

Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific, edited by Paul Spickard, Joanne L Rondilla, and Debbie Hippolite Wright. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002. ISBN cloth, 0-8248-2562-4; paper, 0-8248-2619-1; viii + 384 pages, tables, photographs, figures, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$60.00; paper, US\$24.95.

Constructing Moral Communities: Pacific Islander Strategies for Settling in New Places, edited by Judith S Modell. Special issue of *Pacific Studies* 25:1-2, March/June 2002. ISSN 0275-3596, ISBN 0-939154-68-4, viii + 221 pages, tables, glossary, notes, bibliography. US\$15.00.

Brigham Young University–Hawai'i (BYUH) was involved in the publication of both these books. That institution has provided more university education for Pacific Islanders than any other in North America. *Pacific Diaspora* is the third book to emerge from a BYUH initiative (Pacific Islander Americans Research Project) led by Paul Spickard. *Moral Communities* was published by the BYUH journal, *Pacific Studies*, after developing from a series of Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania sessions. *Pacific Diaspora* presents mainly "insider views" (by members of the communities concerned), and *Moral Communities* is mainly by external observers. Both approaches yield valuable insights, but *Pacific Diaspora* is particularly welcome because insider views are seldom published.

The books are not only about migrants. Almost half the chapters are

on Hawaiian and Māori minorities in their own countries and localities. Despite similarities with the situations of migrants, there are enough differences that they may have been better in a separate volume.

Although the titles imply that both books are about the Pacific Islands generally, 27 of the total 34 chapters are about Polynesians of Hawai'i, New Zealand, Sāmoa, Tonga, and two Polynesian outliers. None are about Cook Islands, Easter Island, Niue, Pitcairn, Tokelau, or Wallis and Futuna, from all of which most people have migrated (86 percent from the Cook Islands, and 96 percent from Niue), nor about Tuvalu or French Polynesia, or possibly the largest category of migrants from the Pacific Islands—the Fiji Indians.

There are 2 chapters on Micronesians, 1 on Filipinos, and 4 general chapters, but none about Melanesians, who constitute the great majority of Pacific Islanders. Equal representation is never possible, and the imbalance does not detract from the value of the studies presented. However, one hopes that Melanesian migration (which has been extensive within and between nations for over a hundred years) will be as well studied before long.

Paul Spickard's excellent introduction to *Pacific Diaspora* outlines six clusters of chapters—on identity, motives for migration and linkages with home, cultural transformations, gender and sexuality, social problems of migrants, and Hawaiian nationalism. He traces the history of Pacific migration to the United States, and the colonial, economic, educational, religious, and strategic linkages that facilitated it.

The book uses several models for possible interpretation of the data. First is the “immigrant assimilation model” in which the main trend is for the immigrant to be absorbed into the host society; second, the “transnational or diasporic model,” which emphasizes continuing links with one’s people at home or elsewhere abroad (which is easier for the wealthy, and for all as communications improve); and the “panethnicity model” (common interest groups forged between immigrants from a common region, such as “Pasefika people” in New Zealand or Latinos in the United States).

The panethnicity model is more pronounced among second and third generation Pacific Islander migrants. They interact and intermarry more, as discussed in chapter 2 on multi-ethnicity, which highlights the selectivity with which people of multiple ancestry emphasize various aspects of genetic and cultural heritage, including language, expressive arts, values, and cultural practices. While accepting elements of all these and other ideal models, Spickard considers the transnational or diasporic model particularly relevant to Pacific Islanders in the United States. Partly that is because most of them are recent migrants during a period of rising incomes and improving communications—most recently and cheaply via Internet.

Tupou Hopoate Pau’u outlines in moving detail her experiences in Tonga, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States; they reflect the lives of many Pacific migrants. Joanne Rondilla considers Filipinos to have “stronger ties to the Pacific than to Asia.” Their languages and cultures are Austronesian, and the Austrone-

sian minority of Pacific Islanders (mainly Polynesian and Micronesian) have most access to industrialized countries. The more numerous non-Austronesians are mainly on the island of New Guinea, where internal migration is extensive, but international migration constrained.

Part 2, on motives for migration, begins with a 1987 reprint, which is based on earlier data. A great deal has changed since then. Asesela Ravuvu emphasizes the importance of kin and community in the decision to migrate, in finding accommodations, work and other needs. Wendy Cowling discusses Tongan migrants’ ambivalence between wanting to “preserve” tradition and modify or avoid it (especially to avoid domination and exploitation by the elite). She outlines the networks of interaction between emigrants and those back home, and the importance of “cultural brokers” who mediate between cultures for first-generation migrants in particular. Craig Janes describes the selective use of elements of culture by American Samoans who go to the United States for work, education, the prestige of migration, and in some cases welfare payments.

In part 3, Helen Morton illuminates degrees of retention, adaptation, and abandonment of Tongan culture by migrants to Australia, including “born-again Tongans” who use aspects of “Tonganness” to assert their difference from other Australians. Inoke and Lupe Funaki explain what aspects of Tongan culture and of mainstream American culture constitute an effective “compromise identity” for Tongans in the United States. Melani Anae presents an in-depth understanding of the construction of identity by New Zealand-born

Samoans who attend an English-speaking Pacific Islander church in Auckland. Vince Diaz illustrates the evolution of “island identity” among Guamanian boys under Hawaiian leaders in a football club in a military environment.

Chapters on social problems and responses to them include one on migrant Pacific Islanders’ ways of dealing with sexual abuse, and family dynamics among Pacific Islander Americans. Value is accorded to male-dominated families (especially large families), and to love, obedience, respect, and firm discipline.

Constructing Moral Communities begins with an editorial overview that highlights how migrant communities create and maintain bonds of solidarity—particularly sentimental bonds. William Donner and Richard Feinberg present penetrating studies of two Polynesian atoll peoples at home and in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Cluny Macpherson elegantly demonstrates the divergence between the life experiences and thus the moral communities of the first generation and those of later generations of Samoans in New Zealand. Linda Allen poignantly explains the dynamics of a “closed” Marshallese community in the United States, bound by an amalgam of Marshallese custom and Christian fundamentalism.

The chapters on Māori and Hawaiian minorities in Hawai‘i and New Zealand in the two volumes are of a different order from the rest of the material. In *Pacific Diaspora* they include chapters on conflicting western perceptions of Hawaiian women, on the differing interests of Hawaiian women and white feminists, the

Hawaiian mahu (persons of mixed gender), Hawaiian health problems and methods of treatment, the Hawaiian practice of ho‘oponopono (for resolving family conflict), an analysis of aloha, and three (at times overlapping) chapters on the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. *Moral Communities* includes two chapters on Māori marae-based urban communities (one on the real and fictive kinship that forms the basis for a marae for migrants of diverse tribal origins, the other a comparison of tribal and non-tribal marae), and two on Hawai‘i (on handling domestic violence and adultery).

The two volumes illustrate in rich detail the ways in which personal identity and place in society evolve, both consciously and unconsciously, for each category of Pacific migrant, and each individual within each category. The main identifiers, apart from physical appearance, include varying uses of language, religion, dress, adornment including tattoo, expressive arts, personal and cultural history, marriage and funerary arrangements, customary practice, social grouping, and values of their multiple reference cultures—of origin, of residence, and of orientation (the last including film, sport, and other distant global models).

Inevitably one wonders how case study “x” would have read if done by author “y.” And one sometimes wishes the mass of descriptive adjectives were more effectively comparable. How do Pacific Islander migrant identities differ from others? Immigrants are commonly minorities, and in varying degrees look, speak, believe, and behave differently from members of

the host society. But how different? And what is the rate of change? Of all the “moral communities” described, how does one know whether one is more cohesive than another? Is the difference due to the authors’ agility with adjectives?

Terry Loomis once did a valuable study with Cook Islanders in Auckland. He asked them to record each day the ethnicities and statuses of each person they spoke to, worked with, socialized with, and so on. The tabulated results were illuminating. Aseela Ravuvu’s book, *The Fijian Ethos* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1987) was enriched by measuring the amounts of time and resources that Fijian men and women (separately) spent on various activities associated with hosting kin who had migrated to town and returned for special occasions. Many other such techniques can be used to make comparison easier and understanding deeper. Numbers don’t tell the whole story, but words don’t either, and while the two books reviewed present a wealth of enlightening word descriptions, they could benefit from a little more measurement.

Many words are used to emphasize negatives in the urban environment people choose to live in, and positives in the environment they choose to remain away from. Why do some authors stress the negatives when the migrants, by being there, seem to stress the positives? At times there is a tendency for a little too much of a “victim” perspective.

Some authors imply that Pacific Islanders’ tendency to maintain contact with home is somehow different

from that of other migrants. But migrants from all over the world do this these days. Many Fiji Indians (those who can afford to) visit India, which their ancestors left generations ago. Many Pacific Chinese maintain links with China and with Chinese relatives around the world. Air New Zealand flights from Auckland to London are packed every day with descendants of emigrants who left Britain generations ago. More choose to visit the “homeland,” one of the most expensive places to get to and stay in, than any of the other 190 countries they could visit (except Australia).

The editors of both volumes refer to Linnekin and Poyer’s claim that Pacific Islander cultural identities are primarily invented and “Lamarkian” (based on behavior), whereas among white people they are given or “Mendelian” (genetically based). Modell seems to accept this (*Moral Communities*, 13), but Spickard notes that it is not so for Pacific Islanders in Hawai‘i and the mainland United States (*Diaspora*, 52)—nor it is so in my experience in the South Pacific. I believe Linnekin and Poyer’s terms are inaccurate and reflect western academic fashion more than Pacific Islanders’ lives. Spickard notes, “What is important for Pacific Islander Americans is not boundaries but centers: ancestry, family, practice, place” (53).

In presentation, *Pacific Diaspora* has an attractive if misleading cover (the launching of a modern reconstruction of a Polynesian voyaging canoe in Hawai‘i—none of the migrants came that way!). *Moral Communities* may not draw as many readers simply because it is not attrac-

tively packaged. There is truth in the adage “You can’t *tell* a book by its cover, but you can *sell* a book by its cover.” While the cover deficiency is trivial, the lack of an index for *Moral Communities* is serious. Being published as a special issue of a journal does not reduce the need for an index.

A minor problem in *Pacific Diaspora* lies in the tables of Pacific Islander populations abroad (19–20), which are based on census figures ten to twenty years out of date when the book was published. Moreover, census figures for Pacific migrants are very unreliable. The table shows 30,000 Pacific Islanders in Australia, when in fact Cook Islanders alone total many more than that, not to mention Samoans, Tongans, Fijians, Tuvaluans, Papua New Guineans, Solomon Islanders, and many others. However, this is not a criticism of the author, as few of the estimated 40,000 or more Cook Islanders in Australia show up as Cook Islanders in the census.

Already, except for Māori, more Polynesians live abroad than in their home countries. That is likely to be so also for Micronesians before long. A growing number of Melanesians is migrating too. Both books make major positive contributions to the growing understanding of the adjustments they find best suit their needs in the new locations.

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Materializing the Nation: Commodities, Consumption, and Media in Papua New Guinea, by Robert J Foster. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-253-21549-8; x + 202 pages, figures, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. Paper, US\$22.95.

Materializing the Nation is a theory-challenging perspective on “everyday nation making” in Papua New Guinea. Foster focuses on how Papua New Guineans, from state officials to office workers, use commodities and mass media to define, promote, and often contradict particular visions of “the nation” and its “national citizens.” He argues against observations that “PNG” is little more than a rhetorical figure of speech and that its diverse peoples are more consumers than “citizens.” He reminds us that despite troubling political and law-and-order crises, procedural democracy continues to exist more than twenty-five years after independence, and that a national consciousness is clearly present, with “the nation” used as a frame of reference for staging collective and personal identities. All seven chapters in this book began as conference or seminar papers. The first five were published elsewhere. Bringing them together, Foster makes his work accessible and proves that banal, everyday nation making can constitute a base for more dramatic forms of nationalism and citizenship.

Part I of the book looks at two state-sponsored projects of nation making and how these efforts at moral education were received. Chapter 1 describes the first National Law Week in 1984. As part of a campaign to