

The Northeast Passage: A Study of Pacific Islander Migration to American Samoa and the United States, by Dennis Ahlburg and Michael J. Levin. Pacific Research Monograph 23. Canberra: National Centre for Development Studies, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1990. ISBN 0-7315-0678-2, viii + 94 pp, tables, appendixes, bibliography. A\$25.

Remittances and Their Impact: A Study of Tonga and Western Samoa, by Dennis A. Ahlburg. Pacific Policy Paper 7. Canberra: National Centre for Development Studies, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1991. ISBN 0-7315-0958-5, vii + 70 pp, tables, appendixes, bibliography. A\$25.

Northeast Passage is a coauthored research monograph bringing together the perspectives of Dennis Ahlburg, an economist from the University of Minnesota's Center for Population Analysis and Policy who focuses on economic-demographic linkages in macromodels of developed and developing countries, and Michael J. Levin, an anthropologist at the US Census Bureau, who has been instrumental in upgrading the quality and accessibility of census data on American-affiliated Pacific polities and populations. The title *Northeast Passage* is obviously a play on *Northwest Passage*, but readers expecting historical comparisons with European migration to the New World, or any history at all, need to look elsewhere (Lewthwaite's article in the *Journal of Pacific History*, 1973; Franco in *The*

Pacific Theater, G. White and L. Lindstrom, 1990).

The first two chapters attempt to set the regional and theoretical context for the presentation of detailed census data on Pacific Islander migration to the United States and American Samoa in chapters 3 and 4 respectively. In chapter 1 the authors identify the three main international migration flows affecting "south Pacific island nations." In order of importance they are: movement from Pacific Islands to the Pacific rim countries of New Zealand, the United States, and Australia; movement from one Pacific Island polity to another; and movement from the Philippines to Papua New Guinea and western Micronesia. Generally, this is correct, but in technical terms problems abound.

Obviously, we're not just talking about the *south* Pacific anymore, and we're not always talking about nations. It is the "borderless" character of current political relationships between the Cook Islands, Tokelau, Niue, and New Zealand, between New Zealand and Australia, and between American Samoa, the Micronesian polities, and the United States, that makes possible the most important of the migration flows just referred to. (Lack of borders should also be central to the discussion of "Return Migration" in chapter 5, but is not). Any contemporary attempt at discussing "Migration from the Pacific" must address borders, or lack of borders, as a factor throughout the region. Instead, Ahlburg and Levin's ahistorical analysis discusses Pacific Islander migration in terms of fostering increasing dependency between sending and destination countries.

Chapter 2 concentrates on "Issues in Migration." The issues here are framed in terms of an econometric cost-benefit analysis. Factors and variables discussed are migration in the presence of unemployment, migration and subsidized education, emigration and remittances, migration and the return of skilled migrants (if they return are they still migrants?), migration and the "bright lights," and migration reduction. These are, of course, critical issues from the standpoint of orthodox theories of economic development and migration. Unfortunately, the authors are unable to adequately address these issues because of a lack of available data.

Despite substantial problems in framing the regional and theoretical issues, the monograph makes a valuable contribution to contemporary Pacific demography. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are loaded with useful data from the 1980 US census, much of which is from previously unpublished tabulations, or from the 1980 American Samoa enumeration. The authors present a wealth of statistical information on demographic characteristics, income and employment characteristics, education and language ability, and migration experience for Pacific Island migrants to the United States and to American Samoa.

Chapter 6 is one page of concluding comments emphasizing the migration-as-dependency perspective prevalent throughout the 1980s. The authors conclude that "continued migration and an economy driven by rents (aid and remittances rather than by productive export-oriented activities) may

imply a level of dependence unacceptable to the governments of most small Pacific nations" (85). The dependency perspective is rather worn, however. These movements are more accurately viewed in terms of individuals taking the initiative to improve their lives, and the lives of their families, through substantial risk-taking in overseas labor markets. People do not leave their homelands wondering what impact their relocation will have on national-level development. They leave in search of better opportunities for themselves and their families. If the unit of analysis is the family, and not the nation, then migration and overseas employment has been and is a successful strategy for development at home.

The academic discourse on migration has been for too long about nations and national borders. Movements from Polynesia and Micronesia to the American rim and Polynesian migration to New Zealand are largely borderless; that is, they are not "immigration" in the technical sense of crossing national borders. Certainly more Polynesian and Micronesian voices are needed in shaping the regional migration debate. In addition, a North American perspective is needed to recast the migration debate as it is argued in the rim countries. Although *Northeast Passage* is about American Samoa and the United States, the authors say little beyond the standard national-level, dependency argument. They do, however, provide impressive data for reinterpretation.

In *Remittances and their Impact*, Ahlburg aims "to assist policy makers

and planners to assess the impact and maximize the benefits of migration and remittances." Chapter 1, which presents an overview of changing migration patterns, the costs and benefits of labor export, and future scenarios, has several problems, however. The data suggesting a changing pattern of Pacific migration, from circulation to unidirectional permanent out-migration, range from spurious to nonexistent. Comparative macro-level data are of questionable value, and the concepts of "labour export" and "labour exporting nations" commodify human beings in the interest of macro-models. The biggest problem, however, is with Ahlburg's future scenarios. He argues that "Migration may decline because of an unwillingness by New Zealand, Australia and the United States to accept large numbers of Pacific Islanders, given the uncertain future economic performance of the host countries and the increasing competition for immigrant places as the world population grows" (3).

Similarly, in chapter 5, "The Future of Migration and Remittances in Tonga and Western Samoa," he asserts that "the future of migration depends on the immigration policies of the receiving nations, New Zealand, Australia and the United States. These countries are adopting or will soon adopt points based schemes to select migrants. The schemes are straightforward measures of human capital on which Pacific islanders are unlikely to do well in the international competition for immigrant places." The United States has no such points-based immigration scheme, and Tongan and

Samoa communities are likely to continue to grow via the family reunification principle in US immigration policy. Again, a North American perspective on the migration and remittance debate is likely to be very different from a New Zealand or Australian one.

Chapter 2 suggests some questions arising from remittance theory: "Is remitting to be viewed as altruism or investment? . . . How are remittance payments enforced? . . . Do remittances decline over time and generations?" In chapter 3 Ahlburg presents some useful data and discussion on the magnitude and source of remittances for Tonga and Western Samoa and suggests that "Tongan and Western Samoan dependence on remittances is among the highest in the world."

In chapter 4, Ahlburg discusses the adverse effects of migration and remittances on the economies of Tonga and Western Samoa. Recognizing the "scanty" evidence, he suggests that remittances increase income inequality in Western Samoa, but decrease income inequality in Tonga. Chapter 5 presents a number of future scenarios assuming four different levels of international migration by Western Samoans and Tongans, and chapter 6 presents related policy options.

In *Remittances and Their Impact*, Ahlburg combines a strong dependency theory orientation with a neo-Malthusian concern for the future of global labor. He is correct in pointing out that most nations are already closing their doors to surplus global labor. Today, in this broader global context, the relatively open, borderless movements

of Pacific Islanders into the United States take on even greater theoretical and practical significance.

ROBERT W. FRANCO

Kapi'olani Community College

* * *

Tahiti: Stratégie pour l'après-nucléaire, by Bernard Poirine. Arue, Tahiti, French Polynesia: Bernard Poirine, 1992. ISSN 2-907776-03-7, 307 pp, tables, notes, bibliography. Price unknown.

In 1985 Bertram and Watters published an important article that characterized the economies of certain Pacific micro-states (notably, New Zealand's dependencies) in terms of the MIRAB model: Migration, Remittances, Aid, and Bureaucracy. In this book, Bernard Poirine, an economist teaching at the newly inaugurated Tahiti campus of the French University of the Pacific, retools the MIRAB model into the ARABE modes to characterize the nuclear-affluent economy of French Polynesia: *Aide, Rente Atomique*, and *Bureaucratie Envahissante*. The key change is the substitution of *Rente Atomique* 'Atomic Rent' for migration and remittances in the original model. Since the installation of the French nuclear-testing program in the mid-1960s, the economy of French Polynesia has been, says Poirine, an *économie de rente*, such as springs up everywhere there is an influx of wealth in large part independent of local added value. Examples include the Arab oil states, phosphate-rich Nauru, and such Pacific territories as those of Microne-

sia and French Polynesia which are dependent on massive military expenditures and associated civil subsidies.

In addition to the direct expenditures for testing, infrastructure, and military and civilian personnel, the atomic rent transferred from metropolitan France to French Polynesia has included a wide range of grants and subsidies to keep the territory solvent and (especially once the construction of testing infrastructure was completed) the people employed. In 1991, all this added up to just over US\$1 billion, a considerable sum for a territory with only some two hundred thousand inhabitants whose per capita income, consequently, surpasses that of New Zealand and rivals that of the metropolitan state. In effect, the French have been renting the territory, paying dearly for the privilege of testing their lethal bombs at Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls in the Tuamotu Archipelago. The accompanying "prosperity" has transformed French Polynesia, making it virtually postindustrial in terms of consumption, but third world in terms of production in that the wealth transfers, the accompanying high wage rates, and other distortions have devastated the production of food crops as well as the old export mainstays of copra and vanilla.

With the end of the cold war, however, the atomic boom has gone bust. Testing was temporarily suspended in April 1992, and there is much talk that—especially if the United States and Russia agree to cease testing permanently—France will definitively end its testing program. However much those French Polynesians who have opposed