



Looking beyond RAMSI: Solomon Islanders' perspectives on their future

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wish to remain a part of France. In this way the book contains valuable empirical and anecdotal material that would be useful for Pacific scholars interested in postcolonial state-building.

The town of Bourail and its surrounds are the focus of Lindenmann's fieldwork. He lived and conducted his research for an extended period in the tribe of Pothé in 2004–05, located within the commune of Bourail in the South Province of New Caledonia. This was followed up with several more periods of research between 2006 and 2011. Despite the choice of Bourail not being explained in much detail, it appears to have been a good one given its colonial history and its diverse ethnic population. It is also clear that Lindenmann has taken advantage of his local connections. Bourail is large enough to contain offices of some of the most common state institutions, such as a town hall and a gendarmerie, as well as a military camp on the outskirts of town. The history of Bourail as the site of a penal settlement, with a strong *caldoche* (an ethnic European of New Caledonian birth or descent) identity, adds another level of nuance to the way in which French identity is understood. Colonisation established a separation between the urban centre and the Kanak tribes around it, which continues to shape relations between the Kanak community and state actors and institutions in addition to shaping the provision of infrastructure and services.

The book is structured according to what the author sees as the three primary functions of the *projet étatique*: to rule (*régner*), to class (*classer*) and to serve (*servir*). 'To rule' explores key aspects of state law enforcement such as the military, the gendarmerie, taxation, customary status and controls on immigration and citizenship. 'To class' examines the important role of civil and customary legal status in addition to issues surrounding land ownership and agriculture. Finally 'to serve' focuses on the state's delivery of key services such as roads, electricity and water. Lindenmann is to be congratulated on the extent of the research on display and the way in which the challenges of conducting research in New Caledonia are presented, though the book's overall size may inhibit a number of readers, let alone the fact that it is in French.

The *projet étatique* in New Caledonia reveals a tension between, on one side, a French state that aims to be uniform in its entirety through the imposition of the same laws and regulations within its territory and, on the other side, the push towards emancipation, where local state and political actors are challenging long-held assumptions about best practice, with their own ways of doing things. Undoubtedly New Caledonia is a site of impressive ingenuity, but Lindenmann's account suggests that the French way is still very much seen by both French politicians and many in New Caledonia as the best course to follow. Yet the path of self-determination being trodden is opening up new possibilities for the way in which the territory is governed. Without doubt, Lindenmann's reflections provide a rich account of the complexities facing New Caledonian society as its population heads towards a decision on independence.

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Looking beyond RAMSI: Solomon Islanders' perspectives on their future. Edited by Clive Moore. Honiara, RAMSI, 2014. x + 102 pp., maps, photos, notes, bibliog. ISBN 978-982-9112-04-0 (ebook). <http://www.ramsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Looking-Beyond-RAMSI.pdf>.

This book is a collection of papers presented at a seminar on the 10th anniversary of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), held at the Forum Fisheries Agency in Honiara in 2013. Its content was determined more by the participants and presenters than by thematic considerations. As revealed by the RAMSI special coordinator, Nicholas

Coppel, in his welcoming remarks, the aim of the seminar proceedings was to provide a space for Solomon Islanders to 'think about the next ten years' (p. 1). This includes discussing socio-economic and governance issues as well as solutions. The title of the book captures this aim.

The then prime minister of Solomon Islands, Gordon Darcy Lilo, in his opening address outlines six issues that are 'crucial to the future of the nation' (p. 3), namely law and order, the conflict trap, the natural resources trap, unemployment, macro-economic and fiscal management and the bad governance trap. He makes reference to the Political Stability and Integrity Bill, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative framework and constituency development funds as measures developed by his government to address some of these issues. The critical point to draw from such political rhetoric, however, is that it assumes that such measures are unproblematic, whereas public perception reveals a lack of confidence in them.

Additionally Nick Warner, who was the first RAMSI special coordinator from 2003 to 2004, provides a positive reflection on RAMSI's work in Solomon Islands. He observes that Solomon Islands has progressed since the arrival of RAMSI in 2003 and that the increase in the number of vehicles, people and new buildings indicates a 'huge lift in the Solomon Islands economy' (p. 13). Yet whether such progress has translated into quality and tangible development outcomes that contribute to improving urban and rural livelihoods remains questionable. The remaining papers in the book contain the views of five young Solomon Islanders regarding the future of their country. Their contributions, as highlighted by the editor, form the 'bulk of the proceedings' (p. ix). Their discussions are great because they point to some of the ongoing socioeconomic and structural issues that Solomon Islands continues to grapple with.

Two papers focus on natural resources. One paper is by Philip Tagini, special secretary to the prime minister 2012–13, on mining. He considers sustainable mining by drawing on relevant literature and suggests policy options that require attention – for example, incorporating a sustainable mining framework in the Solomon Islands mining policy and the recruiting of honest and efficient people to work in the mining sector. Although sustainable mining appears to be a useful model, emphasis should also be placed on responsible mining. Genesis Kofana, an officer in the Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet, examines land issues in his paper. He suggests land recording (using a conflict resolution method and the setting up of a body to manage and lease recorded land) as the best approach to facilitating development, drawing on lessons from the Auluta Basin land-recording pilot project. This is a potential solution, but it needs to be tested in at least two other provincial areas in Solomon Islands to ensure that it works before being adopted.

The other three papers vary in substance but are similar in approach in that they draw on personal experience. Nanette Tutua, from the private sector, highlights the challenges and advantages women have in running businesses in Solomon Islands, and suggests that women should earn their positions in parliament. Sebastian Ilala, also from the private sector, examines infrastructure issues, human resources, tourism, trade and taxation. He suggests practical approaches to address these issues in order to improve business private sector performance at the national and provincial level – for instance, improving basic infrastructure and service industries such as tourism through better consultation and dialogue between stakeholders and authorities. The final paper, by Jude Devesi, the assistant resident representative for the United Nations Development Programme sub-office in Solomon Islands, highlights the dissatisfaction of citizens with the performance of their political leaders. He notes that politicians do not always behave only in the national interest. This is due to existing structures such as the electoral system, the power of the government caucus and the use of constituency development funds. He argues that these structures need to be reformed.

The book's conclusion by the editor, Clive Moore, provides a fine summary of the seminar proceedings. He highlights that the main 'points of discussion' in the seminar 'were about how to develop the nation without damaging the evolving social fabric' (p. 75). This is followed by a 'Select bibliography on Solomon Islands, 2003–2013', which is a useful

resource for those undertaking research on Solomon Islands. The merit of this book is the fact that it brings together a number of Solomon Islander perspectives on the future of their country.

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The Ethnographic Experiment: A.M. Hocart and W.H.R. Rivers in Island Melanesia, 1908. Edited by Edvard Hviding and Cato Berg. New York and Oxford, Berghahn, 2014. xiii + 320 pp., illus., maps, tables, index. ISBN 978-1-78238-342-0. US\$95.00, £60.00stg.

It is a welcome and important editorial choice to dedicate the first volume of a new series, Pacific Perspectives: Studies of the European Society for Oceanists, to historical investigation of a different, but not canonised, ethnographic practice. The result of a conference held in 2008 on the anniversary of the 1908 Percy Sladen Trust Expedition, the volume brings together scholars with wide experience in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to reflect on the expedition's significance in the careers of A.M. Hocart and W.H.R. Rivers, the development of anthropological theories, and more generally the engagement of Europeans with the region encompassed by the term 'Island Melanesia'.

In their introduction, Hviding and Berg sketch the expedition's historical background, temporally frame the chapters and outline the contemporary colonial situation in the Solomon Islands and the practical relations between three budding anthropologists who participated in the expedition: Hocart, Rivers and G.C. Wheeler (who soon left the first two in order to conduct his own research). Christine Dureau (chapter 1) articulates well the problem posed today by those early years of the discipline of anthropology. The postmodern paradigm tends to discredit and dismiss this uncomfortable past from a moral position rather than engage historiographically with colonial complexities. Dureau draws on her field experience to think about Hocart and Rivers as 'anthropological ancestors'. On the analogy of Simbo Christians who came to terms with their own cumbersome, 'heathen' ancestors by ironically but sensitively describing them as 'good sinners', Dureau urges her colleagues to exhibit similar historical sensibility toward researchers who worked in colonial settings and to evaluate their work historically rather than from moral standpoints alien to their era.

This book insists that the Percy Sladen Trust Expedition developed a sophisticated fieldwork practice. The authors thereby challenge both the foundational myth of the Malinowskian lone fieldworker and the postmodernist depiction of anthropological practices under colonialism. Hocart and Rivers practised a collaborative, long-term, multi-sited ethnography, deeply grounded in, and shaped by, the social realities of the communities they worked with. Varied evaluations of their attitudes toward 'data' collecting and theoretical development leak through the different chapters, but unfortunately the dynamics of collaborative research are not systematically investigated. Hviding (chapter 2) shows persuasively how the researchers' multi-sited ethnography emerged from a 'close involvement and deep rapport with the islanders and their own life worlds' (p. 78). Hocart's sensibility for socially situating knowledge is reflected in his publications, whose 'apparent heterogeneity of genre and inconclusiveness of argument' were not a 'methodological shortcoming' but a product of encounters between expedition members and 'New Georgian world-views of spatial connectivity' (p. 90). Thorgeir Kolshus (chapter 5) masterfully pieces together different historical sources to reconstruct the political economy of knowledge-gathering during the surveys