marketable fish per daily trip, using simple handreels and small outboard motorboats. These projects are heavily subsidized with loans, grants, expatriate volunteers, duty-free fuel, and often other equipment, or "cargo" in local terms, such as freezers. Yet, Rodman argues, islanders are generally unwilling to become full-time fishermen, because this would close off other ways of earning money and jeopardize the long-term security that results from meeting traditional social obligations. Instead, commercial fishing fits best into rural life as an intermittent activity, like copra production, in which islanders engage when they want cash to meet specific consumption goals. The author recognizes the frustration this response presents to planners seeking national self-reliance for Vanuatu, and for other small Pacific states facing similar problems. But, she concludes, "so far, the carrot rather than the stick has been the government's approach to increasing the productivity of the rural sector" (157), and so long as this continues, rural islanders' own self-reliance is best served by engaging intermittently in a wide range of activities to earn cash, provide for their own subsistence, and maintain their customary social networks.

The author holds a very sensitive view of Vanuatu's future and economic development. The one-hundred-kilogram figure given for daily fish catches, for commercial purposes, is perhaps too optimistic and not applicable to all areas of the archipelago: according to other sources, a daily catch of thirty kilograms is more likely to be the real national average. Fisheries do, however, feature prominently in Vanuatu's economic outlook--which is also the case for most Pacific islands.

Margaret Rodman's excellent work provides us with a perspective on the future of fisheries, whether it be in terms of local consumption or in terms of economic speculation in an island environment in search of development.