

(as opposed to colonial) rule. "Now that the Pacific is comprised principally of independent or self-governing political entities . . . the tasks of political analysis and criticism become somewhat more difficult. This is especially so for the expatriate, for the non-indigenous observer, who quite rightly may feel uncomfortable with an independent intellectual/political role. . . . [W]ill political scientists question the propriety of criticizing the generation of Pacific islanders who struggled to achieve independence or self-rule for their peoples?" ("The Teaching of Pacific Island Politics: The Role of Political Science," in *Proceedings of the 1982 Politics Conference: Evolving Political Cultures in the Pacific Islands*, edited by Jerry Loveland, Lā'ie, 1983, 16–17). Lawson's forthright and comprehensive critique provides a controversial, challenging, and confident response to these at times awkward dilemmas.

STEPHEN I LEVINE

Victoria University of Wellington

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Land, Custom and Practice in the South Pacific, edited by R Gerard Ward and Elizabeth Kingdon. Oakleigh, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 1995. ISBN 0-521-47289-X, xii + 290 pages. Cloth, A\$80.00; US\$59.95.

Land tenure is one of the enduring themes of studies of Pacific Island anthropology, geography, history, and sociology. Land lies at the heart of identity, custom, community, and well-being for most living in the Pacific, and much has been written on the subject,

including local studies and broad surveys. It would seem difficult to add much that was new empirically or conceptually. Yet this book does so, and does so admirably.

The approach and format of *Land, Custom and Practice in the South Pacific* is novel. Though an edited book, comprising four detailed country case studies and three general essays all separately authored, it is very much a corporate work with coherent themes and objectives. The general essays provide the context for the book. Gerard Ward and Elizabeth Kingdon present first a wide-ranging survey of land tenure, drawing examples from as far afield as Japan, Europe, and Africa, and establish the themes of the diversity and dynamism of communal systems of land tenure, the effect of commodification of land, and the role of the state. They follow with a chapter on land tenure in the Pacific Islands—a very useful general survey of changing custom, law, and practice from the late indigenous period to the present. Antony Hooper and Ward contribute a concluding chapter that draws together the themes from the case studies, challenges the rhetoric of "tradition" in Pacific Island land tenure, and argues for the necessity of land reform.

The country case studies, which comprise the bulk of the book, present the findings of research by anthropologists and geographers with considerable experience in the respective countries. Margaret Rodman writes on Vanuatu, Tim O'Meara on Western Sāmoa, Kerry James on Tonga, and Gerard Ward on Fiji. The authors, because they have worked on a range

of social and economic issues in the countries, are able to place land tenure in a broader context and, in particular, address issues of socioeconomic differentiation, state policy, and cultural change. Of special interest to many readers will be the way they are able to contrast official land-tenure policies with local-level practices.

Each case study chapter develops its own story. In Longana, Vanuatu, Rodman argues that the reification of *kastom* as invented tradition at the national level is paralleled by its use at the village level to regulate relatively equitable and dynamic land-tenure arrangements. In Western Sāmoa, another country that tried to recognize customary practices in land tenure (through *fa'a Sāmoa*) rather than use heavy codification by the state, O'Meara traces how individualization of land tenure has become widely established as a result of a long period of incremental changes to customary practices from within, backed by a land-court system. In Tonga individualization of land tenure (albeit within a strongly hierarchical social structure) has been a part of government policy for over a century and is now revered as part of the country's "tradition." Yet James shows that population growth and commercialization of agriculture have, in recent decades, created a situation whereby individual rights to land can no longer be guaranteed. Ward's chapter on Fiji presents a detailed history of land-tenure changes and an account of how colonial and postcolonial land-tenure policies have enshrined a rigid model of traditional tenure that was out of step with both the diversity of precolonial practices

and the commercial demands of recent decades.

The studies and stories alone mark the book as a valuable contribution to the literature on Pacific Island land tenure. Yet their points of overlap offer probably the most important insights. The book does more than just stress the diversity of Pacific land-tenure systems and practices—that is now well accepted. It sees how "custom" and "tradition," however constructed or distorted, have become very potent symbols and instruments for the state and elites to preserve and extend their power. *Kastom* is an integral part of the Vanuatu constitution, *fa'a Sāmoa* is widely accepted as a way of conducting daily social interactions, and the *mataqali* system is the recognized basis of land tenure in Fiji. However, these often-elusive concepts, whether given legal recognition or merely wide social sanction, are matched by a plethora of individual and group practices that may be contradictory to their legal definition, but in many cases resemble their more ancient forms. Commentators who have pointed to increasing individualism of land tenure in Fiji, for example, may be missing the links to the established, but uncoded, exercise of *veimada* rights. Custom and modernity, communalism and individualism are rarely polar opposites.

There are other important themes. Inequality, in old forms and new, is observed in all the case studies. The issues of absentee owners and land shortage appear in various ways in different places, as does the way in which some individuals have been able to accumulate relatively large amounts of land within putatively communal

systems. Yet perhaps the major theme of the book is the way official land-tenure systems, probably not surprisingly, have been unable to adapt to the strains of commercialization of agriculture, the monetization of many economic relations, and population growth and dispersal. People have adopted their own practices, such as leasing, which are frequently illegal but often hark back to precolonial practices. Such practices have allowed limited, and rarely uncontentious, accommodation of new commercial demands and aspirations within broadly communal structures. Reform of the legal structures of land tenure may be necessary, and pressing, in response, yet it will not come without considerable social upheaval and political conflict.

This is an excellent book. The richness of its case study material is complemented by the depth of its thematic analyses and the quality of its presentation. It is not suitable as a textbook, and its hardcover format and cost may keep it off most private bookshelves. But it deserves to be a standard reference work on land tenure in the Pacific Islands, and its central concerns are likely to endure as relevant issues well into the twenty-first century.

JOHN OVERTON
Institute of Development Studies
Massey University

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The Pacific Island States: Security and Sovereignty in the Post-Cold War World, by Stephen Henningham.

London: Macmillan; New York:

St Martin's Press, 1995. ISBN

0-312-12513, xxiii + 174 pages,

tables, maps, notes, bibliography,

index. US\$59.95; NZ\$140.00.

The twenty-first century has been widely predicted to be the century of the Pacific—in contrast to the twentieth century's focus on the Atlantic, and the earlier concentration on the Mediterranean. If indeed the world's economic, security, and environmental concerns take on a Pacific focus there will be a growing need to expand the past preoccupation with the Pacific rim states to include the many small island states that occupy the central Pacific. Although most are tiny in land area and population, they have vast maritime economic zones, which are likely to grow in both economic and strategic significance. This important study—the first single-authored book-length analysis of the international relations of the Pacific Island states—makes an impressive contribution to the process of understanding the challenges and tensions of the region. It should be of interest not just to students of Pacific Island politics and foreign policy—for whom it is essential reading—but also to all who are concerned about future developments in the world's largest and most dynamic ocean.

Stephen Henningham is well qualified to provide this analysis. He has made a career of Pacific Island affairs, dividing his time between Australian government and academic positions. He has served as a diplomat, analyst in