

Loggers and Degradation in the Asia-Pacific: corporations and environmental management

Peter Dauvergne, 2001, Cambridge University Press, 202pp, ISBN 0 521 00134 X

Tropical deforestation continues to be one of the more, if not the most, pressing environmental issue facing the global community. Although the issue has slipped from the headlines to become something of a cliché promulgated by environmentalists, alongside global warming and species extinction—the real travesty is that the world has been unable (or unwilling) to address this issue. More damning still is that it continues despite widespread awareness of its occurrence over the last two or three decades. As Dauvergne persuasively argues, there is no room for comfort or complacency—tropical deforestation continues rapaciously.

The book is organised into four parts, comprising nine chapters. Part I 'Introduction and Background' provides an overview of the issues surrounding forest degradation in the Asia Pacific. Part II 'Context' clarifies the key underlying issues—including the role and value of 'scientific' knowledge, the lack of capacity and willingness of governments and their institutions to control commercial forestry, and the implications of the recent Asian economic downturn. Part III 'Corporations, Profits and Uncertainty' explores the immutable influence of capitalism on corporate behaviour. Part IV 'Conclusion' provides the author's forecast of forestry in the Asia Pacific, and a brief discussion of strategies that may lead to sustainable tropical forest management.

The book's introduction provides a confronting account of the '... fluid webs of power, knowledge, market, and institutional arrangements' that underpin the excessive deforestation of the Asia Pacific (p.9). While the reality is shocking, it is refreshing that Dauvergne acknowledges the complexity of the issues and refrains from proffering

simplistic solutions. He reveals the use of 'scientific forestry' to legitimise poor practice, and makes the point, as others have done, that sustained yield in itself is not sustainable forestry. Sustainable forestry encompasses a much larger and diverse set of factors—crossing the biophysical, economic, social and political dimensions of forestry.

Much of the book focuses on the paradox (deliberate or otherwise) between the rhetoric of responsibility by governments, organisations and individuals, and their behaviour—resulting in tropical deforestation continuing unabated. Dauvergne makes the plausible argument that economic development is still the dominant force shaping the policies and practices of forestry in the Asia Pacific, if not the world over. It is clearly an extremely difficult task to subvert the dominant 'development' paradigm due to the numerous powerful individuals, corporations and governments that benefit so much from forestry as it is today. Even if these benefits are only likely to continue in the short term, we live in a world that demands economic growth and immediate profits.

While there are instances for optimism (for example certification of forest products, international agreements for sustainable forest management, establishment of national parks, emergence of community forestry), tropical deforestation continues because of the global community's failure to reach enforceable standards. Even within individual countries, such as the Philippines, there is often very little commercial timber remaining by the time there is a stable government that can implement favourable policies, institutions have capacity, there is strong civil society, and a transparent and accountable administration of forest licenses. As such, genuine reform that supports sustainable forestry appears to be always one step behind voracious economic development.

Dauvergne argues that our analysis of forestry cannot be divorced from the immense

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economic pressures facing countries within the Asia Pacific. Many countries have faltering economies, weakening currencies, and unstable governments—with timber harvested from native forests seen as a low-cost option that is readily traded in global markets. This context is not conducive for low-impact, community-oriented sustainable forestry. This point highlights that poor trading partners (whether they are communities, governments or corporations) lack negotiating power and are often forced into accepting unfavourable conditions—with poverty inextricably linked to environmental degradation.

While Dauvergne's language occasionally lapses towards zealotry, he charts a steady course through the various issues and clearly articulates what few before him have been able to do. He mixes detail with clear conceptual analysis, and challenges us to do more, particularly in countries like Papua New Guinea where there are considerable areas of tropical forests still largely intact.

The book is concisely written and draws on a comprehensive and credible list of references, enabling those with a research interest in the topic to pursue further reading. It is a small but important text, suited to graduate students, researchers and policy analysts who need to fully understand the complexities of tropical deforestation in the region. The distressing reality is that unrestrained industrial forestry is stripping the Asia Pacific—the environment and its people—of its vital natural heritage. Above all, he makes the reader think about our collective complicity in the deforestation of the Asia Pacific, a critical first step towards change. Dauvergne is right—it is not worth contemplating the Asia Pacific region without its rich tropical forests.

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Introduction to the Ethics of Business and Development in Melanesia

David R. Lea, 2001, University of Papua New Guinea Press, Port Moresby, ISBN 9980 85 386 7

David Lea is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Papua New Guinea. This book, which grew out of Lea's notes for lectures in business ethics, is concerned with explaining the high incidence of corruption in government and business in Papua New Guinea and other Melanesian states. Lea's primary conclusion is that achieving ethical behaviour requires more than the establishment of a set of rules. It also needs people to have a good understanding of how a system based on those rules works in practice. Lea provides an informative analogy in terms of a game. It is not sufficient that one learns the rules of the game; one also needs to have seen the game played in order to understand how the rules apply.

Lea makes the case that the high incidence of corrupt behaviour in public and business activities in the Melanesian countries is largely due to the lack of development of understanding the complexity of modern commercial activities, including the moral and ethical behaviour expected of the participants. Lea argues that the participants are playing the 'game' according to the 'rules' that were applicable to behaviour in the traditional clan-based system. As Lea says

Melanesian businessmen, incorporated landowner groups and the government itself, appear to be operating in a moral vacuum because they do not perceive themselves as bound by any customary rules which govern the distribution of this newly introduced social good. In the absence of customary rules or rituals operating as cultural constraints, many of these agents feel that they are at liberty to appropriate funds for the maximum personal benefit (p. 16).

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Lea develops this theme from his understanding of writings in philosophy, law and economics. In Chapter 1, he traces the different lines of thought about business ethics—the utilitarian and the libertarian—from their historical and philosophical beginnings, comparing the Aristotelian and Wittgenstein approaches to ethics and law. Aristotle argued that rules and principles are insufficient to generate ethical behaviour without the presence of a developed ethical character and insight capable of applying the rules effectively. On the other hand, Wittgensteinian thought argues that rules are ambiguous and presupposes a complexity of experience and knowledge in order to apply them effectively.

In Chapters 2–5, the evolution of the modern capitalist system and modern corporation is discussed. Lea shows how the ethical thought and behaviour underlying this system developed through the writings of utilitarian analyses of the eighteenth and nineteenth century philosophers Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Lea sees a balance in Smith's writings, stressing on the one hand the societal benefits of the pursuit of self interest, and the need for 'humanity, justice, generosity and public spirit' on the other. Lea contrasts this thinking with the attitudes and beliefs underlying the *wantok* system. Lea also sets out the arguments of the critics of the capitalist system, in particular Marx who questioned its moral underpinnings.

The latter half of the book looks at particular aspects of ethical behaviour within corporations, between corporations and government, and between governments and international financial organisations. For example, Chapter 7 examines the question of the moral responsibility of corporations, particularly in developing countries, to the welfare of the society in which it is operating. Lea contrasts the idea of Milton Friedman that the modern corporation should focus on its fiduciary duties to its owners, the shareholders, to the ideas presented by

'stakeholder theory'. Lea finds stakeholder theory is often 'prescriptively uninformative and proscriptively redundant'. By seeking to impose on corporations responsibility for the self-regulated provision of social benefits, stakeholder theory 'may be used as an excuse for government to abdicate both its supervisory role, and the responsibility for necessary collective goods' (p. 108).

Chapters 11 and 12 look at the ethical issues involved in Melanesian governments' improper involvement in business development and in their interaction with international financial organisations such as the World Bank. The Cairns Conservatory case, the Vanuatu Letters of Guarantee case, and Papua New Guinea's Sandline crisis, as well as other examples, are seen as 'disasters fathered by hastily conceived plans to turn a quick profit' (p. 185) in contrast to governments' proper role of facilitating development and the widespread enrichment of its citizenry.

This is an exceptionally thoughtful, balanced book, based on the author's good understanding of writings in the areas of law, economics and philosophy, and with the argumentation benefiting from his training in philosophy. Anyone interested in development in the Melanesian countries—and development more generally—would gain from reading it.

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Culture and Sustainable Development in the Pacific

Antony Hooper (ed.), 2000, Asia Pacific Press, Canberra, 227pp, ISBN 0 7315 3627 4, A\$21

The decade of the 1990s saw some significant reorientations in thinking about the relationships between culture and economic development. Up until then both development

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economists and the international agencies concerned with the Third World such as the World Bank, the UNDP and FAO had largely ignored culture, regarding it as irrelevant to the hard realities of eliminating poverty and improving economic performance in poor countries. The appearance of the UNDP's first *Human Development Report* in 1991, followed by the UN World Commission on Culture and Development's report *Our Creative Diversity* in 1995, shows a shift in focus from a commodity-centred notion of development towards a model in which humans were seen as both the object and the instrument of the development process. If culture is defined as the systems of beliefs, traditions and values that bind groups of human beings together and provide them with a sense of meaning and identity, a reconceptualisation of economic development as a human-centred process was likely to have the effect of bringing culture in from the periphery and making it an integral factor in understanding growth and change in the developing world and in formulating strategies to improve economic conditions and social welfare.

This shift in focus has, however, been slow in coming and still has a long way to go. UNESCO, as one of the more bureaucratically challenged organisations in the international arena, has had a difficult task in transforming its own dealings with culture, let alone in spreading its message to a wider public. Nevertheless, it is true to say that the Perez de Cuellar Commission (the World Commission on Culture and Development mentioned above) did provide a significant impetus towards a re-orientation of thinking about development, even though its impact has not been nearly as profound as that of its environmental predecessor, the Brundtland Commission of a decade earlier. Amongst the flow-on effects from the work of the WCCD could be mentioned a quasi-summit of cultural ministers and officials held in Stockholm in 1998, a conference in Florence

in 1999 organised by the World Bank, UNESCO and the Italian government under the title 'Culture Counts', and UNESCO's ambitious but possibly short-lived series of *World Culture Reports* (of which only two have so far appeared). More generally, the WCCD's report has stimulated a vigorous debate as to how far its idealism can be applied in a real world where cultural imperatives seem often to lead to conflict and where global economic forces are an increasingly powerful influence in shaping human destinies.

The volume under review results from a conference held in Suva in July 1997 under the title 'Culture and Sustainable Development in the Pacific'. The conference was conceived as part of the *Vaka Moana* program, the contribution of Pacific nations to the UN-sponsored World Decade for Culture and Development, and was financed via the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO. The principal aim of the meeting was to explore notions of culture and development in a Pacific context. The book brings together seventeen of the papers delivered at the conference, together with an Introduction by the editor, Antony Hooper.

As is perhaps inevitable when contributors come from widely different professional backgrounds, the volume is very uneven, with some carefully researched and well-documented papers rubbing shoulders with essentially anecdotal and personal essays, such that there is considerable variability in the level and standard of the material presented. Moreover, the volume took the best part of three years to come into being, so there is a somewhat dated feel to some of the presentations. But a more substantial shortcoming is the lack of a central theme or guiding principle to give the papers some relationship with each other. Indeed there seems to have been some uncertainty about the conference's agenda: on p. xii of the Preface the editor indicates that one of the aims of the gathering was to relate the issues raised to the WCCD report, yet three pages later he

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says the aim was *not* to relate the World Commission's recommendations and policies to the region. This ambiguity appears to derive from a sense of reserve about some of the strong positions taken by the WCCD; whilst such caution may be understandable, it leads to a lack of coherence in the volume, especially in regard to how to interpret fundamental concepts such as 'culture' and 'sustainability'.

Nevertheless, there are some very useful contributions in the book. Antony Hooper's Introduction is a thoughtful if somewhat disjointed *tour d'horizon*, with some helpful signposts into the literature of the field. Langi Kavaliku's opening paper paints a clear-sighted picture of the relationships between culture and sustainable development in the Pacific; although he writes from a Tongan perspective, his remarks will have resonance across the region. The noted anthropologist Marshall Sahlins writes a typically provocative piece about the effect of modernity on traditional peoples. He is a staunch critic of the proposition, too often accepted unquestioningly by Western observers, that one development model fits all. He argues that culture is not disappearing or being relentlessly homogenised by processes of globalisation; rather he sees new ways in which culture and modernisation interact, adapt and develop into new forms.

Another rewarding paper is that of Richard Engelhardt, who runs UNESCO's regional cultural program from his headquarters in Bangkok. Over the last few years Engelhardt has masterminded the formulation and testing of a set of models for implementing culturally sustainable tourism projects in countries of the Asia Pacific region. The essence of his imaginative approach is to look to local communities to manage the development and operation of cultural heritage sites in their midst, exploiting the revenue potential from tourism. Seeing the preservation of the cultural values of the heritage assets in their charge is their primary task. This paper describes case studies in

Vietnam and Laos; since it was written, a number of other sites throughout the region have been brought into the study, to demonstrate the practical applicability of the models which Engelhardt's project has developed.

In addition to the more substantive papers in this book, there are also some illuminating case studies of various aspects of culture and sustainability in a Pacific context. These include Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop's account of the economic and cultural role of women in small-scale enterprise in several countries; Malama Meleisea's analysis of governance in Samoa, told through a case of conflict over land title; a description by Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka of the unsustainability of logging practices in the Solomons; John Burton's sobering view of how social and cultural issues have been handled (or mishandled) in mining projects in Papua New Guinea; and, returning to the governance issue, Robert Norton's discussion of the colonial legacy in Fiji and its effects on chiefly power and inter-ethnic relations.

Overall this book provides some relevant and often thought-provoking material. However, for readers interested in economics, the volume suffers from the lack of a coherent account of culture in sustainable development written from an economic perspective. A chapter discussing the role of culture in processes of economic change in developing countries, written by an economist sensitive to the strengths and limitations of economic analysis in this field, would have increased the book's appeal. As it is, there is a danger that the volume may have the unintentional and quite unwarranted effect of confirming some economists' prejudices that considerations of culture have little to offer in thinking about strategies for improving economic performance in the developing world.

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The New Shape of Old Island Cultures: a half century of social change in Micronesia

Francis X. Hezel, S.J., 2001, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 199pp, ISBN 0 8248 2393 1

Francis Hezel is a Jesuit priest who has lived and worked in Micronesia since 1963. He is a close observer of Micronesian society and a prolific writer on Micronesian social issues, especially those concerning youth and the family. In this book he sets down the changes he has observed during his time in Micronesia, in a series of chapters on the family, land ownership, gender roles, birth, marriage, death, sexuality, political authority and population and migration. An extensive literature is cited, but much of the book recounts Hezel's own experiences and observations.

Most Pacific regional groupings include Kiribati and Nauru as part of Micronesia, but Hezel excludes these two survivors of British colonial exploitation and confines his study to the five countries he knows best—Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau and Republic of the Marshall Islands. In these countries the United States has been the overwhelming political, economic and social influence of the post-World War II period. Japan, and more recently China and Taiwan, have had a substantial economic influence but less impact on culture.

When Hezel arrived in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, in 1963 the United States was still conducting nuclear tests in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and was still reinforcing its presence in the Northern Pacific with a substantial deployment of American military personnel. The end of the Cold War and changing military technology led to a tapering of America's interest in the North Pacific and a reduction in the military presence during the 1990s. By then, however, the Northern Micronesians had become thoroughly

Americanised. American habits persist today, especially a firmly entrenched demand for American food and consumer goods.

Hezel's focus is on the way innovation, which of course has come largely from contact with America, has affected island life and changed indigenous social institutions to varying degrees. He argues that change is pervasive and deep, affecting the very foundations of traditional island societies—land-kinship ties and the relationship between people and the land. Because the cash economy enables families to subsist without relating to the land, it liberates households from social obligations to their larger kin group. On the other hand, Hezel argues this same economic transformation to household autonomy also robs families of rights and benefits they formerly enjoyed.

In the process of describing how Micronesian societies have changed, Hezel provides a wealth of information on how they function, in the past as well as today. Each chapter or sub-section begins with a vignette about life in Micronesia, many of which are the author's first hand observations. This is followed by a discussion to put the vignette in context and explain the social processes and changes it typifies. Some of the most vivid are sections concerning father/son relationships, marriage, birth and sexuality. A memorable description of a dramatic transformation in a youth's demeanour, from extroverted to withdrawn, when his father walks into the house, introduces a discussion of highly structured family relationships that were functional in the past but force fathers and sons apart now that their roles have changed. Another unforgettable vignette describes an adolescent boy dropping a 'skin-flick' video into the family video player when the family is gathered round, but no one steps forward to remove it, even though small children are present. It brings home very vividly the message that there is now much greater acceptance of sexually explicit material and a relaxing of some, although

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not all, of the traditional social taboos designed to keep brothers and sisters and other relatives at a distance.

Equally memorable vignettes lead into discussions of land ownership, economic relations and political activities. Hezel's comments on migration are particularly interesting, and challenge the conventional wisdom by suggesting that the flow of goods from the home to the migrants is probably greater than the flow in the reverse direction. This book leaves the reader with the overall impression that Micronesians have adapted to modernisation and adapted well, yet something of enormous value has been lost, and the welfare and other benefits of modernisation cannot make up for that loss.

While acknowledging that the cash economy and traditional subsistence economy exist side by side and feed into each other in unusual ways, Hezel seems reluctant to explicitly acknowledge the continuing strength of traditional culture. In order to interpret behaviours that are apparently inconsistent with economic rationalism it is important to understand that traditional and modern values coexist in Micronesia. One is not replacing the other. Without this understanding it is hard to interpret Micronesian acceptance of grasping and exploitative leaders; levels of expenditure on birthday parties and weddings that bankrupt the host family; and the need to lend money to relatives rather than investing in improvements for one's immediate family. Such behaviours are mentioned throughout the book, but an uninformed reader might assume they are a part of the process of transition, and not recognise that they are accepted because traditional culture persists in modern Pacific society to a greater extent than in other parts of the world.

Hezel writes very well. His book is engrossing and thought provoking. One annoying feature, presumably the responsibility of the publisher rather than the

author, is that the many important and informative notes and references are tucked away at the back of the volume. It is surprising that the University of Hawaii Press apparently assumed that the majority of readers would not bother to read them. It is also a pity that the photographs sprinkled throughout the text are poorly reproduced and often indistinct.

These are minor defects, however, that do not detract from the great value and interest of this study. It is an important work that is essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand Micronesian society or reflect on the impact of globalisation on small island society.

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Strengthening Ombudsman and Human Rights Institutions in Commonwealth Small and Island States: the Caribbean experience.

Victor Ayeni, Linda Reif, and Hayden Thomas (eds), 2000, Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the International Ombudsman Institute, London, 238pp, ISBN 0 85092 639 4

This is a collection of edited papers presented at a Commonwealth Regional Workshop on 'Strengthening Ombudsman and Human Rights Institutions' held in St. Johns', Antigua and Barbuda in March 1998.

As such, it is an enjoyable mix of learned discussion on the history and development of the ombudsman institution around the world, and very practical issues facing ombudsmen in the Caribbean countries that are members of the Commonwealth. Nine of these countries have ombudsman bodies, the first being Guyana where the office was established by its Constitution in 1966, and thus preceding all in the Pacific but New Zealand. The latest was Bermuda in 2001.

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The book contains a wide range of topics of interest and importance to ombudsmen, related human rights institutions and policy makers both in the Caribbean region and in other states. It offers a number of concrete Caribbean case studies an international comparative context while at the same time examining the experience of developing small and island states in general.

The papers commence with an excellent summary of the essential elements, evolution and contemporary challenges for ombudsman institutions globally, by Victor Ayeni, Deputy Director of Management and Training Services for the Commonwealth Secretariat. In outlining the advantages that an ombudsman office brings to improving the quality of governance, Dr Ayeni lists

- the protection of individual rights
- speed and expertise in investigating and resolving individual grievances, a fair and objective review of citizens' problems
- an opportunity to stop an act of maladministration, broadly defined, before it results in a damaging impact on the system
- capacity to identify and stimulate reform in the governance process
- a chance for the administrator to be heard, and perhaps commended, by an unbiased, respected authority
- a wider area of choice for citizens in dealing with a huge and increasingly complex administrative system
- a watchdog role
- an independent quality control mechanism to manage market forces
- the promotion of a people-sensitive political and administrative process
- a feedback mechanism for the public's opinion about government
- an institution for the promotion and protection of human rights
- a safeguard of each individual's right to proper governance.

The Hon. Justice Vincent Meerbaux of the Bermudan Supreme Court gives a scholarly

overview of the legal basis for ombudsman and human rights institutions in the Caribbean, and former Barbados Ombudsman, Sir Frank Blackman discusses public service and accountability in the region. This has not been all it might in his opinion. Not even in the view of one (unnamed) former head of government, quoted by Sir Frank, who publicly referred to the public service of his country as behaving like an army of occupation!

Of particular interest to ombudsmen and other authorities in the Pacific are the very down-to-earth accounts of the types of operation run by the Caribbean ombudsman offices, and the recounting of difficulties they face. From my own discussion with Pacific Region ombudsmen, many of these stories will have a familiar resonance.

None of the Caribbean countries have ombudsmen with the leadership code responsibilities seen in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, but there are many other valuable lessons from these papers, not the least of which is the preponderance of these nations having the ombudsman institution embedded in their constitutions.

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Property Rights and Economic Development: land and natural resources in Southeast Asia and Oceania

Edited by Toon van Meijl and Franz von Benda-Beckmann, Kegan Paul International, 1999, 294 pp, ISBN 0 7103 0641 5

The tension between customary land title by social groups and legal land title by individuals has been a source of political, and even armed, conflict in the Asia Pacific region over the last two hundred years.

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Colonial and post-colonial governments have often taken the view that development requires a transition from customary title to legal title and have introduced programs to make this transition. This book is a collection of essays by Dutch social anthropologists and legal scholars on the interaction between economic and political development and customary land title in the Asia Pacific region.

The collection has two aims. First, the editors attempt to show that the move from customary title to legal title is not a desirable one. Second, the editors wish to show that the path of development from customary title to legal title has not been a smooth and upward path and that the processes of land reform in Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand have been quite different. The collection falls far short of its mark in its first aim. However in regard of the second aim, the collection is quite interesting and illuminating.

Within modern development economics, the role of the government is viewed as a limited one—as a facilitator of growth. The government is to produce the right set of political, legal and economic institutions within which the private sector can create wealth. One institution that has been a particular focus in the Asia Pacific region has been legal system governing land ownership. Based on theory and general evidence, economists have believed that moving from a communally-owned customary title system to a registered law-based title system should lead to higher levels of agricultural productivity. Economists have been generally successful at convincing multilateral lending agencies and regional governments that land reform would produce positive results.

This book is a reaction against the pressure from development economics and is explicitly set out as a defence of customary title. Two possible defences for customary title could be used

- that change to a legal title system does not lead to the sort of gains in agricultural productivity that economists expect
- that customary title may lead to a lower growth but that it achieves other social aims that may be desirable, such as promoting social cohesion, providing insurance for individuals or improving income distribution.

Both of these defences would require that statistics about the results of land reform be used. Perhaps it is an unfamiliarity with argument using statistics, but the contributors to this book seem unable to correctly use statistics in such a manner. For example, one contributor argues that since a percentage of export crops in Papua New Guinea are grown under customary title, customary title must not be an impediment to development.

The closest that is achieved to a proper argument against the movement to legal title is given in the contribution by Slaats, comparing land registration projects in Indonesia and Thailand. He cites a study by Onchan and Aungsumalin (1993) on land reform in Thailand. This study presents strong evidence that the first argument against legal title is not correct, but that there may be some basis for the second argument.

Onchan and Aungsumalin found that land titling and registration led to higher agricultural productivity and increased value of titled land, greater use of credit and larger loans to families on titled land and more equitable income distribution in areas with titled land. There were sociological consequences of land titling—that there is no communal input in tenure decisions, that inheritance practices had to change and that greater access to agricultural loans might lead to forfeiture of land by debtors. Comparing the economic and sociological consequences of titling, Slaats declares that the results of these studies are 'rather ambivalent'. Perhaps it is just the viewpoint

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of this reviewer, but these results would seem to be a solid argument in favor of land reform.

The strong point of the collection is in the tales about development and property rights across the Asia Pacific. From the slow progress made by the Indonesian government in registering land to the rapid changes made by Maoris in New Zealand to have state land turned over to their communal ownership, the Asia Pacific has had a diverse set of experiences. The collection provides an illuminating social and historical background to the question of property rights in land.

However, this background only informs us about the past, it does not provide any information about where we should go from here. The future of property rights in the Asia Pacific region is certainly an interesting question, but this collection provides no guidance.

Just as in the Thai study, the argument about whether to move to legal title in the Asia Pacific region will eventually come down to weighing economic gains against sociological losses. I would have hoped that a collection of papers produced by social anthropologists arguing against legal title would present compelling evidence about the social disruption and dislocation brought about by past movements to legal title. However it is in precisely this area that the book presents no data. Overall it is surprising that a book by social anthropologists has no sociological information at all.

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Reference

Onchan, T. and Aungsumalin, S., 1993.
Final Report: Socio-economic Evaluation of the Land Titling Project, Kasetsart University, Bangkok.

It analyses statistics, soft law instruments, commentaries, and recent developments, as well as the composition and workings of judicial appointments commissions in Commonwealth member states. It does this by defining the rule of law as a universal and practical concept; promoting high-quality studies and training; and supporting capacity-building on the rule of law which enhances economic development, political stability and human dignity. The Centre is part of the British Institute of International and Comparative Law. Other jurisdictions have established different means of holding commissions to account for their individual decisions, including ombudsman mechanisms and judicial review. See also L.C. Reif, "Ombudsman and Human Rights Protection and Promotion in the Caribbean: Issues and Strategies" in V. Ayeni, L. Reif and H. Thomas, eds., *Strengthening Ombudsman and Human Rights Institutions in Commonwealth Small and Island States: The Caribbean Experience* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2000) at 160 [hereinafter *The Caribbean Experience*]. Google Scholar. L.C. Reif, "The Promotion of International Human Rights Law by the Office of the Ombudsman" in L. Reif, M. Marshall & C. Ferris, eds., *The Ombudsman: Diversity and Development* (Edmonton: International Ombudsman Institute, 2000), p. 160. Human Rights Watch is an international human rights organization that investigates and reports on abuses of human rights around the world. Currently, it employs around 450 people, mostly country-based experts, lawyers, journalists, and human rights workers who work to protect those at risk. The organization works with and advocates towards governments, businesses and armed groups, forcing them to change their policies and laws. *Strengthening Ombudsman and Human Rights Institutions in Commonwealth Small and Island States: the Caribbean Experience* (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2000), p. 2. See also Tore Modeen, "The Swedish and Finnish Parliamentary Ombudsman" in Roy Gregory and Philip Giddings (eds.), *Righting Wrongs: the Ombudsman in Six Continents*, (IOS Press, 2000). But ombudsmen and their staff do need to recognize that if [human] rights are not properly or adequately protected, there may be difficulties for them in ensuring that their traditional preserve "sound and fair administration" operates in a proper manner. Ayeni, V. *Strengthening Ombudsman and Human Rights Institutions in Commonwealth Small and Island States: The Caribbean Experience* London Commonwealth Secretariat 2000. Howe, R. B. Johnson, D. *Restraining Equality: Human Rights Commissions in Canada* Toronto University of Toronto Press 2000. United Nations *National Human Rights Institutions: A Handbook on the Establishment and Strengthening of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights* New York UN 1995. Cortell, Andrew P. Davis, James W. *How Do International Institutions Matter? The Domestic Impact of International Rules and Norms*, *International Studies Quarterly* 40 1996 451.