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PACIFIC ISLANDER PASTORS AND MISSIONARIES:
SOME HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND ANALYTICAL ISSUES

Doug Munro
Stout Research Center,
Victoria University of Wellington

Andrew Thornley
Pymble Ladies' College
Sydney

In global terms, the deployment of indigenous pastors and their equivalents in
the dissemination of Christianity was unusual. A notable exception was in the
Pacific Islands, where the widespread use of native teachers and preachers was
a feature of the missionization process. Their role was not adequately reflected
in the historiography of the region until the publication of Ron and Marjorie
Crocombes' seminal book *The Works of Taʻunga* in 1968. The Crocombes in-
spired an outpouring of research on pastors and teachers, which this article de-
scribes, categorizes, and assesses. The article concludes with suggestions for fur-
ther research.

THE MONUMENTS SCATTERED around the Pacific Islands are sometimes in
honor of fallen soldiers or of deceased statesmen, but more commonly they
stand in commemoration of missionary endeavor, especially to the work of
Pacific Islander pastors. They serve as a reminder that Christian culture con-
tacts in the Pacific were often between island cultures and not necessarily an
interaction of Europeans and islanders. We do not say this to understate the
frequent importance of European missionaries in the initial conversion pro-
cess and in the general oversight of missionary enterprise but only to recog-
nize the extent to which Protestant missionary societies in the Pacific relied
on native pastors to spread and consolidate a Christian dispensation. The
fact remains that the introduction of Christianity throughout most of the

Pacific was not accomplished by European missionaries alone but by a veritable army of islander teachers and pastors, themselves often recently converted (Crocombe and Crocombe 1968:xv; Wetherell 1980:130; Thornley 1982:124; Lal 1994:336; Campbell 1989:117).[1]

Before the gradual post–World War II indigenization of the island churches, the terms "pastor," "teacher," "evangelist," "preacher," and "helper" were commonly, if loosely, used to denote someone who was not entrusted with the full range of pastoral duties and who therefore was regarded as being less than a full "missionary." In practice Europeans were the "missionaries" and Pacific Islanders were the "pastors." The latter was a subservient status in the additional sense that very few European missionaries regarded pastors as equal partners.[2] The indigenization of the island churches now means that the pastor of old is not only fully ordained but, almost invariably, a local person from another part of the country—in order to avoid the pressure of immediate family loyalties. No longer are islander pastors largely "international missionaries" who worked in foreign lands. Turakiare Teauariki was the last Cook Islander to serve in Papua New Guinea, departing in 1975 (Forman 1996; Teauariki 1982). The last Fijian to Papua New Guinea was Seru Berake, who had attained the rank of bishop. He returned home in 1994 after thirty years' overseas service unheralded and unnoticed.

The "decolonization" of the island churches and the gradual demise of overseas-serving pastors were a long time in coming. But these processes were anticipated well in advance, in the mid-1920s, by the Methodist missionary J. W. Burton, who wrote:

> We must train men and women, to make unnecessary, some day, the white missionary, and the South Sea Island teacher who costs so much in travel expenses to and from his island home. It is the trained native preacher who can best instruct his people, and it is he who, with his wife and family, can set an example of home life which can be copied by people from the villages. He is not a foreigner, with a foreign accent in his voice, foreign views and manners, and foreign ways of living. To educate village pastors, then, is the first objective.[3] (Burton 1926:82)

At least 1,500 pastors were sent on overseas service between 1819 and the early 1970s, but this is a lower-bound figure.[4] Their ubiquity is astonishing. Many taught on their home islands, but there was a strong overseas mission impulse in the early Pacific churches. The greatest mission field was Papua, which received pastors from places as far apart as Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, the Solomons, the Cook Islands, and Tuvalu. There were, in fact,

a greater number of pastors in the Pacific on a per capita basis than any-
where else, except for Japan (Forman 1974:432). Actually, the widespread
use of pastors was not a feature of missionization in other parts of the world
—although some Pacific Islander pastors went to the Caribbean and to the
Northern Territory of Australia, just as Jamaican pastors were sent to West
Africa (Latukefu 1996:18; Vassady 1979:15–39). But they were few in number.
The only recent parallel to the extensive use of pastors in the Pacific is the
widespread deployment of lay catechists by Alexander de Rhodes, a Jesuit in
seventeenth-century Vietnam (Neill 1986:166–167). In earlier centuries, by
contrast, it was common enough for Christians from one area to take the
gospel to people of another—as, for example, the use of Celts in Scotland,
England, and Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries (Latourette 1955:
344–345; Neill 1986:59–64). So what Pacific historians take for granted as
the extensive use of native preachers in the missionization process is a signif-
icant departure in a global context in more recent times.

The Historiographical Background to 1967

The notion that pastors were "hidden from history" and have only recently
become "visible" is widespread but largely unjustified. It is simply not the
case that the pastor was an "unperson," that is, someone whom others ne-
glect to mention and who thus becomes erased from future consciousness
(Stern 1977:xix–xxi). From the outset, European missionaries recognized
their importance. The missionaries certainly regarded pastors as subser-
vient, but many a missionary book accords prominence to the pastor, often
in the form of potted pen-portraits that contain strong moral messages
directed at a sympathetic home readership (e.g., Abel 1902; Burton n.d.;
Chignell 1911; Reason 1947). The depictions are often open to criticism: in
Gunson's view, "the principal defect" of W. W. Gill's book *Gems from the
Coral Islands* (published in 1856), which gives a rounded history of the work
of pastors rather than anecdotal description, "is that very few of the native
missionaries are made to appear as real and vital persons, most of them re-
maining anonymous" (Gunson 1959:xiii). It is also the case that singular indi-
viduals get preferential treatment—as, for example, the iconoclastic Tongan
pastor in Fiji, Joeli Bulu (e.g., Burton and Deane 1936:30–34)—which of
course underplays the dull routine of the everyday that characterized the
pastors' work. In this way, the exceptional becomes the norm. All the same,
European missionaries were well aware that "it would have been impossible
for us to have carried out our work so effectively without them" (Burton
1926:96).

   An older generation of academic scholarship also explicitly recognized the

pastors' importance. The first book to deal solely with Pacific Islander pastors was published as early as 1911—an almost unknown volume that deals largely with French territories (Marchand 1911). There were writers who signally failed to recognize the importance of pastors (e.g., Keesing 1934), but many other texts, such as Kuykendall's history of the Hawaiian kingdom (1938:103) and Koskinen's account of missionary political influence (1953: 30–31) are adamant that the pastor was an important figure in the diffusion of Christianity, even if this observation is only expressed in a paragraph or two within the text of a lengthy monograph. Harrison M. Wright, who discussed the diffusion of Christianity in pre-1840 New Zealand, provides a more substantial treatment of Maori teachers (1959:159–162). Although an important part of Wright's analysis, the Maori teacher was sidelined in the debates that surrounded this controversial book, which put the case that the Maori conversion stemmed from social dislocation and loss of confidence (see Howe 1984:224–226). A further publication of the late 1950s was Colin Newbury's edition of *The History of the Tahitian Mission,* by John Davies, where the pastors' work is again accorded extensive treatment (Davies 1961: chap. 14)—another example of a missionary giving pastors their due.

But there was still no single study about them. In effect, they were being lost in the crowd. Despite the dominant islands-oriented/islander-agency ethos of the Department of Pacific History at the Australian National University in Canberra, which set the intellectual trends from the 1950s to the 1980s, pastors continued to be subsumed within the texts of larger works. The discussion was often substantial enough, as in J. W. Davidson's and R. P. Gilson's histories of Samoa (Davidson 1967; Gilson 1970). Doctoral dissertations on European missionaries and the various mission societies also had significant discussions on the pastor. Niel Gunson's study of evangelical missionaries in the Pacific included a chapter on pastors and an appendix that listed the 308 pastors he could identify to 1860 (1959:520–528); and David Hilliard's work on Protestant missionaries in the Solomon Islands was fully appreciative of the "native agency" and the efforts of the various mission bodies to train and use these men (1966). Works written outside the Canberra department likewise noticed the pastors, for example, Ernest Beaglehole's study of culture change in some of the Cook Islands (1957) and Ann Prendergast's history of the London Missionary Society in Papua (1961).

So there was no excuse, at least for the academic specialist, to be unaware of the numerical and practical importance of pastors. At the same time, the only work solely concerned with pastors was Marchand's all-but-unknown study—in contrast, say, to Harry Maude's sharply focused articles on beachcombers and the early European traders, published in journals that Pacific historians routinely read and gathered together in the author's collected

essays (Maude 1968). These subjects were not buried in the pages of a larger work. Unlike the pastors, they were spotlighted and thus brought to the specific attention of other historians.

The Legacy of Ta'unga

The spotlight finally landed on pastors in 1968, when Ron and Marjorie Crocombe, both of whom had been associated with the Canberra department, published *The Works of Ta'unga* (1968; see also 1961). As part of a new wave of Pacific historians, the Crocombes created a heightened awareness of the importance and the ubiquity of the island pastor. Comprising a series of manuscripts by a long-serving Cook Islands pastor, *The Works of Ta'unga* struck a responsive chord, not least because it seemed to represent an authentic island "voice." Fifteen years later, in 1982, the Crocombes followed up with an edited collection of essays on Polynesian missionaries in Melanesia, and Marjorie Crocombe's edition of the writings of Maretu, another Cook Islands pastor, appeared the following year (Crocombe and Crocombe 1982; Maretu 1983). The publication dates—1967 and 1983—provide convenient markers, because during the period between these dates there was a flowering of pastor historiography that largely stemmed from the Crocombes. *The Works of Ta'unga* has been durably influential in itself, and it provided the impetus for other historians to view pastors as individuals in their own right.

The importance of the islander pastor was confirmed, to varying degrees, over the next decade in the monograph literature on Pacific Islands Christianity—in the histories of particular missions (e.g., Williams 1972; Threlfall 1975; Wood 1975, 1978; Hilliard 1978), in missiological studies (e.g., Tippett 1977b), and in the general histories of missionary activity (Garrett 1982; Forman 1982), not to mention Gunson's study of early evangelical missionaries (1978:237–254). In all these works the pastors are recognized as important agents of change, but they are still being treated as part of a larger story. During this period the first monograph on pastors since Marchand's 1911 study appeared, in 1977, but it had limited impact, at least in academic circles. Alan Tippett's *The Deep Sea Canoe* is either unknown or ignored. Written for the edification of younger readers within the Pacific and appearing under the imprint of an obscure publisher, it has suffered the fate of near anonymity (Tippett 1977a).

Another neglected book was W. H. Oliver and Jane Thomson's *Challenge and Response* (1971). The lack of recognition was undeserved, but the book never overcame the multiple disabilities of being a commissioned, privately published, unfootnoted, tritely titled regional history. *Challenge and Response*

deals with the East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand and was intended by its sponsors as a celebratory history of the European settlers and their descendants. Instead, the authors celebrated Maori agency, provided a warts-and-all portrayal of settler politics, and, far from writing a parish-pump history, they explicitly placed the region in a national context.

It is doubly unfortunate that *Challenge and Response* has been neglected because, to our knowledge, the two chapters on "Conversion" and "Christianity" provide the most forceful case for islander religious agency. In a beautifully expressed passage, Oliver and Thomson give full recognition to the manner in which the Maori purposefully manipulated the European advance—often to their own advantage—selecting, rejecting, and modifying, "especially religion and literacy [which] were found serviceable; with them one may write of adaptation because they could be grafted on to the existing Maori stocks; they were changed themselves while they caused changes. They proved, as much else did not, functional within Maori society; they eased transition even as they brought it about" (1971:27).[5]

The result was "a society Christianised upon its own terms and for its own purposes" (ibid.:38). The European missionaries, who elevated individual experience at the expense of social context, were predictably disturbed. As Oliver and Thomson point out, "Christianity was not rejected; on the contrary, the missionaries were alarmed precisely by the ways in which it was practised" (ibid.:43; see also Sanderson 1983:170–171). The role of the native teacher was not forgotten in these developments. In a scenario repeated elsewhere in the Pacific, the indigenous bearer of grace, often a recent convert himself—and in the Maori case not uncommonly a freed captive of war—was frequently the decisive character; he "drove home the main aspects of the new religion" in ways that a European missionary could not and was left behind to carry on the work while the European returned to his head station. In short, the indigenous missionary was of critical importance (Oliver and Thomson 1971:29–32).[6]

It is within the framework of islander agency, although less pronounced, that the specific studies on the islander pastor were expressed. Between 1971 and 1982, a series of papers on pastors or on aspects of the pastorate appeared in leading journals and major anthologies. These are what made the difference: they consolidated the Crocombes' initial impact and repeatedly kept pastors in the historiographical limelight.

The first such study, by Ron Crocombe himself, was an account of a 1954 dispute at the Takamoa Theological College at Rarotonga, where the students staged a walkout in protest against their conditions and their treatment by the expatriate principal (Crocombe 1970). The next study, by Nigel Oram, was also remote from the nineteenth century: with respect to Papua,

he reinforced J. W. Davidson's observation that an emerging modern élite of an incipient nation-state overwhelmingly comprises the descendants of pastors and that this outcome was largely a function of educational opportunity (Oram 1971; Davidson 1967:36, 69–71, 267–268, 392n). More conventionally, there were survey articles on the role and influence of pastors (Forman 1974; Latukefu 1978, 1981) and a succession of detailed case studies with a solid archival basis: Samoans in Tuvalu and Papua (Munro 1978; Wetherell 1980), Fijians in Papua (Wetherell 1978), Hawaiians in the Marquesas (Morris 1979), and Wesleyan pastors in Fiji (Thornley 1982). There was also Nancy Morris's dissertation on Hawaiian pastors on overseas service (1987) and the Crocombes' edited volume on Polynesian missionaries in Melanesia, which included chapters on Samoans in Papua (Sinclair 1982), portraits of individual pastors (Latukefu 1982; Crocombe 1982), and an autobiographical essay (Teauariki 1982). To cap off a successful season, so to speak, was Marjorie Crocombe's editing of the writings of Maretu, another Cook Islands pastor (Maretu 1983); but this volume never enjoyed the near-celebrity status of *The Works of Ta'unga*.

This very mixed bag cannot easily be characterized or categorized. If there is a common theme, it is a reaffirmation of the importance of the pastor in religious conversion and consolidation, and in culture change generally. The various authors attempted to view the pastors' work in broad terms: their educational role, interaction with their congregations, their political activities, relations with European missionaries, cultural influences, their health, and family life. Another feature of these articles is that most of the authors are committed Christians. Forman, at the time Professor of Missions at the Yale Divinity School, comes from a family with a strong missionary tradition; the late Sione Latukefu was an ordained Methodist minister as well as an academic (Latukefu 1992); Thornley (1996c:176) and Wetherell are the sons of clerics; Sinclair's father was a pastor, and she was brought up in a devoutly religious household (Crocombe and Crocombe 1982:136); the late Turakiare Teauariki was the last Polynesian missionary in Papua (Forman 1996). But the concomitant tendency to see the pastor's work as a "good thing" was not a uniform quality. Although Latukefu was wont to equate historical objectivity with approval of missionary endeavor, he could nevertheless be quite critical of the pastors' frequent enough transgressions of human decency. Sinclair, for her part, is inclined to hagiography, especially in her special pleading for the Samoan pastors' typical high-handedness and cultural chauvinism. What does stand out is the uncoordinated nature of the overall effort. Apart from the Crocombes' edited volume on Polynesian pastors in Melanesia (1982), most of the articles were the happenstance products of individuals working largely in isolation from one another.

Our own examples illustrate the haphazard and largely incidental growth of pastor historiography during the 1970s and early 1980s. Munro wrote his chapter on two Samoan pastors in Tuvalu really by default (1978). Invited to contribute to a volume of biographical essays, he originally intended to write about a trader; but because of his graduate commitments, he decided to write on a topic that would draw on his thesis research. Of strongly secular outlook, Munro had never written mission history to that point but thought it time he started, given the profound importance of the church in Tuvaluan life. It was a purely academic decision: an essay on Samoan pastors in Tuvalu seemed necessary, because they were instrumental in the missionization process and yet they were underrepresented in the scholarly literature. Munro does not recall *The Works of Taʻunga* as a specific influence. Probably it had the oblique effect of making him aware that pastors were a worthwhile and "acceptable" historical investigation. He is more aware of the influence of an article by his undergraduate teacher on the Melanesian Mission, which discussed at some length the training of its native pastorate (Hilliard 1970: esp. 128–133).

Thornley wrote his first piece on Fijian Wesleyan pastors (1982) because Hank Nelson asked him to contribute to a seminar series, the proceedings of which were duly published. The choice of topic was his and the eventual essay derived from his dissertation on Fiji Methodism but with considerable additional research. Like Munro, he never would have written the essay but for the initial invitation.

In other words, the various articles on pastors were largely fortuitous, as authors either made serendipitous individual choices within the prevailing intellectual climate or responded to the equally serendipitous opportunities that came their way. Despite a certain lack of overall purpose, the historiography of the islander pastor had, by 1983, increased to a degree that the Crocombes probably never imagined when they issued *The Works of Taʻunga* some fifteen years earlier.

The Impetus Subsides

Between 1983 and 1994 there was a discernible lull in writing on islander missionaries, which in part reflects the diffuse (and misapplied) redirectioning of Pacific historiography into such paradigms as postmodernism, cultural studies, and feminist theory. There was also, largely under the impetus of the Fiji coups of 1987, a shift of attention away from nineteenth-century history to contemporary affairs. Research on pastors continued, but the output diminished to the extent that no articles about them were published between 1982 and 1988. Part of the reason was that the earlier authors turned their

attention elsewhere, at least for the meanwhile, and were not replaced by other historians. As an indicative example of diminishing interest, the published outcome of Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania sessions in the mid 1980s on Christianity in the Pacific barely mentions pastors (Barker 1990). Pastors were also mentioned, largely in passing, in the occasional monograph (Whiteman 1987) and general text (Garrett 1992).

The slack was eventually taken up and significant essays appeared between 1989 and 1994. Steve Mullins's article on Polynesian pastors in the Torres Strait Islands (1990) is a continuation of the more generalized surveys that typified the work being done in the 1970s and early 1980s. The others reflected the increasing specialization and fragmentation of Pacific historiography—itself a reflection of wider trends in the historical profession. Wetherell's study of the former plantation workers from Queensland who served as pastors in Papua (1989) has a sharper thematic focus; Goldsmith and Munro explore the ambiguities created by the multiple versions of the career in Tuvalu of the Cook Islands pastor Elekana (1992); while Wolfgang Kempf (1994) discusses differences in status between European missionaries and Samoan pastors under the rubric "the politics of distancing." Despite increasing diversification, four articles are a meager total over an eleven-year period.

Recrudescence or False Dawn?

Lack of secular interest, however, has been offset by wide-ranging contributions in church publications, beginning with the 1995 special issue of the *Pacific Journal of Theology* to mark the bicentenary of the founding of the London Missionary Society; it contains three articles on pastors in the early churches (Gallagher 1995; Thornley 1995; Lange 1995). The next year the proceedings of the Fiji Methodist History Conference at Davuilevu were published. Titled *Mai Kea Ki Vei?* they too contain several chapters on individual pastors and the Fijian ministry generally (Baleiwaqa 1996; Thornley 1996a; Jakes 1996).[7] The following year, the present authors published an edited collection of essays specifically about pastors, titled *The Covenant Makers* (Munro and Thornley 1996). The opportunity to work on a joint project presented itself when we both happened to be in Fiji over a three-year period, and we immediately agreed that a further book on islander missionaries was needed. The gap appeared significant, to us at any rate.

The contributors to these three recent publications are largely committed Christians, exclusively so in the case of *Mai Kea Ki Vei?* A conscious decision was made in the case of *The Covenant Makers* to include a variety of persuasions, including those of secular outlook. Even so, ten of the six-

teen contributors are ordained ministers or work in theological institutions, or both. The figure suggests that church history in the Pacific is tending to become ghettoized within such institutions, which carries the risk that mission history might become detached from the academic mainstream and enter a cul-de-sac (Munro 1996a:54). Indicative of such tendencies was the abandonment of the session on mission history at the 1996 Pacific History Conference at Hilo for lack of interest—which might have been averted had representatives from theological colleges offered papers. This lack of interest contrasts with the hugely successful session on missionization at the 1975 Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania meeting in Florida, resulting in an impressive anthology that included chapters on pastors and the development of indigenous churches (Boutilier, Hughes, and Tiffany 1978).

On the question of allegiance, there is something of a chasm separating religious and secular historians. There is often clannishness among church historians and a disinclination to reach out to a secular readership. A further concern is that the clerical dominance of mission history has resulted in an overly theological perspective that downplays the economic role of missionary activity (Leckie 1985:47). Conversely, secular historians are often lacking sympathy for churches and missions, do not always bother to inform themselves sufficiently on these matters, and are strongly suspicious of the missiological approach (Munro 1996a:56). The dichotomy is compounded within the theological colleges themselves, where the low priority on research serves to intensify their insularity. Nor have the recent ecumenical sentiments within the theological colleges extended to employing secular scholars on the basis of academic qualities rather than individual beliefs; and in any case secular historians would probably feel out of place in such environments.

It is also fair comment that many of the general histories of the Pacific Islands give poor service to missions generally and to pastors specifically (Oliver 1951; Barclay 1987; Scarr 1990), although others score better on this issue (Howe 1984; Campbell 1989; Quanchi and Adams 1993:73–86). Given this obvious gap, the makers of the latest general texts missed a golden opportunity to redress the situation. *Tides of History* (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994), which deals with the twentieth century, almost ignores religions and churches while the prestigious *Cambridge History of Pacific Islanders,* despite its title, lacks sections on pastors or even on missionization generally (Denoon et al. 1997).

Such comments raise fine points of judgment and relevance. There is the view that one cannot rightly expect authors to go beyond their stated intentions. There is a contrary view that, like it or not, the intrinsic needs of a sub-

ject have to be met; and there are occasions when authors seem oblivious to clear instances when pastors were genuine historical actors. This failing is by no means universal among secular scholars (e.g., Newbury 1980:39–41, 129–138; Monsell-Davis 1981:57–59; Macdonald 1982:31–53; Goldsmith 1989; Beckett 1987:39–44; and in particular Gilson 1970). But there are cases when the marginalization of the pastor seems unjustified. Langmore, in her superb "group biography" of European missionaries in Papua before 1914, explicitly states that she is not concerned with the more numerous Polynesian and Melanesian pastors (1989:xviii). One may regret, however, her lack of discussion of the complicated relationship between the missionaries and the pastors. The perceptiveness of Langmore's comments on the occasion when the pastors do get extended discussion—in the context of indigenizing the church—heightens this regret (ibid.:206–209). It is not as though Langmore presents European missionaries as a stand-alone collection of individuals: she discusses their relationships with traders, government officials, and Papuans in some detail (ibid.:108–133, 211–240), but rarely does she mention how they interacted with their pastor colleagues.

To give another case of omission, Gilson's history of the Cook Islands is avowedly an administrative history, but pastors are hardly to be seen in the chapter "The Mission Period," despite their political influence at the local level (1980).[8] Much the same point applies to Howe's contact history of the Loyalty Islands (1978). A more recent example is Regina Ganter's monograph on the pearl-shellers of Torres Strait. It is a fine book, but to state that pastors were influential in the pearl-shell industry without any kind of elaboration is mystifying (Ganter 1994:63; the omission has been rectified by Mullins's more recent study [1995]).

To sum up so far, the three waves of studies of Pacific Islander missionaries bear resemblance to the three phases of missionary activity identified by Peter Miria (1985). First, there was the initial announcement of the gospel and its "translation" from a Western concept to an island one; second, the "transition" refers to years of ongoing development (or consolidation); and third, the "transformation" from dependent mission to independent church. The Crocombes initiated the "translation" with *The Works of Ta'unga;* the "transition" was accomplished as pastors increasingly entered the literature in their own right, although mainly through Western academic eyes; the "transformation" has perhaps just commenced—more by accident than by design—with the 1995 commemorative issue of the *Pacific Journal of Theology, Mai Kea Ki Vei?* and *The Covenant Makers.*

Or is this a false dawn? Market forces and reader interest may perhaps have been saturated by this surge of activity. While individual studies con-

tinue to put in a welcome appearance (e.g., Lange 1997), there seems little scope for a further collection of essays on pastors in the immediate future. The general lack of a research culture in theological colleges within the Pacific, moreover, suggests that little more will come from that quarter, at least on the basis of individual initiative. Time will tell.

Questions of Representation and Voice

Whatever their exact historiographical location, the various "translation" volumes fall into what has become a well-defined tradition of attempting to give "voice" to the pastors. The prevailing contemporary view was that pastors were an appendage of European missionary endeavor: they carried out a secondary role in a master-servant relationship reminiscent of Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday. The very terms "teachers," "helpers," or "Native Assistant Teachers" indicate that they were regarded as less than fully fledged missionaries who might be entrusted with basic educational duties but not with the full range of pastoral functions. Even the Anglicans in Melanesia, who were comparatively enlightened toward indigenous cultures, at least in the abstract, saw pastors in terms of a "black net" buoyed with "white corks" (Hilliard 1978:81, 153). This fishing analogy neatly reflected the racial and the hierarchical dimensions of the missionary-pastor relationship.

But why have the pastors been given so little "voice," in view of the essential nature of the work they accomplished and the potential sacrifice involved? It is not that the missionaries erased the pastors from the published record. *Missionary Magazine, Juvenile Missionary Magazine, Chronicle of the London Missionary Society,* and the *Annual Reports* and *Occasional Papers* of the New Guinea Anglican Mission contain numerous accounts of pastor activities, as do many books by missionaries. But pastors are generally accorded an elliptical mention in missionary *archival* sources, as anyone who has tried to piece together a continuous narrative and story line on a given pastor will testify. In total there is a fair bit, but there is not much systematically on individuals, although occasionally one will hit on the stories. These stories almost invariably concern atypical individuals whose independence of mind or sheer ability brought them to the attention of the white missionaries. Even then the information is usually only sufficient for the pastors in question to be used as a concrete example of this or that within a group portrait, as Thornley did with the Fiji Wesleyan pastors Eliesa Bula and Tomasi Naceba (1982:130–131, 133–135; 1996a:40–42). For such reasons, studies of individual pastors are rare and group portraits prevalent by comparison.[9] Munro wrote an essay on two Samoan pastors in Tuvalu precisely because the sources would not sustain the study of a single indi-

vidual, and he selected that particular duo because of their singular person-alities (Munro 1978). This selection recalls Somerset Maugham's frank admission that his Malaya and Borneo short stories are not about people who lead "humdrum lives and [do] very much the same things every day" but concern "people with some singularity of character." He stresses that "they are exceptional" (Maugham 1951:viii), the very sort of people who tend to find their way into the records in the first place.

These remarks underline the point that history is not so much what actu-ally happened but is more a matter of what happened to get recorded and what of this happened to survive. To put it another way, the Crocombes made a revealing, if unintended, statement by calling their own book *The Works of Ta'unga,* rather than *The Writings of Ta'unga.* By saying that Ta'unga's "work" was what he wrote, as distinct from what he did, the message comes across that action is for naught unless it is recorded for posterity. The observation is doubly interesting given the frequent percep-tion in the islands that writing does not constitute "work."

The customary lament is that only the occasional pastor, such as a Ta'unga or a Maretu, left substantial written records: had more pastors put pen to paper, the record would be less one-sided and less beset with maddening gaps. This very point was made in the preface to Thornley's study of Tahitian pastors in Fiji:

> [A]bove all this story will try to show, as much as the sources allow, the role of the Tahitians in the introduction to Christianity to Fiji. Some questions are easily answered, concerning places, names and dates. A few more difficult questions surround problems of per-spective, limited information, the breakdown in support for the new missionary venture to Fiji and the risks involved in making any final assessment of the Tahitians, bearing in mind that the search for ver-nacular sources has not been forgotten. (Thornley 1996b:91)

The problem of dealing with pastors in the biographical mode is even more acute. This question, among others, was raised by Michael Goldsmith dur-ing his keynote address at the 1994 Pacific History Association Conference. He and Munro were writing a book (since completed) on the Cook Islands pastor Elekana, whose fame rests on his association with Tuvalu. Goldsmith discussed the epistemological dimension of writing the biography of an indi-vidual about whom the records are so unrevealing and contradictory, so frag-mented and sparse—whether in terms of his character, his motivations, or his activities (1995). Even though some written records by Elekana have survived, these records are far outnumbered and outweighed by what the

European missionaries wrote *about* him. The authors' attempts at "getting at the substance of Elekana" were later remarked on by a conference participant with the following words: "Whose life was it anyway when the only documented sources were the records of an unequal relationship between Elekana and the European missionaries?" (Hempenstall 1994:728).

This is another way of saying that Pacific archival sources, not just mission documentation, are "to a large extent tainted, being written by Europeans possessing the almost inescapable bias of their racial background" (Maude 1968:ix–x). Such is the scarcity value of documentation "from the other side," however, that one sometimes forgets that it is just as "tainted" by an "inescapable bias" of its own, and more besides. In an oft-quoted passage, Ta'unga told his mentor, the Rev. Charles Pitman, that he described "what I saw with my eyes, heard with my ears, and felt with my hands." But he also said: "The customs of these islands are innumerable. I have not written about all of them, lest you should not approve of these matters, and perhaps you may not be interested. . . . What is the point of my writing this report to you? It is just to let you know about these things. Then cast it aside" (Crocombe and Crocombe 1968:111). To which Gavan Daws responded:

> To all questions of value Ta'unga responded simply: Christ was the answer. This is not surprising. It is perhaps less remarkable that Ta'unga wrote like a missionary than he learned to write in the first place. Christianity is the price that he paid (willingly enough, to be sure) for literacy. And the price we pay for being able to read Ta'unga's writings at all is that we will never know what he thought of the rest of the innumerable customs of the islands, those he did not describe for Pitman, lest the missionary be uninterested or disapproving. (Daws 1969:228)

Daws has a point that an exaggerated worth attaches to anything scarce; and one could certainly wish that pastors wrote more frequently and revealingly about their experiences.[10] Some missions, such as the Methodists in Fiji, relied for information on letters from Fijian pastors, and these were often published in *Tukutuku Vakalotu.* But other missionaries, such as those of the London Missionary Society in Samoa, went on voyages of inspection to the outstations and generated their own reports (although some letters and reports from Samoan pastors on foreign service were published in the London Missionary Society magazine *Ole Sulu*). To compound the problem, the relatively few letters and reports written by pastors were often lost or destroyed (e.g., Crocombe and Crocombe 1968:31, 153), and few pastors left journals, diaries, or autobiographical accounts, ghostwritten or otherwise.[11] Still, some

material never imagined to exist has been unexpectedly located, such as the manuscript of the Tongan missionary Semesi Nau (1996); and a relative wealth of documentation "from the other side" probably remains to be found, for example, in the considerable vernacular material in *Tohi Fanongongo,* a Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga newspaper.

But it will never begin to rival in bulk or diversity the European archival and published material. Moreover, Semesi's account adds credence to the view that the pastors' own writings have their particular faults: too much self-censorship and celebration, too little reflection and introspection. This short-coming adds to the original problem that pastors tend to get shouted down in the European archival record. Their wives are even more thoroughly silenced, which stems from another case of corporate missionary amnesia. It is extremely difficult to find information on pastors' wives, a point under-lined by the fact that Jeanette Little's essay on Mary Nawaa, a Hawaiian missionary wife and then a missionary in her own right, was only possible because Mary published an autobiographical account (Little 1996; Kahele-mauna 1944).

Nor is the visual record without deficiencies. Take the example of Papua. When photographed, the pastors and their wives were often made to pose in an unambiguously subservient role, and they were seldom identified by name. This pose accords with their largely anonymous role. Yet they were very visible on the ground—in their white shirts and trousers—guiding Euro-pean explorers, helping administration officials, and in their everyday work of teaching and preaching. They were an integral part of the village world and the European world in Papua, but they were sold short in image, and sometimes also in text, when Europeans recorded, represented, and re-presented Papua (Quanchi 1996).[12] The visual imaging in photographs and illustrations often served to deny pastors, despite their pioneering role, the contribution they were making to Papua's political and economic develop-ment. Perhaps, in the postcolonial era, such a "contribution" might now be deemed less than desirable. But credit was not given at the time where credit was due.

The final question is, in what fashion are pastors to be represented? More to the point, why are they represented in different and shifting ways? Pastors were often controversial figures, and the contemporary record carries numerous allegations of worldly pretensions, political opportunism, and other human imperfections. These, in turn, have been offset by an ex-plicitly celebratory literature that idealizes and ennobles the pastors, reso-nances of which are sometimes found in scholarly writing and in popular mythology.[13] The Samoan scholar Malama Meleisea has pointed out that he was "raised on the ideology that 'Papuans' (as all Papua New Guineans were

then termed) were black savages with horrible customs. This popular Samoan misconception was the result of the imaginative tales told by returning Samoan missionaries, no doubt to emphasize their own heroism in going out to convert the heathen" (1987:143–144).

One reason for this celebratory attitude toward pastors of bygone days is the degree of suffering that those on overseas service commonly endured. "It was generally accepted by the missions . . . that the role of the 'native brethren' was to make initial contacts, establish peace, learn the language and obtain at least nominal acceptance of Christianity and thus to *venture their lives* in order to . . . 'prepare the way for more efficient labourers from privileged Britain' " (Crocombe and Crocombe 1968:118; emphasis added). Pastors were, as one historian bluntly points out, considered "far more ex-pendable than a European missionary" (Howe 1984:293). In fairness, some European missionaries had misgivings about sending pastors to dangerous and unhealthy places where they themselves were reluctant to venture (Joyce 1971:169; Langmore 1974:16; Crocombe 1982:68)—and in any case their own mortality rate and that of their children were severe in themselves. Papua, in particular, was a veritable graveyard for pastors and their families (Langmore 1989:75, 98–99, 255–258). According to the London Missionary Society's own figures, almost one-half of the pastors in Papua and their wives died or were killed between 1871 and 1885: of the 188 teachers and spouses concerned, 8 were killed and another 79 died, of whom 4 were suspected of being poisoned (Crocombe and Crocombe 1982:131–134). By any standards this is a shocking mortality rate. It far exceeded that experienced by inden-tured plantation workers, whose recruitment and employment was so roundly condemned by missionaries as a group. Casualties decreased over time; none of the 55 pastors and spouses in Papua between 1882 and 1885 was killed, and only 12 died (Crocombe and Crocombe 1982:131–134; Jakes 1996:117; Wetherell 1987:340–341). Even so, the mortality rate over this period is in excess of one in five. There are reasons why pastors on overseas service are often represented in their homelands as heroic figures, whatever the accom-panying glorification and racial overtones.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is a temptation for the historiographer to focus on gaps and weaknesses, and to lapse into the conventional pleas and injunctions that others re-channel their efforts into things that they cannot do, do not want to do, or need not do. Without presuming to map out an agenda for future research, we can nevertheless make certain points.

First, the work on pastors on overseas service ought to be counter-

balanced by comparable attention to those who served on their home islands. There were home-serving pastors in the Pacific just as there were domestic missionaries in nineteenth-century Britain, New Zealand, and Australia. Second, Samoan pastors have been overrepresented in the scholarly literature. The reasons are understandable given the singular quality of the Samoan pastorate. Frequently overbearing toward their congregations, the Samoans were staunch in asserting their rights vis-à-vis European missionaries. Indeed, the London Missionary Society Samoan pastorate was the first to be ordained en masse, as of right, in 1875, as a result of pressure from London and from the rank-conscious pastors themselves (Gilson 1970:134–135). A consequence of this overemphasis on the admittedly numerous and wide-ranging Samoans is a tendency toward a Samoan model being imposed on the overall Pacific situation. In particular, the impression may be given that missionary-pastor tension was endemic and universal. It was seldom far beneath the surface, but a somewhat different picture would emerge if Fiji, Tahiti, and Cook Islands pastors were accorded attention commensurate to their numbers. Actually, there were more Fijian than Samoan pastors and almost as many Cook Islands pastors, a point seldom recognized (Forman 1970:215–216). In particular, a major study on Cook Islands pastors at home and abroad is waiting to be done. So too is a monograph-length work on Fijian pastors in western Melanesia that draws on vernacular as well as European documentation.

A further imbalance in the literature is the concentration on the nineteenth century, even though more missionaries came to the Pacific and more islanders were converted in the twentieth century (Forman 1978:36). *Tides of History* missed an opportunity to explore this theme (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994). Moreover, there has been an increasing trend in the twentieth century, as missions transform into churches and as those churches become independent and indigenous, for the islander pastor of old to shed his subservient "helper" status and become an ordained minister. To complicate matters, there has been a proliferation of so-called new religious groups, typically of fundamentalist and Pentecostalist complexion, whose ministers are usually part-time and unpaid (Ernst 1994). Then there is the "reverse thrust" phenomenon of islander missionaries proselytizing in the First World. We are not thinking here so much of Fijian missionaries among Australian Aborigines but rather of the recent activities of Fijian Columban lay missionaries in Eire (Turaga 1996). It is a nice irony that the Irish are receiving Third World missionaries, as their Celtic forebears of the sixth and seventh centuries took the gospel to Scotland, England, and parts of continental Europe.

Future research on islander pastors, missionaries, and ministers will also have to come to grips with the more convoluted situation of more recent times. Whether these research opportunities will be taken up seems unlikely.

Quite simply, the contagious euphoria of the pioneering phase of missioniza-
tion has a superficial glamor that attracts historians (as it often did mission-
aries themselves) in ways that the dull routine of ongoing consolidation does
not. The dearth of post–World War II religious history in Papua New Guinea
is a particularly glaring manifestation of a Pacific-wide historiographical
lacuna,[14] but by no means the only one.

   Accounts of European missionaries (Langmore 1989), their wives (Grim-
shaw 1989), and "lady missionaries" and deaconnesses (Sidal 1997; Tennant
1999) continue to be written. They too belong to the larger picture of which
pastors are part; and there is a danger that revisionism in favor of islander
missionaries will go too far and obscure the role of European missionaries.
There is also a need to study more closely the results of the pastors' work
from the perspective of the converts and church members and the develop-
ment of their Christian lives (e.g., Hoare 1996). And although Protestant
missions relied far more heavily on pastors than did Catholic missions on the
native catechist, more research on the latter is needed to continue the work
of Broadbent (1976, 1996), Buatava (1996), Kabutaulaka (1996), and Knox
(1997:141–145). There is also room for studies on deacons and lay preachers,
because, as Winston Halapua says, "It is difficult to imagine how the various
churches in the Pacific could effectively function without this second strata
of the ministry" (1996:290). But there is no need to perpetuate the lingering
and simplistic polarization that starkly depicts pastors as either saints or sin-
ners. In attempting to present a nuanced depiction, we recall how John Clive
summed up the defining features of the Victorian age. He described them as
"contradiction and complexity—conflicts between religiosity and worldliness,
belief and action, idealism and practice, self-love and self-sacrifice" (Clive
1989:250). Subsequent research on the Pacific Islander pastor and missionary
should strive to capture this spirit.

NOTES

  1. An indication of the relative importance of European missionaries and islander pastors
can be gauged from the numbers involved. In the first hundred years of London Missionary
Society activity, 52 European missionaries were appointed to Samoa and another 22 to

the Cook Islands (Thorogood 1995:6). By contrast, at least 209 Samoan pastors and 197 Cook Islands pastors worked in other parts of the Pacific (Forman 1970:215). The figures for pastors are undoubtedly incomplete (see note 4).

2. The personal prejudices of some European missionaries and their treatment of islander pastors fueled justifiable resentment (Latukefu 1981:179–180). Garrett also comments on the social and professional distinctions that many European missionaries continued to preserve between themselves and islander clergy (1982:304).

3. Earlier still, in 1898, the Anglican bishop of Papua expressed the desire that his mission transform into self-supporting local churches. But practical difficulties, not to mention a distaste for competitive fund-raising campaigns, stymied such intentions toward indigenization (Langmore 1989:207–208).

4. This is the approximate figure in the register of pastors that is housed in the Pacific Theological College's chapel, itself a memorial to islander pastors. Compiled by John Garrett, it was based initially on Niel Gunson's "List of Native Missionaries, 1820–1860" (Gunson 1959:520–528), and supplemented by information supplied by the various island churches. The register does not take into account pastors working in their own island groups. While the 1,500 or so pastors identified in the register is a conservative figure, it is nevertheless a total that well exceeds the number of European missionaries. A recent listing of Fijian pastors, which totals 1,023 (Baleiwaqa 1998), indicates the extent to which upward revision is necessary. This listing builds on Andrew Thornley's identification of 447 Fijian ministers serving within Fiji from 1851 through to 1945 (1979:288–303). The Free Wesleyan Church in Tonga is sponsoring a research and writing project on Tongan pastors (by Kisi Finau, Lupe Tuineau, and Paula Onoafe Latu) scheduled for publication in 2001. This research will undoubtedly lead to a further upward revision.

5. Niel Gunson made a similar observation some twelve years earlier, when he said that "the impact of the Evangelical missionaries often provided the quickest way to self-assertion by the native peoples. In the world of culture conflict, which is in a sense, the world of Evangelical religion, the islander was given a beam to support himself against the tide of new concepts. Whenever the beam was grasped, the islander's potentials for self-assertion were increased" (1959:iii).

6. Whether pastors were better able than European missionaries to explain the tenets of Christianity is a moot point. Some European missionaries claimed that pastors were "well adapted to fill the gap between the debased savage and the European missionary" (quoted in Barker 1996:117). Certainly, there were "varying presentations of doctrine by Polynesian teachers and European missionaries" (Gilson 1970:103). It is difficult to comment on this issue, given that the evidence is so impressionistic and nonempirical. Many missionaries considered that the pastors often perverted the "real" meaning of Christianity. A. K. Chignell of the Anglican Mission in Papua, for example, was of the view that its Melanesian pastors were "probably as ill-instructed and incapable as any body of men who ever handled a piece of chalk" (quoted in Langmore 1989:153). But it can also be charged that individual European missionaries were no better. The artist Augustus Earle, who visited New Zealand in the late 1820s, recalled the ineffectual attempts of an artisan/missionary: "a sturdy blacksmith in the prime of life, sitting in the midst of a group of savages, attempting to expound to them the mysteries of the holy redemption—perplexing his own brains,

as well as those of his auditors, with the most incomprehensible and absurd opinions" (1966:86).

7. This bilingual book has made less of an impression than it might have, both locally and internationally, through poor promotion and distribution at the Fiji end. The book was noted in the 1998 "Bibliography of Mission Studies" of the *International Review of Missions* 87 (346): 451, and received a single review (Whiteman 1998). Locally, *Mai Kea Ki Vei?* has penetrated Fijian Methodist households to some degree, but its exposure is still slight. The problem of book marketing and sales in Fiji is worrying, with the progressive closure of bookshops (most recently Desai) or their relocation from downtown Suva to the suburbs (e.g., Zenon), not to mention their increasing emphasis on selling stationery, school text-books, glossy magazines, and penny dreadfuls. The only decent outlet in the country is the University of the South Pacific Book Centre, and the only effective book distribution net-work is the university's Institute of Pacific Studies. The book marketing and distribution situation in other Pacific countries is even worse—although the Friendly Islands Bookshop is an oasis in Tonga. Even so, its viability as a business depends on stationery rather than book sales.

8. Richard Gilson died in 1963. Both his books were published posthumously. His magnum opus, a magnificent political history of nineteenth-century Samoa (Gilson 1970), was mostly written in the 1950s, and it anticipated much future research on pastors. His book on the Cook Islands, which derived from a 1952 thesis, was edited for publication by Ron Crocombe (Gilson 1980). The contrast between Gilson's two books in their treatment of pastors is marked. Equally marked is the contrast between Gilson 1980 and studies of other atoll groups, whose authors unfailingly recognize the role and importance of pastors (e.g., Beaglehole 1957; Brady 1975:119–124; Huntsman and Hooper 1996: chaps. 6–7 generally; Macdonald 1982:31–53; Munro 1982:135–161).

9. Studies of individual pastors that are based on the documentary record, with sometimes a smattering of oral testimony, are Crocombe 1982; Goldsmith and Munro 1992; Little 1996; and Munro 2000. Other biographical essays are based on personal acquaintance with the subject, meaning that the author could draw on direct observation as well as the written record (Latukefu 1982; Goldsmith 1996; Kabutaulaka 1996; Halapua 1996). Another point concerns Cook Islands pastors: in contrast to pastor historiography generally, where group studies are the norm, the studies of Cook Islands pastors focus on individuals, namely, Taʻunga, Maretu, Ruatoka, Elekana, and Turakiare Teauariki. The latter's second autobiographical account, which was edited by Charles Forman (1996), was separately published by the University of the South Pacific's Cook Islands Centre in 1996 without Forman's consent and without acknowledging his considerable editorial work.

10. Another reviewer endorsed this point and went on to say that Taʻunga wrote "not as a native with a sympathetic awareness of the problems confronting his would-be converts, but as an outsider, almost as a European" (Parsonson 1971:201).

11. They include Barrère and Sahlins 1979; Bulu 1871; Chalmers 1872; Crocombe and Crocombe 1968; Forman 1996; Kahelemauna 1944; Liger 1932; Marau 1984; Maretu 1983; Maude 1974; Saroa 1982; and Teauariki 1982.

12. The photographic record raised other misconceptions, as in the case of Melanesian sugar workers from Queensland who decided to become pastors in Papua during the 1890s.

They assumed that the well-dressed European missionaries they saw in photographs had rank and status, which they too could acquire by becoming pastors (Wetherell 1978:102).

13. There is a clear disjunction in the literature on Samoan pastors: European writers have given considerable prominence to the negative traits of Samoan pastors (e.g., Munro 1996b; Mullins and Wetherell 1996; Wetherell 1980, 1996:79–95), whereas Samoan historians emphasize their "contributions" and positive impact (e.g., Sinclair 1982; Liua'ana 1996). The selective stress of the Samoan-authored studies is reminiscent of the nationalistic chauvinism of the conservative French historian Fernand Braudel, as described by Evans (1997:192).

14. An exception is Delbos 1985. A valuable first step to fill the gap on a Pacific-wide scale is Garrett 1997.

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OASIS OR MIRAGE: THE FARMING OF BLACK PEARL IN THE NORTHERN COOK ISLANDS

Cluny Macpherson
University of Auckland

By the late twentieth century, small island states in the Pacific faced severe problems resulting from the ways in which they had become integrated into the world capitalist economy since the early nineteenth century. Generic environmental, economic, and social problems follow from dependence on the production of a relatively small number of crops for sale in the world economy, out-migration and remittances, and foreign aid. Most states have sought to reduce their dependence and to move toward greater degrees of economic self-sufficiency. In the case of atolls, opportunities for development are typically regarded as minimal because of fragile ecosystems and a shortage of land, fresh water, and local energy. Black-pearl farming is an environmentally sustainable activity that has led to higher incomes and repopulation in the Northern Cook Islands. While it is not the solution for all atolls, its success warrants careful examination.

The Pacific Development Dilemma

IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY, small island states in the Pacific came to face a series of problems that stem, in large part, from the ways in which they have become integrated into the world capitalist economy since the early nineteenth century (Howard et al. 1983). They now face a variety of generic environmental, economic, and social problems (Connell 1991), which follow from having concentrated on the production of a small number of crops for sale in the world economy.

Improved public health has resulted in improved survival rates, longer life spans, and growing population pressure (South Pacific Commission 1998: 6–15). The increasing populations put pressure on resources, which are

exploited more intensively to support them (ibid.:30–31). The intensification of land use in turn leads to resource depletion, environmental degradation, and declining production potential (ibid.:32–33). The clearing of forest in watersheds and the widespread use of herbicides in plantation agriculture produce a variety of effects including silting, flooding, depletion of marine stocks, and reduction of biodiversity.

Overproduction of commodities for which there is declining or unstable demand leads to falling commodity prices, which leads in turn to declining profitability, farmer discouragement, and falling per capita agricultural production levels as farmers and farm families move to urban areas in search of higher incomes (South Pacific Commission 1998:34–35). In some cases it also leads to circular migration between homes and other places in which employment is available (ibid.:26–27). In other cases it results in the permanent or semipermanent loss of parts of the able-bodied population through internal and international migration (ibid.:36–37). The resulting age-selective depopulation of remote or rural areas often leads to a "social malaise," which results in turn in further rural depopulation.

Increasing urban population densities that follow rural-urban migration mean that governments are faced increasingly with escalating costs to provide urban infrastructure for rapidly growing urban populations that are making a relatively minor contribution to production and to the national economy (ibid.:34–35).

The Growth of Dependence

In an attempt to provide for the needs of growing populations with steadily increasing material aspirations, small Pacific states have tended to adopt policy mixes that have resulted over time in growing dependency on metropolitan states with which their economies have become increasingly integrated. This policy mix has resulted in varying, but generally increasing, degrees of dependence on metropolitan labor markets for access to wage economies; emigrant populations for remittances in cash and kind; metropolitan states for aid of various types, technologies, manufactured goods, food and beverages, and fuel; and international business for air and sea transportation and telecommunications links (Hughes 1998).

In the Pacific microstates these mixes have produced what have been characterized, by Bertram and Watters (1985), as MIRAB economies, which depend almost solely on migration, remittances, aid, and the growth of bureaucracy (Poirine 1998; Bertram 1999). While the relative importance of each of these elements and the mix varies from state to state, all face most of the problems to varying degrees. Of all of the Pacific islands that have be-

come enmeshed in this sequence, the worst hit have been the atolls, which start from smaller, more fragile resource bases and more easily destabilized ecosystems.

The Search for a Panacea

These problems are well understood throughout the Pacific. Most governments have, albeit for different reasons, sought to reduce their dependence and to move toward greater degrees of economic self-sufficiency. Even larger states, such as Fiji, with large, well-established, and profitable agricultural bases are having to rethink their strategies as longstanding preferential trading relationships are threatened by the increasing push to trade liberalization by the World Trade Organization and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) (Grynberg 1993).

Many states have tried to reduce dependence by diversifying their economic bases, opting for some combination of import substitution activity and the development of niche activities such as the production of a small range of export crops for specific markets (Tongan squash, Samoan taro, Vanuatuan kava [Seneviratne 1997], new nut crops in western Melanesia [*Islands Business* 1998]), and, more recently, ecotourism (Fiji and Cook Islands), assembly work (Yazaki in Samoa), garment manufacturing (Fiji), resale of excess telecommunication capacity (Tuvalu), training of seamen for multinational shipping companies (Kiribati, Solomons), sales of stamps (Tuvalu, Tonga, and the Cook Islands) and passports (Tonga, Nauru), and provision of offshore banking and financial services (Cook Islands, Vanuatu, and Samoa).

The temporary gains from adopting such specific, niche-oriented strategies may be offset by longer-term risks. These countries become vulnerable because the conditions that produce "winners" are constantly changing. Thus, as modern aircraft are able to fly greater distances nonstop, last year's tourist destinations become this year's overflown outposts (American Samoa). Most recently the Asian "meltdown" has served as a reminder to states that became increasingly dependent on Asian capital and tourism that even large and apparently robust economies can contract suddenly and dramatically (*Islands Business,* July 1998, 9).

This is also true in primary production and other areas. This year's wonder crop in the Pacific has so often proven to be next year's catastrophe. Witness Samoa's economic decline since the taro blight struck what had become its largest export crop. As patron states take exception to the provision of tax avoidance schemes by recipients of their aid, they are likely to retaliate by penalizing either the states themselves or the companies that take advantage

of their services. The sale of national passports to nonnationals by Samoa, Kiribati, and Nauru has led to threats by larger states to withdraw recognition of their passports (*Islands Business,* July 1998, 17).

Furthermore, even if small states were able to discover and implement strategies that produced significant short-term advantages, it is likely that corporate interests in larger states would either acquire or copy highly profitable activities. Vanuatu and Tonga, for example, increased commercial production of kava to supply the North American health pharmaceutical market.[1] It now appears that with market demand established and profits beginning to flow into Vanuatu and Tonga, American interests are using biotechnology to produce pharmacologically superior strains of the plant, which will be grown on a large scale in plantations on former sugar lands in Hawai'i to take advantage of economies of scale and relative closeness to markets.

Furthermore, if small states engage in activities that are seen to threaten the interests of dominant states or aid donors, they are likely to find themselves under pressure to reformulate or relinquish these schemes so that they comply with dominant states' interests or risk losing access to aid. Those states in which trust companies were providing corporations domiciled in aid donors' countries with means of reducing or avoiding tax found themselves under various forms of pressure to regulate businesses. Thus microstates find it increasingly difficult to find means of reducing dependency.

Finally, the Port Vila Declaration has placed increasing pressure on these states by enacting a requirement that governments support activities that are sustainable (South Pacific Commission 1994), which places increasing pressure on the range of available alternatives.

Faced with these problems, a general shortage of high-valued mineral resources,[2] a declining demand for unskilled and semiskilled labor in metropolitan economies, and evidence of declining interest in the Pacific by traditional aid donors and second- and third-generation overseas-born children, Pacific Islands governments are having to look for new forms of productive activity that address various environmental, economic, and social issues.

The environmental issues, set out in the Port Vila Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development in 1993, are arguably the most important, since they constitute the basic parameters of all activity on small and relatively fragile ecosystems (South Pacific Commission 1994:43–53). The environmental imperatives call for activities that use indigenous resources where possible, do not require large imported energy inputs, can be managed on a sustainable basis, do not threaten biodiversity, and reduce pressures on currently heavily exploited land and marine environments that are generating environmental and resource degradation. The commodity and associated production regime must be able to withstand natural disasters such as

cyclones and tsunamis that periodically devastate plantations and disrupt production in the tropics.

The economic imperatives call for activities that produce nonperishable commodities that are not currently oversupplied in world markets; employ relatively inexpensive, low to intermediate technologies; produce higher returns on labor investment than existing ones; generate both direct and indirect employment in the activity itself and in downstream industries that add value to the basic product; reduce dependence on foreign aid and borrowings, which are increasingly difficult to obtain and repay and which result in the capture and repatriation of profits to the owners of foreign capital; and, finally, that do not depend heavily on bulk transport services that are provided by, and can be withdrawn by, international providers without consideration of the consequences.

The social imperatives are crucial because, unless social objectives are met, the nations will be destabilized and all forms of action will be futile. Among these imperatives are the requirement that activities will produce higher and equitable income distribution without dramatic and disjunctive social and economic transformation; the repopulation of rural areas and a reduction of pressure on overloaded urban physical infrastructure and social services; the restoration of rural social infrastructures; the prospect of relatively inexpensive entry into and widespread participation within the activity and maintenance of local ownership; and control of the industry and profits therefrom.

For many Pacific states an activity that addresses these concerns remains illusive. For atolls, with limited physical resources, relatively fragile ecosystems, and little prospect of supporting much more than traditional mixed subsistence with some cash cropping, the search has seemed even more futile until recently. There is, however, a commodity that seems to meet many of the criteria set out above and to offer an alternative, more prosperous future for a small number of Pacific states and, paradoxically, the poorest of all of those states. It is the farming of the black-lipped oyster *(Pinctada margaritifera)* for the production of cultured "black" pearls.

Pinctada margaritifera: The Next Wonder Crop?

The oyster, *Pinctada margaritifera,* occurs naturally in tropical waters in many areas from the Gulf of California to the eastern Mediterranean Sea, but it "reaches its greatest abundance in the atoll lagoons of Eastern Polynesia" (Sims and Gervis 1992:5). The oyster has always had a significant place in the culture and economy of eastern Polynesia. Naturally occurring black pearls were said to be the tears of a goddess. They were occasionally used as

ornaments, and Queen Pomare of Tahiti is said to have played marbles with them. The meat of the oyster has been a source of food and protein that is both relatively plentiful and largely immune to storms, droughts, and other climatic exigencies. Natural whole pearls and half pearls have always been found in oysters harvested for meat *(korori parau).* The oyster shell has been used in the production of items of material culture and has, more recently, been harvested and sold as a cash crop for the manufacture of buttons and jewelry.

The farming of the oyster for black-pearl production has a short history.[3] The industry was established in French Polynesia in the mid-1960s using a process developed by Japanese technicians contracted by the French colonial administration (Rapaport 1995). Commercial farming became established in the 1970s in French Polynesia, when the Rosenthal brothers, Jean-Claude Brouillet, and Robert Wan established farms and demonstrated their commercial viability (DIXIT 1996:254). Since 1983, Territorial Fisheries Service (Le Service Territorial de la Pêche) has disseminated material on farming and seeding, and the industry has become the biggest export industry in the French Polynesian economy with some 3,800 concessions now being managed for different products (ibid.:255).

Black-lipped oysters are now farmed commercially in parts of French Polynesia and the Northern Cook Islands and experimentally or in trials in the Solomon Islands, parts of Micronesia (South Pacific Commission 1996: 16), Kiribati (ibid.:15), and Iran (Doroudi 1996:17). While the organization of the industry differs in French Polynesia and the Northern Cooks, the basic processes are similar, and the associated social issues—lagoon tenure rights, license allocation, reversal of migration flows, increased incomes, and family production units—are similar.[4]

The farming of the pearl in French Polynesia and some of the social issues that it has produced have been described elsewhere (Rapaport 1995, 1996). The social and political history of the Cook Islands industry has been extensively described by Newnham (1989) and more recently by Flintoff (1994), and the marine biology and management of the industry is discussed in reports by Sims and Gervis (1992) and Asian Development Bank consultants (RDA International 1997). This article focuses on the development of pearl farming in the Northern Cook Islands to highlight the possibilities and risks of black-pearl farming as a development strategy for atoll states.

Black-Pearl Farming in Manihiki

Manihiki is an atoll in the Northern Cook Islands, lying 1,204 kilometers northeast of the capital, Rarotonga, at 10 degrees south latitude and 161

degrees west longitude. The atoll has a land area of some 544 hectares with a maximum elevation of 5 meters above mean sea level. The land consists of a series of islets, or *motu,* around the lagoon, which has an area of 48 square kilometers and is 8 kilometers wide in places. The 1991 population of Manihiki was 663 people, who lived in or around two villages, Tauhunu and Tukao. It is presently served by a weekly air service from Rarotonga and a scheduled interisland shipping service.

The pearl-farming industry was introduced into Manihiki in the mid-1950s by an Englishman, Ron Powell—described by some as an armchair marine biologist—who introduced the idea of spat collection as part of an effort to reestablish stocks of the wild oyster, which had been depleted by diving for pearl shell in the Manihiki lagoon. His ideas were largely ignored by the New Zealand administration of the day, and it was not until later that anything else was heard of pearl farming (Newnham 1989).

An Australian, Peter Cummings, obtained a permit from the Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources to establish a farm in the Manihiki lagoon in the early 1970s. The Cook Islands government used its power to grant the license, asserting that the lagoon fell under its jurisdiction, in the face of opposition from the Manihiki Island Council, which believed that the lagoon was, and always had been, under its exclusive control. The Cummings venture eventually foundered in 1982 (Torrey 1996).

The revival of the industry was the consequence of interest from two groups with different visions of the way to develop the industry and of Manihikians' roles within it. The principal obstacles to establishing pearl-farming operations were a shortage of capital and an absence of oyster-farm husbandry skills. While Manihikian incomes, derived principally from diving for pearl shell and to a lesser extent from cutting copra, were higher than those of other atolls, they limited the scale of farming and rate of growth. Low local incomes limited the possibility of saving the capital necessary to both enter and expand oyster-farming operations. Before the industry could grow, new capital and credit were necessary. Each group proposed to overcome these obstacles in different ways.

The member of parliament for Manihiki, Ben Toma, encouraged the Manihiki Island Council to license a single, large-farm development program managed by a non-Manihikian with experience in large-scale pearl farming in Tahiti. That operation was to provide a source of capital for Manihikians who wished to start small farms. To ensure that aspiring small farmers had access to capital, the Island Council prohibited the company from diving for pearl oysters and required it to purchase its oyster stock. In the first two years of operation, Cook Islands Pearl purchased NZ\$1.2-million worth of oysters from Manihikian divers. The government's Ministry of

Marine Resources was at the same time working with a group of eight Manihikian family-farming operations that had begun pearl farming using assets and skills that had been deployed in pearl diving and capital from pearl-shell sales, from work overseas, and from family networks.

Two methods were proposed to train aspiring farmers, who already had many of the necessary diving and boat-handling skills, in the farm management practices necessary to produce and maintain healthy stock. One group proposed using a private company to establish a large operation that could provide Manihikians with training. The company subsequently employed seventy local people. The second argued that a large, non-Manihikian–run venture was unnecessary. This group argued for the development of smaller farms with assistance and technical guidance from the Ministry of Marine Resources, and it employed its own management, technical, and marketing resources. These family farms could also provide training, albeit for smaller numbers of people.

Through 1987 tension existed between the advocates of these approaches. The arguments had less to do with oyster farming than with politics. The Manihiki Island Council believed that it had the right to manage the lagoon and the obligation to develop it in the communal interest (Kaitara 1988). Private farmers believed that they too enjoyed the right, as Manihikians, to farm in the lagoon and did so with the guidance of the Ministry of Marine Resources.

The tension persisted even after the Manihiki Island Council licensed a part-Tahitian, part–Cook Islander, part-Chinese entrepreneur, Yves Tchen Pan, who had established pearl-farming operations in Tahiti.[5] This tension was in fact heightened at times by such things as the suggestion by Tchen Pan that local farms should be limited to 2,000 oysters each, while he enjoyed the right to farm up to 200,000, and led to local anger (Kaitara 1988). It was clear from this point that significant effort would need to be invested in conflict resolution during the early stages of the new industry (Dashwood 1992).

Despite the tension, the Island Council formed the Manihiki Island Trust, which purchased the Cummings farm's assets in 1987 for use as a training establishment in a program to get Manihikians into pearl farming on their own farms. Tchen Pan then entered into an arrangement under which he would be allowed to operate a large farm in the lagoon at Manihiki in return for provision of management for the Island Trust's own training establishment. For a while Tchen Pan provided advice and ran his own farm, but the Island Council eventually discontinued the Trust's farming operation as farmers gained experience and wished to set up their own farms.

A new arrangement, known as the 60:40 agreement, replaced the original one. The agreement was put together by Ben Toma, Yves Tchen Pan, the

Island Council, and a local lawyer and businessman, Reuben Tylor. The Crown Law Office represented the interests of the Island Council, and Reuben Tylor acted for Cook Islands Pearl. Under the terms of this agreement, Manihikians dived for oysters, which were taken to Cook Islands Pearl's farm. The farmers, who tended their own shells with advice from Cook Islands Pearl, gained knowledge of farm husbandry practices, access to management advice, access to technicians, and a market for their pearls. In effect the shells were managed, seeded, harvested, and marketed on their behalf by Tchen Pan's company, Cook Islands Pearl Ltd., in return for 40 percent of the proceeds.

With proceeds from sales of shells, proceeds of their own crops' sales, and the above arrangement, Manihikians could become established on their own farms relatively easily. The number of farmers with necessary capital and skills who wished to farm independently grew steadily. Under pressure from farmers who did not wish to participate in the Island Council–Cook Islands Pearl agreement but wanted access to experienced technicians, the company set up another program and seeded shell at Cook Islands Pearl's farm for $12 per shell for independent farmers who returned the shells to their own farms.[6]

The eight pioneering family-farming operations grew alongside Cook Islands Pearl and provided a model for others who wished to enter small farming without dependence on Cook Islands Pearl. The Ministry of Marine Resources granted a permit to one large farmer to seed his own crop. His group brought in technicians and seeded their shells in 1987 with the assistance of the Ministry of Marine Resources. This enterprise was said to contravene an exclusive right granted by the Island Council to Cook Islands Pearl and generated tension between the two groupings, which culminated in attempts to prevent the independents from seeding their own pearls in 1988 and to constrict their cash flow.

Despite these initial tensions, it was increasingly clear that pearl farming offered Manihikians an opportunity to earn higher incomes and enjoy greater autonomy. With proceeds from diving for pearl shell and casual labor along with government wages and assistance from kin who were already in farming, the way was clear for more Manihikians to enter farming on a scale that would provide a significantly better income than that available from the main employer, the Cook Islands government, or the erratic subsistence income from pearl-shell diving and the harvest and sale of copra.

Since these early days, Manihiki and neighboring Penrhyn (Tongareva) have developed into the Cook Islands center for the commercial production of black pearls. In the region in 1987 eight operations farmed a total of 10,000 seeded oysters. Nine years later there were 150 farming some 225,000

seeded oysters.[7] The numbers of active operations and oysters farmed vary from year to year for a range of social, biological, and commercial reasons. The success of spat-collection techniques in Manihiki, for instance, has meant that the once-obvious dichotomy between large and small operations has been eroded.[8]

In Manihiki there are approximately sixty-nine operations of various sizes farming oysters (Sutton 1996). The largest operation, Cook Islands Pearl, seeds between 50,000 and 60,000 oysters in a season, an estimated fifteen to twenty locally owned commercial operations seed between 10,000 and 40,000, an estimated thirty to forty operations seed between 5,000 and 10,000, and an estimated thirty to forty smaller farmers seed between 500 and 3,000. Leases have now been assigned over a significant portion of the parts of the lagoon most suited to farming (Newnham, cited in Sutton 1996:60).

The Farming of the Pearl Oyster

Farming involves the capture of oyster spat on lines suspended in areas where natural oyster populations spawn or the selection of juvenile wild stock.[9] Selected juveniles from either source are grown out on banks near oyster farms until they reach a condition and size at which they can be transferred to farms. The shells of the selected oysters are drilled near the hinge so that they can be suspended from lines. The shells are then carefully separated and held open 1 to 2 centimeters with a small wedge to allow a 1 to 2 centimeter incision to be made in the oyster's gonad. A spherical nucleus made of Mississippi mussel shell is inserted into the gonad with a small section of the live mantle of another sacrificial oyster.[10] The nucleus provides an inert core over which the oyster deposits a colored nacre with material from the mantel tissue.

The "seeded" oyster is then placed in a nylon net "catch bag" and suspended, by either stainless steel wire or nylon, upside down to discourage the animal from rejecting and ejecting the nucleus. The seeded oysters are suspended on lines of ten, known as chaplets, which are in turn suspended, between 1 and 2 meters apart, on underwater lines floating at between 5 and 7 meters below the sea surface. The lines, which vary in length according to the size and shape of the farm, are fastened by vertical lines to coral heads or artificial anchors on the lagoon floor. Flotation is provided by buoys, which are adjusted to keep the lines at the selected depth.

The seeded animals are checked after six weeks to establish whether they have retained the implanted nuclei. The catch bags are inspected for rejected nuclei and oysters that have rejected the nucleus are killed and those that have retained it are cleaned and reattached to chaplets, which are in

turn resuspended from the lines. The retainers are periodically brought to the farm, where they are cleaned manually and checked before being returned to the lines until they are harvested and reseeded after some eighteen months.

The harvested pearls are graded on the basis of size, shape, color, surface quality, and luster. The pearls are sold in various ways. In 1990 and 1991 pearls were sold at auction, but now most are sold either directly by the farmer, through the technician who seeds the pearls, or through agents in Rarotonga.

Black Pearls and Development

The recent history of commercial black-pearl farming has established that this is a viable industry but not whether it is a realistic answer to the problems faced by Pacific microstates at the start of the twenty-first century. These problems are not purely technical but are also social, economic, political, and environmental. To establish whether the farming of *Pinctada margaritifera* for the production of cultivated black pearls represents an answer to the problems of Pacific atolls, the imperatives set out above can be used to identify costs and benefits. I will attempt to answer the question with data from the Northern Cook Islands, where the industry has been established in its present commercial form since 1985, and to provide a comparison with the French Polynesian operation.

Environmental Costs and Benefits

Pinctada margaritifera are being farmed sustainably using oyster stock and physical resources that occur naturally in certain lagoons throughout the Pacific. The introduction of exotic stock and the attendant risk of introduction of disease are therefore avoided. In fact, the existence of a profitable marine-farming activity may increase popular awareness of the need to maintain the lagoon health to ensure that the industry on which people become reliant is maintained (Torrey 1996). Two lagoons, Manihiki and Penrhyn, are currently producing pearls, and others, Pukapuka, Rakahanga, and Suwarrow, have been identified as possible sites for the establishment of further farming operations.

Because wild stock is periodically harvested from the lagoon floor for farming operations, biodiversity is not threatened, and because layers of water separate the "farmed" stock from the "natural" stock, the latter is to some extent insulated from the possibilities of diseases in the farming operations. The existence of profitable marine farming reduces pressure on the

land-based economic activities that lead to environmental degradation. Pearl farming provides income that can be used to purchase imported food and takes pressure off fragile atoll soil, although it does create a minor waste-disposal problem.

Farming, seeding, and harvesting operations do not require large amounts of energy, fresh water, land, or fossil fuels that frequently go with land-based development. Nor does oyster cultivation require the use of introduced, dedicated chemical sprays and fertilizers, which are frequently associated with land-based crops. The phytoplankton on which the oyster feeds occurs naturally in the lagoon, and routine oyster health can be maintained by a series of well-understood farming practices.

Economic Costs and Benefits

The black pearl is a nonperishable commodity that is not presently oversupplied in world markets. The pearls are easily and inexpensively transported from production sites to markets. The pearls have potentially high unit values. The best pearls can fetch as much as US$5,500, and even imperfect grades have a limited range of uses in jewelry. A crop typically yields 10 to 15 percent rounds; 25 to 35 percent drops, pears, and buttons; 15 to 20 percent baroques; and 40 to 50 percent circles (Torrey 1996:6).

Furthermore, the value of a pearl can, in some circumstances, be manipulated by withholding supplies from flat markets and selling them in more buoyant ones. Until recently, promotion of the pearl in jewelry manufacturing markets was hampered by the absence of a significant stock of good quality pearls with which to meet a suddenly escalating demand. With marketing it is possible that the demand for the black pearl could be increased, while supply is likely to be limited by the number of sites in which stock occurs naturally alongside a population in lagoons with the necessary characteristics.

The value of pearls is significantly higher than that of alternative commodities. The price of copra to the grower after handling and transportation charges is around NZ$345 per tonne, and the gross price of pearl oyster shell, used in the manufacture of buttons, is around NZ$7,000 per tonne, from which handling and transportation charges must be deducted. By comparison, the value of a tonne of pearl would be around NZ$113 million and, while production costs are significantly higher, handling and transportation charges are significantly lower.

The farming of black-lipped oyster involves relatively limited amounts of fairly basic technology and equipment that is readily available. The lines, buoys, wire, boats, outboard motors, generators, water blasters, drills, air

compressors, and diving gear can be bought easily in extremely competitive world markets. The farming does not require expensive specialized equipment that is constantly being upgraded and that requires the latest generation to remain competitive. Some parts of the equipment, such as spat collectors, can be produced from locally available resources.

Even the equipment used for seeding and harvesting is readily available. Stands in which oysters are held during the operation, dilators that open the oyster, wedges that hold it open during the operation, scalpels, tweezers, probes, and sundry other equipment used to insert the material and retrieve the pearl can be readily acquired in an open market as can antibiotic solutions used to ensure postoperative animal health.

Although in populations with low incomes even the costs of this fairly basic equipment inventory may seem high, expenses can be financed and repaid with relatively small development loans over reasonably short payback periods. Furthermore, these costs can be reduced in various ways by purchasing secondhand equipment to start and using farm income to increase the size of the operation gradually. The relatively limited capital inputs that are required to establish a small entry-level farm allow the eventual possibility of widespread popular participation and explain the growth in the number of operating farms in the past ten years.

The return on pearl farming can be further increased by improving the retention rate in seeded pearls, improving the quality of the pearls, and retaining the part of the profits that are currently disbursed to technicians. The means of improving retention rates and pearl quality are the subject of experimentation and cannot yet be achieved consistently because of the number of variables involved. The mastery of the technical skills of pearl farming by Manihikians and the retention of profits currently disbursed are, however, more advanced.

Two significant skills, seeding and harvesting, are in short supply and do reduce the return to farmers. Seeding and harvesting, which are crucial to the retention rate and ultimately to the quality of the pearls and the profitability of the industry,[11] have been largely carried out by Japanese and Australian technicians who are contracted by Manihikian farmers. These skills, which are the product of formal training in marine biology and in seeding and harvesting practices, are presently costly but can be acquired by Manihikians. One Manihikian is presently centrally involved in the industry; several others are said to be experimenting,[12] and at least one other is in training in Australia.

In addition, in the last three or four years the growth of the industry has resulted in a growing demand for spat as replacement stock. The industry kills some 500,000 oysters per year that must be replaced. A training pro-

gram for people interested in spat collection has been started, and some are collecting spat, which they sell to established farmers for around NZ$2.50 per shell. If demand grows, the return from this downstream activity would be expected to grow.

Social Costs and Benefits

Pinctada margaritifera are being farmed relatively easily using skills and knowledge that either are readily available or can be developed within the local population. The farming operations require three basic sets of skills. The basic husbandry requires a set of technical skills for maintenance of the farming infrastructure and management and husbandry of oyster stock. Such skills involve a mix of boat handling, diving, basic technical skills such as equipment maintenance and repair, and basic marine biology. A second set of management, clerical, and accounting skills is needed to ensure that tasks take place at required times and within budgets. The third set of skills involves periodic seeding and harvesting of pearls. These latter skills, which are crucial to the profitability of farming, have until recently been controlled and closely guarded by technicians who have served their time in the industry elsewhere.

Only small amounts of imported labor are currently required for seeding the shells and harvesting the pearls, which ensures that the social dislocation that often goes with labor importation can be avoided. Certain skills must, for the meantime, be imported, but even this labor used in seeding and harvesting is not especially disruptive, because it typically involves small numbers of technicians who are present for relatively short periods of time and who typically live on the farms and away from the centers of population. In French Polynesia, and now in the Northern Cooks, these tasks are being mastered by local people who may eventually come to control this area of the operation.

The black-lipped oyster can be farmed within existing forms of social and economic organization. Family units have been traditional units of economic activity, and they can manage most of the labor demands of routine farming operations, supplemented occasionally by casual labor at certain times in the farming cycle and by technicians for seeding and harvest. All but one farm are family owned and operated businesses (Torrey 1996), which is significant because those working on the farms have a vital interest in the success of the industry.

The industry is organized on the atoll by the Manihiki Island Council, composed of elected Manihikians. The council's duties are set out in law and include regulation of lagoon management, issue of farm licenses, allocation of license areas, certification of pearl seeding technicians, and dispute reso-

lution between farmers. This organization means that those who manage the industry can understand and represent local interests effectively. The Cook Islands government, which once took a central role in the industry through its Ministry of Marine Resources, has now withdrawn to a more specialized role in such areas as the provision of technical advice. Government ownership of farms has been phased out.

Farming of the black pearl in the Northern Cooks has produced a modest repopulation in atolls with formerly declining populations. The 1996 Cook Islands census showed an 8.1 percent intercensal increase between 1991 and 1996 in the population of the northern group compared with a 1.9 percent increase in Rarotonga, the former population magnet, and 1.5 percent for the nation as whole.[13] The prospects of significant incomes from farming have attracted people back to the Northern Cooks from the southern islands of the group and from New Zealand and Australia (Torrey 1996).

The Downside

Can any one industry offer so much potential for Pacific Islands atoll development? Might this be a mirage? There are clearly various environmental, technical, economic, political, and social risks associated even with apparently successful activities. In the case of oyster pearl farming, the major risks would seem to be environmental, economic, and social.

Environmental dangers might come from increasing the stocking levels within the lagoon to a point at which the stock becomes stressed, which could lead to widespread death of stock, rejection of nuclei, or production of large numbers of inferior pearls. These risks have been minimized by a two-year research program focused on lagoon monitoring by marine biologists supported by the Asian Development Bank. This program has produced new data on the lagoon's carrying capacity and health and established an ongoing program of lagoon monitoring and management that may have limited the potential of this risk (RDA International 1997).

The risk may be further reduced by the growing awareness that farming returns may be increased by strategies other than increasing stock numbers. These possibilities involve focusing on areas of farming that can improve returns without increasing labor costs and include the use of the most successful technicians and better animal husbandry and farm management practices. While these measures alone will not guarantee better crops, because other sets of factors also influence quality, a marine biologist who worked on Manihiki for the Asian Development Bank believed that growers would embrace these strategies because they increase returns without increasing labor costs (M. Anderson, pers. com., 11 March 1997).

A second danger would involve the spread of an endemic or introduced

disease to which oysters have no immunity, as occurred in French Polynesia, which could cause similar problems. If such problems were to persist for any length of time, farmers deprived of pearl income could be forced to resort to land-based activities that would put pressure on the terrestrial environment. Public availability of the findings of the research that followed in the wake of the French Polynesian epidemic and public awareness of the dangers of the introduction of disease are likely to minimize these dangers.

Both stocking and lagoon management decisions can be overseen by those with a vital interest in the health of the lagoon and the industry that it supports. Personal dependence on the lagoon would be expected to ensure that they manage it in ways that minimize threats to the lagoon and the industry. But there is another set of global environmental factors that cannot be managed with any certainty.

Global climatic change could also threaten the industry in several ways. First, in the event of general sustained ocean warming, the oysters, which are most healthy and grow most quickly at between 26 and 28 degrees Celsius, would have to be farmed at greater depths where water temperatures are lower, with associated increased costs. In 1992, surface water temperatures in the Manihiki lagoon rose to 31 degrees Celsius. Cook Islands Pearl tried various means of handling the temperature rise, including lowering the farm, but in the end suffered a drop in revenue from NZ$9 million to $3 million as a consequence of reduced production.

Second, if El Niño events were to become more frequent and more intense, the atoll could be exposed to more cyclones. The most recent cyclone, Hurricane Marten, which struck Manihiki in late 1997, resulted in nineteen deaths, the loss of harvested pearls, and damage to villages and farming operations. While damage to the actual underwater farming operations was limited, production was severely disrupted by loss of equipment, damage to the above-water infrastructure, and a loss of income. Loss of life in a small, close community and loss of income have serious impacts on the viability of the industry for different reasons. If such events were to become a more frequent feature of life, it could well be that people would abandon the industry and look for safer places to live and to earn a living.

Economic risks would include oversupply of established markets and the collapse of returns to a level at which farming became uneconomic. Supply and demand must always involve a risk, but in this case the risk is presently mediated by the existence of several developing markets and relatively limited volume of available production. Furthermore, for reasons outlined above, it will be some time before production volumes will increase significantly.

Until recently the Japanese have been the largest buyers of black pearls,

but demand from Southeast Asian nations grew in the wake of the Kobe earthquake, which disrupted Japanese domination of the market. Demand from this wider market has fallen temporarily in the wake of the "Asian meltdown," but there is untapped demand in both European and United States markets. Italy, which manufactures 70 percent of Europe's jewelry and 20 percent of the world's, has been targeted by producers from French Polynesia and is becoming a major user of the pearl.

Other threats include the culturing of more "spectacular" pearls from other marine animals like abalone, but experiments with such products as the mabé pearls produced from one of New Zealand's three species of native abalone *(Haliotis iris)* suggest that these can never produce large amounts of product (*Pearl World* 1996:9).

Social risks result from the fact that, historically, wealth was relatively evenly distributed in Manihiki. The organization of the pearl-farming industry is such that those families that entered the industry early and approached production commercially have received significant returns on their activity, and there are now probably significant disparities in the wealth of individuals on the atoll. The emergence of disparities in the wealth of individuals and groups in societies in which disparities have not been present historically may create social tensions resulting from awareness of and sensitivity to new forms of inequality. These tensions may manifest themselves in various ways, including political and social instability, in different circumstances.

There is always the possibility of tension between groups over the definition and allocation of use rights where resources assume new use values as has been the case in Manihiki. Where the prospect of significant wealth leads to the return of expatriate islanders, tension may develop between residents and returnees over the nature and quality of the latter's rights. This tension may lead in turn to friction between the relations of returnees, who support them out of family solidarity, and those who would challenge their rights to reside and use resources. It may also lead to tension within families as long-absent members seek to establish claims to resources that have been used by resident members. All of these and other tensions have been evident at various times in Manihiki.

Several factors seem likely to limit the probability of sustained conflict. First, while such tensions are almost inevitable, the benefits of exploiting the resource place a premium on early resolution of conflicts. Second, the disparities of wealth are not readily apparent and are not reflected in conspicuous consumption on the atoll. Members of the community who have made significant amounts of money from pearl farming do not appear wealthier than those around them. There are no palatial homes, expensive

cars, or boats on the atoll to draw daily attention to the disparities in wealth. The wealthy live alongside less wealthy people, to whom they are related in many cases, and are connected by multiplex bonds to many other members of the community in many contexts. Third, those who are wealthier are, from limited observation, in many cases still actively engaged in farming operations and work alongside those whom they employ daily. Those employed are frequently related and are not simply wage workers. Since most are aware of the significant effort that is required daily to operate a successful farm, those who continue to work when they are wealthy and need not work may enjoy respect rather than envy.

Those who are less wealthy believe that they too could be wealthy if they chose to become involved in farming and argue, in support of this claim, that they too have leases that they could work if they chose. Thus, following this rationale, people can choose to farm and become wealthy or not. The greater wealth of some is not seen as a cause of the lesser wealth of others. The existence of some large, profitable farms is not seen as a barrier to the entry of others into the industry.

Finally, Manihikians' lives and fates are all bound together by the dangers and vicissitudes of life on a remote atoll. The wealthy cannot, as one young man noted, protect themselves from hurricanes or other acts of God any more successfully than the poor and indeed cannot even insure themselves against them, so they have more to lose. For all of these reasons, the tensions that might be expected to accompany emerging disparities in wealth in a small society do not seem as likely to surface.

Conclusion

The pearl-farming industry meets a series of criteria that make it well suited for the atoll environment. It employs readily available marine resources and technical skills, relatively inexpensive intermediate technology, and it does not require large amounts of land, energy, or fresh water. Since there are few profitable industries that are actually well suited to the atoll ecosystem, these factors warrant considerable interest from aid agencies. While economies of scale are available, it is possible for family units to manage profitable pearl-farming operations with limited amounts of paid labor.

Farming of the black-pearl oyster at Manihiki in the Northern Cook Islands appears to be a remarkably successful form of sustainable atoll development for a range of environmental, economic, and social reasons. While it is not without its risks, it promises a more significant and more sustainable income than any of the other currently available alternatives and meets most of the criteria for "appropriate development" for atoll societies, which have

the necessary combination of an appropriate lagoon, oyster stock, and population. This ideal combination does not occur widely. Not all atolls have suitable lagoon ecologies, and without these farming is impossible, although both population and stock can be moved to appropriate sites with some risks.

Populations from atolls facing population pressures could be resettled on uninhabited, but otherwise suitable, atolls if and when marine tenure and other well-understood sources of potential social and political tension have been considered and planned for. A growing body of material from social scientists' studies of marine organization and tenure in the Pacific is now readily available. Existing ecological knowledge and technical skills are, as the Manihikian experience has shown, readily transferable, and a growing body of technical and scientific knowledge about the industry, which can be used to minimize risk, is also available.

The possible benefits of moving excess spat and juvenile stock to other atolls in which *Pinctada margeritifera* does not occur naturally seem readily apparent. Such a development, managed properly, could produce significant income possibilities for spat growers in Manihiki, for atoll dwellers who currently have little prospect of significant income, and for microstates seeking paths to sustainable development. Hatchery technology, which is now well developed, could produce a crop for other atoll societies, such as the nearby Tokelaus, that currently exist largely on copra sales, remittances, and aid from New Zealand.

NOTES

1. Kava is the powdered root of the plant *Piper methisticum.*

2. The exceptions among the smaller states with which this article is concerned are Fiji, which has gold and other minerals, and New Caledonia, which has significant nickel deposits.

3. What is known as the "black" pearl includes a number of shades of pearl from darker grey hues to iridescent greenish-black. The range of colors that designers and consumers can choose from increases the product's value in high fashion.

4. I am indebted to Raymond Newnham, former secretary to the Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources, now a pearl farmer, businessman, and consultant, for these observations.

5. There is a dispute over whether the final decision to sign the contract that licensed Tchen Pan was ratified by the full Island Council. The final terms were supposed to have been taken back to Manihiki for ratification by the council but were in fact signed by a council representative in Rarotonga.

6. The 60:40 agreement continues and is still used by small farmers.

7. If unseeded shell and shell on spat collectors is added to seeded shell, the current total is around 700,000 (Newnham, pers. com., 1998).

8. By contrast, disparities between larger and smaller farms persist in Penrhyn, where, estimates suggest, of the approximately eighty active farmers, one seeds between 10,000 and 15,000, three or four seed between 500 and 3,000, and the remainder seed between 50 and 500 shells.

9. Hatchery technology has now been developed that increases the success rate and extends the possibilities of introducing stock into areas in which it does not occur naturally.

10. The size of the inserted nucleus is determined by the seeding technician on the basis of observed size and health of the animal and the number of times it has already been seeded. Mississippi mussels are found naturally in the Mississippi, Missouri, and several other midwestern U.S. rivers. While various natural and synthetic alternatives have been tried, none has been as successful as Mississippi mussel shell. The search for a less expensive synthetic alternative continues.

11. There are several ways of calculating the retention rate (Torrey 1996), but the most frequently used counts the number of nuclei retained when the pearls are first checked after seeding by examining the catch bags for rejected nuclei as a proportion of all pearls seeded.

12. It is estimated that it takes 10,000 "practice seedings" to achieve consistent success in seeding and harvesting. This is an expensive investment in the short term, because returns from these practice seedings may be low for some time. However, the longer-term returns from mastery are potentially high.

13. The Cook Islands population grew to 18,904 from 18,617. Austerity measures and economic restructuring undertaken by the Cook Islands government since 1996 have led to major outflows of population, believed to be on the order of 3,500, as redundant public servants and their families have moved to New Zealand in search of work.

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WESTMINSTER DEMOCRACY:
A COMPARISON OF SMALL ISLAND STATES
VARIETIES IN THE PACIFIC AND THE CARIBBEAN

Dag Anckar
Åbo Akademi University
Åbo, Finland

The validity of the suggestion by Arend Lijphart that the structure of consensus democracy may spring from a general cultural inclination toward consensus is investigated by comparing a set of small Pacific and Caribbean island states. All have colonial histories that involve a strong British legacy, and all have been submitted to attempts by the metropolitan power to influence the preparing of the independence constitution. The results indicate that the Pacific islands with long-standing indigenous and consensual cultures and traditions have indeed introduced into their political systems more consensus-based applications of Westminster rule. Controls for the impact on democratic style of ethnic fragmentation and a dispersed geography suggest, however, that a dispersed geography likewise promotes consensualism, whereas the impact of ethnic fragmentation appears negligible. This finding is in line with other recent findings that emphasize the importance of geographical and physical factors for understanding the structure of political institutions in island states.

Introduction

THE FRAME OF REFERENCE for this essay can be found in a statement as early as 1964 by David Lerner, who, objecting to the title of the volume *The Transfer of Institutions,* preferred to name his contribution "The Transformation of Institutions." According to Lerner, processes that involve transplantations of institutions are anything but processes of transfer (1964:8), which, to borrow a phrasing from the editor of the same volume, simply

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involve "dumping an institution on foreign docks, sending in techniques to install it, and then switching on the power to run it" (Hamilton 1964:vii). The argument of this essay, however, is that both concepts may be valid: a transplantation of institutions may involve transfer as well as transformation, the former concept implying a straightforward diffusion of the metropolitan model and the second concept implying that the metropolitan model is adapted to specific needs and circumstances. To demonstrate this point, I undertake a comparison of two regionally defined sets of democratic small island countries, situated in the Caribbean and the Pacific, that have gained independence from the same metropolitan power, Britain, but may still be expected to perform differently in terms of democratic style and democratic architecture.

The tool for discriminating between democratic styles is Arend Lijphart's (1984) well-known distinction between a Westminster or majoritarian democracy on the one hand, best exemplified by Britain, and consensual democracy on the other. In a retrospective article Lijphart has suggested that political culture and political structure tend to interact very closely with each other and that the structure of consensus democracy may spring from a general cultural inclination toward consensus (1998:105–107). It is the aim of this essay to study the validity of this hypothesis, and the comparison of Caribbean and Pacific island states is guided by this ambition. If Lijphart's view is accepted, the expectation will be that, more than Caribbean nations, South Pacific nations have embarked in their applications of Westminster democracy on a road toward the accommodation of consensus. This is because the Pacific nations preserve a culture that is oriented toward consensus and consultation, brought to the fore in several cases in basic normative and ideological declarations and texts, like constitutional preambles (D. Anckar 1999a). Insofar as culture models structure, the outcome of the introduction of the Westminster model should in the Pacific region be more in the direction of consensus democracy than in the Caribbean region, which does not to the same extent have long-standing indigenous and consensual cultures and traditions (e.g., Horner 1992).

Nine small independent island states in the Caribbean region and seven small independent island states in the Pacific region are investigated, the upper size threshold being a population of approximately one million people at time of independence. The Caribbean cases are Antigua-Barbuda (independent in 1981), Bahamas (1973), Barbados (1966), Dominica (1978), Grenada (1974), St. Kitts-Nevis (1983), St. Lucia (1979), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1979), and Trinidad and Tobago (1962). The Pacific cases are Fiji (1970), Kiribati (1979), Nauru (1968), Solomon Islands (1978), Tuvalu (1978), Vanuatu (1980), and Western Samoa (1962). In 1997, by act of par-

liament, Western Samoa changed its name to Samoa, and although this essay deals with democracy models introduced at the independence stage, the new name of the country will be used here. All Caribbean nations are former British colonies, and the same is true of Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands (British protectorate), and Tuvalu. Nauru gained independence from a status as a trust territory of Australia, New Zealand, and Britain; and Samoa is independent from U.N. trusteeship and New Zealand administration. Vanuatu, finally, is independent from a status as the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides (van Trease 1995a). Thus, the colonial background of Nauru, Vanuatu, and Samoa is only partially and indirectly British. However, their colonial history involves a strong British legacy. Fiji suffered later from racial tensions and political turmoil to an extent that calls its democratic standing into question (e.g., Lawson 1991); however, at the time following independence, Fiji was indeed "the shining example of democracy, multicultural harmony and development in the Pacific, and indeed a standard for the entire Third World" (Kay 1993:28). Tonga, however, is excluded from the analysis of Pacific countries. The country has a semi-authoritarian regime and is often classified as an absolutist system (e.g., Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1993:49); furthermore, although at times under British protection in the field of foreign affairs, Tonga was never fully colonized (Campbell 1992:112–113; Colbert 1997:25).

By restricting the analysis to this set of small island states, several advantages can be achieved. First, a clear-cut variation in the independent variable is obtained, as the research population consists of one group of units that represent a consensual view and another group of units that do not represent this view. Second, this family-of-nations approach (Peters 1998: 74–77) controls for a variety of exogenous factors as well as assures that characteristics that are essential to the analysis are included in the framework. The units are former British colonies and have therefore, on the whole, been submitted to the same type of attempts by the metropolitan power to control the political architecture of the new nation and to influence the preparing of the independence constitution. Furthermore, the units all departed after independence on roads toward democracy (Hadenius 1992:61–62), and are therefore, in contrast, for instance, to Bahrain or Swaziland, colonies that are relevant cases in efforts to detect variation in democratic style. Third, the essay takes due notice that Lijphart's overarching concern has been with politics and representation in plural societies where people are segmented into more or less permanent ethnic and other social groups with their own interests (e.g., 1984:22–23). It therefore aims at controlling for the impact on structure of various types of fragmentation, and the island states populations perform well in this respect also. On the

one hand, island states represent different geographical configurations, some consisting of one island, some consisting of two main islands, and some being archipelagoes; they therefore represent variation in terms of geographical fragmentation. On the other hand, contrary to conventional wisdom (e.g., Dahl and Tufte 1973), recent research suggests that small nations are no more homogeneous than large nations (D. Anckar 1999b). The small island states therefore probably form an equally adequate and valid category in terms of ethnic and social fragmentation as any other group of states.

Culture, Fragmentation, and Geography

The belief that political life in the Pacific is guided by a consensual mood is well supported in the literature. Books and chapters on the Pacific region are in fact swarming with observations and declarations that indicate the existence of a "Pacific Way" "whereby issues are talked through in an unhurried fashion in informal meetings, in pursuit of a consensus acceptable to all involved" (Henningham 1995:15). Only a few scattered examples from different countries can be given here. About politics in the Solomon Islands it has been said, "A group of people sitting down together to discuss a problem is a more Melanesian way of proceeding than a formal debate followed by a vote" (Alasia 1989:144). Research on the political culture of Vanuatu suggests that people attempt to conceptualize and to portray their community as a cohesive, coherent whole (Facey 1995:214), and an exposition of Samoan politics maintains that the *fa'amatai* (social organization) insists on making decisions on a consultative basis, the ideal being that the decision-making processes include and involve all relevant people (Tagaloa 1992: 122–123). There is in Nauruan society an absence of aggression and an emphasis on the achievement of harmony (Crocombe 1988:54), and texts about Kiribati suggest that leadership is consensual, avoiding confrontation or the public criticism or embarrassment of others (Macdonald 1996:6), and that in accepting the Westminster model, the country has modified the model to suit its egalitarian ethos (Neemia 1992:8). The same characterizations are valid also for other than former British colonies in the region. For instance, in the Marshall Islands there is little vocalizing of discontent, reflecting the influence of the traditional system on modern-day politics (Johnson 1988: 82); and in Belau, there are few hard and fast political divisions among a people who value family, clan, and village ties more than party affiliation (Quimby 1988:113; Anckar, Anckar, and Nilsson 1998:81–84).

Still, the ideal of consensus may be exaggerated in texts about Pacific politics. In her authoritative study of Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa, Stephanie Lawson (1996) suggests that the emphasis on consensus is in many

instances misleading and that efforts to defend tradition in fact are about the protection of the power and privileges of indigenous élites. However, if consensus is taken to mean no more than a culturally derived estrangement to the open display of divisivenesses and conflicts and to institutions for the management of overt conflict, it can hardly be denied that the Pacific region is imbued with consensual traits that mold and cultivate democracy Pacific style. A dichotomizing approach to culture as an independent variable that simply distinguishes between Caribbean and Pacific nations therefore seems valid. To repeat, the expectation is that, more than Caribbean nations, Pacific nations lean toward and apply a consensual approach to democracy and democratic structure.

The contesting explanatory consideration is about the impact of fragmentation. When writing his early and widely recognized volume *Democracy in Plural Societies,* Lijphart turned against the established political-science proposition that it is difficult to achieve and maintain stable democratic government in a plural society and that social homogeneity and political consensus are factors strongly conducive to stable democracy (1977:1). He argued that the goal of stable democracy was perfectly attainable in plural societies as well, given that the form of government involved consociational features. The idea to be tested here is a fairly straightforward application of Lijphart's thoughts. It is assumed that the inclination of a democratic unit to resort to a consensual rather than a majoritarian view of democracy is a function of the degree of ethnic fragmentation that prevails in that country; this is because heterogeneous units have a stronger need to balance antagonisms and incongruities and to provide against conflicts and disorders that may emanate from an ethnically defined multitude of interests and attitudes. Within the frame of this essay, then, the expectation is that heterogeneous islands are more inclined than homogeneous islands to make use of consensual devices and practices.

To test the correctness of this idea, one needs to measure the extent of homogeneity in the island states. To accomplish this task, data are employed here from a study by Carsten Anckar and Mårten Eriksson (1998), who have used the fragmentation index created by Douglas Rae for the calculation of party-system fragmentation to compile the extent of ethnic homogeneity in the states of the world. The theoretical rationale for the Rae formula is that it represents the frequency with which pairs of voters would disagree in their choice of parties if an entire electorate would act randomly (Rae 1971: 55–56), and Anckar and Eriksson modify this rationale to describe the probability that randomly selected samples of 1 percent of the population consist of individuals belonging to different ethnic groups (1998:8). The index runs from 0 to 1, where the value approaches 1 as fragmentation increases. The

TABLE 1. **Homogeneity Values for Sixteen Small Island States**

Antigua-Barbuda	0.20	St. Lucia	0.15
Bahamas	0.44	St. Vincent and the	
Barbados	0.33	Grenadines	0.53
Dominica	0.17	Solomon Islands	0.11
Fiji	0.55	Trinidad and	
Grenada	0.53	Tobago	0.64
Kiribati	0.05	Tuvalu	0.16
Nauru	0.58	Vanuatu	0.06
St. Kitts–Nevis	0.25	Samoa	0.22

Source: Anckar and Eriksson 1998.

Anckar-Eriksson index gives data separately for ethnic and religious frag-
mentation. The ethnic fragmentation index is used here, and the relevant
values for individual cases are given in Table 1.

The data indicate considerable variation. Whereas some nations are quite
homogeneous, others are clearly heterogeneous. Within the frame of varia-
tion, two fairly distinct groups may, however, be established. The average
value for the sixteen countries is 0.31, and when this entry is used as a cut-
ting point, a group with nine homogeneous countries emerges, the range
being between 0.05 and 0.25. There are also seven heterogeneous countries,
the range being between 0.33 and 0.64. There is not much overlapping of
culture and fragmentation. Of the nine homogeneous cases, four are from
the Caribbean and five from the Pacific region; whereas, of the seven heter-
ogeneous cases, five are from the Caribbean and two from the Pacific region.

The third assumption is about the role of geography. The distinction that
is used is between contiguous and noncontiguous units (Merritt 1969), and
the expectation is that more than contiguous units, noncontiguous units pro-
mote a consensus democracy. Again, this expectation builds on conceptions
of fragmentation. In archipelago states, it has been said, each island, how-
ever small, tends to have a distinct history, unique cultural characteristics,
and often its own language or dialect (Hamilton-Jones 1992:200). Indeed, in
some small-island cases the fragmentation assumes immense proportions:
"Nowhere is the complexity of cross-cutting cultural, geographic, linguistic,
and political ties more evident than in the Federated States of Micronesia"
(Petersen 1989:285). Although differences in terms of fragmentation
certainly exist between noncontiguous units, they can all be expected to
share a concern for the management and accommodation of the mental
distances that are outcomes of geographical distance. Therefore, and also
because identifications and structures for identification are as a rule an-

chored in island-specific rather than nation-specific contexts and circumstances (D. Anckar 1999a, 2001) and thereby obstruct attempts at nation building, noncontiguous units are better served than contiguous units by consensual devices and arrangements.

In the following, island states that consist of one island only are classified as contiguous units, whereas island states that consist of two or more islands are classified as noncontiguous units. There are five states in the single-island category, namely, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Nauru, and St. Lucia (Grenada has two small outer islands named Carriacou and Petit Martinique that are, however, insignificant to a degree that justifies the classification of Grenada as a one-island state). Of the remaining eleven noncontiguous units, four—namely Antigua-Barbuda, St. Kitts–Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and Samoa—are two-island states, whereas the other seven are archipelagoes. The distinction between two-island states and archipelagic states may, however, be disregarded in this context, as there is little reason to believe that the one type of fragmentation is easier to handle than the other type. In fact, evidence suggests that the antagonism between the constituent parts of two-island states may be strikingly intense and difficult to reconcile (e.g., Inniss 1983; Richardson 1992:187–188). It should also be noted that the ethnic and the geographic dimensions do not overlap in the research population: of the contiguous units two are homogeneous and three heterogeneous, whereas of the noncontiguous units six are homogeneous and five are heterogeneous.

The Dependent Variable

In *Democracy in Plural Societies* (1977), Lijphart provided a thorough review of features and devices of consociational political systems. He also discussed the social and political features that promote the emergence of such systems and advocated the development of such systems in the plural societies of the Third World. In later writings Lijphart has developed his thoughts on the matter. He has on several occasions returned to the question of favorable factors for consociational democracy (Bogaards 1998), and he has in another much-quoted volume expanded his analysis into a contrastive model of majoritarian and consensual systems for twenty-one democratic nations (Lijphart 1984). In this work, to quote his own words from a later review, he formulated a set of majoritarian characteristics of democratic government that were "logically based on the principle of concentrating as much power as possible in the hands of the majority" (Lijphart 1989:34). He also derived a set of logical opposites, "based on the principle of sharing, dispersing, and limiting power in a variety of ways" (ibid.). As explained earlier, this distinction between a majoritarian or Westminster model of democracy, on the one

hand, and a consensual model of democracy, on the other hand, frames the comparison between small island states that is undertaken here.

In order to define the extent to which nations adhere to a majoritarian or a consensus form of democracy, one needs to establish an operationalization in terms of which the comparison between nations can be effected. Following Lijphart's identification of main characteristics of the majoritarian and the consensual model, and following closely also Kenneth McRae's listing of these characteristics (1997:283–284), one is left with nine devices or practices that draw a demarcation line between a majoritarian and a consensual model. The majoritarian model (1) posits one-party executive power in cabinets that command a majority of parliamentary seats; (2) supposes cabinet control of parliament and a fusion of executive-legislative authority; (3) leans to asymmetrical bicameralism and legislative dominance by the lower house; (4) prefers and works toward a two-party system; (5) presupposes a one-dimensional party system; (6) prefers elections in single-member constituencies by the plurality method; (7) assumes a unitary, uniform, and centralized system of government; (8) does not require a written constitution; and (9) resorts sparingly to referenda. In contrast, the consensual model (1) shares executive power among all important parties in parliament; (2) is marked by separation of executive and legislative authority; (3) gives powers to the upper house and typically uses it to protect minority interests; (4) is open to multiparty politics; (5) accepts the possibility of multiple cleavages in society and a multidimensional party system to reflect them; (6) uses some form of proportional representation; (7) provides autonomous areas for minority interests through federalism or decentralization of authority; (8) requires a written constitution; and (9) resorts to referenda.

However, these listings cannot, for different reasons, be used as such in the kind of empirical research that is attempted here. The following objections and corrections apply:

1. A couple of characteristics clearly lack relevance. The referendum characteristic, it has been said, is not really distinguishing in efforts to separate majoritarian and consensual systems (McRae 1997:284), and it may be disregarded. (If this device were classified, contrary to Lijphart's suggestion, as an institution for promoting the will of the majority, it would belong in the majoritarian and not in the consensual category.) The written constitution characteristic is less distinguishing still (Foley 1989:3–11), and may also be disregarded.

2. The question of a fusion or separation of legislative and executive authority is clearly relevant for any characterization of the majority-consensus dimension, and it will come to use here. One specific aspect of the fusion device that provides additional information will be classified sepa-

rately. This aspect concerns the dissolution of parliament, which may or may not be at the discretion of the executive. If it is, the device is classified here as supportive of majoritarianism, this classification following from the Westminster emphasis on cabinet control of parliament. However, if parliament decides on its own life and if dissolution, in consequence, is not at the discretion of the executive, the device is classified as consensual in nature. Although there is much diversity in the provisions for dissolution in the various cases at hand, the actual empirical classifications are clear-cut and nonproblematic. In one specific case, namely, Kiribati, the executive and the legislature are equally balanced (Ghai 1988b:84); this case is classified here in the majoritarian category.

3. In introducing party-systems characteristics into his model, Lijphart blends dispositional and relational components, which is generally an ill-advised thing to do in the classification of regimes, not least because the method tends to create conceptual ambiguities (Elgie 1998). Also, the Lijphart framework is a model and therefore represents a blend of causes and consequences. For instance, the existence of single or multiple cleavages in society and the use of the plurality or the proportional electoral method are causally related to the number of parties. Furthermore, maintaining party-systems characteristics and party dimensions as elements of the dependent variable creates specific difficulties in this essay, as several units, for different reasons, do not, although they are mature democracies, have and operate political parties in the conventional meaning of the term (Anckar and Anckar 2000). In consequence, the characteristics that deal with the number of parties, the party composition of the executive, and the social basis of the party system must be deleted from the design of this research. I do not mean to say, however, that features relating to social cleavages and party systems are ignored. They are incorporated through observations on culture and fragmentation and are thereby, correctly, assigned the role as *explanans* rather than *explanandum.*

4. In one further respect, which concerns bicameralism, the Lijphart framework must be altered. A familiar distinction concerning this device is between a bicameralism that aims at moderation and quality assurance and one that aims at the resolving of regional and other distinct interests (e.g., Money and Tsebelis 1992:27–31). Lijphart classifies a moderating type of bicameralism as a majoritarian device, whereas a regional or federal type of bicameralism, in his view, constitutes a consensual device. This is a strange distinction, indeed, not least because it does not take account of the existence of unicameralism. Anyhow, in terms of the distinction between majoritarianism and consensualism, the bicameral device, be it moderating or federal, must always be classified as supportive of consensualism. When

moderating, the device provides means for delay, second thoughts, and re-fined consideration; it thereby indirectly accommodates and fosters the interests of minorities. When federal, it promotes the same goal by explicitly focusing on the representation of diverse interests. In the following, there-fore, a distinction is made between countries that maintain bicameralism (consensualism) and countries that do not (majoritarianism). The rather peculiar arrangements in Dominica, St. Kitts–Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines that seat elected members and appointed senators in the same house are classified here in the majoritarian category. This is because the arrangements do not recognize shuttle systems and stopping rules that are commonly used for resolving disagreements between houses in bicameral systems. The mechanisms for quality assurance and moderation are not there; the bicameral function is therefore not satisfied (D. Anckar 1998:372).

5. One device will be added here to Lijphart's scheme. This device is apportionment. The term usually denotes that phase of the electoral process that concerns the allocation of seats to constituencies (Nurmi 1987:181), but here it is given a very specific meaning. The focus is on a special kind of apportionment by which a certain region or part of a country or a specific interest of some kind is guaranteed by constitutional or similar norms mem-bership in the legislature (or, in the case of bicameral legislatures, in the lower chamber). Such an arrangement serves to disperse and limit power and is therefore aimed at balancing the penetration power of the majority.

6. To classify devices into a majoritarian or a consensual category implies dichotomization and thereby simplification, perhaps in some instances even oversimplification (e.g., Peters 1998:96–97). In the present context the clas-sification difficulties are surmountable. A specific comment that relates to electoral systems, however, needs to be inserted. Some political systems may combine elements from proportional and pluralistic electoral methods, thereby distancing themselves from systems that prescribe either propor-tional or pluralistic systems. For instance, Giovanni Sartori argues that it is not the case that all electoral systems can be classified as being either majori-tarian or proportional: "The double ballot system can either be a majorita-rian system with single-member constituencies, or a proportional system with multi-member constituencies" (1994:4). The cases that are dealt with here do not, however, present complicated problems in this respect. Some nations make use of the plural method with single-member constituen-cies and are classified in the majoritarian category; others use proportional methods or pluralistic methods with proportional elements and are there-fore regarded as consensual. In this last category one finds, for instance, Kiribati, which makes use of run-off elections and multimember constituen-cies (Brechtefeld 1993); Vanuatu, which likewise uses a system based on

TABLE 2. **Consensus Characteristics in Sixteen Small Island States**

Nation	Separation of Authority	Dissolution by Legislature	Bicamer-alism	Propor-tionality	Decentral-ization	Apportion-ment
Antigua-Barbuda	0	0	+	0	+	0
Bahamas	0	0	+	0	0	0
Barbados	0	0	+	0	0	0
Dominica	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fiji	0	0	+	0	+	+
Grenada	0	0	+	0	0	0
Kiribati	0	0	0	+	+	+
Nauru	0	+	0	+	0	0
St. Kitts–Nevis	0	0	0	0	+	+
St. Lucia	0	0	+	0	0	0
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0	0	0	0	0	0
Solomon Islands	0	+	0	0	+	0
Trinidad and Tobago	+	0	+	0	+	+
Tuvalu	0	+	0	0	+	+
Vanuatu	0	+	0	+	+	+
Samoa	0	+	0	0	0	0

Sources: Separation of authority, dissolution by legislature: Blaustein and Flanz (relevant issues); Ghai 1988b. Bicameralism: Blaustein and Flanz (relevant issues); also Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1993; Money and Tsebelis 1992; D. Anckar 1998. Proportionality: Blais and Massicotte 1997; also *Electoral Systems* 1993. Decentralization: Blaustein and Flanz (relevant issues); also Ghai 1988a, 1990. Apportionment: D. Anckar 1996.

multimember constituencies (van Trease 1995b); and Nauru, which uses the alternative vote system.

Indeed, not much is left now of Lijphart's original scheme. Out of nine characteristics, two are discarded because of lack of relevance, and another three are taken out to form elements of independent rather than dependent variables. Of the remaining four characteristics, three are accepted, whereas one (bicameralism) is reworked. Two additional characteristics are included. The scores of each of the sixteen cases on the six components of the dependent variable (separation of authority, dissolution by legislature, bicameralism, proportional or semiproportional electoral method, decentralized government, use of apportionment) are given in Table 2, a plus sign indicating a consensual score and a zero indicating a majoritarian score. Since the majoritarian and the consensual characteristics are derived from the same principle, the theoretical expectation would be that they occur together in the real world in two clusters (Lijphart 1989:34). This, however, is not the case. Only two countries, namely, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grena-

TABLE 3. **Majority-Consensus Ratios for Three Categorizations of Sixteen Small Island States**

Countries	Classifications (percentage)		Classifications (*N*)
	Majoritarian	Consensual	
Caribbean	78	22	54
Pacific	57	43	42
Homogeneous	67	33	54
Heterogeneous	71	29	42
Contiguous	83	17	30
Noncontiguous	62	38	66

dines, represent purely majoritarian cases; and there is not one single case that satisfies in full the demands for a consensual democracy. Trinidad and Tobago and Vanuatu come closest to this category, both displaying four out of six consensual characteristics. The vast majority of nations represent in-between cases, and about two-thirds of them lean more toward majoritarianism than consensualism. Out of a total of 96 classifications, 66 are in the majoritarian category and 30 in the consensual category. The distribution suggests the existence of transfer as well as transformation: although the Westminster model is alive and well, modifications and alterations are frequent.

Findings and Discussion

A chapter on the future of democracy in the South Pacific educates its readers about the regional derivatives of the Westminster system: "Although the current political systems in Western Samoa, Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Cook Islands and others all incorporate various aspects of the Westminster system, each of them is very different from the other" (Crocombe 1992:10). By condensing these differences into the frameworks of majoritarian and consensual democracy and by introducing culture, fragmentation, and geography as broad explanatory factors, I have tried in this essay to picture and understand the similarities and dissimilarities that exist between various Pacific islands with a British colonial legacy and between these Pacific islands on the one hand and a corresponding set of Caribbean islands on the other.

    The empirical findings are summarized in three tables. Table 3 provides an overall view of the individual classifications in Table 2 and reports, for each independent variable, the percentage of classifications that goes into the

TABLE 4. **The Number of Consensus Characteristics in Three Sets of Countries**

	Culture		Fragmentation		Geography	
	Majority (9)	Consensus (7)	Low (9)	High (7)	Contiguity (5)	Noncontiguity (11)
SEP	1	0	0	1	0	1
DL	0	5	4	1	1	4
BC	6	1	2	5	3	4
PR	0	3	2	1	1	2
DC	3	5	6	2	0	8
APP	2	4	4	2	0	6
Total	12	18	18	12	5	25

SEP = separation of authority; DL = dissolution by legislature; BC = bicameralism; PR = proportionality; DC = decentralization; APP = apportionment.

majoritarian or the consensual category. The distributions appear encouraging from the point of view of theoretical expectations. First, more than Caribbean countries, Pacific countries lean toward consensualism. No less than 78 percent of the classifications that concern Caribbean countries are in the majoritarian category, whereas 43 percent of the classifications that concern Pacific countries are in the consensual category. The Pacific political structures therefore appear more consensual than the Caribbean; the link between consensual culture and consensual structure is apparently there. Second, in like manner, geography makes a difference. More than contiguous countries, noncontiguous countries employ consensual devices. However, fragmentation does not operate in the expected direction, homogeneous countries being even more inclined than heterogeneous countries to resort to consensual devices.

Two more tables differentiate the picture further. Table 4 breaks down the classifications in Table 3 and now presents the distribution of individual consensus characteristics on countries that are differentiated in terms of culture, fragmentation, and geography. Finally, in the form of a truth table, which is a basic tool of the Boolean algebra approach (Ragin 1987; Peters 1998:162–171), Table 5 searches for explanatory patterns that comprise combinations of independent variables and classifies the available cases in terms of presence (Y = yes) or absence (N = no) of presumed determinants as well as presence or absence of the expected outcome. As the table represents an attempt to explain why countries adopt a consensual regime, Pacific region, high fragmentation, and noncontiguous geography are relevant independent factors. In this Boolean analysis, countries are classified as consen-

TABLE 5. **Explaining Democratic Style: A Boolean Truth Table**

Independent Variables			Consensus Democracy Cases	
Culture	Fragmentation	Geography	Y	N
N	N	N	0	2
Y	N	N	0	0
N	Y	N	0	2
N	N	Y	0	2
Y	Y	N	0	1
Y	N	Y	3	2
N	Y	Y	1	2
Y	Y	Y	1	0

sual if they display consensual values on three out of the six components of the dependent variable.

By and large, Tables 4 and 5 repeat and confirm earlier impressions. Thus, the overall impact of fragmentation, on the one hand, appears rather negligible: it does not matter much if the units are homogeneous or heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity. On the other hand, culture and geography make a difference. The impact is, however, not general in the sense that it can be recorded for all dependent factors. Rather, in regard to culture and especially to geography, the impact of these variables is fairly selective. There is a tendency for culture to promote a legislative dissolution power and also a proportional method of election, whereas geography, when non-contiguous, advances the emergence of a decentralized government and the use of the apportionment device. The link between culture and the right of the legislature to decide on its own life reflects an ambition in many Pacific states to strengthen the position of the legislature. This ambition, again, is an outcome of culture insofar as the resistance against divisions and party systems makes executive control of the legislature an awkward and unpredictable arrangement (Ghai 1988b:84–88). A specific observation from Table 4 merits attention: the relation between culture and bicameralism that appears in the table is not in the expected direction. The device is to be found in several Caribbean but not in the Pacific countries. The probable explanation for the use of the device in some Caribbean cases is that it improves the balance of representation (Laundy 1989:10; D. Anckar 1998:372–375). Insofar as this interpretation is correct, it serves to show that, in some instances at least, consensual devices may emerge from a majoritarian culture.

An inspection of the truth table again underlines the position of culture and also indicates the power of a combination of culture and geography.

Although a consensual culture and a dispersed geography are often characteristic of cases that display consensual devices, neither culture nor geography always produces a consensual structure; however, when consensual cases are at hand, the two factors are present with some regularity. They come, in fact, close to constituting necessary conditions. This is especially true of the dispersed geography factor, which is present in all five cases of consensualism; not a single case combines a contiguous geography and a consensually flavored political structure. The argument that a dispersed geography promotes consensualism is certainly well supported in the data.

The emphasis on geography is much in line with several other recent research findings about democracies and small states, which likewise emphasize the importance of geographical and physical factors. For instance, whereas one study has demonstrated that variations in terms of party fragmentation between democracies is a function of size differences, this rule applying irrespective of electoral systems and several other institutional factors (C. Anckar 1998), another study has suggested that the existence of predominating party systems in small island states is best explained in terms of size differences between small and extremely small states (D. Anckar 1997). The geographical factor is present also in the empirical finding that islands with a colonial past under British or American rule are more democratic than states lacking both of, or one of, the island and colonial heritage characteristics (C. Anckar 1997). Furthermore, differences in the political architecture of legislatures in small island states tend to follow from differences in terms of geographical contiguity (D. Anckar 1996). More than small size, culture, and fragmentation, it is argued, dispersed geography accounts for the fact that a handful of small island democracies do not have political parties (Anckar and Anckar 2000). Of course, geography does not explain everything about politics and power, as the early geopoliticians would have it (e.g., Taylor 1993:33). This essay and others, however, suggest that geography is not an insignificant factor. By affecting the motives, inducements, calculations, and behavior of constitution makers, geography penetrates into and molds political structures. Jean Gottmann has stated in an essay on perspectives of political geography that it is the task of the political processes to manage spatial partitioning (1980:433); indeed, in light of this research, the task is well fulfilled among small island states.

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BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Stephanie Lawson, *Tradition versus Democracy in the South Pacific: Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa*. Cambridge Asia-Pacific Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. x, 228, maps, tables, notes, bib., index. US$64.95 cloth.

Editors' Note: Because of the fluidity of the situation in Fiji, it is important for readers to note that the various reviews and the author's response were written in late 1999 and early 2000, before the events of May 2000.   —LL & DBR

Review: Henry J. Rutz
Hamilton College
Clinton, New York

Evaluating the Discourse of Tradition

Arguably the most important problems of many Pacific Islands countries today concern political legitimation. The postcolonial history of Pacific Islanders is devoid of the wars and genocidal confrontations of Africa, the death-squad democracies of Latin America, and the authoritarian oppression of some Asian countries. The word "crisis" would be inappropriate for this region's colonial and postcolonial political rhetoric and constitutional development. To date, the only events worthy of the term were those of the bloodless Fiji coups of 1987, the first ever in the region.

Nevertheless, if "crisis" refers to the ontology of legitimation, by which I mean serious disagreements about what constitutes legitimacy, that is, what

legitimacy "is," then a number of Pacific Islands countries can be said to be in a state of perpetual legitimation contests that consist of discourse about their constitutional development. The single exception is the bloodless Fiji coups of 1987, the first ever in the region. These did produce a constitutional crisis that brought the country back to "normalcy," to use a term of international diplomacy, in 1990. In the Pacific Islands, the postcolonial process of constituting the nation-state and constructing national cultures continues to be a project in the uses of the past. Indigenous peoples lay claim to "tradition" as the source of political legitimacy.

This thoughtful and provocative book explores in depth the dialogic "tradition versus democracy" discussion that has come to frame particular discourses of legitimation in many Pacific Islands countries, with special reference to Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa. On the one hand, there is the recent world-historical triumph of democracy, reinforced by American hegemony, which more than ever coerces all countries, including those in the Pacific Islands, to frame certain ideas about political legitimacy as "democracy." In other words, from a global perspective, "democracy" is the hegemonic term in discourses about legitimation, and people in Pacific Islands countries are aware that they are not beyond the reach of global hegemony. On the other hand, there are, from an insular perspective, discourses of legitimation in which ideas about "tradition" are hegemonic. As the ironic title of Lawson's book suggests, she views all these discourses as being framed by a dialogism in which ideas about democracy are opposed to ideas about tradition, either as complementary or contradictory ciphers in the power struggles of political elites.

In the past several decades Pacific historians, anthropologists, and political scientists have produced a large and rich literature on tradition as a form of history and culture. Less often have they linked their cultural studies to questions of elitism and political ideology, or both questions to problems of legitimation, which always brings into view a particular formation of the state as an instrument of elite power.

Lawson's book makes four important contributions to a subject that will continue to preoccupy scholars of the Pacific Islands. First, she brings together in her text the voices of Pacific Islands politicians, journalists, activists, academicians, and intellectuals. Readers will find a treasure trove of sources in the detailed chapter notes and her bibliography. Second, in her first and last chapters, she addresses many epistemological issues that plague the literature on tradition and adopts an epistemological posture, bringing into her discussion the reflections of many authors whose geographical interests lie in other parts of the world. Third, she synthesizes the particularities of our knowledge about legitimation contests for three countries, pro-

viding a comparative perspective that has been lacking in the literature. Fourth, and most courageously, she takes a stand against the discourse of "tradition" by evaluating it negatively from the viewpoint of a discourse of "democracy."

My brief comments are directed at Lawson's evaluation of the dialogism of "tradition" versus "democracy." Her conclusions raise questions about evaluative criteria and the place of interpretation and relativism in comparative studies. It will be useful at the outset to have a précis of Lawson's conclusions about the dialogics of tradition versus democracy. For Lawson, tradition is not just another cultural system, a particular form of history that views the past as present. Whatever its cultural logic, tradition is an ideology that legitimates the social hierarchy, especially for chiefs whose discourse of "tradition" is a cipher for codifying privilege and prerogative in the name of preservation and protection of culture from alien elements that are perceived as destructive of a way of life. Furthermore, the discourse of "tradition," which is inherently conservative, has become more rigid as it has been codified in the constitution of the nation-state. Thereafter, the legitimacy of the state resides in the constitution, framed by a discourse of "tradition" and valorizing the social hierarchy as a natural civic order.

In the Pacific Islands, the discourse of "tradition" also is shaped by a dialectical relationship to the discourse of "democracy." The latter is portrayed as alien to "the Pacific Way." This dialectic becomes hypocritical and oppressive when discourses of tradition take on the characteristics of island xenophobia. Chiefs encourage commoners to think that by accepting the authority of tradition, they must reject "the Alien Way" (the "money way"). It is a frequent observation that those elites who most strongly defend tradition in the interest of commoners also share unequally in the benefits of education, employment, consumption of imports, and travel to foreign lands. Seeing tradition as ideology removes the apparent paradox of chiefs as the keepers of authentic culture who consume other cultures, specifically those whose discourses of legitimation are democratic.

Lawson has gone farther than most in taking a position against the politics of tradition in Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa. In between the lines there is more than a little frustration with relativistic analyses of history, culture, and symbolism. Political scientists seem less prone to relativism than anthropologists. Political theory is, by and large, democratic theory, and political scientists haven't had much use for the old science of culture. Some anthropologists, steeped in the relativism of cultural systems and still not wholly comfortable with the ideological dimension of culture or the necessity of thinking about culture in terms of nation-states, are reluctant to insinuate themselves in the evaluation of systems of legitimation that govern

the lives of others. But on these points Lawson is most convincing. She argues, correctly in my opinion, that cultural relativism can't be defended. It rests on a false dichotomy between outside-inside, as if there is intellectual sovereignty over particular forms of culture or ideas. Following Nathan, she rejects the claim that evaluation of "otherness" is a form of cultural imperialism, on grounds that value judgments underwrite all forms of communication. To give over the power of evaluation to cultural relativism would be to admit all forms of political legitimacy as equivalent without any basis for judgment.

In Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa, the main defenders of tradition as the basis of legitimacy are political elites, primarily chiefs or nobles, whose privileges and prerogatives depend upon maintaining their positions in a social hierarchy. The three countries (which have a shared history in the precontact period) have slightly different kinds and degrees of social hierarchy, which themselves have implications for differences in their rhetoric and politics of tradition. But they all have an entrenched stratum of chiefs whose legitimacy rests on perceptions of their power to protect people from harm and promote the welfare of all. This original power derives from divinity, *mana,* or some other supernatural source—most definitely not from the people. From the viewpoint of practically any rhetoric of "democracy," these discourses of "tradition" look more similar than different. Each country has an equivalent phrase for "tradition" that encompasses an ontology of things believed to be "good" or "true": *vakavanua* in Fiji, *anga faka Tonga* in Tonga, and *fa'a Samoa* in Western Samoa. In each case, tradition is conflated within chieftainship: *vakaturaga* in Fiji, *anga faka Tonga* in Tonga, and *fa'amatai* in Western Samoa. The ontological framework that conflates tradition with social hierarchy is captured by Lawson when she quotes the words of Queen Salote on the founding of the Tongan Traditions Committee in 1952(!) to the effect that "the customs of the people are its heritage" (p. 97). Lawson goes on to say: "But the kind of heritage recalled through genealogical knowledge is one which can only be expressed in the idiom of chiefliness."

The identity of the individual, the group, and the nation are one in tradition. When Indira Gandhi came to Fiji in 1982, a year of national elections fraught with Fijians' fears of losing control of the government to Indians, commoner Fijian friends took the occasion of her visit to instruct me: "You see now that Indians cannot win. How could an Indian be prime minister or governor-general? How could he greet a foreign visitor in the correct manner?" The Fijian rituals of *vakavanua* (tradition), which include greetings to high chiefs that incorporate formal speech codes in Fijian language and ceremonies, had become official government protocol. My Fijian friends found the protocol for ceremonies of state and "the Fijian way of life" to be indistinguishable. The idea of an Indian head of state in charge of the former

was incomprehensible to them because of the impossibility of an Indian in charge of the latter, whereas my own confusion arose from the incomprehensibility to me of an Indian governor-general of Fiji who could fail to give a proper welcome to a prime minister of India.

Five years later, in 1987, the first Fiji coup laid bare two incompatible ontologies and their relation to two different forms of political legitimation. The 1987 coups are significant because crisis brought into the open just how little most Fijians—at all levels of the social hierarchy—had made democracy a part of their lives. Lawson points out that it is Christianity, not democracy, that Pacific Islanders brought into their lives. Democracy, to use her words, is a "regime legitimator," there for the eyes of other nation-states (p. 160). As her case studies show, democratic practices are not a burning issue. In each case, the voice of democracy comes from a small number of educated individuals whose biographical profiles often stand apart from the vast majority of their fellow men and women. Colonial legacy and national status have, in all cases, effected real change in peoples' lives, necessitating a shift in rhetorical strategies. But there has been no transformation of the dialogic form of "tradition versus democracy." Instead, the form gradually (traditionalists, after all, are in no hurry) encompasses more and more foreign content, a kind of legitimation involution.

Lawson is on the mark when she concludes that, overall, in Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa the colonial legacy and nationhood have resulted in the intensification of elitism through a process of the codification of chieftainship as the linchpin of legitimation by virtue of tradition. Their constitutions provide for the retention of their highest chiefs as heads of state and recognition of aristocracy in places of power and wealth (p. 161).

What, then, are we to make of the global hegemony of "democratic" discourse? Pacific Islands countries, like so many others in the world today, "talk the talk but don't walk the walk." Lawson shows in her case studies that reforms in all three countries were responses to local contests within the discourse of "tradition," not embraces of democratic virtue. For example, the adoption of universal suffrage in Western Samoa was a response to the Samoan problem of inflated *matai* titles. And when it was adopted, the Village Fono Act of 1990 was an agreement to embrace universal suffrage at the cost of a reform that would actually increase local powers of the *matai* system.

The relativization of democracy, Lawson argues, poses further problems of interpretation and evaluation. The rhetorical strategy of inscribing "tradition" as "democracy" is one more way for conservative political elites to close the door to outside criticism, "accusing their critics not only of errors in cross-cultural understanding, but of ethnocentrism, epistemological imperialism,

cultural chauvinism, and so forth" (p. 35). In other words, conservative polit-
ical elites could use their own brand of political cultural relativism, strength-
ening the hand of reactionary and xenophobic nationalists. The purpose is
not to open debate about political legitimation but to stifle it.

Lawson discusses how Western Samoan political elites adopt the rhetor-
ical strategy of claiming that the chiefly system (*vakamatai*) is a pure form of
democracy, providing for all men the opportunity of becoming chiefs through
a process of consensus rather than secret ballot. The invocation of consensus
as a superior substitute for open debate and secret ballot is common in the
discourse of "tradition." In Pacific Islands chiefly systems, consensus means
going along with chiefly authority. Commoners neither dissent nor vote; they
grumble. Their only hope is for chiefs to delay action, sometimes for gener-
ations. The doctrine of cultural relativism without evaluation would be help-
less in the face of these and many other rhetorical strategies of "tradition."

Few countries remain that do not purport to be "democracies" or at least
to give the appearance of being sympathetic to a discourse of "democracy."
In the Pacific Islands cases, the global hegemonic discourse of "democracy"
is being brought inside other, counterhegemonic political discourses, that is,
those of "tradition," resulting in ambiguities, incongruities, and paradoxes
reflected in the "tradition versus democracy" debate.

Lawson is acutely aware of the ideological pitfalls of relativizing a discourse
of "democracy." Both as a matter of personal commitment and as a mundane
problem of comparative method, she is forced by the position she has taken
vis-à-vis "tradition" to say more about "democracy" by way of criteria for
evaluation. In her three chapters on country case studies, Lawson honors
the relativist position of interpreting each country's political discourse in the
context of its own culture and history. Here Lawson gives the reader a sense
of ambiguity and paradox in the constitutions of each state. A discourse
of "tradition" underscores reforms and strengthens its own legitimacy by
codifying it. Even radical action seems to result in a further reinforcement
of tradition. An example is the first Fiji coup in May of 1987, which surprised
practically everybody close to the events of the election, and it surely sur-
prised more distant observers. When prime minister and paramount chief
Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara was defeated in the April election, and the chiefs
had lost control of the reins of power for the first time, he included in his
concession speech a statement that the winner in the election was democracy.
And a few months later, when it looked like a coalition government would
resolve a constitutional crisis, restoring to power those who had won a valid
democratic election, an unexpected second coup happened in September,
restoring Fijians to power. By October, Fiji had gone from being a dominion
in the Commonwealth to becoming an independent republic. The winner

was the discourse of "tradition," which became more elaborated and codi-
fied in a new constitution in 1990 (Rutz 1995).

Lawson describes these and many other less-dramatic constitutional
reforms that continue to be shaped by political discourse in Fiji, Tonga, and
Western Samoa. She includes the voices of "democracy," found in such doc-
uments as the Declaration of Rights in the Tongan constitution or Western
Samoan elite ideas about the chiefly system (*fa'amatai*), as the purest form
of "democracy." In her case studies, she moves easily from exposition to
evaluation to express her approval or disapproval of efforts by Pacific Islanders
to shape their own discourse of "democracy." For example, she expresses her
approval of those parts of Tonga's Declaration of Rights that "suggest some
desire to give effect to certain principles associated with more modern lib-
eral values" (p. 94) while withholding her assent to an expression of equality
in the same constitution because it is compromised by the Tongan discourse
of "tradition." To take a more extreme example, she characterizes the Fijian
version of "democracy" reflected in the 1990 constitution as "a form of polit-
ical apartheid on the one hand, and the attempted institutionalization of a
one-party state on the other" (p. 66). This is in spite of her claim that "there
is no one institutional form that can be claimed to give ideal or exclusive ex-
pression to the practice of democratic politics" (ibid.). How do we reconcile
these apparent discrepancies?

Clearly, the problem lies not with her evaluation per se (with which I am
mostly in agreement), but with the methodological requirement to establish
explicit criteria of "democracy" that limit its elasticity and thereby reduce its
co-optation by nondemocratic discourses. To Lawson's credit, she struggles
mightily to provide the reader with standards of evaluation that underscore
her belief in the virtues of democracy but which expose her to relativistic
critique. Sometimes these appear in a case study side by side with its expo-
sition, such as in the example above when she invokes "liberal values" as a
criterion. Another example is when she rejects Fijian claims that the 1990
constitution is democratic on the grounds that denying political rights to one
part of a citizenry that are constitutionally granted to another "is contrary to
the character of democratic rule" (p. 67). A third example is when she in-
vokes the constitutional guarantee of the right of a political opposition to
come to power as "one of the most basic features of modern democracy" by
way of dismissing the Fijian constitution as nondemocratic (ibid.).

Lawson first addresses the problem of criteria in chapter 1, where she
defines democracy minimally as a system "in which no person can arrogate
to him or herself unconditional or unlimited power" (p. 35). But she recog-
nizes that this negative criterion is too weak to withstand a relativist critique.
This brings us back to her own rhetorical strategy. Lawson believes that dis-

courses of "tradition" are less desirable forms of political legitimation than those of "democracy." But why? The reason is that the former are dogmatic while the latter are open to change through debate. Democracy has its dogmatic truths, but it also has a built-in means to overcome them. She is not unmindful of similar criteria championed by Karl Popper earlier in the century, when the evaluation of both science and politics seemed less ambiguous and paradoxical. Popper made strong claims for the demarcation of science from myth and for the clear distinction between an open society and its enemies. Elsewhere in her discussion of the importance of traditions in every society, Lawson cites Popper on the distinction between uncritical acceptance of traditions and traditions that are subject to change by means of critical awareness (p. 16). However hard we try, it seems that we are forced back on outmoded and rejected dichotomies not unlike tradition-modernity, however suspect that may be. If we add to this protection of open debate a criterion of a constitutional guarantee that a political opposition has a peaceful means to come to power, we are probably as close as we can get to evaluative criteria for comparing "democratic" discourses and their relation to discourses of "tradition." Both, as Lawson recognizes, can be instituted in diverse ways.

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Review: GLENN PETERSEN
BARUCH COLLEGE,
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

The morning after I finished reading Stephanie Lawson's *Tradition versus Democracy in the South Pacific*, the *New York Times* ran an article concerning current Maori activism in Auckland, dwelling in particular on a sledgehammer attack upon the America's Cup. The accompanying photograph, spread across three columns, showed a solidly built young Maori in traditional attire, brandishing a carved stave at an older man in a business suit. The caption set the scene on the Waitangi Treaty grounds, where a wedding was underway, and explained that "a relative of the groom offered a traditional challenge to the father of the bride" (*New York Times,* 20 March 1997:A4).

Discussing the article in class, my students, who receive a later edition than the one delivered to me, immediately pointed out that in their copies the photo had been cropped, deleting both the bride's father and the additional commentary that the father "took a few steps forward and was then welcomed."

This excision struck me as mirroring the point of view Lawson brings to bear on questions of democracy and tradition in the Pacific. Our attention is drawn to a fierce greeting while we are led to ignore the warm hospitality that ordinarily follows it. In her examination of the sociopolitical precedents that have shaped Pacific Islanders' responses to European-imposed political institutions, Lawson finds little that might be described as receptive to democracy. She thus concludes that shortcomings in the ways new island nation-states adopt Western-style political values and institutions are mainly the result of local predispositions to social relations less egalitarian and participatory than those of the powers that impose these institutions upon them.

Throughout the island Pacific, formal ceremonies often include not only acknowledgements of political rank and prestations of food and floral garlands, but also performances that are decidedly martial in character. This amalgam of agonistic display and warm hospitality reflects the duality of foreign relations as they have evolved in Pacific Islands societies over millennia spent adapting to life in these particularly vulnerable environments. Island dwellers have reason to fear that others, displaced from their home islands by a range of phenomena (including storms and overpopulation) might seek in turn to displace them; at the same time, they also recognize that only their hospitality to those who have already been uprooted is likely to ensure them aid in bad times.[1] Performances of various kinds, including rhetorical flourishes but especially dance, are capable of transmitting the sorts of mixed messages that effectively communicate this ambivalence, informing outsiders simultaneously about a group's ability to defend itself and its willingness to be cooperative (Petersen 1992a).[2]

In the same vein, virtually all Pacific island communities maintain systems of social rank, regardless of the degree to which any sort of rank is actually acknowledged in everyday behavior. In the process of convincing outsiders of one's ability to defend oneself, people are likely to find that some manifestation of hierarchical political organization is almost indispensable; this does not mean, however, that people in these societies necessarily want to be burdened with the costs of putting up with formidable leaders on an everyday basis. In short, the existence of hierarchical political values and institutions in a given society does not tell us, a priori, much about their nature or about the circumstances in which they are brought to bear upon pressing strategic and tactical problems.

Having said this, I am prepared to argue that, with a few possible exceptions, Pacific Islands societies have been as likely to demonstrate aspects of democratic political processes as any in the world. Obviously, these communities have been engaged in continual social change and have at some times been more authoritarian than at others. I am not suggesting that their citizens are all paragons of virtue, but rather that they have pursued the same sorts of political struggles and dealt with the same contradictions that all societies confront. All of them seem to have placed high values on decentralization and political participation; attempts at centralization seem to have been resisted, if not always successfully. It is in the commitment to small-scale, face-to-face, and intensely participatory government that I find this democratic character most fully revealed.

Lawson examines the contemporary workings of government in Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa. She seeks to demonstrate that "traditionalist emphasis" on chiefs, monarchy, and *matai* in these three Pacific Islands societies, respectively, enhances and enforces the continuing rule of elites. "The concept of tradition," she says, "is one of the most important components of an ideological arsenal which has been used to counter the development of more democratic norms of political conduct and organization." In her view, indigenous claims about the continuing significance of tradition serve largely to preserve elite power and privilege against claims to "more extensive opportunities for participation" on the part of "those without traditionally derived political or social status" (p. 5).

Lawson couples an appreciation for classical political theory with keen powers of observation. She grounds her analyses upon sophisticated judgments concerning the relationships between that which members of various island societies say is going on and that which a range of competent scholars have reported regarding what actually seems to be taking place. It is difficult to quarrel with a good many of her assertions and interpretations. "Tradition," as Pacific Islanders sometimes employ it in the course of European-bashing, does indeed have something in common with the "patriotism" Samuel Johnson called the last refuge of scoundrels.

My regard for the quality of Lawson's work, however, does not compel my concurrence with her basic themes in this volume. I have two fundamental disagreements with her approach. First, her perspective on the political dynamics of indigenous Pacific Islands societies does not capture their participatory character and it thus substantially exaggerates the authoritarian aspects of chieftainship. Second, her renderings of democratic theory underestimate the degree to which work in this area inherently and irresolvably contests the nature of democracy, and it undervalues the emphasis much of this theory places upon participation as essential to the life of suc-

cessful democratic politics. Both of these issues are as relevant to questions concerning the uneasy relations between democracy and tradition in the rest of the Pacific as they are to the specifics of the cases Lawson dissects, and it is these broader themes, rather than the details of her case studies, that I wish to address here. Because my own firsthand experience with these matters lies in Micronesia, I shall draw particularly upon Micronesian examples.

Underlying Lawson's treatment is a misapprehension about the presence and character of participatory politics as a key element in the dynamics of chieftainship. Arguing that "a substantial part of the history of democratic development in the West has been about depersonalizing political power, and vesting it in impersonal institutions," she contrasts the polities in her case studies as marked by "a much stronger personalized element in the assertion of tradition since its most authoritative bearers are those whose status is largely (although not exclusively) ascribed" (p. 12). Yet it is clear that in these Polynesian societies, as in Micronesia, the most politically salient aspects of ascription are commonly seen in the manipulation (or selective reinterpretation) of genealogies after the fact of succession to a chiefly title. Indeed, I have had chiefs explain to me that much of clanship's viability lies precisely in the broad net of men it makes eligible for titles. A number of ethnographies describe situations in which it is obvious that ascription—local claims to the contrary notwithstanding—is not the most salient factor in access to titles (Alkire 1989:44–46; Kiste 1974:52; Petersen 1982). Lawson makes the error of granting credence to post facto claims, which in fact tend to legitimize rather than prescribe succession.

On the other hand, she also dismisses as little more than instrumentalist maneuvering the claims put forward by elites about their rights to run things, that is, "the manipulation of tradition by indigenous elites in ways that enhance their own legitimacy by sanctifying the political order to which they owe their privilege" (p. 12). Again, I see several problems with this portrayal. While it is certainly accurate in some senses, it is also a basic truism of social life that is hardly peculiar to Pacific Islands politics; her assertions evoke Jeremy Bentham's powerful diatribe against "malefactors in high places" for whom "preservation of order is but keeping things in the state they are in: preservation of good order is keeping things in that state which, in proportion as it is good for the preservers, is bad for every body else" (Bentham 1995:112). Moreover, Lawson's analysis seems to indicate that the operation of political dynamics works only to justify the status quo and rarely, if ever, constitutes a basic part of daily social life in communities full of people trying to get things done. She finds it problematic (p. 17) that " 'traditionalism' can emerge and take on an explicitly ideological character that lends itself readily to instrumental manipulation" and that "tradition exhorts its partici-

pants to an attitude of reverence and duty toward the practices and values
that have been transmitted from the past" (though it should be noted that in
passing she does cite Bronwen Douglas to the effect that traditional ideolo-
gies can provide alternative strategies for political action). This echoes much
too closely those classic political-science attitudes describing "traditional
society, in which vast masses live an unpolitical life, embedded in customs
and usages they need not understand" (Merkl 1967:208). Anyone who has
spent much time in island societies knows how difficult it is to identify many
unpolitical lives.

Lawson's position is, I think, the consequence of a perspective that over-
emphasizes the place of institutions in political life. In this approach, "democ-
racy" is mostly about government. Yet, democracy is more appropriately—
or at least more productively—understood as something considerably more
extensive than a type of government. Sheldon Wolin, who has devoted his dis-
tinguished career to the exploration of democratic politics, maintains that
"democracy needs to be reconceived as something other than a form of gov-
ernment" (1996:43). James Kloppenberg insists that "democracy is not now,
nor has it ever been, primarily a question of representative institutions" and
suggests instead that it be "conceived as a way of life rather than a way
simply of managing conflict and preserving order" (1995:176).

When Lawson does tackle the issue of just what it is that constitutes
democracy, she acknowledges that the gap between theory and practice "is
just as problematic in the West where democratic institutions have largely
failed to deliver on the promise of greater equality for the mass of ordinary
people" (p. 27). If this is indeed the case (and I certainly believe that it is),
then it seems to me her entire argument founders. She wants us to believe
that it is the predisposition of Pacific Islands political cultures toward per-
sonalized and authoritarian government and the instrumentalist manipu-
lations of modern-day elites that prevent these societies from reaping the
fruits of democratic institutions introduced by their erstwhile colonial rulers.
But if the societies in which this Western political form has arisen cannot
properly or fully implement it, then why are we blaming defects in the socie-
ties where it has been subsequently introduced for faults that appear to be
inherent in the form itself?

I think Lawson is mistaken in implying—or perhaps I am merely arguing
that we should not infer—that such shortcomings derive from flaws inherent
in these societies. It is in the nature of democracy, whatever it is, that in
practice it must be incomplete. Graeme Duncan opens his introduction to a
searching critique of modern political life, *Democratic Theory and Practice*,
by observing, "Democratic practice throws a dark light on democratic theory,"
and continues, "Democracy is a rare and desirable political form, vulnerable
in theory and practice and always incomplete in certain respects" (1983:3).

In this context, I find myself standing with Albert Hirschman:

> In these days of universal celebration of the democratic model,
> it may seem churlish to dwell on deficiencies in the functioning
> of Western democracies. But it is precisely the spectacular and ex-
> hilarating crumbling of certain walls that calls attention to those
> that remain intact or to rifts that deepen. Among them there is one
> that can frequently be found in the more advanced democracies:
> the systematic lack of communication between groups of citizens.
> (1991:ix)

It is precisely because the organization of daily life in most Pacific Islands communities fosters an overwhelming amount of communication among groups of citizens that Lawson's position troubles me. She is particularly unhappy with "claims of the 'democracy-as-indigenous' kind" and the question of whether the island nations have "pre-existing democratic traditions that can provide a better basis for contemporary political institutions than those imported from the West" (pp. 27–28). She explicitly denies this possibility, however, insisting "those principles that first gave democracy pride of place as the most desirable form of government are largely absent in the political practice" of the countries she examines (p. 30). She rails against "what some defenders of non-democratic systems in the South Pacific have done in promoting the validity of indigenous traditions against Western ideas about democracy" (p. 34). In sum, Lawson maintains, it is specious to defend the political practices of these societies on grounds either that they entail indigenous forms of democratic action or that they have the right to pursue their own political destinies regardless of what Westerners think best for them.

Lloyd Fallers assayed much of this same terrain in exploring what he called the "politics of equality," in his contribution to that classic of political development studies, *Old Societies and New States*, and elsewhere. Fallers contrasted forms of social stratification found in the new African states with the class systems characteristic of European societies, pointing out that in Africa rights in land were in the charge of kin and local groupings and "thus, tendencies toward crystallization of rigid horizontal strata were checked" (1963:180). As a consequence, African struggles for equality have differed markedly from the familiar outlines of European social history. His conclusions foreshadow much that Lawson describes. We can substitute Pacific Islands attitudes toward outside interference in local political matters, for instance, when he observes, "The politics of equality, and indeed such political self-awareness of any kind that may be said to transcend the boundaries of the traditional societies, have thus far consisted in the main of the assertion of the dignity of things generically African, as against Western domina-

tion" (ibid.:216–217). But Fallers found it equally the case that local African societies have demonstrated their own means of promoting equality. Because of this, "In most African kingdoms, kinship groups have played a much greater role in diffusing authority" (Fallers 1959:32). "In traditional Africa, even in the larger kingdoms with their elaborate political hierarchies, a kind of egalitarianism" remains rooted in kin and family relations (Fallers 1963:180). This commitment to important aspects of equality, however, is compromised when foreign political institutions are grafted onto local practices: "With the achievement of independence, there emerges the problem of finding or creating structures within the social fabric of the various states in terms of which to channel the politics of equality" (ibid.:217).[3]

In this context, the key element in Fallers's phrase "politics of equality" is politics. Active political life simultaneously promotes and works to resolve tensions between equality and tradition, as well as between hierarchical authority and tradition. Lawson is inclined to overlook the politics of equality as a consequence of her emphasis on inequalities; she might do well to consider Sherry Ortner's remonstrance against "the lack of an adequate sense of prior and ongoing politics among subalterns" (1995:179)—that is, the tendency to ignore or overlook ongoing internal struggles and resultant political skills that peoples bring to their dealings with those who oppress them. The unfortunate corollary, Ortner notes, is that critiques of this tendency may direct us toward entirely antithetical errors. Many now find it difficult "to look at even the simplest society ever again without seeing a politics every bit as complex, and sometimes every bit as oppressive, as those of capitalism and colonialism" (ibid.:179).

In the course of these struggles, individuals employ different versions of tradition or inscribe alternate histories. We can speak of "contested" interpretations or "off-the-shelf" traditions—versions that can be dusted off and used as the occasion and context demand (Petersen 1995a, 1992b).

Lawson notes that people do use "tradition" to serve current political purposes in the same way that they use "history." Indeed, she provides a cogent discussion of the fundamental ways in which these societies' uses of tradition run parallel to other societies' uses of history (pp. 12–13). Yet it is in fact widely appreciated that history is not only written by the victors, but that it is continually being rewritten by both winners and losers. As Eickelman and Piscatori observe in their recent work on Muslim politics, "Religious scholars, in particular, take upon themselves the role of defending tradition, but in fact they utilize it as a means to power and control" (1996:55). "The fact that proponents of credos, beliefs, or ideologies may assert that their values and visions are timeless and immemorial," they continue, "should not obscure the fact that they are subject to constant modification and change" (ibid.:69).

The real issue, then, is not so much a matter of whether indigenous demo-
cratic forms are to be found in these societies as it is the ability of local elites
of one stripe or another to dominate political life in them. This is what truly
provokes Lawson, I think. In Fiji, it is the eastern chiefs who have usurped
control; in Tonga, it is a monarchy that stifles essential freedoms; and in
Samoa, it is the privileged place of the *matai* that undermines equality.

In each of these cases there are abuses, to be sure. "Utopia," after all,
means "nowhere." The important questions are whether the existence of
these problems can be read as unequivocal (or at least thoroughly convinc-
ing) evidence that democracy is effectively absent from these societies and,
if so, whether this is the consequence of indigenous obstacles to its survival.

This is a problem familiar to those with an appreciation of Micronesia's
modern history. Each of the successive colonial regimes that took over ad-
ministration of the various archipelagoes argued in turn that its task was
both to overcome indigenous backwardness and to eradicate inappropriate
and even harmful practices introduced by their immediate colonial predeces-
sors (the Spaniards were intent on overcoming apostasies introduced by the
Protestant missionaries operating outside the Marianas). When the United
States, paragon of democratic virtue that it represents itself to be, took over,
there was a degree of ambivalence about indigenous practices. Some thought
the islanders should be left to their own devices (the so-called zoo theory,
often attributed to anthropologists but more common among one strain of the
navy's civil-affairs officers) while others—decidedly in the majority—urged
the immediate "development" of American political institutions.[4]

It seems fairly apparent to me that those charged with most closely
examining the character of Micronesian political institutions in the imme-
diate postwar years—that is, the anthropologists sent out in the Coordinated
Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology (CIMA) and related projects—
were also divided in their appreciation of Micronesian political life. Before
he ever reached Micronesia, George Peter Murdock (who organized and
directed CIMA) wrote that the islands' "feudal," even "primitive political
tradition," assured the failure of any attempt to "impose" representative gov-
ernment, concluding that "all in all, the interest of the inhabitants (and inci-
dentally, the best interests of the United States) would be best served by
establishing in most of these islands a strong but benevolent government—a
government paternalistic in character, but one which ruled as indirectly as
possible." The memo called for complete naval control over the area "on a per-
manent or at least semi-permanent basis" (quoted in Richard 1957, 1:18–19;
cf. Bashkow 1991:180–181).

It was Murdock who convinced the navy of the " 'pressing need' for infor-
mation relevant to island government," given "the obscurity of the native

system of land tenure and the scarcity of knowledge concerning the political and social structure of native communities" (Bashkow 1991:185). After he had conducted his portion of the CIMA ethnographic research in Chuuk, Murdock concluded that he had found "small feudal states with an elaborate class structure" nearly everywhere in Micronesia and that they were in the process of evolving in Chuuk and nearby islands. He said he had seen " 'on the hoof,' so to speak, a process of state development and class formation" (Murdock 1965:245–247). His suggestion (Murdock 1948) that Micronesian societies should be transformed into modern democracies is a logical, if unperceptive, consequence of this outlook.

Elsewhere I have explored similar—as well as diametrically opposite— perspectives manifested by a number of other anthropologists (Petersen 1999). Questions of whether Micronesians, or other Pacific Islands peoples, need to radically alter their political behavior in order to become democrats would seem to turn largely on whether their practices were adjudged democratic in the first place.[5] Perhaps Burrows and Spiro, two participants in the CIMA project, best express the point of view directly contrary to Murdock's: "In form the government of Ifaluk is strictly aristocratic. In practice it is quite democratic, in the sense that every individual gets a chance to express his opinion and can make sure that it will be heard and considered by those in power. . . . The government of the United States, in form, is strictly democratic. In practice, as all citizens seem to agree, it falls far short of that ideal" (Burrows and Spiro 1970:198).

They go on to argue that if democracy in practice is what the United States aims for, there is simply no need to make changes in Ifaluk's traditional form of government and that there are in fact extremely good reasons militating against American attempts to foster such changes (ibid.:198–199).

There are, of course, significant differences between Ifaluk and the substantially larger Polynesian societies Lawson considers. It nonetheless remains the case that the degree to which an outsider deems any of these polities democratic is closely related to the issue of whether the outsider believes substantial changes are necessary in order for that polity to achieve according to the standards of democratic theorists.[6]

There are, to be sure, many important differences among Micronesian societies and nation-states, just as there are an array of differences between them and the societies Lawson studies. But the issue at hand plays a role in all these societies. All are characterized by significant indigenous forms of hierarchical relations—more intensively developed in some cases, less so in others. But in each case there are equally well-developed forms of checks and balances, the most notable being the importance of landholding and titleholding corporate kinship groups. Writing as an American and with

reference to former American colonies, I tend to trace the relevant historical trajectory back to the drafting of the American constitution. But as Pocock (1975), and more recently Maier (1997) and Rakove (1996), have emphasized, the American constitution and the revolution that preceded it were dramatically influenced by Machiavelli's analyses of republics and republican politics interpreted via James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1992), with its oblique seventeenth-century commentaries on the English revolutions and the English Declaration of Rights. The men who shaped early American political institutions were struggling to adapt a body of political theory to the very specific political conditions brought about by decolonization and the advent of independence. This is no more and no less than the former British Commonwealth colonies and American trusteeship colonies have been engaged in. What George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and their colleagues seized upon was the important role property-owning could and would play in formulating a viable set of checks and balances. This was not property-owning in the sense of capitalist accumulation, but in Fallers's sense: the raison d'être of groups capable of checking "tendencies toward crystallization of rigid horizontal strata" (1963:180). Pacific Islands peoples still look toward kin groups for similar protections from the state.

In all her cases there are more complex processes, and more conscious political action, than Lawson seems to think. I am by no means suggesting that tradition and democracy are synonymous in Pacific Islands political cultures, but any work that is framed in terms of tradition versus democracy is apt to misunderstand a great deal of contemporary political life in the region. Despite the relative magnitude of most Pacific Islands nation-states' bureaucracies, their governments are not particularly oppressive. This must in some measure be attributed to a widespread indigenous commitment to participatory politics—that is, traditional democracy.

NOTES

1. This sentiment is hardly peculiar to islanders. The eighth century B.C. Greek poet Hesiod, observing a necessary degree of tension among neighbors, instructed his brother Perses that it was proper for a man to respect his equals but also to be sensitive to slights, balancing healthy rivalry with fair dealings. "He had to be tough but welcoming, because either too much or too little trust would ruin him" (Morris 1996:28).

2. Full-scale receptions of diplomats in most countries include military displays, and visiting heads of state are required to inspect military units.

3. Basil Davidson argues clearly and cogently that independence was granted only when Africans agreed to saddle themselves with these imposed political institutions (1992).

4. Some American leaders wanted to do both.

5. In examining the politics of constitutional arguments rooted in the notion of "original intent"—that is, attempts to conjure up the original meanings of passages in the United States Constitution—Jack Rakove acknowledges that while he generally objects to such arguments, "I happen to like originalist arguments when the weight of the evidence seems to support the constitutional outcomes I favor" (1996:xv).

6. A respectful attitude toward indigenous political practices is sometimes dismissed as romantic Rousseauian naiveté (Petersen 1995b). But the outlook has a venerable American pedigree. Thomas Nairne, who lived with the Chickasaws in what is now Mississippi in the early 1700s, wrote, "Plato nor no other writer of Politicks even of the most republican principles, could ever contrive a Government where the equallity of mankind is more Justly observed than here among the savages" (quoted in Nobles 1997:36). In his *History of the American Indians,* originally published in 1775, James Adair wrote of the Cherokee that

> [t]he power of their chiefs is an empty sound. They can only persuade or dissuade the people, either by force of good-nature and clear reasoning, or colouring things, so as to suit their prevailing passions. . . . When any national affair is in debate, you may hear every father of a family speaking in his house on the subject, with rapid bold language, and the utmost freedom that a people can use. Their voices, to a man, have due weight in every public affair, as it concerns their welfare alike. . . . And their whole behaviour, on public occasions, is highly worthy of imitation by some of our British senators and lawyers. (Adair 1960:109–110)

This perspective was shared by Lewis Henry Morgan (whom many consider the founder of American anthropology). In his 1876 review of H. H. Bancroft's *The Native Races of the Pacific States,* subtitled "An Essay on the Tribal Society of North American Indians," Morgan tackled the issue more generally, insisting that "[l]iberty, equality and fraternity, though never formulated, were cardinal principles" in native American societies. "The institutions of the Iroquois," for example, "were essentially democratized—a fact that will ultimately be found true of every tribe and confederacy of the American aborigines" (Morgan 1950:24, 29).

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Response: Stephanie Lawson
University of East Anglia

The "politics of tradition" and related issues of culture and identity have been
at the forefront of some very important debates throughout the Asia-Pacific
region—and elsewhere—for several decades now. In the academic sphere it

is a debate that has been joined, in the main, by anthropologists, although there have also been some significant contributions by historians, legal scholars, geographers, and political scientists. It has also been joined by politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, intellectuals, church leaders, and activists of all stripes—dissident, conservative, moderate—but rarely simply neutral. It is a topic that is close to the hearts, and the vital interests, of many of the participants.

Academic commentators (including reviewers), of course, also bring their own intellectual and emotional baggage, personal quirks, predispositions, and interests to the study of the issues involved. And in a spirit of reflexivity, it's as well to acknowledge these. I hope that my own intellectual predispositions are not too rigid or fixed, but in my book (and in these pages here) I am prepared to state them clearly enough. Anyone who has read *Tradition versus Democracy in the South Pacific* will find that I quite clearly favor democratic politics over authoritarian politics, and a liberal approach to a conservative one. Moreover, I hold quite clear views about what actually constitutes democratic politics—and more particularly about what does not— and am prepared to defend these views vigorously. I completely reject the notion that social scientists—of whatever discipline—should attempt or pretend to be either fence-sitters or "objective" observers and reporters of "the facts." Facts simply do not speak for themselves. Various people, from various positions, make them speak, often in very different ways. This does not necessarily mean that the act of interpretation is always mired in a completely self-interested form of subjectivity—but all speaking positions are inherently subjective in one way or another. There is no Archimedean vantage point and there is no final truth accessible to any one person or group of people whether these are so-called insiders or outsiders. I especially oppose the idea that there are "cultural truths" accessible only to a certain privileged few. The rejection of the possibility of objectivity, however, is by no means a license to simply indulge our subjective biases or only seek out evidence that supports our preferred positions. To do so would be an act of intellectual dishonesty.

My view of what my job is as a social scientist who is engaged specifically in the study of politics is to be, in one way or another, a critic in and of the public sphere. I take this public sphere to extend from within the bounds of any particular community (itself an unstable category) to the entire globe. There is no place that does not fall legitimately within this sphere, although some may dispute that and object strongly to the analyses and criticisms of "outsiders." To be a critical social scientist in this sense, and to argue for or against certain political positions and beliefs, such as those dealt with in my book, is not always an easy thing to do, and especially if one has the status of

an outsider. This has emerged as an issue, either explicitly or implicitly, in several criticisms of my book, and my previous book as well (Lawson 1991). I've given some thought to this problem and I shall say something briefly about the "politics of theorizing" later. This essay has been invited primarily as a response to the two reviews of the book printed above, and so I shall deal specifically with these first.

The review by Henry Rutz is basically a positive one, and that is at least partly because we seem to share some common critical ground in our respective studies of Pacific Islands politics. Rutz focuses on the principal themes of the book: the issue of political legitimacy and the key role played by the concept of "tradition." And he emphasizes the extent to which the book's analysis is highly critical of a strategy, employed largely by some political elites in the region, that pits "tradition" against "democracy." He is certainly right in identifying the most difficult conceptual issue with which I've dealt—and that is the attempt to steer a viable course between a relativistic approach to defining democracy, on the one hand, and what amounts to an equally problematic universalist approach, on the other. What I argue for is a pluralist approach that acknowledges diversity (whether we want to call that diversity "cultural" or not) but stops well short of an "anything goes" position. In other words, I do attempt to take a stand. But in taking a stand, it's never enough to simply say that if the term "democracy" can mean all things to all people, then it doesn't mean anything at all. If I want to make an effort to repudiate a radical relativist position, then I must be prepared to go on and be more specific about what democracy is, and what it is not. That is what I've attempted to do both in the general analysis and the case studies. I think this is what leads Rutz to remark that, at certain points in my case studies, I seem to move "easily from exposition to evaluation" to express my "approval or disapproval of efforts by Pacific Islanders to shape their own discourse of 'democracy.'" I'm not quite sure if this is meant to be criticism of my approach, but it seems implied. In any case, I acknowledge that the kind of critical approach I've taken in the book is bound to be seen as expressing approval or disapproval in one way or another. For instance, if I have argued that democratic practice entails x but definitely not y and raise what seems to me to be an apt example, then logically my analysis must implicitly express "approval" of x as a democratic practice and "disapproval" of y as one that is not. And I agree with Rutz that this is exactly what I do in the case study on Fiji. I describe the exclusion of Fiji Indians under the 1990 constitution from effective political power as a "form of political apartheid" and I clearly disapprove of this because it does not conform to my standards of what is democratic and what is not—although I think I am quite safe in saying that these are not merely "my" standards arbitrarily arrived at.

Rutz does not have a problem with my evaluation per se—because he largely agrees with it—but rather with the "methodological requirement to establish explicit criteria of 'democracy' that limit its elasticity and thereby reduce its co-optionation by nondemocratic discourses." This interesting and important point raises the question not simply of standards but the foundations on which such standards rest. My first response, however, is how can Rutz—or anyone else—agree (or indeed disagree) with any evaluation in the absence of a methodological attempt to establish explicit criteria for democracy? As he points out, I've made a concerted effort to set out and defend some standards in chapter 1, and he seems to agree with the idea that although democracy has its own dogmatic truths, it also has an inbuilt means of overcoming them.

One of the sections of the book that I have been somewhat dissatisfied with myself, in that I dealt too briefly with a key issue, is in fact the question of what democracy is and how standards may be devised for adjudicating claims about what is democratic and what is not. Petersen is more critical on this point—but I'll come back to his concerns later. In a subsequent paper (Lawson 1998), I've set out some further arguments and analysis in more detail. That paper, incidentally, is also informed by reflection on contemporary political issues surrounding notions of culture and values in Southeast Asia, as exemplified by the "Asian values debate" (although it does not deal specifically with any case-study material). The 1998 paper discusses the common institutional forms and standards that have been set out by theorists such as Schumpeter and Dahl, as well as the relationship between institutional forms and actual democratic outcomes. But I then go on to argue that the institutions and expected outcomes also reflect a certain ethic of politic rule:

> "Democracy" is the name of a form of rule, meaning literally "rule or power of the people." In its modern representative form, people have ultimate political authority rather than engaging directly in daily governance. It is this meaning which animates, however imperfectly, the institutional structures and outcomes. . . . But, beyond the descriptive meaning of democracy, there is also a distinct normative dimension that provides democracy with its basic justification. Put simply, it is assumed that it is *right* that the people rule or have ultimate political authority. (Lawson 1998:259)

I go on to say, again, that there is no one institutional form that must be adopted in order to accommodate this normative principle and to produce substantive democratic outcomes, and that a variety of forms can adequately

accommodate democratic rule. As I emphasize in the book, this variety is
an important element of a pluralist approach. My key point in the 1998
paper, however, is that "the normative principle remains *essentially* the
same despite institutional, historical, cultural and other contextual differ-
ences" (ibid.). And on this basis, I reject some forms of rule that lay claim to
being democratic—such as the form that keeps the ruling party in power in
Singapore, or that which marginalized Fiji Indians after 1987. This formula-
tion would not satisfy defenders of more relativistic approaches—especially
since I (deliberately) use the word "essential," but I think it can accommo-
date a reasonably flexible pluralist approach that leaves space for cultural
(and other) differences. This capacity is important when considering some
of the other values that are now normally associated with democracy—values
that may also be in tension with each other.

In developing some ideas about this tension, I again had in mind some
important aspects of the Asian values debate where normative support for
the value of "liberty" is often seen as a distinctively Western cultural inclina-
tion (and strongly associated with individualism) whereas support for the
values of "equality" and "community" are claimed to be more in tune with
Asian cultural approaches and value systems. Here, incidentally, is where I
strongly object to the "essentializing" of something called "Western culture"
or "Asian culture" by reference to cultural essences.

Nonetheless, I go on to say that varying cultural (or other) considerations
and circumstances may result in differential emphasis being placed on cer-
tain secondary normative principles of contemporary democracy—such as
liberty, equality, and community. Moreover, there are often tensions between
these principles in both the theory and the practice of democracy. The value
of liberty, especially, coexists in tension with both equality and community
(see Lawson 1998, esp. pp. 260–261).

One of the main points that I have attempted to make is that "democ-
racy" carries a strong normative load—and in more ways than one. The pri-
mary and secondary normative principles that I've identified above are but
one aspect and are very relevant in considering the extent to which different
practices and emphases on values can be accommodated within a frame-
work that itself remains "democratic." But another, quite different norma-
tive aspect, discussed in the book, is the extent to which the universal acclaim
that "democracy" now enjoys as "the appraisive political concept par excel-
lence" has made its meaning so hotly contested—indeed, in W. B. Gallie's
terms, "essentially" contested (1956).

What this means is that virtually any regime will try to claim to be a democ-
racy, no matter how repressively it actually governs. (These claims, inciden-
tally, are largely conditioned by an international political environment within

which it is virtually unacceptable to actually admit to being anything else.) But the main question raised by my analysis is not whether democracy as a form of rule can accommodate cultural difference or reflect different cultural norms and practices. It can. The question is whether some forms of rule that are claimed to be authenticated contextually by reference to certain local cultural traditions can be called democratic at all. This, I think, is worth arguing about, a debate I intended to provoke in my book.

I knew my book would be provocative—and Henry Rutz is certainly not alone among reviewers in describing it in such terms. But most have not meant this in a negative sense. As in Rutz's assessment, generally speaking most reviewers have seen the book as being thoughtful, well argued, and carefully documented, even if they may have done it differently. Rutz's review —and others that I've seen—stand in very marked contrast to Glenn Petersen's. Indeed, it almost seems that Petersen's review is about another book altogether. I shall have to spend most of the next section defending my book against many of Petersen's criticisms because I think that he has missed, or misinterpreted, many of the key points that I attempted to make.

Petersen's review begins by suggesting that my book is comparable to a certain newspaper photograph and caption that tells only half a story (and seems quite deliberately to omit the second, most telling part of the story). After I finished reading Petersen's review, however, I thought that was a more accurate description of his own essay. In any event, he goes on to make a point, which he emphasizes again later in his essay, that I find little in the sociopolitical precedents that have shaped Pacific Islanders' responses to European-imposed political institutions that might be described as receptive to democracy. My conclusion, according to Petersen, is that "shortcomings in the ways new island nation-states adopt Western-style political values and institutions are mainly the result of local predispositions to social relations less egalitarian and participatory than those of the powers that impose these institutions upon them." I must say, quite simply, that I conclude no such thing and have nowhere developed or argued or even implicitly supported any such line of thought.

Petersen's most basic error is in talking, in very generalized terms, about my interpretation of "Pacific Islanders' responses." The whole tenor of my argument is that there is no such thing as *a* "Pacific Islander response." What Petersen alludes to is what I refer to quite distinctly as a response by certain (not all) political elites in parts (not all) of the region who have invoked a discourse of traditionalism to defend their privileged positions.

Moreover, these elites have mounted their own arguments in opposition to movements for democratic reform that have come from *within* the societies concerned. This situation is most clearly and unambiguously shown in

my case study of Tonga, where page after page of description, discussion, and analysis is devoted to showing how the prodemocracy movement in Tonga (led by indigenous Tongan commoners) has arisen—against all the expectations that one may usually derive from a cultural determinist perspective—to challenge the traditionalist status quo. In other words, I have quite clearly *not* argued deterministically *for* the overriding importance and influence of preexisting sociopolitical arrangements or predispositions with respect to the population of Tonga. My arguments are quite emphatically ranged *against* any such cultural determinist position.

It is one thing to argue, as I have done (and along with most other writers on Tonga), that Tonga's traditional sociopolitical arrangements are basically authoritarian. It is another thing altogether to say that any such argument automatically implies that the proponent is therefore offering up a deterministic conclusion about the prospects—or lack of prospects—for change. While I have suggested that the beneficiaries of the present system in Tonga are very likely to resist change, this hardly amounts to a deterministic conclusion about the inherent nature of Tongan society per se.

The same paragraph of Petersen's review also contains a common but quite misleading assumption that formal democratic institutions are always "imposed" by colonial powers. As I set out in the book, the political institutions devised during the colonial period were indeed largely imposed by colonial powers, but often with the complicity and support of certain local elites who sometimes benefited substantially from their introduction. This was certainly the case in Fiji. Furthermore, these institutions were clearly not democratic—a point on which virtually all agree. With respect to the independence constitution, indigenous Fijians and Fiji Indians played a very active part in devising the constitution that Petersen implies was simply "imposed" (by the British) on the country in 1970—although it did not prove viable for various reasons in the longer term. Tonga, not being a colony, obviously never had a constitution "imposed" on it during decolonization at all, nor was the 1875 constitution an imposition strictly speaking, although there were important external influences. And chiefly indigenous leaders in Western Samoa, at the time of independence, clearly succeeded in not having universal suffrage—let alone universal eligibility to stand for elective office—thrust upon them by anyone, even though New Zealand had urged broader suffrage.

Petersen makes a common mistake in making generalizations about colonial impositions that deny the agency of local people—whether they are elites or not—in shaping or influencing their own institutions. Of course, departing colonial powers often left behind certain political structures, institutions, and practices. But they were not always "imposed" in the manner

suggested by Petersen. Moreover, the parliamentary and other Western democratic elements that they contained often had the strong support of some members of the local communities.

I provide a fairly detailed account of the history of constitutional development in the case studies that I think makes all of the above quite clear. Which brings me to another of Petersen's criticisms that is relevant to the question of institutions. He says that I overemphasize the place of institutions in political life. Perhaps, from the perspective of an anthropologist, I do. But I am, after all, a political scientist and not an anthropologist. On the other hand, the latter are often criticized for *under*emphasizing political institutions, or sometimes ignoring them completely. So perhaps our different emphases are simply differences in disciplinary approach. Even so, I can scarcely be accused of ignoring anthropological approaches and indeed many vital issues raised by anthropological studies. My book is deeply engaged with the anthropological issues and debates on the whole question of the invention of, and the politics of, tradition.

In some ways, I am very critical of some conventional anthropological approaches to the issues dealt with in the book. I'm not entirely surprised, therefore, that the book has provoked this kind of response from an anthropologist. But on Petersen's more specific point raised above, since the issues dealt with in the book are so closely tied to the development of political institutions—both national and local (whether these are recognized by some anthropologists or not)—I remain unapologetic about the extent to which the book deals with them while emphasizing that the book deals with much more besides.

Petersen goes on to make a further criticism in this context: that my approach to democracy is mostly about government. He quotes some brief extracts from various authors on the extent to which democracy is not merely about government or representative institutions. I couldn't agree more. Nor do I see how the overall analysis of the book could be interpreted as focusing almost exclusively on democracy as a form of government. But again, even given this, how can democracy not be vitally concerned with how—or by whom—we are governed? We can indeed describe democracy as "a way of life"—a point on which Petersen quotes another writer with approval—but that is hardly inconsistent with or unrelated to the manner in which we are governed.

More generally, Petersen says that he has two fundamental disagreements with my approach. First, he says that my perspective on the political dynamics of Pacific Islands societies does not capture their participatory character and it thus substantially exaggerates the authoritarian aspects of chieftainship. He goes on to elaborate, but does so on the basis of what he

says is his "own first-hand experience . . . in Micronesia." As I state in the preface, however, I am not dealing with the entire region, and certainly not with Micronesia—and had I looked at other areas (such as Melanesia or Micronesia) other perspectives would no doubt have emerged (p. ix). So my response is quite simply that my case studies concern three Pacific Islands states, more or less located within the Polynesian area, in which the authoritarian aspects of chiefly rule have in fact been stronger than in some other parts of the Pacific. Indeed, their hierarchical and authoritarian aspects have often been emphasized by chiefly leaders themselves, even if the word "authoritarian" is not necessarily used. Moreover, Petersen's claims about the participatory character of Pacific Islands societies may be true for the societies he has studied in Micronesia—the ones he refers to most explicitly —but are certainly not true of all South Pacific societies.

The formal traditional mode of Tongan politics, to take the clearest example, was simply not participatory at all. I cite Sione Latukefu to the effect that the Tongan *fono,* for example, was never more than a meeting where instructions were issued by chiefs to those below them. This contrasts somewhat with the *fono* in Western Samoa, where lengthy discussions did take place but excluded non-*matai* (see p. 85). This is not to deny *reciprocity* between chiefs and non-chiefs, but that is a different matter altogether. In any event, I am scarcely alone in asserting authoritarianism as the overriding feature of traditional Tongan political life: My argument draws on the various findings of most prominent Tongan scholars—and scholars of Tonga —that have written on the subject. These include Latukefu, Epeli Hauʻofa, Futa Helu, and Okusitino Mahina as well as anthropologists such as George Marcus and Adrienne Kaeppler. But as I said above, the assessment or acknowledgement of traditional sociopolitical structures in Tonga (or anywhere else) as being authoritarian by no means implies a deterministic conclusion about the present and future.

Petersen's second fundamental disagreement concerns my rendering of democratic theory, which he says "underestimate[s] the degree to which work in this area inherently and irresolvably contests the nature of democracy." I simply disagree with Petersen's assessment. A substantial part of my project is based squarely on—and indeed assumes—the contested nature of democracy. Democracy as an "essentially contested concept" is discussed specifically on pp. 31–32, as well as the problems it raises for relativistic understandings. Indeed the entire debate about relativism and democracy revolves around the contested nature of democracy.

Petersen goes on in the next section to make some points about ascriptive status that I don't think have much relevance or don't detract from points that I was making. For example, I don't necessarily disagree with Petersen's

point that "the most politically salient aspects of ascription are commonly seen in the manipulation (or selective reinterpretation) of genealogies after the fact of succession to a chiefly title." Nor do I have a problem with what some chiefs (in Western Samoa?) have evidently said to him concerning the notion that a "clanship's viability lies precisely in the broad net of men it makes eligible for titles" (although one could ask about women). He also points out that "a number of ethnographies describe situations in which . . . ascription—local claims to the contrary notwithstanding—is not the most salient factor in access to titles." In my case study of Fiji—not mentioned by Petersen as an important qualification to my earlier general point about ascription—I say myself (citing Nayacakalou) that genealogies may be avoided or varied in order "to facilitate the direct interplay of forces in selecting leaders on the basis of personal qualities, or of the political power of the groups which support them" (p. 53).

The next problem with Petersen's review arises from his observation that I tend to dismiss "as little more than instrumentalist maneuvering the claims put forward by elites about their rights to run things." He says that he sees several problems with this portrayal because, although "it is certainly accurate in some senses, it is also a basic truism of social life that is hardly peculiar to Pacific Islands politics." He goes on to quote Jeremy Bentham's diatribe against "malefactors in high places" who benefit from preserving things as they are.

This particular criticism of Petersen's I find quite remarkable, for he could as easily have quoted directly from my book to make exactly the same point. This is what I have to say about the matter: In the section on "tradition as ideology" (pp. 17–20), I note some of Bronwen Douglas's (1985) observations about the nature of ideology in that it provides "alternative strategies to be implemented selectively in action contexts and in the manipulation, negotiation and creation of social reality." I then go on to say:

> Traditionalist political ideology seeks to accommodate these wider dimensions primarily by preserving what is assumed to be a time-honoured structure of authority . . . [and which can therefore] be portrayed as the "natural" locus of authority. . . . This was a key element in much of the romantic backlash which followed the eighteenth-century revolution in European political thought, and which has been a persistent feature of Western conservative political ideology. (P. 17)

I proceed for another three pages comparing further important elements of European political thought with traditionalist discourses in the South

Pacific. One purpose in doing this comparison is to demonstrate precisely how similar the discourses are—thereby illustrating quite specifically the very point that Petersen accuses me of missing or ignoring. Indeed, one of the main reasons for my setting this out in so much detail in the book is to emphasize the similarities between the history of important aspects of political thought in the West and expressions of traditionalism in the South Pacific. This feeds directly into my rejection of so-called incommensurability theses.

Next, Petersen also misinterprets a point I make about the ideological character of traditionalism. He says, using a quote from Merkl, that it "echoes much too closely those classic political-science attitudes describing 'traditional society, in which vast masses live an unpolitical life, embedded in customs and usages they need not understand.' " If Petersen has read this into what I have set out then I can only say that it is quite mistaken. At this point as well, Petersen states that this and other shortcomings in the analysis are a consequence of a perspective that overemphasizes the place of institutions in political life. As I suggested before, some of the differences in our respective approaches to the key issues raised in my book may just simply be the result of different disciplinary approaches. But some of them, I think, are due to Petersen's simply missing relevant sections of my discussion or drawing inferences on the basis of what he thinks I've said rather than what I've actually said.

The next point Petersen makes, following on from the above, commits this and other errors. He says first, and quite rightly, that I acknowledge that the gap between the theory and practice of democracy in the West is problematic since "democratic institutions have largely failed to deliver on the promise of greater equality for the mass of ordinary people." He then says that if this is indeed the case (and he believes it is), then my entire case founders. As far as I can see, Petersen's claim here is a complete non sequitur. He also goes on to relate this to something he thinks I have argued, but which I most emphatically have not, that "it is the predisposition of Pacific Islands political cultures toward personalized and authoritarian government and the instrumentalist manipulations of modern-day elites that prevent these societies from reaping the fruits of democratic institutions introduced by their erstwhile colonial rulers."

Petersen takes issue with a number of other matters dealt with in the book, including the "democracy-as-alien" as well as the "democracy-as-indigenous" debates. With the latter, especially, again Petersen seems to have misunderstood the debates surrounding this matter and what I have drawn from them in my own analysis. He seems to think that my purpose is to deny that democratic forms have ever existed in non-Western societies. This is a complete misunderstanding of the particular democracy-as-indigenous debate

that I deal with in the book, which draws on the work of others on the topic, such as Goldsmith (1993).

What I have criticized in this very particular democracy-as-indigenous debate is an attempt by people like Asesela Ravuvu—a noted defender of the military coups in Fiji, of chiefly power and privilege, and of the relegation of Fiji Indians to political irrelevance—to describe certain traditional modes of politics as democratic when they are not. Ravuvu, for example, like many who have attempted to paint authoritarian practices in democratic colors, takes "consensus" to be a hallmark of his version of "democracy-as-indigenous."

Now, consensus is a key theme in the Asian values debate too. The term has often featured in justifications of all manner of authoritarian rule. In the South Pacific societies that I studied "consensus" has usually meant—and here I will use Rutz's succinct words—simply "going along with chiefly authority." My criticisms here, though, have nothing to do with other democratic forms and practices that have been identified, say, in the (precontact or precolonial) small-scale indigenous societies in Africa or North America or Australia, which may well be described as indigenous forms of democracy. Nor do I deny that the Micronesian societies with which Petersen is most familiar may have much more of an indigenous democratic character. In short, Petersen's points and claims about these examples may well be true, but they have little to do with the points that I was actually discussing.

But let me here acknowledge something in which I was, in a fit of pessimism, deeply mistaken about at the time I wrote the book. With respect to Fiji I wrote that "it remains highly unlikely that any significant constitutional reform will take place" (p. 74). Events in the meantime, I'm glad to say, have clearly proved me quite wrong. And yes, I am expressing approval of the change of political climate that has seen acceptance of a Fiji Indian as prime minister of the Fiji Islands—a country that has attempted to shed at a formal political level what did amount to a racist system of political apartheid that in the end benefited neither indigenous Fijians nor Fiji Indians.

A final issue that I will take up is Petersen's remark, following his acknowledgement that there are significant differences between Ifaluk and the substantially larger Polynesian societies that I deal with, that "[i]t nonetheless remains the case that the degree to which an outsider deems any of these polities democratic is closely related to the issue of whether the outsider believes substantial changes are necessary in order for that polity to achieve according to the standards of democratic theorists." I assume that I'm the ethnocentric "outsider" here (while Petersen is perhaps privileged as an honorary "insider"?). In any case, such remarks about "outsiders" are quite naive. The time has long passed (if it ever existed) when one could speak

unproblematically of insiders and outsiders in dichotomous terms. Such categories are not only superficial but also often grossly homogenized. This categorization is also directly related to the politics of theorizing that I mentioned at the beginning. I've dealt with this theorizing in the book to some extent and have also developed some thoughts more fully in subsequent papers (see especially Lawson 1999).

In the book I was at pains to emphasize the extent to which calls for democratization had come principally from *within* the societies concerned (see especially pp. ix, 9, 164) and had little if anything to do with outsiders—whether these were democratic theorists, journalists, politicians, or whatever. While external pressures were stronger on Fiji, the momentum for reform nonetheless came from within. And my discussion of the prodemocracy movement in Tonga and the pressures for extended suffrage in Western Samoa clearly demonstrate the extent to which these emerged from local social movements and were supported by local people who want more opportunities for participation—even if this consists simply of the right to vote.

Therefore it is by no means merely a matter of whether an outsider considers that any of these polities lives up to its own standards and expectations about what democracy is, it is more a matter of whether they live up to what local people—the ordinary people in these places—expect and want. This was a major focus of the final arguments in the book. It is also dealt with in the forthcoming follow-up essay that was written as a general critique of defenses of authoritarian political practices in parts of both Asia and the Pacific and the extent to which they are underscored by notions of "authentic" cultural traditions. The last section of this forthcoming essay is also an appropriate conclusion to the present discussion:

> [M]uch of the rhetoric about the Pacific Way and Asian values which has come from some political leaders and commentators in the region—and which is supported implicitly by conservative commentators in the West, including Samuel Huntington, is nothing short of an inverted form of orientalism. In other words, the dichotomization of the Pacific Way and the West, or Asia and the West, which has figured so prominently in much recent traditionalist/ culturalist rhetoric simply replicates all the most obnoxious aspects of orientalism, but now in an occidental configuration. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, much of the practical action in support of this rhetoric by political leaders seems to have been directed most frequently against local oppositional figures and prodemocracy movements in the broad Asia-Pacific region rather than any "outsider" critics. This suggests that while the politics of iden-

tity and traditionalism certainly does have a great deal to do with fending off criticism of authoritarian practices as well as human rights abuses from external sources, especially those in "the West," it usually has at least as much to do with dealing with the more dangerous gadflies at home. (Lawson 1999; translated from the French)

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REVIEWS

Greg Dening, *Performances*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1996. Pp. xvi, 296, bib., index. US$45 cloth; $19.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Marta Rohatynskyj, University of Guelph

THE WORK OF NO OTHER HISTORIAN has been so intimately involved in contemporary ethnography in Oceania than Greg Dening's. In respect of Dening's own impatience with disciplinary boundaries, he should be seen as an ethnographer who uses the distance of time to define the otherness he sees as essential to the ethnographic enterprise. Perhaps no other practitioner of the craft has so completely fused a historical perspective with an anthropological one, setting out one of the goals of this work: "Let me show also that an ethnography of History as a mode of consciousness is History's anthropology even as it is anthropology's History. Historians cannot escape a theory of how the past is in the present any more than can anthropologists" (p. 41).

This volume is a collection of twelve essays, many of which had been published before in edited collections and various journals. The essays are grouped into five sections, starting with a prelude and ending with a postlude. The three sections in between reflect the key theoretical themes that inform much of his work: the degree to which the recounting of the past is the substance of present realities, history as performance and representation, and the power of history's poetics to liberate. In the prelude, Dening positions himself as a man who devoted many years of his life to scholarly and religious discipline as a member of the Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius Loyola. In writing this prelude, he finds commonality between his academic

experience and that of William Wordsworth and his contemporary, William Gooch. While Wordsworth reflected on a dismal academic performance at St. John's College, Cambridge, Gooch's scholarly career was a triumph and he became the subject of one of Dening's major works. As the balance of the essays show, the author has sympathy both for the poetical imagination of the former as well as the obvious joy found in order and discipline of the latter.

The postlude returns to personal experience and concerns having to do with ritual, the value of symbols, and their ability to harness emotional energy. Whereas the prelude gives a glimpse of religious fervor in everyday life, the postlude focuses on the current experience of the Mass by the now-former Jesuit. With detachment the author observes the many liberalizations of religious practice, such as young girls acting as altar attendants, and ponders the power of strictures instilled in him early as to proper reception of communion. He asks, "Whatever happened, for that matter, to all the allegories that filled the air like angel choirs" (p. 270). This is a question of a historian and an anthropologist. And in attempting to understand the value of all the communions taken in his life as a starting point in finding answers to this question, he concludes the collection: "Perhaps I should write a poem and by that be honest to my particularities. But then again, I do not think my narratives of what it is to believe and hope, to be guilty and sad, to be sure and doubting—in different space and different time—is something less than a poem. Or should be."

These thoughts capture a paradox that permeates all the essays. Whether it is the well-known "Sharks That Walk on the Land" concerning the death of Captain James Cook or the heavy-hearted war history of Dening's own school, Xavier College, in "School at War," the reader is constantly confronted with the tension between relativity and absolutism, whether of faith or fact. Confronting the issue directly, the author writes:

> So the ultimate taunt of the absolutist to the relativist: "Are you certain that you are a relativist?" is nothing but a sad joke. On the other hand, the inventions of the semiotician of more and more words to isolate less and less are just as sad. A curse on both their houses. The theatricality of history-making is to narrate the paradoxes of the past out of the paradoxes of the present in such a way that our readers will see the paradoxes in themselves. (P. 122)

The reader is presented with a number of clear and provocative definitions in the course of the essays, which together come to build a method for the doing of ethnography. Poetics, Dening writes, "are the facility with which we relate the systems of meaning in these texts to the occasions of their

reading" (p. 36). Histories are "metaphors of the past: they translate sets of events into sets of symbols. But histories are also metonymies of the present; the present has existence in and through their expression" (p. 37). The ethnographc moment is "the space between cultures filled by interpretation, occasions of metaphorical understanding and translation" (p. 195). All of these ideas are embroiled intimately with recent questions pursued in the anthropological literature, questions of history and culture, memory, symbol, and action. This collection of essays, spanning a twenty-year period, brings Dening's ethnographic method into focus. At risk of poaching on Dening's own powerful rhetoric, it is a method for the discerning eye and the passionate heart.

   Performances has appeal to a broad audience, not just anthropologists and historians, but all ethnographers struggling with the paradoxes of the moment.

R. J. May and A. J. Regan with Allison Ley, eds., *Political Decentralisation in a New State: The Experience of Provincial Government in Papua New Guinea.* Bathurst, N.S.W.: Crawford House Press, 1997. Pp. 431, xi, maps. A$40 (available by E-mail: <frontdesk@chp.com.au>)

Reviewed by Bill Standish, Australian National University

Since 1973 the on-off-on-again saga of political decentralization in Papua New Guinea has acutely affected that country's domestic governance. Against the advice of some Australian officials and observers wary of federal and state problems, Papua New Guinea's constitutional designers thought elected governments for the nineteen provinces were necessary for democratic decolonization. Decentralization was halted in July 1975 because of the first Bougainville attempt to secede, then revived in February 1976 to placate that province.

   The complex sharing of powers that resulted initially led to administrative upheaval, and the desired participatory democracy did not develop in many provinces. In political and administrative terms the system worked fairly well in some island provinces, but not on the mainland. Bougainville had innovative officials, but even there political capacities were limited and tensions between local and national politicians contributed to the crises over the mine and renewed secessionism from 1988. As a rule, provincial premiers were resented by the national parliamentarians because they controlled most state resources in their electorates. In response, from 1980 national parliamentarians grabbed pork-barrel slush funds, which usually were dispersed for

political or personal gain with little lasting benefit. Meanwhile provinces were starved of both operational and capital investment funds.

By 1994, fourteen provinces had been suspended for some length of time (a total of eighteen suspensions)—usually for mismanagement, especially misappropriation—and in a series of self-serving reports by national parliamentarians the entire system was scapegoated as the cause of state weakness in rural areas. Eventually, emboldened by the second Bougainville secession attempt, the system was "reformed" in 1995 by the national MPs seeking to grab power. This "reform" was presented as a further decentralization to local-level governments, although it was known that local councils were moribund, undermined by the provincial government ministers in the same way the national MPs had weakened the provinces. Repeated restructuring of Papua New Guinea's bureaucracy on political whim or at the urging of international lenders has ignored the need to nurture institutions over time.

The first section of this book, primarily by Anthony Regan, provides essential legal and political background on the system as a whole. In the second section thirteen authors (only two of whom are from Papua New Guinea) present histories of eleven provinces. There is a brief conclusion by Ron May and a postscript sketching the 1995 reforms.

The national media report few of the provinces well, so Papua New Guineans quickly lose their own local history. The authors know their research areas well, yet most give the impression of rather limited close observation or else a failure to probe the outcomes and significance of the events described, tending to see issues in terms of personalities rather than systemic problems. The best chapters are the multilayered analyses of Bougainville by James Griffin and Melchior Togolo and of East New Britain by Anthony Regan, which show how much their relative success relied on factors that are not replicated elsewhere. The most vivid study is that by Harry Derkley on the rough and tough politics of Enga, one of three provinces where the provincial headquarters buildings have been burned down.

To an extent this volume is a tombstone for the old provincial system, but not a detailed obituary. It contains important if implied lessons for Papua New Guinea's constitutional engineers and also aid donors. Ron May, in his low-key three-page conclusion, mentions the limited capacities of the provinces and especially their weak fiscal management, political intervention in provincial business corporations, and the damaging effects of internal conflicts within provinces. He notes the lack of commitment to the system among national leaders and their unwillingness to intervene when problems arise, asserting that problems of corruption and inefficiency are shared by the national government as well as the provinces. That problems of governance will not be solved by recentralization may be his implication, but such profound conclusions justify a more-extensive concluding essay.

Confusion remains in Papua New Guinea at all levels from the hastily initiated 1995 changes. Merely supplanting local politicians and relocating officials will not remove systemic weaknesses. One problem that has emerged recently is the virtually unmonitored use of tens of millions of kina of petroleum and minerals revenues in several provinces. Undoubtedly the provincial saga will have further episodes, if only because any lasting resolution of the Bougainville conflict will require further changes.

With most chapters completed in 1994 or earlier, this book demonstrates the editors' opening statement that contemporary political analysis risks being overtaken by events. Yet, there is so little sustained political research on Papua New Guinea that this collection is the main study of that country's internal government and will long be essential reading for those working in and on the provinces.

Jürg Wassmann, ed., *Pacific Answers to Western Hegemony: Cultural Practices of Identity Construction.* Oxford: Berg, 1998. Pp. 449, bib., index. £44.99 cloth; £17.99 paperback.

Reviewed by Laurence Marshall Carucci, Montana State University

This volume follows the well-traveled path of works on identity construction in the "postmodern" Pacific with a number of insightful case studies. The collection is divided into four major segments, though the subdivisions are not highly integrated and, not uncommonly, the reader may wonder why a particular piece appears in the selected locale. In its major sections, the book flows from a consideration of how historical knowledge is constituted to the ways in which particular Pacific Islands peoples construct identities. Next comes a subsection that focuses in depth on Australia after *Mabo* (the 1992 legal decision that recognized the native land title of indigenous inhabitants), and a final pair of articles on Maori and Western Samoan questioning of democracy.

Wassmann's introductory essay positions the contributions as part of the debate about identity construction and relations of power vis-à-vis the seemingly simultaneous moves toward globalization and fragmentation in the postcolonial era. At the state level, Wassmann discusses processes of internal cultural homogenization and creolization, the domination of new states by transnational elites, and other pluralistic factors that receive stress as concepts of custom and tradition become increasingly problematic. Wassmann suggests that capitalism has real universalizing effects that lead to commodification and Americanization and to the "socially detached individual, in danger of degenerating into an opportunistic and lonely 'homo oeconomicus.'"

Equally, he sees the postmodern era as typified by a time-space compression that has expanded the boundaries of the Pacific and the border-crossing mobility of "its" inhabitants to create a new, multidimensional global space where "peripheries implode into the centers." With such mobility, Wassmann suggests, ideas of the local must be rethought. In their place, more-flexible senses of habitat with meanings relevant to "spaces of experience" must replace reified analytic discourses of the past that referred to culturally fixed realities, which, at their worst, juxtaposed images of "homo primitivus" to "homo logicus" (pp. 7–10).

If this volume lacks a cohesive focus, it certainly contains many worthy chapters and ideas. Due to space constraints, I concentrate on a few. Friedman's contribution, first of the set on how knowledge is constituted, suggests that the current controversies over ethnographic modes of knowing derive from differences in how elemental bits of knowledge are structured in relation to one another. Pacific ways of constructing knowledge, especially the Hawaiian ones he portrays, differ substantially from European/American modes of understanding. Friedman suggests that Hawaiians use embedding strategies to conjoin imagined universes and mythical pasts with social relational contexts in ways quite different from the Europeans or Americans, who see knowledge as a symbolic object to be fitted into a topographic or historic system.

Douglas's chapter deals more directly with issues of identity and notions of narrative authority in relation to the construction of the past. She notes how the ethnographic record of New Caledonia was constructed in the European image, with practices of naming inscribing questionable continuities of group and place-based identity that are consistently contradicted by contrary notations of movement and fluidity in social practice. She argues cogently, and correctly I believe, for a reflexive, nonessentialized view of historical and cultural consciousness, though she does not fully explore the complementary idea that categorization itself is inherently and necessarily reifying.

Burt's chapter addresses the issues of authorship and audience, exploring some of the rough terrain that separates the political agendas of anthropologists and European authors from those of local authors. Burt notes that all accounts are informed by political interests and that many so-called indigenous authors in fact represent a small urban elite who can do little other than further the "project inherited from their colonial predecessors" (p. 100). In contrast, he looks in modest detail at the local accounts of Alasa'a, a Kwara'ae elder writing his autobiographical account of family and clan for his own sons. The agendas here are very local, professing ancient claims of the Kwara'ae as first settlers on certain lands and positing genealogies as evidence for the inheritance of certain lands (and the illegitimacy of others' claims to

the same lands). He notes that the challenge for future authors, anthropo-
logical and local, will be to sort through the differential effects that the im-
mutable written histories have in relation to flexible oral texts, both in terms
of the recollection and erasure of remembered events.

Stephenson's chapter in the identity construction section offers a nice
example of how each of three Warengeme groups with flexible contours
creates viable accounts of its own activities by twisting stories into viable
rationalizations of these activities depending on differently valorized views
of *kastom* or *komuniti*. While the reader is left wondering about the salience
of the three factions among Warengeme villagers, this article offers a fine
example of Burt's plea for local, politically contested accounts of identity in a
postcolonial setting. Gustafsson's chapter analyzes the domain of sport and
gambling as a site in which Usiai, Titan, and Matankor identities are consti-
tuted and perpetuated or, in contrast, where new configurations of identity
are given a salient form in Manus Province, Papua New Guinea. The stark
contrast between Gustafsson's characterization of traditional groups and recent
dynamically constituted groups is perplexing, as are the well-worn images of
sport as a warfare substitute. While one senses that the characterizations of
the past are far too reified, the importance of sport in the current day is
undeniable. Otto's chapter explores the way in which changes in resource
management practices among the Lavongai and Tigak in northern New Ire-
land have an impact on constructions of identity. Although Otto's concep-
tualizations of traditional practice, including his portrayals of clan and matri-
lineage, seem too rigid and unidimensional, he clearly demonstrates how
shifting patterns of marriage, residence, and relations of exchange correlate
with alterations in landholding practices and claims about the ownership of
marine resources to influence notions of identity at several different levels.

Tonkinson's article, which leads the section on Australian national iden-
tity, nicely situates the shifting historical constructions of sovereign nation-
hood for Australia as a whole as well as the issue of Aboriginal sovereignty
within the nation-state. The *Mabo* decision to recognize Aboriginal rights to
land serves as an important symbolic moment in this multifaceted negotia-
tion that counterposes issues of indigenous rights to the British contention
that at the time of settlement the Australian continent was *terra nullius,* that
sets ahistoric racialist portrayals of social justice against historicized views of
a wide array of local experiences by indigenous peoples that share little other
than a common experience of oppression, and that challenges attempts to
fashion unitary images of Aboriginal identity with a wide variety of local
images and important feelings of autonomy. Tonkinson sees the outcome of
this negotiation as part of an attempt by "the nation as a whole [to] reimagine
itself via a[n innovative set of] myth-making processes" (p. 288). By viewing

Mabo as the nexus of the cultural and political dimensions of Aboriginality, these myth-making processes are nicely overviewed in this chapter.

The two articles of the final section discuss the complex issues surrounding democratization among Maori and Samoa residents. Both are provocative but, seeking closure, I overview only Tcherkézoff's discussion of Samoa. Tcherkézoff describes the seeming contradiction between the "aristocratic *matai* system" and the broadly shared Samoan contention that it is only through *matai* that democracy can be maintained. This, of course, is on account of the fact that Samoa is a place where all families are noble: where the principle of nobility does not exist in opposition to the peasantry. The flexibilities of the *matai* system are explored, noting its affinities with respect (as opposed) to rank, of common belonging rather than aristocracy, and of levels of participation in the sacred rather than clear-cut opposition to it. Within this frame, Tcherkézoff nicely situates the way in which ideas of universal suffrage and voting are discussed by Samoans in relation to local concepts of *matai,* togetherness, and processes of consensus building.

In brief, in spite of its lack of focus and beyond some amusing sections of uneven translation, *Pacific Answers to Western Hegemony* holds several gems for scholars interested in issues of history, identity, and social practice in the Pacific Islands today.

Glenn Banks and Chris Ballard, eds., *The Ok Tedi Settlement: Issues, Outcomes, and Implications*. Pacific Policy Papers, no. 27. Canberra: National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University, 1997. Pp. xi, 279, map, bib. A$20 paperback.

Reviewed by Alex Golub, University of Chicago

In the early 1980s the Ok Tedi copper and gold mine began production in Western Province, Papua New Guinea. Throughout the eighties the mine caused massive pollution that seriously affected the lives of the subsistence horticulturalists living in the area. Eventually, these people retained an Australian legal firm to sue BHP Limited, the main shareholder in the mine. The resulting lawsuit received international attention and pressured BHP to settle out of court in a multimillion-dollar deal that is unique in the history of the industry.

Amidst the growing body of literature on Ok Tedi, *The Ok Tedi Settlement* stands out as an important contribution. The volume itself is the result of a workshop held at the Australian National University designed to explore the implications and issues that arose out of the Ok Tedi settlement. This

background is what gives the book its unique flavor—it reflects the varied background and viewpoints of the workshop participants, which included a diverse assortment of people ranging from an indigenous leader, mining company executives, academics, and political activists.

Initial papers by Glenn Banks and Chris Ballard, Meg Taylor, John Burton, and Colin Filer help sketch the historical, legal, and social context of the mine's construction and operation. Burton and Filer in particular provide detailed and insightful analyses of the realpolitik surrounding national and corporate interests in the mine. David King argues against a simplistic view of indigenous people as concerned environmentalists victimized by the mine. But while King emphasizes the primacy of local demands for development, both Alex Maun and Stuart Kirsch emphasize the more-familiar view of Fourth World people fighting transnational capital in order to preserve the environment.

John Gordon, Brian Brunton, Ila Temu, Gavin Murray and Ian Williams, and Chris Harris discuss the details of the lawsuit proper and the implications it has for the law, the mining industry, and political activists. Gordon's paper is particularly well written and conveys the way legal issues blended with life outside of the courtroom during the duration of the litigation.

The most interesting thing about this volume is the way it integrates a wide range of interests and opinions. However, this diversity of viewpoints is also responsible for the volume's shortcomings. One gets the feeling that the editors have encouraged multivocality to the point that it strains the narrative coherence of the volume. Contributors frequently repeat the same general facts while embellishing them with details drawn from their own fields of specialty. The result is paradoxical: basic facts and background are repeated again and again in the introductory section of each article, but without some sort of overarching framework, the reader is left without a view of the "big picture" to organize the wealth of data presented. This lack is all the more important given the extremely detailed level of description in all of the articles. Even the reviewer, a graduate student specializing in indigenous people and mining in Melanesia, was occasionally lost contemplating, for instance, whether BHP and DEC were, as ICRAF and MPI claimed, implicated in the issue of subrogation arising from *Trident General Insurance v. MacNieve Bros Pty Ltd (1988)* for their part in the Eighth Supplemental Agreement and the Compensation (Prohibition of Foreign Legal Proceeding) Act 1995.

Additionally, although the authors include a diverse group, two main players—the national government of Papua New Guinea and BHP itself—are not represented. Although there are chapters by people from the mining industry and the PNG government, actors from the company and agencies involved are not included. While this is undoubtedly an artifact of the antag-

onistic nature of the lawsuit and settlement rather than the editors' partiality, it is unfortunate that such important players do not present their side of the story.

Despite the complexity of the issues involved, the book succeeds on many levels. Differences of opinion are highlighted, and important debates are not papered over. The volume demonstrates that one cannot rest content with the simple view that Papua New Guineans are a homogenous, nature-loving group of people, nor can one assume that the mine operators are cunning capitalists for whom human error and ignorance is merely cover for extractive schemes. Colin Filer's paper in particular demonstrates that the state of Papua New Guinea, as both shareholder and regulator of the mine, does not always act in the interests of its citizens. Similarly, the fact that the leaders instrumental in bringing Ok Tedi to court could not parlay their victory into success in local elections suggests that views of local politics must be complicated.

In sum, the volume provides a detailed analysis of an important event. It does so by representing truly divergent points of view from those best situated to untangle the complex relationships that formed around the mine. Floating behind the particulars of the Ok Tedi case are more-general concerns about transnational capital, the politics and ethics of environmental activism, and cross-cultural alliances. Like the settlement that it examines, the volume will prove to be an important precedent to anyone interested in resource extraction and indigenous people at the end of the millennium.

Donald Denoon with Stewart Firth, Jocelyn Linnekin, Malama Meleisea, and Karen Nero, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi, 518, index, maps. US$79.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Joel Robbins, University of California, San Diego

Even before one begins to delve into the contents of this book, one is struck by the sense that its production was a monumental undertaking. To begin with, there is the matter of authorship. While each of the book's thirteen chapters is attributed primarily to one of its five editors (in one case with a co-author), more than half the chapters contain sections written by others. In all, twenty authors contributed to the making of this volume. Then there is the historical and geographical range that the book embraces: from pre-history through contact and colonialism to the present in the Pacific Islands broadly defined, including (refreshingly) New Zealand and to a limited extent

Australia. Finally, there is the "Cambridge History" imprint, conveying the sense that with the publication of this volume Pacific Islands history has achieved significant recognition among those who draw the academic map of the world.

The book's monumental status conveys itself, then, even before one begins to read. But what of its contents? Does the book hold together, despite its huge range and multiple authorship, and does it manage to succeed as a contribution to Pacific scholarship? In general terms, the answer to these questions has to be yes. There is a wealth of information here and it is well organized and very well presented. The editors have to be applauded for upholding high standards of exposition that make every chapter accessible and useful.

In general, it is true, the book does not open up new interpretive paths. Rather, as Denoon notes in the preface, the book is meant for readers looking for an "introduction" to the people of the Pacific and with this in mind it seeks "to provide clear and reliable first words, rather than lay down last words" (p. xv). Given this goal, chapters and sections of chapters tend to fall into one of two categories: those that are accurate but rather straightforward compilations of known facts or exemplifications of known trends and those that are more ambitious, if still carefully grounded, presentations of synthetic arguments. Overall, there are rather fewer of the latter than there might be, though they are always welcome where they appear.

One of the best of the strongly argued chapters is Linnekin's chapter on the historiography of the region. This opens the volume very successfully. It is followed by seven chapters that cover the period from prehistory to 1941 and take up settlement, precontact economic and political structures, contact, and colonialism and the changes that it wrought. The final five chapters cover from World War II to the present, looking again at changing political and economic structures and at the history of nuclear testing, changing political ideologies, and migration. All of these areas are covered in such a way that novices will get a sense of key issues in current scholarship while even those with great experience in Pacific studies are likely to learn new things.

As should already be clear, the format of this book is one that conduces to the production of many small insights, rather than to the kind of large ones that might shape Pacific studies in the future. It comes as a pleasant surprise, then, to report that this work as a whole does very much sharpen our perception of one issue that deserves to be of continuing importance in future scholarship. This issue has to do with defining the meaningful social units of Pacific history: should historians (and other scholars) take the region as a unit, or should they focus on the nation, or subnational regions, or language groups, or villages, or migratory networks? Of course, there are no

easy answers to this question. And even as contributors wrestle with it, they also alert us to the fact that a similar question—that of what social units should form the bases of Pacific island futures—is a crucial political concern of Pacific Islanders themselves. It is the way this issue plays itself out on these two levels simultaneously that makes it such a potent one. I doubt if a work of narrower scope than this one could have so successfully brought out the issue's importance.

Any effort this ambitious is bound to leave some things out, but for the most part this history is impressive in its coverage. Thus one is rarely tempted to nitpick about what is not here. It does seem worth mentioning, however, that religion is not quite given its due. This is especially clear in the account of the colonial and postcolonial periods. If we accept that Pacific colonialism constituted a three-pronged attack that advanced on economic, political, and religious fronts, then clearly the first two topics are better served here than the last. To be sure, missionaries and cargo cults are considered, but nei- ther they nor various forms of indigenized Christianity are discussed in the kind of depth that would indicate their centrality in island lives. This centrality comes out strikingly in two sections written by Pacific Islanders, which appear late in the book. Though Ruth Saovana Spriggs and Vilsoni Hereniko are not the only Pacific Islanders who contribute, they are the only ones who clearly speak in both a personal as well as an academic voice. It is in their contribu- tions, on women in the Bougainville civil war (Spriggs) and on cultural iden- tities (Hereniko), that the power of church organizations in island life and the force of Christianity in island ideologies comes through most clearly. Coming near the end as they do, these pieces serve to point up that the his- torical chapters that lead up to them do not really prepare readers for the importance Christianity assumes in their accounts of the present.

Take that, though, as the proverbial reviewer's quibble. Overall, this work stands as a major contribution to Pacific studies and as a foundation on which to build in future work. Speaking as an anthropologist, I imagine that this book will do much to insure that students coming to the field in the future will be better versed in the general history of the region than they often have been in the past. I suspect that the same will be true in other disciplines. The content here amply fills out the monumental frame that surrounds it, and for that scholars studying the Pacific have reason to welcome this as an important work.

BOOKS NOTED

RECENT PACIFIC ISLANDS PUBLICATIONS:
SELECTED ACQUISITIONS, MARCH–AUGUST 2000

THIS LIST of significant publications relating to the Pacific Islands was selected from new acquisitions lists received from Brigham Young University–Hawai'i, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, University of Auckland, East-West Center, University of the South Pacific, National Library of Australia, Melanesian Studies Resource Center of the University of California–San Diego, and Secretariat of the Pacific Community Library. Other libraries are invited to send contributions to the Books Noted Editor for future issues. Listings reflect the extent of information provided by each institution.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Dag Anckar, Department of Political Science, Åbo Akademi University, Biskopgatan 15, 20500 Åbo 50, Fin. Fax: (358–02) 215–4585. E-mail: danckar@abo.fi

Stephanie Lawson, School of Economic and Social Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ, U.K. Fax: (01603) 250434. E-mail: S.Lawson@uea.ac.uk

Cluny Macpherson, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, N.Z. Fax: (64–9) 373–7439. E-mail: c.macpherson@auckland.ac.nz

Doug Munro, Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, P.O. Box 600, Wellington, N.Z. E-mail: <munro47@yahoo.com>

Glenn Petersen, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Baruch College–City University of New York, New York, NY 10010, U.S. Fax: (212) 387–1708. E-mail: Glenn_Petersen@att.net

Henry J. Rutz, Department of Anthropology, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY 13323, U.S. Fax: (315) 859–4404. E-mail: hrutz@hamilton.edu

Andrew Thornley, Pymble Ladies' College, Sydney, N.S.W. 2073, Australia. E-mail: thornley@idx.com.au