reader will be charmed by the picture of her and her informant recreating scenes from the 1975 documentary, *The Ax Fight*. On the whole, however, I think this sort of thing is delightful and opens the ethnography up to the reader.

In sum, *Conservation Is Our Government Now* is a timely, well-written book about an important topic that deserves to be widely read and taught. It is accessible for nonspecialists. Despite the importance of its theoretical contributions, the book’s greatest strength is its ability to bring to life the world of contemporary grassroots Papua New Guineans.

**ALEX GOLUB**

*University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa*

* * *


This book comprises a collection of eight essays that focus on the dynamics of relationships and their significant value in construing contemporary claims to ownership in Papua New Guinea. The essays are based on detailed ethnographic case studies from contemporary Papua New Guinea, and they give attention to the transactions inherent in the claims rather than to the objects that are the subject of the claims. This book is a great resource for lawyers, policy makers, legal and sociocultural scholars, and researchers both in and outside of Papua New Guinea. Edited by Lawrence Kalinoe and James Leach, this volume includes contributions from anthropology and law.

In chapter 1, Marilyn Strathern provides an excellent introduction to the collection wherein she gives a brief summary of each chapter and how the chapters are connected. Strathern also offers an introduction to aspects of Papua New Guinea’s customary law and legal system that are fundamental to understanding transactions associated with contemporary claims to ownership.

In chapter 2, Eric Hirsch draws the reader’s attention to entification, a local process of making entities. Hirsch suggests that entification is not new, but rather a local process used in claims to ownership, whereby persons present themselves as visible and powerful. Entification is possible through the use of narratives, and the knowledge of narratives indicates connection to persons and place. In his case study, Hirsch shows how the creation of new entities arises because of the proposed boundary to the mining extension in the Udabe Valley of Central Province.

In chapter 3, Melissa Demian takes the reader through two types of disputes. The first involves disputes over injury to property, which is seen as analogous to injury to a person; this type of dispute is dealt with by the village magistrate. The second involves a dispute over claims to land; this is dealt with through the land magistrate. Demian discusses how both types of disputes focus on the public exhibition of relationships that are
in a negative state, and provides an insight to the roles of the village and land magistrate courts in reestablishing positive relationships.

In chapter 4, James Leach deals with disputes over land that are perceived to have new effect, and how the perceived new effect of the land is connected to development. Leach shows how new effects cause relationships between persons and land to be constantly renegotiated as circumstances and contexts change. This is true of the dynamics of claims and ownership among Nekgini, which involve an ongoing renegotiation of relationships, place, and identity.

In chapter 5, Lawrence Kalinoe looks at the concept of ownership and possession in the common law and examines how these concepts relate to customary land tenure. He discusses how ownership of customary land is established through principles such as genealogy, prior occupation, and ancestral relationship to people and to the land. Kalinoe highlights how these principles form the basis of ownership claims to natural resources. In reference to the Re Hides Gas Project Land Case [1993] PNGLR 309, Kalinoe addresses how the judge converted possession into ownership and draws our attention to the implications of this decision in construing claims to natural resources.

In chapter 6, Stuart Kirsch focuses on social networks, which are part of the compensation claims in Melanesia. In making comparisons between Melanesian ways of viewing social networks and Euro-American ways, he explains how Euro-American property claims place restrictions on networks, while ownership claims in Melanesia bring social relations into view. Kirsch draws on cases that concern relations between the gold mine and the local communities in Lihir.

In chapter 7, Tony Crook discusses the “new joint person” (91), that is, a person created by combining rationales of ownership, such as those of Papua New Guinea people and those of the international intellectual property legislation. Crook uses examples from Bolivip to illustrate the dynamics involved in such combination.

In chapter 8, Strathern brings this book to an end by discussing two disputes, one concerning property relations on a global scale, and the second concerning property relations associated with a local practice that raises issues of human rights. Strathern examines these two disputes together to show how people in a global and local scale construct rationales of ownership to be used in their claims.

This book is a treasure for anyone interested in current issues and debates over cultural and intellectual property. Some of the great things about this book are that it pulls together detailed ethnographic examples on different transactions and claims to ownership as well as contributions from anthropology and law, which makes this book appeal to a wider audience. Finally, this collection shows an excellent integration of theory, research, and practice, and encompasses many common themes arising out of different circumstances and contexts in contemporary Papua New Guinea.

MALIA TALAKAI
Radboud University of Nijmegen

* * *