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Social Change and Psychosocial Adaptation in the Pacific Islands

Cultures in Transition

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To the People of the Pacific Islands
With Respect and Admiration

To Albert B. Robillard and Divina Robillard
For Courage, Dedication, and Scholarship

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Preface

This volume is the product of an international gathering of scholars and health professionals in Honolulu, Hawaii, for the specific purpose of documenting and understanding the wide-ranging psychosocial consequences of rapid social change among people of Pacific Island nations. In the wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean, there are scores of nations and an untold number of cultural traditions. This area has been the scene of rapid social change since the Pacific Island people began contact with the Western and Eastern worlds through exploration, commerce, and religious missionaries. These changes led to the collapse and decimation of many groups as challenges to traditional ways of life soon exceeded their capacity to endure and survive.

Today, from Australia's Aboriginal peoples in the South to the Hawaii's Native Hawaiian (Kanakanaka Maoli) people in the North, there is a resurgence of cultural pride and efforts to renew ties with past. From Polynesia (e.g., Hawaii, Samoa) to Micronesia (e.g., Chuuk, Pohnpei, Palau) to Melanesia (e.g., Solomon Islands, New Guinea), the indigenous people of the Pacific are continuing their struggle to survive amidst a rapidly changing world in which basic and fundamental values and life styles find themselves in conflict with ways of life that emphasize alien values such as individuality, materialism, competition, and change. These words are not meant to idealize the traditional cultures of the Pacific Island people for they have often been characterized by aggression, hostility, and destruction of one another in the course of their history. Yet, it is clear that never has there been such so many and so potent external forces challenging their existence.

Westernization can now be found throughout the Pacific Islands with the exception of a few isolated regions in Melanesia and Micronesia. From clothing, to food, to religions, to the presence of new economies, the

changes occurring are many and are rapid. The result—both directly and indirectly—has been the onset of numerous psychosocial problems ranging from substance abuse to suicide—the social pathologies. Family violence, divorce, crime, alcoholism, drug use, and sexually transmitted disorders are now virtually omnipresent in rising levels. These problems are found at especially serious levels among youth and young adults.

The present volume offers an overview of these conditions across a sample of Pacific Islands nations and cultural groups that include aboriginal areas of Northern Australia, various groups in Guam, and Fiji, Micronesians from Chuuk, Pohnpei, and the Marshall Islands, Native Hawaiians, and Solomon Islanders. While this limited number of groups in this volume can no way can be considered representational of the conditions or circumstances among the numerous nations and cultural groups of the Pacific Islands, they can offer examples that capture the complexity of the past and present forces that have shaped the Pacific Nations and the consequences that often arise as cultures encounter one another and become cultures in transition.

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February 10, 2005

The opinions and views suggested in this book do not necessarily represent those of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration which funded the conference.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Anthony J. Marsella, Ayda Aukahi Austin,
and Bruce Grant

The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things; of shoes, and ships, and ceiling wax, and cabbages and kings; and why the sea is boiling hot, and whether pigs have wings?

Through the Looking Glass (1872)
Lewis Carrol
(1832–1898)

BACKGROUND

The Pacific Island and Oceanic nations are home to indigenous cultures that are thousands of years old. The indigenous people of the Pacific flourished for centuries as seafaring cultures that supported complex societies and strong traditions maintained through oral histories. The contact and eventual Western colonization that occurred during the past 500 years resulted in drastic and often catastrophic changes to these ancient societies.

While these places are home to many ancient cultures, we can also view these Pacific Island nations as among the newest nations in the world due to recent shifts in leadership and control. Most of these nations experienced significant change in political leadership in the post-colonial era following the end of World War II when Great Britain, Japan, France, and the United States relinquished territorial and governmental control. The political, economic, and social structures that were at that time under the control of the colonial powers were transferred to the indigenous people

with little preparation. The indigenous people that occupied the many islands were often unprepared for the new freedom and civil responsibilities that followed the colonial nations' sudden departure. And while the region remained a critical area strategic and military area for world powers, little was done to build the infrastructure needed for successful governance and administration.

The result of this situation has been a widespread conflict between old and new, between past and present, and between cultural collapse and survival. It is a tribute to the resiliency of the Pacific Islands' people that they have continued to survive amidst the many demands and pressures placed upon them by our changing world. Faced with great distances across islands and nations, inadequate financial and natural resources, and the marginalization of their traditional cultures and languages, the continued survival and growth of the Pacific Island people constitutes an extraordinary effort that can only be admired and respected by all people throughout the world.

Today, there remains a broad variety of governmental, political, and economic patterns among the Pacific Islands nations. Some are totally independent, others are commonwealth affiliates, others are independent republics but with compacts of free association, and still others are colonies (e.g., Tahiti). These varied patterns reflect the different histories and contemporary situations facing the Pacific Island nations. Many of the Pacific Island nations are designated as the United States Pacific Jurisdictions, a name that has little legal meaning but which reflects varying attachments and associations to the United States.

The Pacific Island region is generally divided into three oceanic areas: Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. *Polynesia* includes Hawaii, Western Samoa, American Samoa, Fiji, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, New Zealand, Niue, and French Polynesia. *Micronesia* includes the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (USA), Guam (USA), the Republic of Palau, the Republic of Nauru, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Kiribati, and the Federated States of Micronesia (e.g., Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei). *Melanesia* includes Papua-New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, and Vanuatu. *Austranesia* includes Australia and portions of New Guinea. The front piece provides a map of the Pacific Island region with the various divisions.

What is especially noteworthy about the Pacific Island region is that the populations of the different nations are very small in comparison to the area they occupy, which is larger than any continent in the world. The Pacific Island nations that will be included in the present conference and team building meeting study have the following populations (see Table 1). It should also be noted that many of the Pacific Island nations and rim locations are homes to diverse ethnocultural populations. For example, Guam's

Table 1.1. Land Mass and Population Estimates for Groups in Current Study

| | Population | Land Mass (sq. miles) |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| American Samoa | 58,070 | 77.0 |
| Australian Aboriginals (Northern Territory) | 125,000 | ? |
| Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands | 78,252 (2004) | 176.5 |
| Federated States of Micronesia | | |
| Chuuk | 53,319 | 49.2 |
| Pohnpei | 33,692 | 133.4 |
| Fiji | 762,000 | 7050.0 |
| Guam | 155,225 | 212.0 |
| Hawaii | 1,260,000 (2004) | 6459.0 |
| Papua New Guinea | 3,529,538 | 178,704.0 |
| Republic of Marshall Islands | 59,246 | 70.0 |
| Solomon Islands | 523,000 (2004) | 10,639.0 |

(Sources: Pacific Island Health Officers Association Report—1997; Encarta Encyclopedia—1998; US Census—2000; World Fact Book, 2004).

population includes Chamorros (indigenous people), Filipinos, Koreans, Chinese, Micronesians, Samoans, and various European-American groups. Throughout the Pacific Islands, there has been growing conflict among indigenous populations and other ethnocultural groups as political and economic power become targets of control. Good examples of these conflicts include the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Hawaii, and Australia to mention only a few.

RATIONALE FOR THE BOOK

The Pacific Island oceanic and rim nations include many traditional societies and emerging nations that have experienced abusive histories of colonization, exploitation, and social change and upheaval. Many societies and nations in the region are now struggling to restore traditional cultural heritages and identities, even as they seek to participate in a world community now dominated by Western values and lifestyles. The present social, cultural, and political context in many of these nations is characterized by growing cries for sovereignty, self-determination, independence, home rule, restorative justice, and cultural renaissance. Yet, in these times of transition, the daily-life of many of the people is filled with conflict, uncertainty, instability, and insecurity. National and cultural visions are being challenged by formidable social and environmental problems including substance abuse, poverty, crime and violence, helplessness, suicide,

alienation, malnutrition, inadequate economic, educational, medical, and social resources, and political corruption.

For many nations, cultural disintegration, cultural dislocation, cultural collapse, cultural abuse, and cultural insecurity now characterize the social milieu of daily life. Research indicates that when these cultural conditions are present, they exact a heavy and pernicious toll upon the individual and collective psyche. Certain patterns of social dysfunction, disorder, and deviancy are particularly associated with these conditions of cultural disintegration including:

- A. Substance abuse
- B. Problem drinking
- C. Hopelessness and helplessness
- D. Violence, crime, anger, and abuse
- E. Juvenile delinquency
- F. Suicide, alienation, anomie
- G. Future shock, culture shock
- H. AIDS

In dealing with rapid sociocultural change and with the attendant problems noted previously, Island people—political leaders, professionals, and lay people—will require fundamental information about the sources, types, and patterns of individual and societal problems. Among the most pressing questions that must be answered for health policy development and implementation are the following:

1. What are the variations in the rates, patterns, and ecologies of substance abuse and related disorders within and across the various research sites?
2. What are the variations in the cultural construction and meanings of substance abuse and related disorders within and across the various research sites?
3. What are the methodological challenges associated with the assessment of substance abuse and related disorders within and across the various research sites?
4. How can these data be used to by local health and social resources to develop policy, service delivery, and prevention programs?
5. What can the results of studies reveal about the relationship of socio-cultural factors to the etiology, rates, patterns, course, and outcome of substance abuse and related disorders?
6. What is the relationship between substance use and abuse and related disorders such violence, suicide, and hopelessness/helplessness?

The material in the present volume represent a step toward answering some of these questions though it is clear that future efforts will be needed for substantive answers to be available.

CULTURAL DISINTEGRATION AND DISLOCATION INDICES

Under the pressures of rapid social and technical changes, cultures can collapse or disintegrate. There certain conditions that promote cultural disintegration and certain consequences that appear to be the result of this pernicious situation. While these conditions do not guarantee cultural disintegration will occur, they do increase the risk. Examples of these conditions are:

- A. Recent history of disasters (natural or human)
- B. Poor communication network
- C. Urbanization
- D. In-migration and out-migration
- E. Few rituals and celebrations of tradition
- F. Low social coherence
- G. Rapid social and technical changes
- H. Poverty and economic instability
- I. Few, ineffective, and corrupt leaders

If cultures have strong historical roots and if they are coherent and well defined, then even in the face of major life stressors, they can still continue to provide an anchor for members.

It is clear that many Pacific Island and Oceanic nations and societies have bent beneath the pressures of social change and now find themselves in adaptive efforts that are challenging their limited resources. The outcome for many of these nations has been severe problems in health and well-being. In turn, these problems have added to the burdens the nations face by eroding human resources needed for successful coping and adjustment. The result today is that there is profound need for capacity building related to training, research, policy, and service development. In addition, there is a need to foster networking both within and across the nations and to relate to these networks to international resources (e.g., United Nations, World Bank). Further, there is an obligation to develop culturally relevant and sensitive collaborative training and research skills among researchers and service providers in the Pacific Region. Moreover, these efforts must be accompanied by a dedication to recognize, acknowledge, and understand the socio-cultural context of health and well-being, especially as it is linked

to problematic disorders such substance abuse, alcoholism, violence, and suicide. Obviously, no single discipline or profession will prove sufficient for this task. Rather, it will be necessary to encourage a multidisciplinary, multisectoral, and multicultural orientation and foundation for social action. Finally, it is essential that local and indigenous personnel be used as the primary resources whenever possible.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

The present volume is divided into three major sections. Section I provides some basic foundations for understanding the contemporary Pacific Island and Ocean nation situation, especially with regard to the rapid changes that are occurring and the possible implications these may have for health and well-being. Chapter 2 by Eugene Ogan, a cultural anthropologist with years of experience in the Pacific islands, provides an overview of the Pacific Islands with a special focus on the extensive variations in cultural change and developmental status among the different regions. In Chapter 3, Michael Salzman, discusses the implications of rapid social change for the health and well-being of Pacific Islanders. Dr. Salzman, a cross-cultural counseling specialist with experience in both Alaska Native and American Indian groups, invokes terror management theory in his explanations of the consequences of social change.

Section II includes a spectrum of discussions on various Pacific Island nations and cultural groups. Each of the chapters in this section were encouraged to follow a common outline in their presentation. The recommended outline included the following topics:

Introduction

- Location/Geography
- Population Distribution
- Economy/Political System
- Historical Chronology (Appendix—25 Major Events)

Culture

- Traditional Culture
- Forces of Change and Impact

Health and Well-being

- Health Care and Community System: Structure and Policies
- Substance Abuse
- Alcoholism
- Violence
- Suicide

Because of the obvious variations in data and background, some of the chapters in Section II varied in their ability to follow the outline. Nevertheless, the effort to use a common flow for the chapters provides a useful heuristic for understanding each chapter.

Chapter 4 was prepared by Bridie O' Reilley, Stuart Carr, and Floyd Bolitho, all psychologists from the Northern Territories in Australia who have worked in the Northern Territories with indigenous aboriginal populations. The abuse of the aboriginals in Australia is well known, and in the Northern Territories, many traditional ways of life are still being lived. Robin Taylor, a British trained psychologist who has lived in Fiji for many years and is a member of the faculty at the University of the South Pacific, authored Chapter 5 on Fiji. Among the Pacific Islands, Fiji has been the scene of considerable contemporary violence between Asian Indian migrants and the indigenous Fijian populations. This has created enormous tensions with profound implications for health and well-being. Chapter 6 addresses the many challenges of social change faced by that broad scattering of diverse island cultures known as the Federated States of Micronesia with a focus on Chuuk and Pohnpei. This chapter was written by Joakim Peter and Marcus Samo, two Pacific Island culture specialists associated with the FSM community college system. Fran Hezel, SJ, and Brett Robillard served as consultants.

Chapter 7 discusses Guam; the chapter was written by Juan Rapadas, a Chamorro clinical psychologist, Mamie Balajadia, a retired administrator from the Guamanian Mental Health Division, and Donald Rubinstein, an anthropologist who is a faculty member at the University of Guam. These authors provide a valuable overview of the problems facing Guam amidst the many changes occurring in this nation that has close political and economic ties to the United States. The challenges facing the Native Hawaiian people are discussed in Chapter 8, which was written by Ayda Aukahi Austin, a Native Hawaiian clinical psychologist, and Anthony J. Marsella, Professor of Psychology at the University of Hawaii. Hawaii, of course, is unique among the Pacific island communities because of its political status as a State. At the same time, the Native Hawaiian population has faced numerous problems in its efforts to preserve Native Hawaiian culture and identity. Chapter 9 is on the Marshall Islands, a Pacific Island nation that has known considerable trauma because of nuclear testing and rapid social changes. This chapter was written by Michael Jenkins, a Marshallese psychologist, and Cleveland McSwain, an American mental health professional who has lived in the Marshalls for a number of years. The last chapter in Section II was written by Rolf Kuschel, a Danish psychologist with considerable field experience in the Solomon Islands and two Solomon Islanders, 'Angikinui Francis T. Takiika and Kiu' Angiki. The Solomon Islands is perhaps the least developed of the Pacific Island nations addressed

in this volume and the changes occurring have led to much violence and strife among different tribal factions. These writers offers a useful summary and insightful analysis of the current situation in the Solomon Islands.

Section III includes two chapters that summarize data across the Pacific Island Nations represented. Chapter 11 is written by two public health specialists from Johns Hopkins University and Michigan State, Amelia Arria and James Anthony, who have spent considerable time in capacity building across numerous Pacific Islands. Their Chapter reviews many of the challenges facing Pacific Island nations as they seek to develop institutional structures to support development.

The closing chapter of this book is written by the volume's editors. In this chapter, the editors offer a list of conclusions and recommendations based upon the different chapters in this volume. The numerous and complex changes facing the Pacific Islands today is mirrored in the many variations in responses to these changes. This vast expanse of ocean cultures and nations has little population, but it has considerable importance for the world and for the many groups residing in its region. It is clear that the many changes occurring in the region will continue. In this volume, the consequences of these changes for human health and well-being are addressed.

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Chapter 2

Social Change in the Pacific

Problems Old, Problems New, Problems Borrowed

Eugene Ogan

INTRODUCTION

Decades of research in and about the Pacific Islands do not necessarily make it possible to provide complete coverage of all the issues relevant to a volume of this kind. The vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, the largest single feature on the earth's surface, is daunting enough. Island variety adds to the complexity, since while New Guinea covers approximately 309,000 square miles, the average island is less than 25 square miles, and an island like Funafuti, the capital and population center of Tuvalu, has a land area of less than a single square mile (Rapaport 1999).

In terms of culture history, we know of at least two distinct migrations into the Pacific Islands, separated by thousands of years. The first brought settlers to New Guinea and islands as far to the east as Bougainville. In the 50,000 years that have elapsed since then, their descendants developed a diversity of languages unparalleled elsewhere in the world, perhaps 800 just in what is now independent Papua New Guinea. More than 40,000 years later, or about 3500 years ago, canoe voyagers carried new cultural traits into the northwestern and eastern parts of the Pacific, settling what later Europeans called Micronesia and Polynesia. Neither the earliest nor later settlers possessed metal technology, and all to some degree depended on gardening, fishing, and hunting for their livelihood. But within those constraints, they created a number of distinctive cultural patterns (Kirch 2000).

Finally, the topic of social change exacerbates the challenge to create a framework for the specific chapters to follow. Even if only those changes recorded in written history are considered, one must deal with a time span of three centuries. Whole volumes have been devoted to this subject (e.g., Robillard 1992). Though all the islands have been affected by one or another form of colonialism, here again the range of these experiences is extraordinary. Colonialism encompasses the relegation by outsiders of New Zealand Maori, Hawaiian Kanaka Maoli, and New Caledonia Kanak to minority status in their own homelands. Colonialism has meant military control of Micronesian islands; plantation economies followed by natural resource exploitation in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands; welfare colonialism in French Polynesia; and less neatly classifiable developments in Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga.

Thus one cannot overemphasize—even to a relatively sophisticated readership—the variability found in the region. To do otherwise is to create a mythical “South Pacific” that does no justice either to problems to be explored or solutions to be found (Fry 1997). I shall return repeatedly to the issue of variation in islanders’ lives throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The title of this overview is, perhaps inevitably, misleading in that human life cannot be divided neatly into categories, either of time or of space. “Old” problems may persist, sometimes in slightly changed form. “New” problems are likely to have their roots in the past. And, in view of the long history of outsiders moving into, and often dominating, islanders’ lives, it might be said that all of the problems discussed in this volume are in a sense “borrowed,” though perhaps “imported” or “imposed” would be better word choices. Like all anthropologists, I cannot resist reminding practitioners of other disciplines that our histories and social institutions are so functionally interrelated that we are always in danger of overlooking, or at any rate underemphasizing, these many connections. What appears to be an improvement in one area of social life may produce conflict or loss in other areas, and this is often the case with social problems as they develop. With all these cautions in mind, I will try to set a stage on which to mount the chapters that follow.

“OLD” PROBLEMS

Sixteen years ago, a conference on “Contemporary Issues in Mental Health Research in the Pacific Islands” was held in Honolulu. Looking back on the publication that resulted from the conference (Robillard and Marsella 1987), I am struck by the similarity of the topics presented then

to those in the present volume: alcohol and other substance abuse, suicide, youth crime, and adaptation of Islander cultures to create more successful ways to deal with such issues. Naturally one hopes to see continuity and progress in mental health research and intervention strategies, but should it be assumed that 1985's "old" problems have refused to go away—a discouraging thought, indeed—or that they have taken on new dimensions?

What does appear to me as a very serious "old" problem is rhetorical: the persistent use of the word "paradise" as a way to think about the Pacific Islands. I am not alone in arguing that this term has for centuries misled outsiders to ignore the underlying humanity that Islanders share with those who live beyond that vast ocean. The notion that Islanders live in "paradise" is analogous to what Edward Said has called "Orientalism," a perspective that collapses the rich variety of human experiences into some essentialized and ultimately fictional portrait (Fry, 1997, p. 310). Pacific Islands were never "paradise," and the inhabitants were no more the noble savages the French explorer Bougainville thought he saw than they were the savage brutes described by some early missionaries.

This idea is particularly pernicious when considering social change. If one actually believes in this mythical Eden, then any change can only be understood in negative terms. A notably egregious example of this misunderstanding can be found in the popular book *The Happy Isles of Oceania* (Theroux 1992). Such thinking may be excusable in a "creative writer," but it is much more dangerous if it is allowed to guide policy created and imposed by outsiders (Fry, 1997, pp. 309–13). Given the variety of environments and cultures already noted for the Pacific, it must be understood that islanders face some problems that are unique to individual populations but that others can be best addressed cooperatively.

It is also the case that the colonial legacy of the past two centuries can be thought of as an "old" problem that continues to shape islanders' destinies in ways that require detailed exploration (Wesley-Smith, 1999). For example, the manner in which colonial boundaries were drawn has profoundly affected the "new" problems of ethnic conflict in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Here a dilemma for analysis is that, in spelling out what might be called colonial deformations, care must be taken not to deny the power and agency of islanders themselves. Even the best-intentioned outsiders, who rightly condemn Western, especially Anglo-American, imperialism for creating many of the social problems discussed here may fall into the trap of building new kinds of "victim" attitudes that stifle, rather than enhance, the ability of islanders to take control of their own destinies. Anthropologists are notorious for blaming missionaries and colonial administrators for producing "socio-cultural disintegration," yet international aid agencies may be operating with the same kind of "we know what's better

for you” or “what has worked for us must be the road for you to follow” program. This is why the goals of building islanders’ capacities, participation and empowerment, based on cultural relevance and sensitivity, are spelled out in the chapters that follow.

“NEW, BORROWED, OR IMPOSED” PROBLEMS

It is less useful to belabor these kinds of “old” problems than to focus on what seem to be at least some of the factors of social change that are of most widespread relevance to islanders’ lives today and in the foreseeable future. These changes are both “new” in that they were not addressed in the 1985 conference and certainly “borrowed” in the sense that they can be dealt with only through collaboration between metropolitan and island nations. The first of these has received widespread currency under the label “globalization,” a term that often seems to carry too many different meanings to too many different people. Fortunately, Stewart Firth has recently brought some clarity, together with a particular focus on the Pacific, to the concept. He is careful to point out the record of an earlier history, dating from the 1850s, when traders, planters, miners and settlers first brought the forces of capitalism to the islands (Firth, 2000, 181–184). However, it is a new form of globalization process that he characterizes in specific terms.

The first characteristic is an increased emphasis on free trade. Policy makers are urged to remove perceived barriers like tariffs, quotas and subsidies that would impede any easy flow of goods and services throughout the world. From his observation post in Fiji, Firth sees special dangers when this emphasis replaces the kind of special preferences islands have enjoyed under the Lome Convention. This Convention, which provides advantages for agricultural exports to the European Union, has been a mainstay of the Fijian sugar industry, but it also benefited Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. It expired in 2000 and, since this kind of special arrangement is now seen as “antiquated,” is unlikely to be renewed in its present form (Firth, 2000, 186–7).

Firth further characterizes globalization in terms of a technological revolution in electronic communication. Though noting the possible benefits to island nations that have been disadvantaged by the difficulties of communication and travel over vast expanses of ocean, Firth uses Fiji as a particular case to express his pessimism. An alternative view is offered below.

Finally, Firth discusses the new freedom to move capital around the world. Since the 1970s, financial institutions in the industrialized world have pushed for deregulation of capital movements, resulting in

“a dynamic, yet inherently unstable and volatile global economy” (Firth 2000, 188). Such instability was most dramatically demonstrated in the series of collapses that blighted East Asian economies beginning in 1997. Though the same kind of speculation is not a particular threat to Pacific Island currencies, Pacific nations might be forced to devalue their currencies in order to protect the value of their exports, but devaluation means that the prices they pay for imports would increase. Furthermore, the globalization agenda seems to press for a regional currency like that of the Eurodollar, which would turn over control of much economic life to metropolitan financial institutions.

Pacific Island nations are already disadvantaged economically vis-à-vis metropolitan countries. Since economic factors underlie so many social institutions, it is all too easy to envision an entire new set of social problems emerging from the conditions created by the globalization process spelled out by Firth.

Aid donors, international banks and financial institutions, and foreign investors have already begun to pressure the leaders of these nations to formulate policies to speed up this new agenda. This is particularly notable in the case of land tenure. Economic development, according to such agencies as the International Monetary Fund, is said to require granting fee simple title to individuals, in contrast to other arrangements more typical of Pacific societies.

To the extent that there is any uniformity in Pacific Island cultures, it lies in the centrality of land as material resource and powerful symbol. The flexibility of different forms of land tenure as observed, though not always understood, at first contact was precisely what made possible adaptation to otherwise inhospitable environments. By careful attention to local conditions, whether on large islands or tiny atolls, Pacific societies were able to provide reasonable access to the resources required for daily life and, in the more favorable environments, to achieve surpluses adequate to support specialists in arts, crafts and ritual. Therefore any change in long-established rules of tenure and usage would be bound to have widespread social consequences.

It is true that a trend for communalistic forms of land tenure to be replaced by forms emphasizing individual ownership appears to be worldwide (Ward and Kingdon, 1995, 6). However, this does not mean that shifts away from older patterns, governed importantly by norms of kinship-based reciprocity, should be lightly undertaken, especially when imposed from the top down. The mere suggestion of departing from traditional rules of land tenure set off riots in Papua New Guinea in 1999 and in 2000, suggesting that many in the population were all too aware of what might happen to their lives if such a move took place. (That country's prime

minister, an economist by training, seems sympathetic to this and other features of a globalization agenda, though PNG's complex parliamentary politics make it risky to condemn his policies prematurely.) Fiji's current political turmoil, though often portrayed in purely ethnic images, has at base issues of land, especially the question of leases for sugar cane growers. This is also true to a degree in Solomon Islands, where settlement by Malaitan islanders on the island of Guadalcanal was the proximate cause of allegedly ethnic strife.

Cluny Macpherson (1999) has provided an example from independent Samoa of far-reaching social and cultural effects as land increasingly came to be regarded as individual property. His analysis has implications for the whole region, and links many of the topics considered here and in the following chapters. At the time of European contact, kinship was the principle around which economic, political and religious life was organized. Kinship was the basis for access to land and other resources and for the social relations of a production system of subsistence agriculture (Macpherson, 1999, 73). This production system was directed by title-holders (*matai*) who controlled specific areas of land. Beginning with Christian missionization, this entire structure came under attack in ways not always apparent to either Samoans or outsiders. Missions expected support from converts, encouraging Samoans to produce surpluses for commodity exchange. Expatriates sought to establish plantations, and the alienation of even small parcels of land opened the possibility of a new category of rights and relationships based on ideas of individual private property, rather than on kinship (Macpherson, 1999, 80). Other changes, which cannot be detailed here, include the creation of a labor market and the new political structures (especially a Land Title Court) that came with independence in 1962.

Samoans, like other Pacific Islanders in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, have migrated beyond their islands to metropolitan countries like New Zealand, Australia and the United States. The migrants have become well known among social scientists for the substantial sums of money they remit to their relatives at home. Unlike the goods and services Samoans traditionally rendered to title-holders, these remittances normally go to individual family members, further weakening a nexus that once linked land, *matai*, and larger kinship groups. What is particularly interesting in Macpherson's analysis is that, despite the many changes affecting Samoan land tenure, he has found that Samoans still subscribe to an ideology of kinship that reflects earlier, rather than contemporary, conditions. This accords with Ward and Kingdon's observation (1995, 37) that in the Pacific, much current discussion of land tenure is more concerned with rhetorical assertions about the importance of idealized forms of tenure than with actual practices. Thus interrelated questions of an emergent global economy