Regrettably, only one chapter is devoted to Western Samoa, the oldest democracy in the island Pacific. Aiono Dr Fanaafi Le Tagaloa’s essay focuses on matai chiefly authority. Because family decisions are made by consensus and the matai is the family’s chosen representative, Aiono views the Samoan system as “a truly democratic system of government” (131). At the end of the chapter Aiono presents a fascinating insider’s account of Samoa’s switch to universal suffrage in 1990. Although positive about democracy as a political model, she sees the change as an unconstitutional ploy by the party in power to strengthen its position.

Another authoritative insider’s view of democratization is provided by ’I. Futa Helu, who lucidly explains the prodemocracy movement in Tonga. “Fourth World” Pacific peoples—the Maori and the Hawaiians—are also represented in the collection. John Henderson evaluates the underrepresentation of Pacific Islanders in the New Zealand electoral system, and William Tagupa analyzes Hawai’i’s political economy. Tagupa’s candid critique of Hawai’i’s incestuous political culture will ring true to local residents. As a final point, the book is badly in need of careful proofreading and copyediting—a flaw that, in this reviewer’s experience, is unfortunately common in USP books.

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This book roams across the world of small tropical islands, encompassing a chapter on interisland shipping in Fiji and the Cook islands, a chapter on the present and prospective economic situation of the Federated States of Micronesia, other chapters concerned with various aspects of several island groups in the Indian Ocean, two chapters that deal with São Tomé and Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea, and still other chapters on islands in the Caribbean. Given this variety, it seemed at first glance a good idea that all nine of the book’s maps are grouped at the beginning for easy reference; however, the egregious errors on some of the maps get the book off to a bad start. To mention only some: Palau (Belau) is shown as one of the Federated States of Micronesia; Bougainville is included in Solomon Islands; the boundary between Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya is omitted; the map coordinates shown on the map of Micronesia are so grossly wrong that, for instance, rather than being in the southern hemisphere, Nauru is shown to be located at 5 degrees north and too far west by 25 degrees of longitude. On the map of the Caribbean, the cartographer followed the tradition of most tourist maps in omitting the name of the largely beachless island of Dominica, though it is mentioned several times in
the text. The names of Trinidad and Tobago also got left off, but there is a cryptic “Cayman” stuck in about the right place. Most geographically grotesque, even if politically symbolic, is the placement of the equator between Florida and Cuba.

Once past the botched cartography, the standard improves (although several misspellings could be noted). Most of the book’s thirteen chapters were first presented as papers at a conference on the Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands held at Exeter University in 1989. Malyn Newitt’s introduction states the book’s objectives and seeks to establish unifying themes. One objective is to construct a wide comparative dimension for small-island studies, including a deliberate focus on lesser-known former or present French and Portuguese island groups rather than on the better known British ones. Certainly the comparisons are interesting, and readers who know the Pacific Islands will find constant echoes of familiar tensions and issues in the book’s coverage of small islands elsewhere. Themes that occur frequently include the difference between France’s reluctance to separate from its overseas islands and Britain’s hurry to do so during the past decades of decolonization, the vulnerability of small islands if they do not have a metropolitan patron in international affairs, and the credibility of the case for full independence for all remaining island colonies or dominions.

Following the introduction, all the chapters are case studies of particular island groups, except for David Lowenthal’s general overview of small tropical islands and a survey by John Connell and Robert Aldrich of the bits and pieces of territory that remain legally tied to European countries. In his erudite and entertaining contribution, Lowenthal romps through the geographic and conceptual world of islandness, arguing that islands are special and different, apt to suffer from outsiders’ stereotypes and externally generated ventures. The survival of island societies, he concludes, depends on “islanders’ active involvement in their own affairs, and the recognition of their special character and needs by mainland powers” (28–29). Connell’s and Aldrich’s deftly comprehensive listing and examination of presently extant overseas territories serves the book well, providing details about the exact status of “the confetti of empire,” a clarification I turned to many times while reading other chapters. In their chapter, which is a truncated summary of their forthcoming book *The Last Colonies* (Cambridge University Press), Connell and Aldrich also raise several general questions about the continued existence of these possessions, concluding that “their diversity precludes definitive statements that link their political past, present, and future” (39).

Two chapters—Marlow’s “Constitutional Change, External Assistance and Economic Development in Small Islands: The Case of Montserrat,” and Constant’s more sociologically theoretical “Alternative Forms of Decolonization in the East Caribbean: The Comparative Politics of the Non-sovereign Islands”—suggest that for remaining Caribbean colonies “decolonization isn’t what it used to be” (61). That is, the mode of decolonization is changing
and, though formal independence may seem the "natural" path for remnants of empire, it can no longer be assumed that such a course will increase or widen development options. As alternatives, both authors argue for the possibility of some sort of continued allegiance to the former colonial powers in combination with further ventures into regional cooperation among Caribbean islands.

In her chapter "France’s Love Children? The French Overseas Departments," Hintjens employs the metaphors of family life to explicate the contradictory relations of Martinique and Guadeloupe with France. This tactic, which would apply as usefully to the French Pacific as it does to the Caribbean, succeeds in illuminating the complex and paradoxical swirl of pride in “Frenchness,” alienation, centrisms, pro-autonomism, generous paternalism, equality, cultural approbation, and contemptuous neglect that bemuses anglophone observers of French overseas territories or departments.

In “The Perils of Being a Microstate,” Newitt examines the experiences of two island microstates that became independent in 1975: the Comoros Islands in the Mozambique Channel and São Tomé and Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea. With a plantation past based on introduced labor from mainland Africa, both now rely heavily on food imports. They also endure difficulties related to land, population growth, emigration, economies of scale, and transport. Their independence in 1975 (Comoros from France, São Tomé and Príncipe from Portugal) plunged both countries “into desperate economic insecurity and compelled them to face the future without any of the technical expertise necessary to operate a modern state” (82). Newitt traces the disordered postindependence political history of the Comoros and the somewhat greater stability of São Tomé and Príncipe, noting that “going it alone” is a hazardous policy for such frail and poorly equipped states (90). Pinto da Costa’s chapter provides further details on the colonial economic history of São Tomé and Príncipe and on the islands’ plantation economy today. His analysis of an alternative development policy concludes that “external support is the essential ingredient in the economic survival of São Tomé and Príncipe” (122).

Houbert further contrasts French and British approaches to colonization and decolonization in the light of geostrategic considerations (including those of the United States) in the Indian Ocean. Somewhat opaque, the chapter nonetheless usefully clarifies the complex histories of the Seychelles, the Chagos Archipelago, and the Mascareignes (Mauritius, Réunion, and Rodrigues—with the label Mascareignes (or Mascarenes) left off the map. Houbert sees all these island groups as part of a “New World” in that they were uninhabited prior to European colonization. His particular focus is on France’s effort to become a nation-state in the Indian Ocean by transforming Réunion into an integral part of the French national self, a “decolonization through Départmen talisation” (103).

Faber turns to contemporary economics in an Indian Ocean state in “Micro-states, Increasing Integration
and Awkward Imperatives of Adjustment: The Case of the Republic of the Maldives." His discussion eerily reverberates with similarities to the Pacific, as he describes a small open economy dependent on tuna fishing, tourism, and international shipping; a country whose increasing population is fragmented over many islands; a population overconcentrated in the capital causing, along with other problems, pollution of the freshwater lens; men leaving their home islands to work on merchant ships; government attempts to spread the benefits of growth to peripheral areas; a low multiplier effect from tourism; imports exceeding exports; garment manufacture based in part on a quota for woolen goods into US and Canadian markets; and so forth. Faber’s story has a happy ending, at least for orthodox economists, in that past failures of economic planning and financial control in the Maldives have recently been corrected by a series of stern measures.

Turning to transport, Titchener’s chapter, "The Role of Transportation in the Trade Patterns of the Lesser Antilles," discusses the ever-present island issue of maintaining adequate, affordable transportation. Recognizing the chicken-and-egg predicament of small islands lacking sufficient trade volume to justify regular services, he hypothesizes that regular direct cargo liner services will stimulate trade (182). The other chapter directly concerned with transport is "Problems of Inter-island Shipping in Archipelagic Small Island Countries: Fiji and the Cook Islands," by David Hamilton-Jones, who places his analysis in a core-periphery framework while arguing convincingly that islands are different from remote continental settlements. For one thing, it is more difficult “to close down an island if it is uneconomic” (201). He makes worthwhile points about the political and social imperatives that override economic rationality when it comes to providing transport in island nations, though his discussion of Fiji would have gained from including reference to the “pampered periphery,” as discussed in T. Bayliss-Smith and others’ Islands, Islanders and the World (1988, Cambridge University Press). His chapter would also have benefited from careful editing of both text and maps (Pukapuka in the northern Cook Islands has gone unlabeled, like Dominica and the other missing Caribbean islands).

The only other chapter directly focused on the Pacific is John Cameron’s “The Federated States of Micronesia: Is There a Pacific Way to Avoid a Mirab Society?” Cameron provides a useful depiction of the characteristics of the Federated States of Micronesia, followed by a somewhat doctrinaire analysis of the opposition between “the Pacific Way” and a Mirab future. His idiosyncratic definitions point to “the Pacific Way” as a dated form of local, self-reliant, small-scale, appropriate development, and to Mirab as implying large-scale export production as well as the migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy that form the acronym. The conclusion to his chapter does succinctly sum up the perplexing set of factors that will influence the future of the country’s political economy.

Whether or not the sum of the book’s chapters “amounts to something
rather more than just a collection of micro-monographs about micro-societies” (1) will depend on how much thought each reader puts into an integrating process. The two chapters on the Pacific deal with significant topics, and students of the Pacific could benefit by learning more about what has been and is happening in other small-island regions of the world. Beyond that, the full significance of the union of “islandness” and “smallness” remains elusive. The whole book supports the view suggested by Connell and Aldrich that despite the many striking similarities among small islands and island groups all around the globe, the destiny of each much depends on its own, always unique, geography, history, and society.

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There were 132 participants, and 49 of the papers are reproduced here, with a further 2 listed by title or abstract only, and “available from the author.” The volume was sent to press barely three months after the conference, with only perfunctory editing, and with the editor’s hopes that “the content of the papers will more than compensate for editorial blues and imperfections in presentation.”

Well, maybe. It depends on what you are looking for. This is not a tightly constructed academic volume, and makes little pretense of being one. It is the record of a university happening, one that was, moreover, shot through with the contemporary politics of tertiary education in New Zealand, where declining government funds and an emphasis on “relevance” and quantifiable “outcomes” have led to new kinds of competition. The papers vary greatly in length, quality, and subject matter, and by no means all of them deal with “development that works.”

The title, it turns out, simply reflects the decision of a conference planning committee to emphasize the successes of development initiatives; those papers that describe abject failures have been embraced willy-nilly for their “constructive spirit” and good intentions.

Twenty-two of the papers are by academics, most of them from Massey University. Six were written by graduate students, and a further three by consultants, with the remainder coming from nongovernment organizations and government departments.

Although somewhat less than half are substantially concerned with the Pacific rather than with Asia, I shall