tion practice now emphasizes prevention over prosecution.

Forsyth’s groundbreaking book is also a good example of the virtues of electronic publishing. It is available instantly, for free, as a PDF, while libraries and others out of reach of the Internet can order a paperback, printed on demand.

PETER LARMOUR
The University of the South Pacific, Suva

* * *


This monograph concerns the relationship between HIV/AIDS and gender, social structure, and the cultural and religious politics of sexuality in Papua New Guinea. The author, a longtime scholar of sexuality and sexual health in that country, draws on historical and ethnographic work, media reports, policy documents, interviews, and his own research experience as his principal data sources. The major aim of the work is “to pay critical attention to several aspects of Papua New Guinea’s national response to HIV and AIDS and hopefully thereby to strengthen it” (24). Thus, as opposed to being a disinterested academic, Hammar is an engaged advocate, compelled to write by a “hot glow of anger” (47) and his self-declared “special responsibilities in the world” (387).

The book is divided into two very different sections. The first, “Sexual Networking and Sexually Transmitted Dis-ease in the Pacific,” contains five chapters. At the outset of these chapters, Hammar identifies 7—though there actually appear to be 8—key points on which the monograph is based: (1) National and international public health and policy personnel have not yet grasped the root causes of HIV transmission in Papua New Guinea. (2) The national response to HIV/AIDS has been based on insufficient empirical data. (3) Because HIV/AIDS programs are externally funded and rely on a foreign epidemiological model and surveillance system, the epidemiological database is too “loose” to capture behavioral practices and guide the national response. (4) The response to HIV/AIDS is too biomedical and technical in nature, and it ignores social factors. (5) The risk of contracting HIV has inappropriately been externalized away from oneself, one’s marriage, and one’s sexual partners. (6) This tendency to externalize risk is related to the inability of program managers, politicians, and religious leaders to accept normative sexual practices. (7) The “ABC” (Abstinence, Be faithful, use Condoms) model is inappropriate for Papua New Guinea—in concept, motivation, and implementation—and ignores the constraints of social structure, political economy, and gender. (8) Christian churches, more than any other institution, have encouraged unsafe sexual practices and prevented initiatives that would lead to safer sex.

The next three chapters are pri-
marily historical. Chapter 2 is an interesting but excessively lengthy and detailed history of the customary sexual practices of south coast groups, which shows the slow changes over time in the meaning and value of women’s bodies and sexual services. Hammar argues here that women’s growing involvement in prostitution since the 1960s is best explained in terms of social change and political economy, rather than any reified notion of traditional sexual practices. Chapter 3 is a history of HIV surveillance and policy responses in Papua New Guinea between the mid-1980s and 2007, and Hammar does a good job of drawing on media coverage and policy literature in his analysis. Chapter 4 is a history of “leading messages and programmes” (143) related to HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea. Hammar suggests that insufficient energy has been directed toward critically and reflexively interrogating risk categories and the quality of epidemiological data, meaning that any response based on this data is flawed. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the anti-condom discourse in Papua New Guinea, showing how the introduction of condoms has been incredibly contentious, leading to ideological struggles, stigmatization, and the spread of disinformation. Peculiarly, Hammar spends considerable time in this chapter seriously engaging and refuting multiple claims—eg, that condoms are actually causing an increase in the spread of HIV—made by the Catholic bishop of Vanimo.

Part 2, “What the Experts (Still) Don’t Get,” consists mostly of transcribed discussions with colleagues, and opens with an unnecessary discussion of male genital cutting. Chapter 6 is a conversation with a graduate student researching sexual health in the Indonesian territory of Papua. Chapter 7 is a discussion with another Indonesianist regarding issues of gender and sexuality. Chapter 8 is yet another discussion, this time with a physician-scholar on the topic of anti-retroviral therapies. These discussions are an anomalous addition to the book and, though interesting, add little to the monograph as a whole. Hammar then concludes this section and the book with a passionate and moving chapter that returns to his message about the importance of understanding how social structure and gender-based violence impact HIV/AIDS-prevention strategies in Papua New Guinea.

In this work Hammar does an excellent job of illustrating the complex interplay of social, political, religious, structural, and economic factors that are driving the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Papua New Guinea. His fundamental claims, outlined in his eight points above, all ring true, and he is right to call for a combined biomedical and social scientific response. Likewise, his calls for giving more attention to the status of women, for making condoms freely available and acceptable, and for Papua New Guinea’s population to become more sex positive would undoubtedly help in formulating a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS, though unfortunately they must confront the country’s cultural and infrastructural realities.

The shortcomings of the book are primarily editorial but make the task of reading fairly laborious. For example, the author’s attention seems unfocused, such that there are
a bewildering number of arguments and sub-arguments that are difficult to follow. Similarly, the contents can be repetitive, pictures do not often relate to the main text, and discussions are frequently overly belabored or only tangentially linked to what is ostensibly the main point. Finally, the work could be better organized because, although each chapter is interesting in and of itself, the monograph lacks an overall coherence and may be better conceptualized as a number of loosely related essays.

To conclude, it is difficult to identify a relevant audience for this work. Some of the material will be of interest to specialists of sexual health in Papua New Guinea, but most of what is presented is a summary of other works, and many findings and recommendations are not unprecedented. For teaching purposes, the monograph’s organizational issues, its relatively narrow focus, and its high price will likely preclude its use in the classroom. Finally, the author’s controversial reputation in Papua New Guinea—which will probably not improve, given the infuriated and sometimes accusatory tone of his writing—will likely not move this book to the top of the reading lists of religious, policy, and political representatives in the country. This appears to be the audience that Hammar had in mind as he wrote, so it seems unfortunate that these factors will likely diminish the value of what could otherwise have been a widely distributed and influential book.

CHRISTOPHER A J L LITTLE
University of Toronto

* * *


This volume of essays on the militarization of the Pacific and parts of Asia is a welcome, much-needed contribution to a woefully small body of scholarly work. There is little study of the military (particularly of the US military) as an institutional presence in this region; those hardy scholars who insist on leveling a critical gaze at the military often face a determined wall of silence.

In light of this pervasive silence, the essays in this book, which focus on Hawai‘i, Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, Okinawa, South Korea, and Japan, address an essential gap in our knowledge. This is a very teachable collection of essays, useful both for beginning students and more experienced scholars. The volume addresses both the “big picture” of the region and close readings of particular places that allow the big picture to take accurate shape. Editors Setsu Shigematsu from the University of California at Riverside and Keith Camacho from the University of California at Los Angeles provide an introduction that usefully situates contemporary militarization in the context of US and Japanese colonialism; the organization of labor, sexualities, racial and national identities, migration, adoption, and remembrance are wound around the spindle