

services, and the strengthening of civil society will present a continuing challenge—a challenge in part derived from Australia's own previous involvement in the region.

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*Strategies for Sustainable Development: Experiences from the Pacific*, edited by John Overton and Regina Scheyvens. London and New York: Zed Books, 1999. ISBN cloth, 1-85649-641-4; paper, 1-85649-642-2; xiv + 306 pages, tables, maps, bibliography, index. Paper, \$27.50.

*Pacific Development Sustained: Policy for Pacific Environments*, by Colin Hunt. Pacific Policy Paper 32, National Centre for Development Studies. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press for Australian National University, 1998. ISBN 07315-2383-0; x + 163 pages, tables, bibliography. A\$20.

For readers wishing to cover the widest spectrum of opinion on Pacific Islands economic development, these two books complement each other rather well. Hunt's *Pacific Development Sustained* applies conventional economic theory to systems that have so far failed to respond to policies generated by such theory, while the authors of Overton and Scheyvens' edited collection of *Strategies for Sustainable Development* recognize implicitly that this theory is insufficient to deal with the region's growing economic, social, and ecological problems. Both books take the ambiguous notion of "sustainability"

as a basic value of the equally ambiguous notion of "development," but while *Development Sustained* is primarily concerned with sustaining national economies within the existing global system, *Strategies* emphasizes local social perspectives and experience in dealing with problems ultimately deriving from participation in this system. This approach is characterized by a chapter on "Pacific Islands Livelihoods," the dynamic relationships between communities and their resources, as fundamental to development for the benefit of local people.

Both books accept that conventional economics have failed to provide either sustainable national economies or sustainable livelihoods, but while *Development Sustained* suggests more rigorous applications of the theory, *Strategies* challenges it. Unfortunately the introductory chapters of *Strategies*, intended to contextualize the case studies that make up most of the book, are not always equal to this task. Physical and human geography is well summarized, but the chapter on colonial history neglects the consideration of indigenous political and economic systems that is essential to the "inside-out" perspective intended for the book. When "Culture and Society" follows as a separate chapter, it reinforces the complaint made in the introduction that this subject is "a junior partner in the development coalition." This chapter also seems to depend more on idealism than evidence when it asserts that "sustainable societies" must be equitable and just, considering the longevity of some very inequitable societies in the Pacific Islands, as elsewhere. Other introduc-

tory chapters are also rather disappointing in the conclusions they draw, or fail to draw, from interesting local studies of land tenure becoming more inflexible and inequitable as a result of capitalist development in Kiribati and on the development and dependency fostered by the MIRAB process in the Cook Islands. On the concept of *vanua* in Fiji, an inevitably speculative description of precolonial ideology is commended as a guide for sustainable development for the future, without addressing the political and economic circumstances that have undermined it in the past.

Chapters on "The Effects of Development," having less ambitious theoretical aims, are on firmer ground. "Logging in Melanesia" covers a major regional issue of resource depletion in terms of damage to subsistence, health, and social relations, as well as swindling and corruption. This makes an interesting contrast to its treatment in *Development Sustained*, which includes a financial cost-benefit analysis qualified by a notion of ecological sustainability measured by the essentially western value of biodiversity, rather than by the more Pacific Islands value of livelihood. A useful review of "Mining in Papua New Guinea" in *Strategies* also demonstrates how financial benefits are compromised by damage to the local resource base and social relations, although there is a certain naivety in the conclusion "that the interest of local people be allowed to guide the nature of mining activities." Considering the contradictions between short- and long-term interests, often appreciated only when it is too late, and between the interests of different local groups,

this principle raises as many questions as it answers.

As a nonrenewable resource, mineral exploitation is perhaps more amenable to the *Development Sustained* criterion for sustainability, in which depletion of natural resource capital is balanced against savings and investment in human-made capital. The problem is, of course, as the book demonstrates, that economists do not have the data to make these calculations accurately, and the governments that could make a policy of this principle have other priorities. One of the problems with this book is that, like many of the "development" interests in the Pacific Islands, it applies the logic of trading resource depletion for capital accumulation not only to finite resources like minerals but also to renewable resources with ecological and economic values to the population at large, which cannot be costed in national economic terms. The excellent chapter on "Marine Resources" in *Strategies* makes the point in emphasizing the development potential of communally managed local fisheries. At the same time it agrees with *Development Sustained* in advocating regional cooperation to claim an equitable share of the benefits when powerful industrial countries exploit Pacific Islands resources, rather than the sacrifice of sustainable management policy in exchange for foreign aid.

*Strategies'* critique of conventional development policy continues with a survey of urbanization problems, reflecting the failure of government policies based on the notion of development as growth. Again this subject might benefit from the economic

analysis of *Development Sustained*, but this book's own review of urban environmental degradation and inadequate services unfortunately fails to address the economic policies leading to urban drift, which are ultimately responsible for this unfortunate situation. Such rural development as might counter this trend, as the *Strategies* chapter on agricultural commodity production concludes, is also going in directions that are increasingly ecologically unsustainable and economically fragile.

Having depressed the reader with a series of studies in which "development" seems to depend on resource depletion, *Strategies* concludes with some more encouraging reviews of "sustainable alternatives." The initiatives for these owe more to local communities and nongovernment organizations than to governments, and offer some instructive contrasts to the economic approach of *Development Sustained*. A chapter on forest conservation in Samoa describes a policy shift from western-inspired environmental protectionism toward "integrated conservation and development," which recognizes the essential interests of local people in sustaining and improving their livelihood from the ecosystem to be conserved. This essentially Pacific Islands attitude to the environment may be compared with the value of "biodiversity," the focus of conservation in *Development Sustained*, which so often conflicts with local interests in improving a productive human habitat. As the *Strategies* chapter on sustainable forestry implies, prioritizing resource diversity in a peasant economy, in this case through community-based timber

production, may be a more effective way of conserving forest ecosystems.

This kind of "livelihoods" perspective on conservation, treating people as participants in the ecosystem, is aptly applied in the excellent *Strategies* chapter on ecotourism, which advocates local control of small-scale projects as most sustainable, but without precluding large-scale resort tourism when local people prefer to keep their source of income at a distance. Unfortunately the chapter on the crucial subject of agriculture does less justice to this approach of building on local priorities and experience. In emphasizing the disappearance of local agricultural systems in their precolonial form as holistic adaptations to particular ecological and social circumstances, it seems to miss the point that many Pacific Islands farmers have retained such values in adapting their agriculture to changing circumstances, despite rather than because of western development policies. Improving these local systems by "progressing with the past" might promote sustainability in commercial agriculture too, but the suggested concentration on distant metropolitan markets, rather than on local marketing and processing of food, could equally undermine broader considerations of economic sustainability. The chapter would also have done well to consider the needs created by urbanization, but this question is left to the following chapter on Pacific Islands towns, whose "urban villages" with "urban gardens" are an encouraging example of Islanders' ability to develop their own solutions to problems created by "development."

*Strategies* concludes that the types of development pursued up to now,

based on natural resource extraction, production for protected metropolitan markets, aid and remittances, and tourism, are all under threat and unsustainable. If this seems realistic enough, there is a certain naivety in the underlying assumption that these strategies were ever promoted by metropolitan powers for motives other than those driving the free market globalization now overtaking them. Even so, the “livelihoods” approach of *Strategies* is both an effective critique of, and a positive step forward from, the much-compromised capitalist development model still pursued by *Development Sustained*. It is not quite as original as its presentation implies, being a variation on the “bottom up” approach discussed in our own book, *Environment and Development in the Pacific Islands* (Burt and Clerk 1997, incidentally in the same series as *Development Sustained*). Given that alternatives to conventional development economics are under active debate at present, it is a pity that some of the arguments advanced in that book are not engaged with by more than a passing footnote. But *Strategies* has the same emphasis on building on local experience, recognizing the paternalistic colonial legacy inherited by expatriate developers in its frequent references to the “agency” of local people. If the book did more to examine the economic and political relationships between Islanders and foreign development agencies and treated their cultures as a dimension of these relationships—rather than as a local factor in development—by building on the rich anthropological literature of Pacific Islands social change, it might go fur-

ther in its aim to help “sustainable development . . . break free of modernist approaches to ‘development’ and ‘progress’.”

*Development Sustained* offers no general conclusion. It would have done well to sign off with a defense of its economic critique of policies pursued by Pacific Islands governments and metropolitan agencies, in anticipation of the kind of challenge presented by contributors to *Strategies*. Although the discussion may never catch up with the changing realities of Pacific Islands local livelihoods and national economies, it is essential that both local and metropolitan participants treat the development process as a debate between the kinds of opposing perspectives and interests represented by these two books.

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*Adolescence in Pacific Island Societies*, edited by Gilbert Herdt and Stephen C Leavitt. ASAO Monograph 16. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998. ISBN cloth, 0-8229-4068-X; paper, 0-8229-5672-1; xii + 239 pages, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$50.00; paper, US\$22.95.

This volume was conceived nearly a decade prior to its publication, at a 1990 symposium of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO), and was nearly aborted several times during its lengthy and difficult gestation. Its long-delayed debut, in a much altered and slimmer form than originally conceived, reveals in