

# Pacific Geographies

Research | Notes | Current Issues from the Asia-Pacific Region

A painting of a woman with dark hair, wearing a pink dress with a heart-shaped brooch at the neckline. She is standing with her right arm raised, holding a small object. The background is a textured wooden surface. The text 'SPECIAL ISSUE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS IN THE PACIFIC' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

## SPECIAL ISSUE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS IN THE PACIFIC

### **Gandhi, Rizal and Sukarno**

Asian models for decolonization  
aspirations in the Pacific?

### **New Caledonia and/or Kanaky**

On the way to political independence?

### **Hawai'i**

Illegal annexation & sovereignty miseducation



## CONTENTS #46 | July / August 2016



**Making a nation and faking a state: illegal annexation and sovereignty miseducation in Hawai'i – 11**



**Sukarno, Gandhi & Rizal: Role models for self-determination & decolonization aspirations of Pacific island countries – 17**



**New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Free Association – 21**

**04 New Caledonia and/or Kanaky:  
On the way to political independence?**  
Mickael Forrest & Matthias Kowasch

**11 Making a nation and faking a state:  
illegal annexation and sovereignty  
miseducation in Hawai'i**  
Karin Louise Hermes

**17 Sukarno, Gandhi and Rizal: Asian role  
models for self-determination and de-  
colonization aspirations of Pacific island  
countries**  
Hermann Mückler

**21 New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and  
Free Association**  
Evelyn Marsters

**26 Book Review: Hanoi Hospital**  
Britta Schmitz

**28 Advertisement of photo book:  
Đà Nẵng: COASTAL City**  
Michael Waibel (ed.)

# EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

the present Special Issue of *Pacific Geographies* discusses actual and controversial questions of decolonization and political independence in the Pacific Islands region. Many countries in the Pacific have gained their political independence in recent decades. But to this day, the decolonization process in the Pacific is not completed. New Caledonia, Tokelau, Guam, Pitcairn, Samoa and French Polynesia are recognized by the United Nations as "Non-Self-Governing Territories". But independence movements also exist in Hawaii, Bougainville and West Papua. The legal status and the socio-cultural situation, as well as the shape of independence movements differ greatly in these territories. The present Special Issue deals with the decolonization debate in Hawaii, the Cook Islands and New Caledonia. Another research note proposes an interesting comparison between Asian (Gandhi, Rizal and Sukarno) and Pacific decolonization processes. One of the three case studies (Hawaii, Cooks Islands and New Caledonia) is co-written by a representative of an independence party, the FLNKS (Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front).

Further, we would like to inform you that we adapted the management of our journal according to international standards. We selected an editorial board consisting of 12 renowned experts of the Asia-Pacific region. In the course of the upcoming three years the members of the editorial will support us to disseminate knowledge about our journal within the scientific community, to invite particularly emerging scholars to publish at our journal, to advise on the contents and to do reviews or to suggest potential reviewers. As part of this re-structuring process Julia Albrecht, who has been managing editor since 2007, moved to the Editorial Board. On this occasion, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to her substantial efforts to keep this journal alive during the recent years and we are very glad that she will continue to support us as member of the editorial board.

We sincerely hope you enjoy this new issue of *Pacific Geographies*.

The managing editors, Michael Waibel & Matthias Kowasch

## Pacific Geographies

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The PG provides an interdisciplinary platform for an academic discussion of social, cultural, environmental, political and economic issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

In order to uphold scientific standards, the PG is implementing a peer-review process. Articles marked as „scientific papers“ have been peer-reviewed by two external reviewers. Articles marked as „research notes“ have been peer-reviewed by one external reviewer and a member of the editorial board. All other articles have been reviewed by the editorial board.

APSA-Members receive the *PACIFIC GEOGRAPHIES* at no cost as a membership benefit.



The Association for Pacific Studies (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Pazifische Studien e.V., APSA) was founded in 1987 at the Department of Geography of the University of Technology in Aachen. Activities include workshops, conferences, public lectures and poster exhibitions. The book series *PAZIFIK FORUM* was initiated in 1990. In 1992, it was complemented by the journal *PACIFIC GEOGRAPHIES*.

The APSA sees itself as one of the largest scientific networks in Germany for academics and practitioners with an interest in the Asia-Pacific region as well as academic exchange.

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#### COVER PICTURE

**Making a Nation and Faking a  
State: Aloha 'Āina and Sovereignty  
E(A)ducation in Hawai'i**

© Karin Louise Hermes 2015



A spray-painted depiction of Queen Lili'uokalani of Hawai'i. The sign was painted during the summer of 2015 protest vigil on Mauna Kea and was unlawfully "arrested" for trespassing along with 7 other women and one man in prayer on September 9. The "emergency rules" under which they were arrested restricted cultural practices and were later ruled invalid.

# New Caledonia and/or Kanaky: On the way to political independence?

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**Abstract:** The French overseas territory of New Caledonia, called “Kanak” by the indigenous Kanak people who represent around 40% of the total population, is preparing a referendum to be held on the question of political independence from France. The context is the Noumea Accord of 1998, which provides not only the transfer of political competences from France to New Caledonia (except defence, foreign affairs, law and order, currency and justice), but stipulated that a referendum on independence should be held between 2014 and 2018. This article discusses questions of belonging and identity raised by the possibility of eventual sovereignty. After a historical review of struggles for independence, we offer four different scenarios for the future of the country and some observations on its future prospects.

**Keywords:** Political independence, New Caledonia, Kanak people, Kanaky

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In 2012, the former French Minister for Overseas Territories, Victorin Lurel, declared that government members are interested in the future of New Caledonia, of “Kanak”. “We say New Caledonia but it’s connoted. I say so to respect all parties. (...) I think there is enough wisdom in New Caledonia-Kanaky to understand”, explained the minister (Libération 2012). The declaration led to a political debate about the name of the country and its political connotation.

The term “Kanak” refers to the indigenous people of New Caledonia, all of whom are Melanesian, who speak 28 different languages and who are located throughout the archipelago, but predominantly in the Northern Province and the Loyalty Islands Province. Up until today, French people use the term “Melanesian” to refer to the indigenous people of New Caledonia. It was only by 1983 that the French specifically recognised the “Kanak people”, formalised in the Noumea Accord in 1998: “The colonisation has undermined the dignity of the Kanak peoples and deprived them of their identity. (...) It is appropriate to recall these difficult times, to recognise the mistakes, and to restore the Kanak people’s confiscated identity (...)” (Faberon and Postic 2004) The term ‘Kanak’ is nowadays deeply related to the independence movement that does not call the country “New Caledonia”, but “Kanak” (Néaoutyine 2006). So, Kanaky is the name favoured by pro-independence groups, but not accepted by loyalist parties and the French government.

The Noumea Accord in 1998 provides for discussion and agreement on new identity signs, and the name of the country is part of it. “Kanak” or “New Caledonia” refers to the identity of the country and its inhabitants. The Accord also concedes to a referendum on political independence from France.

The article discusses questions of belonging and identity with regard to eventual sovereignty and the political future of “Kanak-New Caledonia”.



## Method and theoretical framework

The paper is based on newspaper and scientific articles review, and on ethnographic fieldwork that the authors conducted in New Caledonia between 2007 and 2016. Participatory observation was used to emphasise the results from informal interviews with customary representatives and political authorities.

The article relies on a theoretical framework of identity research by Mee and Wright, Hall and other authors working on belonging and identity. After discussing works on belonging, identity and indigeneity, we present a short history of independence struggles in New Caledonia before analysing the Noumea Accord in 1998 that represents a political turn in the emancipation of the country. To conclude, the paper introduces four scenarios, according to Courtial and Mélin-Soucramanien (2014), that can occur after the independence referendum organised at the latest in 2018.

## Belonging and identity

There is a growth of recent research in geography, which draws on belonging as a key concept. Mee and Wright (2009:777) note: “The geographies of belonging are negotiated geographies”. The concept of belonging can appear in different geographical works, such as citizenship, place, identity or indigeneity.

According to Desforges et al (2005:440), research on citizenship has mobilised the concept of belonging: “(h)istorically citizenship was a mark of belonging and commitment to a specific space and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship were performed in this civic context”.

Other works explore contested spaces of national belonging; these literature tensions between what Fenster (2005) calls a “sense of belonging”, everyday practices of belonging, and formal structures of belonging, including in some cases citizenship rights (cited in Mee and Wright 2009:773). In the perspective of an upcoming referendum on political independence in New Caledonia, we assist in an actual political debate on who has citizenship rights, who has the right to vote in the referendum on independence and who “belongs” to the New Caledonian territory.

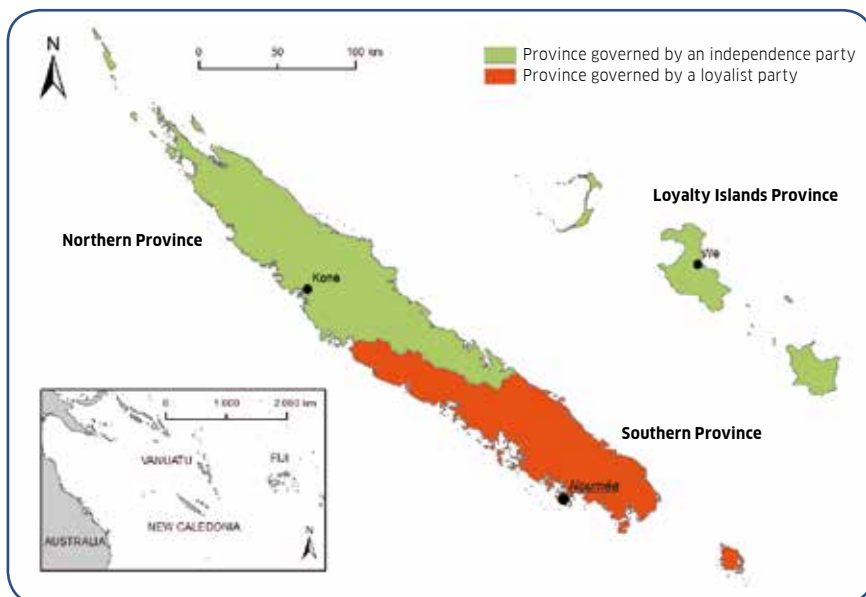


Figure 1: Map of New Caledonia and voting behaviour

The Kanak independence movement refers to the United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960. The Declaration says that “all peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (United Nations, 1960). Graff (2012) explains that in the early 2000s, representatives of Kanak NGOs participated regularly at UN meetings on the rights of indigenous peoples. Those were mainly representatives of the CNDPA (National council for indigenous rights), and then, subsequently, the Rheebe Nuu Committee and the Customary Senate. In 2001, 2005 and 2008, Rock Wamytan, member of FLNKS, and Julien Boanemoui, at the time member of the customary senate, gave a speech at the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee of the UN General Assembly.

In addition to the right or self-determination, the UN (2008:6) proclaim in article 9 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples a “right of belonging”: “Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right to belong to an indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No discrimination of any kind may arise from the exercise of such a right.”

Referring to the politics of indi-

geneity, Muller et al. (2009) show how indigenous landowners and land managers (re)create belonging based on diverse and relational ontologies in Northern Australia. This also applies in New Caledonia where indigenous communities create and negotiate “spaces of belonging” (sacred places) on the basis of relational ontologies. Stuart Hall (1990:226) explains that cultural identities are “points of identification [...] which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. Hence there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position”. In the case of Melanesian countries, the social identity of people is written in space, because identity is formed through the clan’s itinerary. In New Caledonia, an itinerary is represented by a series of sacred places where a group moved throughout its history. These places all have a name in one of the 28 Kanak languages and shape the social identity of each clan. Land legitimacy follows from these sacred sites. So, identity is always constructed and never given (Kowasch 2012; Kowasch, Batterbury and Neumann 2015).

Schein (2009) demonstrates how political struggles over citizenship, race and nation are bound up with landownership and the memorialisation of the past (cited in Mee and Wright 2009:776). We can observe similar struggles in the colonial history and the actual debate on political independence of New Caledonia. The indigenous Kanak people were discriminated against for long time,

Design: Matthias Kowasch 2016.

	Congress (54 members)	Government (11 members)
<b>Pro-independence parties</b>		
FLNKS-UC et Nationalistes	15	3
UNI-PALIKA	9	2
LKS	1	0
<b>Loyalist parties</b>		
Les Républicains / FPU- Rassemblement-UMP	10	2
Calédonie Ensemble	16	3
MRC	1	0
UCF	2	1
		(UCF-MRC-MPC)

**Table 1: Composition of the New Caledonian Congress and government since 1 April 2015 (election 31 December 2014).**

and this discrimination continues today, in instances such as renting apartments or nightclub entries. On the other hand, extremist Kanaks see the future of the country as a racial inclusion-exclusion base. Inclusion-exclusion arguments refer to the concept of identity that Tajfel (1981) defines as a “part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from [his] knowledge of [his] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (cited in Fisher 2014a:2), and which others have seen as closely linked with culture (Nagel 1994).

The key question that we ask is how these questions of belonging and identity influence the upcoming referendum and in general the political future of New Caledonia. Before

discussing the referendum that will be organised until 2018, we shall first present the origin of independence struggles in this French overseas territory.

### Origin of independence struggles in New Caledonia

The nickel sector, the core industry of New Caledonia, was booming in the late 1960s. Fortunes were built in a few months; production forecasts based on nickel prices on the world market gave the feeling that anything was possible (Kowasch 2010). A flow of immigrants arrived in the country: more than 8,000 French citizens came to live in New Caledonia between 1969 and 1972. In addition, a few thousand immigrants arrived from other French overseas territories in the Pacific, Wallis and Futuna. We

have to note that in 1969 there were ‘only’ 7,800 people born in France living in New Caledonia (Doumenge 1982:227), while the total population of the country was 100,579 (ITSEE 2000:77).

However, the economic boom leads to a decline in the political autonomy of the country. Reducing the autonomy was carried out by the statutory reform of 1963, which increased the powers of the State, and the “Billotte laws” in 1969. The latter laws transferred the administration of the New Caledonian districts back to the French State and also dealt with mining regulations; nickel, chromium and cobalt became “economically strategic resources”. Hence, the allocation of mining licenses was reserved to the State. On 18 July 1972, Prime Minister Pierre Messmer explained to the Secretary of State for Overseas Territories, Xavier Deniau, how the central government intends to achieve its aims: “The French presence in New Caledonia can not be threatened (...) by a nationalist claim of indigenous peoples (...). In the short and medium term, immigration from France and from French overseas departments should avoid this danger by maintaining and improving the numerical ratio of communities. In the long term, indigenous nationalist claim will only be avoided if the non-originating Pacific communities represent a majority population mass.” (Vivier, 2009:21)

At the beginning of the 1970s, the price for nickel on the world market dropped and resulted in an ‘economic crisis’ in New Caledonia. The reduction of political autonomy and the crisis led to a change in the political landscape: In June 1975, Kanak delegates and organisations met in the village of La Conception and elaborate a statement for Kanak independence. They formed a coordination committee for Kanak independence (Leblic, 2003).

In 1984, a new political status (“Lemoine statute”) for New Caledonia was voted by the national Parliament. The Lemoine statute provided a five-year transition period for a referendum on political independence in 1989, but did not limit the right of suffrage. The new proposal did not comply with the declaration of the round-table in Nainville-les-Roches (8-12 July 1983), that not only recognised the right of self-determination to the indi-



Source: Toussaint.

**Figure 2: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Gatope (Northern Province of New Caledonia), 9 August 2009.**



genous Kanak people, but also legitimacy to the other ethnic communities (Nouvelle-Calédonie 1ière 2013). Thus, the independence movement hardened its attitude and reorganised in August 1984 in a Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS), which boycotted the elections in November 1984. The Lemoine statute reflects a political debate based on two principles. The first is the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, the second is equality, which means that all citizens are equal before the law and have the right to vote. France and the European Union are imbued with this second principle, while the United Nations, which host the majority of formerly colonised countries, are more sensitive to the first one.

The period 1984-88 is characterised by violent struggles between the independence proponents and opponents. The tragic climax was the hostage-taking on Ouvéa island where 19 Kanak activists and two members of the hostage recovery team were killed. It appeared that 12 of the Kanak activists had been executed and the leader of the hostage-takers had been left without medical care, and died some hours later.

After the Ouvéa tragedy, the Matignon Accords were signed on 26 June 1988. The primary achievement of the Matignon treaty was to put a stop on the violent and insurrectional situation in the country (Lindenmann 2016). The agreements also served to suspend the raising of the issue on self-determination for a 10 year-period, to accelerate economic development in the frame of a spatial rebalancing policy between the North and the South and a political restructuring of the country in three provinces (Nord, South and Loyalty Islands), two of which are governed by the independence movement (Fig. 1).

Approaching 1998, instead of proceeding to the promised referendum, political authorities started to negotiate a new treaty, fearing violent struggles, because the country was still divided in pro- and anti-independence movements.

### Political turn with the Noumea Accord

The Noumea Accord, signed on 5 May 1998 by the independence movement FLNKS, the loyalist party RPCR (Rally for Caledonia in the Repub-

lic) and the French state, established legal reorganisation. For the first time, the New Caledonian parliament, the Congress, could enact legislation. All political competences should be transferred to New Caledonia except sovereign powers (defence, foreign affairs, law and order, currency and justice). The transfer of the new responsibilities is irreversible (Pontier 2000).

The transfer of political competences represents an important power sharing that is also visible in the government formation. Indeed, government seats are shared in proportion to the seats of the parliamentary groups (Lindenmann 2016). All eligible political parties that have a parliament group are thus represented in the government. Political parties have to surpass a limit of 5% of votes to be represented in the Congress (Garde

2001, Lindenmann 2016). If they gain 5 seats or more in the Congress, they can form a group and claim a seat in the government. The congress includes 54 members, seven are sent by the Loyalty Islands Province parliament, 15 by the Northern Province parliament and 32 by the Southern Province parliament. The Congress elects the New Caledonian government. Since April 2015, the government is composed of 5 members of pro-independence parties and six members of loyalist parties (Table 1).

The government reflects a gap within the Caledonian society, even if this rift is complex. The loyalists of FPU-Rassemblement-UMP and the pro-independence party FLNKS-UC (“Union Calédonienne”) for example agreed in 2010 to the temporary representation of the country by two official flags: the French “tricolore” and the



Figure 3: Fisherman with Kanak flag on his shirt

Source: Kowasch.



Figure 4: FLNKS meeting in Noumea, March 2016

Kanaky-flag. Former French Prime Minister François Fillon, when visiting New Caledonia in 2010, assisted to the hoisting of the Kanaky-flag in front of the office of the French High Commissioner in Noumea (Mrgudovic 2011).

The flag is one of the identity signs that have to be redefined according to the Nouméa Accord. Thus, the Accord provides new symbolic ‘markers’ comprising a flag, a country name, banknotes, a slogan and an anthem. While banknotes are being printed, a slogan created and a hymn written, political authorities did not decide about a new flag and a new name for the country. While French Polynesia, Wallis & Futuna and other French overseas territories have their own flags, it is still not the case for New Caledonia. Discussions are controversial and differences over the flag were so intense that they led to the moribundity of the government for much of 2010 (Fisher 2014a:9). One reason why it is so difficult to agree on identity markers is the lack of a ‘national’ identity (Lindenmann 2016). The Noumea Accord indeed creates a New Caledonian citizenship, but its definition is still incomplete. The notion of citizenship is based on the right to vote at provincial elections. But only the Kanaks define themselves as a “nation” with its own cultural identity (see Fig. 3). At the same time, symbolic ‘markers’ mean nothing if the community does not really exist by itself. The essence is the feeling of belonging to the same community

(Fisher 2014a). The feeling of belonging refers to the definition of the concept of belonging given by Desforges et al (2005): that citizenship was a mark of belonging and commitment to a specific space (see chapter “Belonging and identity”).

The Noumea Accord also contributes to the recognition of cultural identity of the indigenous Kanak people by establishing a customary senate. The senate, created on the base of linguistic spheres, must be consulted on all decisions with regard to the Kanak identity (Garde 2001), so that it enjoys some of the privileges of a second chamber of parliament. Nevertheless, some of the members complain that the senate, whose members are only men, has no power in decision-making and is thus unable to enact laws.

In addition, the Accord foreshadows a referendum on the question whether to create a sovereign state. Article 2.2.1 of the Noumea Accord defines the electorate for the referendum that has to be organised between 2014 and 2018 “as including those with 20-years residence to the referendum date no later than 31 December 2014; those eligible to vote in 1998; those having customary civil status or, if born in New Caledonia, having New Caledonia as the centre of their material and moral interests or having one parent born there with such material and moral interests; voting age persons born before 1 January 1989 who lived in New Caledonia from 1988 to 1998; and those born after 1 January 1989 having one parent who

could vote in 1998” (Fisher 2013:100). Concomitant to this electorate that is based on the ‘fixed’ electorate for the provincial elections, there is a debate between jurists defending the principle of equality (everybody has the same right to participate in elections) and jurists defending the right of indigenous people to self-determination.

### Further political and socio-economic disparities

Before getting to the referendum about political independence, the transfer of political competences represents an important power sharing that political scientists call “shared sovereignty”. From an international viewpoint, the country is not sovereign, but from a French perspective, New Caledonia is a territorial entity with a unique status of emancipation. In the past years, France has encouraged and facilitated the country’s way to further emancipation, even if French government representatives reiterate that New Caledonia is still a part of France.

The French State is the largest contributor to New Caledonia’s budget, contributing A\$2 billion in 2007 (US\$1,52 billion), about a sixth of its GDP (Fisher 2013:125). According to the MRC (Republican Caledonian Movement), the French State still contributes US\$1,37 billion (around 16%) to the GDP that increased to US\$8,36 billion in 2013 (Actu.nc, 2016:7). The MRC argues that in case of independence, the salaries should be devaluated by 40% in general or one of four civil servants must be released. The pro-independence party FLNKS-UC replies that US\$1,16 billion flow back from New Caledonia to France each year, in terms of expatriate savings, repatriated bank earnings and other benefits (Actu.nc, 2016:7). Moreover, the expenses for the political competences that will be transferred to New Caledonia (defence, foreign affairs, law and order, currency and justice) can be reduced. Fig. 4 and 5 show a FLNKS meeting being held in March 2016 under the caption “Serenity and confidence to win in 2018”.

Nevertheless, the financial question is only one issue in the scenario of a “yes” vote at the upcoming referendum on political independence. Growing social disparities, marginalisation of a part of the population,



especially young people, and education are relevant problems that the New Caledonian government has to tackle.

In 2011, the economist Samuel Gorohouna (2011) touched a sore point by analysing ethnic inequalities. He shows that non-Kanaks have more permanent and better paid employment than Kanaks. Gorohouna explains that non-Kanaks are better integrated in the business community, while on the other hand, there is discrimination against Kanaks. He concludes that New Caledonia still has a long way to go in order to achieve a “common destiny”.

Imbalances are still rampant, and disparities do not only exist between different ethnic communities, because are also visible in space. In 2014, around 67% of the total population live in “Greater Noumea”, which includes the capital Noumea and the three neighbouring districts Mont-Dore, Dumbea and Païta (ISEE 2015). Spatial disparities are also visible in two different land tenure systems: common and customary land. In contrast to common land, customary land is inalienable, indefeasible and elusive (Kowasch and Batterbury, forthcoming). That is why in the past, most of economic projects were realised on common and not on customary land. Private companies could not speculate on land. Some 26% of New Caledonia is classified customary land, and 50% is located in the Northern Province (<http://www.adraf.nc>).

#### Four scenarios

Actual political authorities do not seem to have a common vision and all answers, when it comes to a social model for the future of an independent country. Which immigration policy will apply when France is no longer present? Which educational system should be adopted; should the same be followed like in France? How the social system can guarantee care for everyone? How can unemployment assistance be developed? There are many questions that are still unresolved. And the Congress still lacks a debate around the design of a constitution for a future sovereign state.

In the face of a lacking debate on a future constitution and a social model, the report of the French parliamentary commission delegated to New



Figure 5: FLNKS meeting in Noumea, March 2016

Source: Tingal.

Caledonia evokes four scenarios that can occur after the referendum to be organised, probably in 2018 (Courtial and Mélin-Soucramanien 2014; Fisher 2014b; Lindenmann 2016).

The first scenario will be the classical independence, which means that New Caledonians would lose French citizenship and access to the French educational system. Financial transfers would be stopped and the country would have to establish its own police corps. The second scenario provides a ‘partnership’ that can be explained by the notion of “independence-association”. New Caledonia will become a sovereign state, but surrenders certain competences to France, such as foreign affairs and defence. The country can join the United Nations as an independent state. The political status of the Cook Islands is often cited as example in this case (Courtial and Mélin-Soucramanien 2014, Lindenmann 2016). An extended autonomy represents a third scenario. A majority of political competences will be transferred to New Caledonia, but sovereign powers remain mainly with France (Courtial and Soucramanien 2014). Financial transfers from France to New Caledonia will be pursued, but this scenario will certainly not appease the aspiration towards an independence movement. The fourth scenario provides a continued autonomy, which means to maintain the status quo. The main problem of this solution is that several arrangements of the Noumea Accord were established to further the emancipation process of the coun-

try. French immigrants arrived after 1998 are excluded from voting rights in local affairs and New Caledonian citizenship. It does not seem conceivable that French immigrants remain excluded, but admitting them would marginalise the independence vote in case of a second or third referendum. Voter eligibility, concerning longstanding and new residents, is still a sensitive issue (Fisher 2014b).

#### Conclusion and prospects

A spin-off of New Caledonia can have impacts on the region and the emancipation process in other countries like French Polynesia or Bougainville. Therefore, the question of political independence and which of the four scenarios will occur remains unclear. While some politicians defend an extended autonomy, others believe in political independence. For the latter, only the creation of a sovereign state completes the process of decolonisation. If a compromise like an “independence-association” propitiates the different interests is unsure at present.

In resume, the long process of decolonisation of the country is still fragmentary and ongoing. To accompany New Caledonia in successfully achieving decolonisation remains a challenge for France. The knowledge about New Caledonia in France is weak, but the French government claims a special security role on the international stage, and its presence in the South Pacific bolsters this role and provides France with large EEZ status, an access to significant mine-

ral resources and a foothold in the growing Asia-Pacific market (Fisher 2015). On the other hand, the Melanesian neighbours of New Caledonia support the Kanak struggle for independence.

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# Making a nation and faking a state: illegal annexation and sovereignty miseducation in Hawai'i

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**Abstract:** As a result of the re-emergence of the 1897 Kū'ē protest petitions and more recent scholarship among academics, which counter the U.S. history of annexation and occupation, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa scholars have been addressing the discourse on De-occupation instead of pursuing a nation-within-a-nation arrangement of U.S. federal recognition.

This article describes the February 2016 'Aha Na'i Aupuni, a self-governance and constitution-writing meeting for and by Native Hawaiians, and includes the first-hand observations of one of the participating delegates. This Na'i Aupuni process is tied in with the recent protests against the Thirty Meter Telescope project on Mauna Kea on Hawai'i Island in early 2015. The momentum of the Mauna Kea protests has led to a renewed sense of responsibility to educate on the history of illegal annexation, and on the significance of land for Hawaiians and Hawaiian sovereignty in particular.

**Keywords:** indigenous, sovereignty, education, resistance, federal recognition, Hawai'i

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## The question of self-governance after the rediscovery of the Kū'ē Petitions

In February 2016, a 20-day self-governance and constitution-writing meeting called the 'Aha Na'i Aupuni was held by a group of unelected delegates at the Royal Hawaiian Golf Club in Kailua on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i. Both on the ground and in Facebook discussion forums, the reactions to the Na'i Aupuni process greatly differed, with many considering it to be fake self-governance. There were two general factions, one that was pushing federal recognition and one that was termed the "independ-

ence caucus". Throughout the 'Aha Na'i Aupuni, delegates moved from one side to the other and convinced those undecided, to the dismay of those on the outside, who had been relying on a reasonable outcome. In the end, the new "constitution" was voted 88 in favour, 30 in opposition with 1 abstention. Strategic planning against the process of this fabricated self-governance entity includes re-educating the population on sovereignty matters and continued, prolonged U.S. occupation. In order to comprehend the recent De-occupation and re-education movements, it is important to review the history of

false representation of Hawaiian self-governance, due to misconceptions on the U.S. annexation of Hawai'i.

The Hawaiian archipelago was unified in 1810 under the rule of King Kamehameha I, as a sovereign monarchy that by 1843 had almost 100 consulates all over the world recognizing this status. In 1996, the Kū'ē Petitions against Hawai'i annexation to the USA were rediscovered and turned around the discourse on federal negotiations with the USA. 99 years earlier, in 1897, these 556 pages of signatures were gathered and presented to the U.S. Congress as proof that an overwhelming majority of



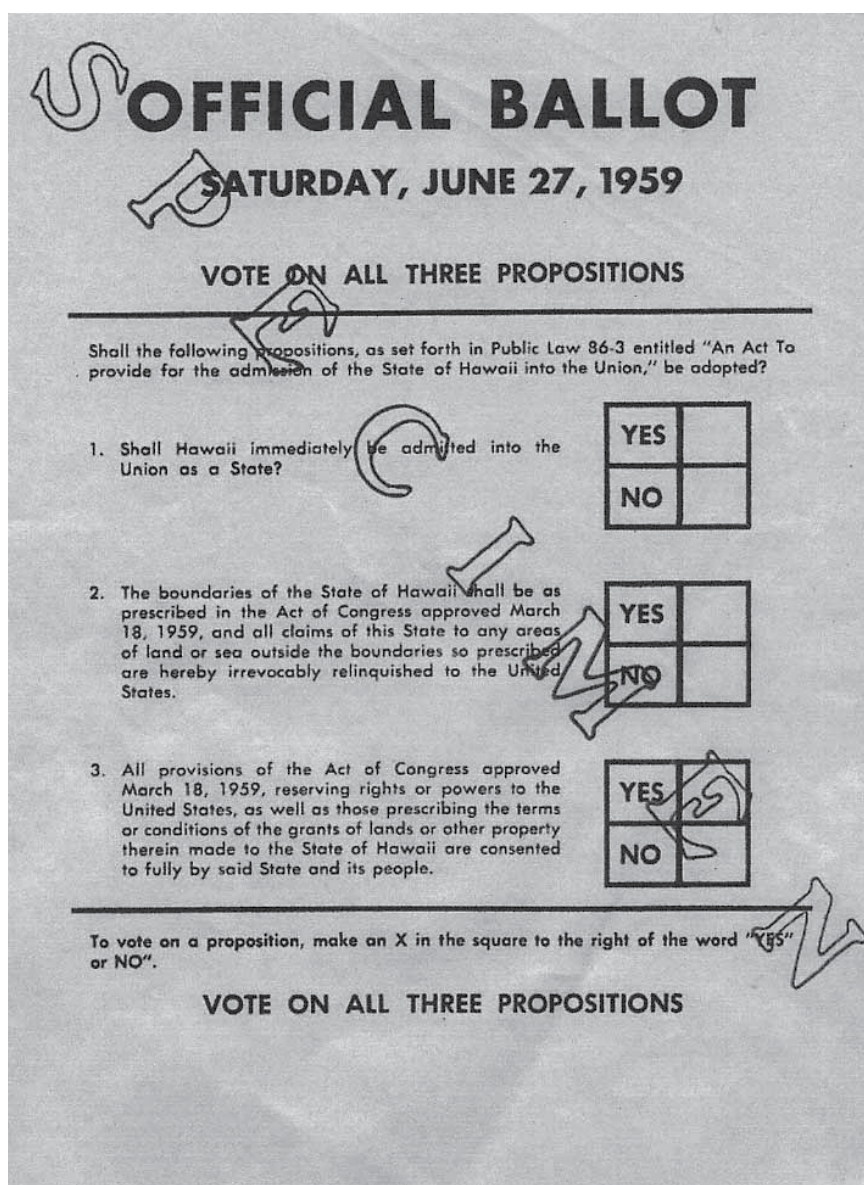


Figure 1: 1959 Statehood Ballot

Hawai'i's citizens, both Kānaka Maoli and others, opposed annexation and denied any formal bilateral Treaty of Annexation. Nowadays, aware of the illegitimacy of annexation, sovereignty activists have come to term the "State of Hawai'i" the "Fake State of Hawai'i" in an act of protest. The Kū'e Petitions now showed that accepting federal recognition under U.S. occupation would be a lesser status than calling for the De-occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

What pressed many to nevertheless participate in the process of Na'i Aupuni, rather than to forfeit the chance to voice their opinions on the sovereignty debate, was the preface taken from the previous name roll and recognition process, the Kana'iowalu Roll: "Native Hawaiians who choose not to be included on the official roll risk waiving their right, and the right of their

children and descendants to be legally and politically acknowledged as Native Hawaiians and to participate in a future convention to reorganize the Hawaiian nation ... and as a result may also be excluded from being granted rights of inclusion (citizenship), rights of participation (voting) and rights to potential benefits that may come with citizenship (e.g., land use rights, monetary payments, scholarship, etc.)." (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2013). Correspondingly, the Hawai'i statehood vote in 1959 had run along the same principle of a closed vote, between the choice of remaining a U.S. territory or becoming a U.S. state, no question on regaining sovereign status as the Kingdom of Hawai'i (Fig. 1). In contrast, the 1953 United Nations General Assembly advises that there is to be no electoral interference of a "foreign government" in the self-gover-

ning vote of a territory (UN GA, 1953). Would that not be the USA in itself? In protest to the vote, participation had been marginal, and statehood prevailed.

## The Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Na'i Aupuni

The goal of Na'i Aupuni was to elect 40 delegates of Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) ancestry, throughout the Hawaiian archipelago and those resident on the U.S. continent, to write a constitutional paper for self-governance. It was the most recent of several failed attempts of what critics claimed are mainly a push for tribal recognition by the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) in the name of "nation-building". On December 12, 2015, the Na'i Aupuni election was terminated due to a legal case that challenged the discriminatory ethnic exclusion of the election (Na'i Aupuni, 2015). Instead, the election commission circumvented the process without counting the votes, and invited all 154 current nominees to participate in the proceedings (Na'i Aupuni 2016). These were unvetted and unelected nominees, who in some cases had stood for nomination solely to disrupt the process.

The fabricated self-determination being promised by Na'i Aupuni, under the auspices of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), was only open to those willing to work within the U.S. domestic system of law. OHA is a government agency tasked with Kanaka Maoli matters, such as specific programs for the betterment of Native Hawaiian health and education. However, the premeditated and funded nation-building process by OHA is an extension of the failed attempts of "native rolls" collecting names, such as Kana'iowalu mentioned above (Act 195). Act 195 is clear in stating a move towards federal recognition, generally seen to be a lesser status of nation-within-a-nation than a sovereign nation-state in itself: "The purpose of this Act is to recognize Native Hawaiians as the only indigenous, aboriginal, maoli population of Hawai'i. It is also the State's desire to support the continuing development of a reorganized Native Hawaiian governing entity and, ultimately, the federal recognition of Native Hawaiians." (State of Hawai'i, 2011). In a seeming rebellion of the OHA and thus U.S. executive involvement, the OHA CEO Kamana'opono Crabbe had in May 2014 raised the following questions in a letter to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry: "First, does



the Hawaiian Kingdom, as a sovereign independent State, continue to exist as a subject of international law? (...) if the Hawaiian Kingdom continues to exist and the sole-executive agreements are binding on the United States, have the members of the Native Hawaiian Roll Commission, Trustees and staff of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs incurred criminal liability under international law?”. Crabbe’s questions were meant to expose the process and those promoting it as simultaneously counter to both independence goals and U.S. domestic laws. The letter was shortly thereafter rescinded by a follow-up letter sent by the other OHA Trustees, although another individual trustee confirmed his support (Hussey, 2014). The letter and questions were left unanswered by Kerry.

Critical participants of the ‘Aha Na‘i Aupuni, who pulled out of the proceedings before elections/meetings or in the end voted against the “constitution” and the “Gated 88” – a reference to the gated golf course – noted particular pre-assembled ideas for the “constitution” that explicitly excluded national independence. During the meetings there were vocal protests with arrests at the golf course. Among the protestors were known cultural leaders like Walter Ritte, who had eliminated himself from nomination and was physically removed from the golf course, when attempting to be a non-participant observer of the proceedings in the first week. The leader of the Nation of Hawai‘i with its sovereign land tract in nearby Waimanalo, Bumpy Kanahale, had participated and withdrawn from the ‘Aha Na‘i Aupuni earlier than midway through it. One of the professors, who continued working within the ‘Aha towards independence, was Williamson Chang from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Richardson School of Law, drafting working papers for a provisional Government.

Throughout the ‘Aha Na‘i Aupuni meetings, emails were being leaked from the participant list serve and smartphone videos uploaded into Facebook discussion forums for the benefit of those being denied observation. One of the participants of the ‘Aha’s “independence caucus” and subsequent “international committee”, journalist Ka‘iulani Milham, later exposed the opaque and rushed drafting of the “constitution” in a series for the “Hawaii Independent”: “If developing the best product possible was really the goal of the convention and, at the planned ending of the pro-



Figure 2: Mauna a Wākea mural at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Campus Center by Haley Kailiehu and HauMĀNA

cess, that product had clearly not been agreed upon, wouldn’t the logical move be to extend the process and continue working? Originally, the ‘Aha was meant to last for eight weeks, not four. And that was with only 40 different viewpoints to incorporate.” (Milham, 2016).

In the meantime, a declaration was written denouncing the ‘Aha and signed by independence advocates on the outside of the gated convention, among others, professors Jon Osorio, Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, and Kaleikoa Ka‘eo from the University of Hawai‘i: “The ‘Aha 2016 stems from a top down approach in which all of the terms: the use of Hawaiian trust monies; participation; timeline; representation; the convention, and outcomes have been determined by a small number of people, including former Governor Abercrombie; the State legislature; the Governor-appointed Kana‘iolowalu commissioners; the OHA Board of Trustees; the OHA-selected Na‘i Aupuni Board; and approximately 150 self-appointed ‘aha participants. Each of these parties is complicit in driving an agenda that has divided our people more than ever.” (Hawaii Independent, 2016).

### Mauna Kea and contemporary indigenous resistance

The reason so many Hawaiians were watching and protesting the Na‘i Aupuni proceedings was tied to the dynamic and on-going “We Are Mauna Kea” movement that sprung up in early April 2015 (Caron, 2015). Among those arrested protesting at the Aha Na‘i Aupuni were also main actors of the Mauna Kea movement. Mauna Kea on Hawai‘i Island is the tal-

lest mountain on earth measured from the seabed to the highest point of its summit. The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT), the project which initiated this renewed consciousness to guard the ancestral land, is to be 18 stories high, to have a construction footprint of 8 acres, and to sit on 5 acres of land (KAHEA, 2015). Building laws on the island do not even allow for any structure of this height. Construction for the first of currently 13 telescopes began in the late 1960s and this was the only one actually agreed upon, but over the decades a dozen were to follow with inadequate permits. Environmental impacts of the project are seen in the destruction of the habitat of endangered flora and fauna, only to be found on Mauna Kea, and in the potential contamination of the main aquifer of Hawai‘i Island beneath the summit of Mauna Kea. The protests against the telescopes on Mauna Kea go back several decades, however, the involvement of the younger generation and of students, as well as the use of social media, helped gain a different level of awareness on the conflict.

In October of 2013, a mural for Mauna Kea was painted at the Campus Center of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, calling out the university’s claim to be a “Hawaiian place of learning” while they bulldoze the most sacred sites (Fig. 2). The university newspaper “Ka Leo”, who hosted the mural event, painted over this protest. After pressure from the Native Hawaiian student group “HauMĀNA”, Ka Leo apologized for the censorship. On October 7, 2014 the ground-breaking ceremony for the TMT was disrupted.

Source: HauMĀNA, October 16, 2013: <https://www.facebook.com/haumanastudentmovement/photos/>

ted and ultimately stopped by Mauna Kea activists. “We are Protectors, not Protestors” is a common slogan for this movement, as the emphasis lies on protecting the sacred land rather than protesting the construction project as is in this location. On April 2, 2015, the so-called protectors, now more numerous, blocked the access road to the construction site. 31 were arrested in the peaceful protests, and thousands began showing their support for Mauna Kea. Social media and the speed in which it spread around the world showed a great solidarity movement with the hashtags #WeAreMaunaKea, #protectmaunakea, #aoleTMT, and #TMTshutdown. Another standoff on June 24, 2015, with approximately 700 protectors including children, resulted in more targeted arrests and the Hawai‘i Governor David Ige proclaimed “emergency rules” for trespassing on the summit road. The emergency rules were only directed towards protectors, and cultural practitioners were restricted from their customary visits, while astronomers and stargazing tour participants were officially permitted to travel on the road. The emergency rules were deemed unconstitutional and thrown out after protectors had been arrested nonetheless, as once in the case of a group of seven women and one man arrested during prayer (Kelleher, 2015). Currently, thanks to a Hawai‘i Supreme Court ruling in favour of the protectors, a lawsuit has won against the TMT for the time-being. The Supreme Court ruled that the TMT did not follow the appropriate building permit, the Conservation District Use Permit (CDUP), and was to renew its permit application process, which has stalled the project indefinitely.

The arguments against the TMT project and the Na‘i Aupuni process stem from the complex sociopolitical factors to keep in mind when discussing Kanaka Maoli sovereignty in Hawai‘i. In the historical context of U.S. American imperialism, Hawai‘i was an independent nation-state overthrown and occupied by the USA. The demographics of the State of Hawai‘i that depict the population as multiethnic with a non-white majority gloss over the marginalization and assimilation of the indigenous people of the land. However, the demographics of the citizens of the independent Kingdom of Hawai‘i until 1893 were multiethnic

as well. In 1993, the Apology Resolution was signed by U.S. President Bill Clinton admitting to the overthrow on its 100th anniversary. Revealingly, its phrasing delegitimizes the argument of a multiethnic nation-state and only “apologizes” to the indigenous population: “Whereas, the indigenous Hawaiian people never directly relinquished their claims to their inherent sovereignty as a people or over their national lands to the United States, either through their monarchy or through a plebiscite or referendum” (U.S. Congress, 1993).

Due to the long held misconception of the legality of annexation, there are now two main discourses of the factions in the Hawaiian sovereignty movements, with the one side – the Hawaiian Kingdom “monarchists” – disputing the use of the term “indigenous” for Kānaka Maoli. The De-occupation proponents argue on an international law basis that the Hawaiian Kingdom remains an internationally-recognized nation-state under prolonged occupation, whereas the Decolonization advocates argue within the frame of domestic U.S. laws and are in part for the status of federal recognition. Noelani Goodyear-Kāōpua contends that these concepts and movements need not be exclusive to another, as she asserts that Kānaka Maoli are in fact “indigenous”, but to Hawai‘i, not to the USA (Goodyear-Kāōpua, 2011). She argues for conceptualizing decolonial responses for sovereignty from outside the occupier’s framework instead of from within, and advocates for collective action and decision-making for land rights and nationhood from an indigenous perspective, effectively bridging the two main discourses.

### **Aloha ‘Āina**

The concept of aloha ‘āina, the Hawaiian “love of the land”, which also translates to “patriot”, is fundamental to this indigenous perspective. To understand aloha ‘āina, a rough “translation” of both ‘āina and aloha into the English language and concepts is needed here, despite the shortcomings in the connotations conveyed. For the context of the term “aloha ‘āina”, aloha would be translated as “love”. The everyday use of the term “Aloha” is not merely “hello” and “goodbye”, as it holds a more vital life-giving essence for Hawaiians. The understanding of ‘āina as simply “land”

requires a more in-depth description to highlight the profound meaning of the land to Kānaka Maoli epistemology. The etymology of ‘āina indicates the root as the word ‘ai and shows the value of the land in nurturing and sustaining life: “‘Āina also conveys the sense of arable land. It is essentially a term coined by an agricultural people, deriving as it does from the noun or verb ‘ai, meaning food or to eat, with the substantive na added, so that it may be rendered either “that which feeds” or “the feeder”. ‘Āina thus has connotations in relation to people as conveying the sense of “feeder”, birthplace, and homeland” (Ho‘omanawanui, 2008: 124).

Mauna Kea protector Ku‘uipo Freitas, among those arrested at least twice on the mountain, explains her understanding of the term: “Aloha ‘āina is not only a phrase I say, but also a way of living; of conducting oneself. It doesn’t only mean love for the land. It has kaona [meaning] to it that most people don’t realize. When we say ‘āina, we don’t just mean land. It means all things in relation to the land that we live on and survive on. It is the love we have for our language, culture, resources, ali‘i [chiefs], chants, stories, legends, people and more. It is the encompassment of everything to do with our culture and history as a people of Hawai‘i. You must show aloha ‘āina through your actions, not just your words.” (Hermes, 2016). In a quote by James Kaulia, President of the Hawaiian Patriotic League “Hui Aloha ‘Āina”, which collected 21,000 of the Kū‘e Petitions’ signatures, the term aloha ‘āina is translated as “patriot” from the meaning of “love of the land”: “Do not be afraid, be steadfast in aloha for your land and be united in thought. Protest forever the annexation of Hawai‘i until the very last aloha ‘āina [lives].” (Silva, 2004: 146-147).

### **Miseducation and E(A)ducation**

As a result Noenoe Silva’s rediscovery of the Kū‘e Petitions in 1996, the sovereignty advocates are now promoting the De-occupation discourse over the Decolonization one. Fully-aware that the greater public is still misinformed on the illegitimacy of U.S. annexation, due to the Department of Education upholding much of the standard U.S. curriculum in the “Fake State of Hawai‘i”, many of the advocates are taking it upon themselves to re-educate or “EAducate” on Hawaiian history and sovereignty. Mauna Kea





Source: image by author.

**Figure 3: Stone ahu at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Bachman Hall**

activists came up with the slogan “EA-ducate” and Ku’uipo Freitas explains the wordplay on “EA” and “education”: “There are many meanings to the word ea. These include sovereignty, life, air, breath, to rise and to swell up. All of these meanings are goals for Hawai’i Aloha ‘Āina, to raise awareness and knowledge that the history we thought we knew was in fact all lies. We are in a time of great change, and so I believe the meaning of this slogan “EAducate” is to educate in the Hawaiian way; to see things the same way our kūpuna [elders, ancestors] saw things. It’s an amazing time to be witnessing this.” (Hermes, 2016). Hawai’i Aloha ‘Āina is “a free Hawaiian educational series that aims to overcome the indoctrination, denationalization and Americanization of our people that has been occurring ever since the illegal overthrow of our queen Lili’uokalani on January 17, 1893,” she explains (ibid.). Even Honolulu’s McKinley High School – renamed after William McKinley, the U.S. President that had unilaterally declared the territory’s annexation – also features a statue of McKinley holding a depiction of the non-existent annexation treaty. A travelling art project to protest this statue is the “No Treaty of Annexation” installation that depicts the repeated slogan on signs, while the reverse side depicts names of the Kūē petitioners (Fig. 4).

Two recent examples further illustrate this resurgence of aloha ‘āina and re-education on two distinct levels of the state apparatus: the public university

and the U.S. federal election process. As a manner of “reclaiming” a particular parcel of land, during the highpoint of the Mauna Kea protests in April 2015, the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa students, faculty, and community members, had erected a stone ahu (altar) on the Lawn of Bachman Hall at the entrance of the university campus. Rocks had been passed down from person to person from the Hawaiian Studies Center on Dole Street to the lawn located at the intersection of University Avenue and Dole St. (Fig. 3). The approval of this form of Hawaiian resistance on the lawn of the flagship campus signifies both a greater acceptance and education of Hawaiian traditions within the university, a move perhaps unthought-of only two decades ago. In another attempt of participatory civil politics within the U.S. system and running with the momentum of the Mauna Kea protectors, a few of James Kaulia’s descendants had begun collecting signatures to reactivate the existing political party Aloha ‘Āina Party, named after the Hawaiian Patriotic League or Hui Aloha ‘Āina. 707 signatures were required to establish the new party to be on the state ballot for the upcoming 2016 U.S. elections (‘Aloha ‘Āina Party, 2015). However, of the over 1000 collected, the signatures accepted as valid were barely off this target. Fortunately, parallel to this and in response to the exclusivity of the ‘Aha Na’i Aupini, an independent movement with a series of its own meetings was launched on the

various islands as the ‘Aha Aloha ‘Āina in February as well (‘Aha Aloha ‘Āina, 2016). Community participants of this ‘Aha Aloha ‘Āina corresponded in part with the vocal critics of the ‘Aha Na’i Aupini and remained skeptical about the ability to “change the system” from within.

The Hawaiian Patriotic League and Kaulia’s aloha ‘āina quote against annexation confirm that the resistance against U.S. occupation and the opposition to corporate interests on Mauna Kea cannot be separated, and that the concept of aloha ‘āina is the essential narrative that advances both protests. Aloha ‘āina is indispensable in the calls for independence, food sovereignty, and in regaining the stewardship to the occupied lands. Another statement by Goodyear-Ka’ōpua illustrates the value of and interrelation to the land: “The actions and words of activists (...) remind us that Hawaiian social movement is at its best when, rather than demanding that the land be given back to Hawaiians, it is getting Hawaiians back on the land.” (Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2011: 155-156).

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Figure 4: "No Treaty of Annexation" installation at 'Iolani Palace, Honolulu

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# Sukarno, Gandhi and Rizal: Asian role models for self-determination and decolonization aspirations of Pacific island countries

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**Abstract:** This article highlights exponents of Asian nationalism, who followed a strategy of non-violent acting to achieve the political goal, in their capacity for being role models for Pacific Islands nations in their struggle for independence and/or autonomy from the 1960s onwards. Starting from the fact that precursory developments had taken place for preparing the way for local players in Oceania for their aspirations for decolonization, three examples – Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Guam – are mentioned. This is a first sketch, which shall invite for a more detailed future research about the impact of Asian political activists on Pacific Islanders political leaders.

**Keywords:** Sukarno, Gandhi, Rizal, decolonization, nationalism, independence, autonomy, non-violence

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Figure 1: Monument of Achmed Sukarno und Mohammed Hatta in the Botanical Gardens of Port Moresby

Source: H. Mückler.





Figure 2: Monument of José Rizal, the Philippine hero.

When taking a close look at the history and development of decolonization of Oceania, it is obvious that decolonization of the region after the 1960s did not happen out of the blue but that precursory developments had taken place, preparing the way for the local players in their aspirations for decolonization. When you visit the Botanic Gardens in Port Moresby, the capital city of Papua New Guinea, in these days, you will find two monuments next to each other

of the two Indonesian politicians and independence fighters Achmed Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta (Figure 1). Also in this park, very near these monuments, you will find those of the Philippine freedom fighter José Rizal and of the Indian politician and (inter-)national hero Mahatma Gandhi. This raises the question why all these four monuments are located together in Port Moresby. All these monuments were given to the people of Papua New Guinea by the respective governments – Indonesia, the Philippines and India – during official state visits to Port Moresby. Did the personalities portrayed in the monuments had an impact on the struggle for self-determination and/or independence of Papua New Guinea or some other Pacific Island countries? Gandhi for instance was and is well known in the Indo-Fijian communities of Fiji; Rizal on the other hand is famous on the island of Guam, which is controlled by the USA. An additional question might arise, why the monuments of the undisputed non-violent freedom fighters Rizal and Gandhi are located so close to the Indonesian politicians Sukarno and Hatta. After all, the latter two and especially Sukarno represent a state which annexed West Papua as a province and who attempted to marginalize the Melanesian Papua population by creating a Muslim majority by means of an aggressive immigration policy (“transmigrasi”) which is still going on today.

In spite of this argument, Sukarno, the founder of the Indonesian State, in some respects was a positive figurehead at least for some politicians of Papua New Guinea, during the era of a step by step achievement of independence from Australia. Michael Somare was the most influential indigenous politician when New Guinea achieved indepen-

dence from Australian colonial influence in 1975. He is therefore known as the “father of Papua New Guinea” because he was influential in the decades preceding independence and became the new nation’s first Prime Minister. Somare quite respectfully mentioned to me in a private conversation at a lunch, which we both attended during a state visit to Austria in 2008, that through Sukarno’s policies, this Indonesian politician had managed not only to achieve independence from Dutch colonial influence for Indonesia, but also to successfully hold together this extremely heterogeneous amalgamation of states. This situation is analogous to that of Papua New Guinea, which is characterized by many different ethnicities, languages and cultures and is made up of hundreds of social groups, autonomous and culturally independent. Sukarno’s model of ‘united in diversity’, which incorporated the five ‘Pancasila’-principles representing the interests of the state – the principles of divine rule, nationalism, humanism, democracy and social justice – could not be the perfect model for Somare, but there still were some common interests: What had been the Netherlands for Sukarno in the 1930s and 1940s, whose influence as a colonial power he strove to diminish by establishing a nationalist movement, was Australia for Somare, and he took up the cause of reducing and minimizing the Australian influence in Papua New Guinea since, which in fact was and is not always easy in view of the extensive Australian funding programmes. Being a staunch nationalist, Somare followed Sukarno’s example in this respect by attempting to generally reduce any foreign influence in the first years after Papua New Guinea had gained independence in 1975. The fact that Somare and members of his family in later years of his leadership were eminently involved in the sale of his native country’s resources, did not yet play an important role in the initial stages of the young Melanesian state. Also in the first years of Somare’s reign as well as in the years before 1975, Somare sympathized with communist ideas within the context of his anti-European and anti-Australian stance, as the Australian journalist Sean Dorney once explained in a radio interview, based on documents dating from the 1960s



Figure 3: Monument of Mahatma Gandhi in Port Moresby.



(Dorney 2012). There definitely existed parallels to Sukarno's positions, who, before his downfall in 1965 in the last years of his rule, was accused by his opponents of displaying sympathy with the communists (especially regarding all topics related to the economy). This hastened his fall from power in the coup of 1965 led by Suharto. Somare was also sympathetic to Sukarno's support of the Non-Aligned Movement, which at that time was to be established as an alternative to the two blocks – the East and the West. Sukarno had been the host of the famous Bandung-Conference in 1955, where the protagonists Jawaharlal Nehru und Josip Broz Tito, together with Sukarno, set the course for founding the Non-Aligned Movement, which became established in 1961 and continued to grow steadily. While Indonesia became one of the founding states of the Non-Aligned Movement, Papua New Guinea was able to join only after when it became an independent nation in 1975 and has remained a member of this association ever since. The monument of Sukarno in the Botanic Gardens in Port Moresby was a gift by Indonesia to the government of Papua New Guinea, presented and erected in 2000 on the occasion of a state visit by Megawati Sukarnoputri to Papua New Guinea; she was then still Vice President and was soon to become President of Indonesia.

It is no coincidence that a monument of Mahatma Gandhi, installed in 1997 under PNG Prime Minister bill Skate, is there in the immediate vicinity. This outstanding person too was a figurehead in Asia but also in the Pacific Region because of his political achievements especially in the 1920s and 1930s. The Fiji Islands play a significant role in this context, since in the 1930s a vast number of Fijians of Indian descent – the so-called Indo-Fijians or Fiji Indians – used to live in that country, and might eventually have outnumbered the native Fijians of Melanesian-Polynesian origin. The majority of the Indo-Fijians had been brought to Fiji by the British as contract labourers for the booming sugar cane industry from 1879 onwards. Thus they were a population, which had to suffer massive repression and their interests had been insufficiently protected by the British colonial power. Usually the



Figure 4: Indentured Indian labourers (girmityas) in Fiji.

contracts of the indentured labourers, which they called *girmitya* (agreements), required them to work in Fiji for a period of five years, but many of them extended the contracts and remained in the islands after the expiration of the contract. The living and working conditions for the *girmityas* (indentured labourers; Figure 4) on the sugar cane plantations were harsh and brutal, also because of the indigenous Fijians opposing their presence. Thus the Indians in Fiji observed Gandhi's statements with the keenest interest, especially the Gujaratis were strongly nationalistic and avid followers of Mahatma Gandhi (Lal 1992: 77). Gandhi (Figure 3) had already agitated against the British colonial power in South Africa and since the time of the First World War had increasingly called for India to become independent from Great Britain. Gandhi preferred a non-violent solution as opposed to some of his companions in the cause, especially Subhash Chandra Bose. When Great Britain entered World War II and the British Governor in India had enforced Indian commitment to the conflict, those forces in the Indian sub-continent, which were in favour of gaining independence from Great Britain as soon as possible, won the upper hand. Fiji too was supposed to support Great Britain in the great dispute and the Fiji politician Lala Sukuna played a key role in those days, organizing the recruitment of Fijians for

the Allied troops in World War II. He toured around the villages holding incendiary speeches for the British and Allied cause and was the symbolic figure calling for both Fijian tradition and unconditional loyalty to and respect of the English. The Fiji-Indians, however, received this call with great reservation. On the one hand they did not really share Fijian unconditional loyalty to the British, on the other hand they closely observed the developments in India, which they considered relevant to the Indians in Fiji. On the political front they followed Gandhi's call for non-violent opposition and most of them refused to be recruited as soldiers. As early as 1934 a small Indian unit of 40 soldiers had been established in Fiji, but this was dissolved by the Indians in 1941. Nevertheless the Indians too contributed to the Allied forces by appealing for donations. With the money thus raised a bomber for the Royal Air Force was purchased and named "Fiji Indian" (Lal 1991: 20).

The threesome is complete with José Rizal, the Philippine non-violent acting freedom fighter and author of the first draft of a Philippine constitution. He was court-martialled and shot by the Spanish in 1896 following a charge of inciting a rebellion, which had never been proven. He was considered to be one of the key founders of Philippine national identity. Rizal also plays a vital symbolic role for the former Spanish colony, now

Source: Ministry of External Affairs/Government of India.



Figure 5: Angel Leo Guerrero Santos.

the US-colony Guam, whose population largely has Philippine roots. But there it is the indigenous population of the Chamorro, who sees Rizal to be the father of their call for regaining control of their island. Large areas of the island, which came under US-rule after the Spanish lost the island during the American-Spanish War in 1998, are used by the US army and are therefore off limits. The most important Chamorro activist of recent days was Angel Santos until his early and mysterious death (Figure 5). Angel Anthony “Anghet” Leon Guerrero Santos III., as is his full name, was born in 1959, a United States Air Force veteran, a former Senator in the Guam Legislature and a (finally unsuccessful) candidate for Governor of Guam. In the past decades he had promoted the vision of a “Nasion Chamoru”, an independent Chamorro state, for which he campaigned incessantly. Among others he had fought for the implementa-

tion of the Chamorro Land Trust Act and the return of excess federal lands, and acted as an advocate of social justice for the indigenous Chamorros of Guam. His unexpected death in 2003 was associated with rumours about him having been poisoned in prison, after he had been convicted for vehemently campaigning for his views. It is not absolutely clear in how far Angel had been inspired by Rizal's ideas, but he had repeatedly mentioned and praised him in his public speeches. As the Philippine Community in Guam is quite influential with more than a quarter of the total population, only surpassed by the indigenous

Chamorro who count for 37% of the total population, Rizal has a meaning for many Guamanians. In Guam the Rizal Park north of Agat is reminiscent of this Philippine freedom fighter. Rizal, who was a contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Sun Yat-sen, died already in the 19th century and thus was one of the first exponents of Asian nationalism following a strategy of non-violent acting to achieve the political goal.

### Conclusion

Summing up it may be said that three events in Asia had an influence on at least three developments in Oceania. These events were the following: 1) The resistance by the Indians against the British in the Indian subcontinent, symbolized by Mahatma Gandhi; 2) The Philippine struggle for freedom first against the Spanish and subsequently against the US-Americans, symbolized by José

Rizal, and 3) The Indonesian fight for independence after World War II, led by Achmed Sukarno. These three conflicts each in their own specific way had an influence in Oceania 1) on the Indians or Indo-Fijians in the fight for more rights and cultural autonomy on the Fiji Islands; 2) on the campaigning by Chamorro activists against the US-administration for more rights on Guam, and 3) on the struggle for independence and on the political situation in Papua New Guinea. This paper only provides a very rough outline of these connections and mutual influences. No detailed bibliographical references are given, because usually only one sentence or phrase can be found on the activists from Asia in the many books and articles on Self-determination and independence of small Pacific Island states. This topic as a whole has so far not been paid the attention it deserves and is urgently required to be dealt with thoroughly in future. Detailed future research is fairly sure to reveal a number of interesting aspects and connections and these would help add a new facet to the ups and downs of the history of Pacific Islands societies.

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# New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Free Association

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*Abstract: The Free Association arrangement between New Zealand and the Cook Islands is a pivotal force behind the movement of Cook Islanders between the two countries. Part of the Cook Islanders' way of life is understanding and leveraging the different opportunities that exist across the Cook Islands, New Zealand and further afield. This paper introduces the Cook Islands and New Zealand Free Association agreement and provides background to the historical and contemporary political relationships between New Zealand and the Cook Islands. This leads into a short discussion on the different concepts of citizenship and independence, and how these relate to the Cook Islands transnational population. This paper began as a panel discussion on Sovereignty movements in the Pacific Islands at the annual meeting of German "Pazifik-Netzwerk" and raises many important questions about "Where to from here for the Cook Islands?"*

**Keywords:** Cook Islands, New Zealand, Free Association, Transnationalism, Sovereignty

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Cook Islanders are voyagers interested in life beyond their home island(s). The contemporary movement between the Cook Islands and New Zealand has created dense networks of ties which connect people physically and emotionally across distances. Air travel facilitates these ties with increased frequency of movement to many other places, and new technologies have provided wider access to communications (Crocombe, 2003). The density of ties connecting the Cook Islands to New Zealand, and vice versa, is not unique to the Pacific, with similar patterns of mobility and international relationships existing globally (Portes, 2003). This paper introduces the Cook Islands and New Zealand Free Association agreement and the establishment of a Cook Islands transnational social field. Extensive literature on the diverse characteristics of Pacific transnationalism already exists, and this paper does not set out to duplicate it (Lee & Francis, 2009; Macpherson, 2012; Nahkid, 2009; Spoonley, 2001). Instead, this paper provides background to the historical and contemporary political relationships between New Zealand and the Cook Islands and leads into a short discussion on the different concepts of citizenship and independence, and how these relate to the Cook Islands transnational population. This paper began as a panel discussion on Sovereignty movements in the Pacific Islands at the annual meeting of the German "Pazifik-Netzwerk" and raises many important questions about "where to from here for the Cook Islands?"



Figure 1: Cook Islands Flag, Rarotonga

## A brief history of the relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand

The colonial relationships between the Cook Islands and New Zealand occurred during a period when New Zealand was becoming responsible for administration in the Pacific Territories at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1901, New Zealand took over as the colonial power in many parts of the Pacific, including the Cook Islands and Niue (Crocombe, 1979). A colonial government remained in the Cook Islands until 1964 when self-government was discussed, planned and approved at the Sessions of the Cook Islands Assembly and by the New Zealand Parliament (Crocombe, 1979; Strickland, 1979). This constitution was initiated by the New Zealand government during a period when colonial administrations in the Pacific were retreating, and the self-determination of indigenous populations was heavily promoted by organisations such as the United Nations (UN). Strickland (1979) argued that many Cook Islanders believed that this was the:

... opportunity to recreate nationhood in the Cook Islands and to ensure that the governance of the Cook Islands was in the hands of men and women dedicated to the cause of greater prosperity and increased social welfare of the Cook Islands (p.9).

The Cook Islands and New Zealand also recognised that the Cook Islands would have difficulty in sustaining a fully independent national state at such a small scale (Strickland, 1979). Therefore the response of both govern-

ments was to favour that the Cook Islands be in 'Free Association' with New Zealand. Free Association represented an alternative to independence that allowed Cook Islanders to govern their own islands and have full responsibility for external affairs. It also allowed Cook Islanders to retain New Zealand citizenship, use New Zealand currency, and to call upon the New Zealand government to assist in defence and foreign affairs matters (New Zealand Government, 1999). One of the most significant features of the Free Association relationship is that it continues to afford Cook Islanders the advantage of New Zealand citizenship. As such, Free Association between the Cook Islands and New Zealand plays a role in not only the population mobility of Cook Islanders, but also their access to social welfare and other benefits while in New Zealand.

Currently, more Cook Islanders reside in New Zealand than in the Cook Islands, a pattern which can be traced back to the rising number of Cook Islanders migrating to New Zealand after the Second World War (Loomis, 1990; Macpherson, 2012). During this period, Cook Islanders were attracted to New Zealand for employment opportunities in primary and manufacturing industries (Macpherson, 2012). However, Cook Islanders had been present in New Zealand since the nineteenth century (Bertram, 2012). Mallon (2012) refers to early movement of Pacific people between the islands, New Zealand and elsewhere, as "regional traffic" (p.92), conveying not only the establishment of main thoroughfares

between the Pacific Islands and New Zealand, but also disrupting the notion that New Zealand only became connected to the Pacific through the migration of the 1960s and 1980s.

Afterwards, the extensive outward migration of Cook Islanders during the 1960s and 1970s, facilitated by a newly opened international airport in 1974, led to the growth of Cook Islands communities resident in New Zealand and large scale depopulation in the Cook Islands (Barcham, et al. 2009; Crocombe, 2003; Koteka-Wright, 2007; Spoonley, 2001). The other key moment in the Cook Islands' political history, which heavily influenced large-scale migration from the Cook Islands to New Zealand was in the 1990s when economic restructuring in the Cook Islands halved public sector jobs and removed government subsidies for basic goods and services (Murray & Overton, 2011; Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2005). For example, in 1995, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Cook Islands government providing them with the responsibility of investigating the economic situation of the nation. The Cook Islands at this time had been unable to meet international loan repayments and pay public servants and other creditors. The ADB, as a major lender of development finance to the Cook Islands, along with other aid donors refused payments to the government until an investigation had taken place (Rasmussen, 1998). During this investigation, which lasted a year, it was discovered by the ADB that development programmes had been overly ambitious, aid funding had declined from New Zealand, and costs associated with an inflated public service were high (Asian Development Bank, 1995). The solution, according to the ADB was a restructuring 'rescue' package that mirrored the economic reforms implemented in New Zealand from 1984–1993. The package, which was termed the 'Economic Reform Process' (ERP), was designed by representatives from the ADB, New Zealand and the Cook Islands. The overall aim was to reduce numbers of government employees, by shifting towards 'user pays' for public services, enhancing government accountability and stimulating private sector investment (Asia Development Bank, 1995; Pragnall, 2003). The implementation of the

Source: Evelyn Marsters 2010.



Figure 2: Parliament of the Cook Islands, Rarotonga.



ERP, which is referred to within the Cook Islands by the local population as 'the Transition', was funded by another loan from the ADB (Pragnall, 2003).

The economic restructuring in the Cook Islands, as part of the neo-liberal economic development of the 1990s, influenced population decline there among both the Southern and Northern groups. Murray & Overton (2011) capture some of the intensity of this period of time for Cook Islanders as:

... a very rapid and harsh structural adjustment. New Zealand, its (Cook Islands) former colonial power, in concert with the Asian Development Bank, imposed a severe cut in direct budgetary support for the Cook Islands government in 1996. As a result nearly two thirds of the country's civil servants lost their jobs more or less overnight (p.276).

'The Transition' for Cook Islanders caused widespread unemployment, en-masse migration to New Zealand, and the dislocation of families and communities. In some cases, the responses of Cook Islanders to global forces set in motion in the 1980s and 1990s have been positive, with the creation of transnational communities as one example (Nahkid, 2009). However, it has also been argued that these communities have had heterogeneous sets of transnational behaviours and activities (Dunsford, et al. 2011), and exacerbated impoverishment or declining opportunities have also occurred (Alexeyeff, 2011). According to Spoonley, Bedford, & Macpherson (2003):

Without doubt, the circulation of people, capital, goods and ideas all represent important transnational linkages that have contributed to the development of Pacific peoples in their island homes and 'homes abroad'. However, the 1980s and 1990s have also marked an important period of economic adjustment as states have sought to respond to new global forms of capitalist production and consumption, often by radical measures. In the case of Pacific peoples, this restructuring has led to new or enhanced forms of impoverishment (p.39).

The depopulation of the Cook Islands during the 1980s and 1990s has had a lasting effect on the shape of the Cook Islands population and the trend of outward migration to New Zealand and beyond continues.

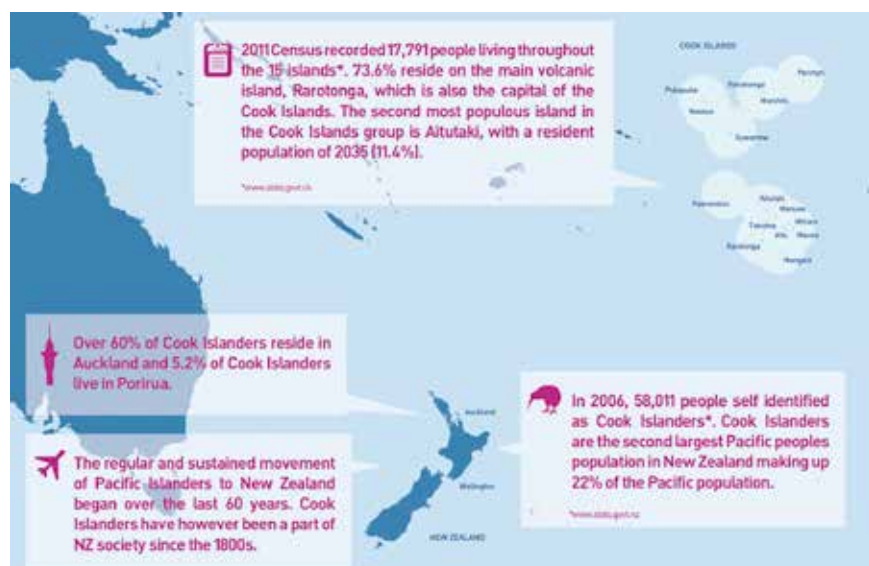


Figure 3: Overview of NZ-Cook Islanders relations

### Tracing the edges of the Cook Islands Transnational Social Field

The Free Association arrangement between New Zealand and the Cook Islands is a pivotal force behind the movement of Cook Islanders between the two countries. Part of the Cook Islanders' way of life is understanding and leveraging the different opportunities that exist across the Cook Islands, New Zealand and further afield. The creation of a Cook Islands transnational social field has emerged as a new conceptual understanding of the constellations of Cook Islanders' lives stretching beyond nation state boundaries (Marsters, 2014). The scale of population mobility in a globalised world and the "tempo driven by revolutions in communications and transport technology" (Daulaire, 1999, p.1) is the new face of global movement of people, goods, ideas and capital and while nation states still exert influence, engagement with what has been coined a "transnational social field" is now common (Glick-Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton, 1995). Under transnationalism the nation-state is interrogated via questioning the basic assumptions of how people organise their lives. The state remains a major influence on livelihoods, but this sits alongside people's own influences and logic in determining their lives (Hannerz, 1996). Crocombe (2003) states that "Cook Islanders of today are genetically and culturally new people, creating new culture, deriving from the past and present, the local and the international" (p.14).

As a group of people, Cook Islanders live across many boundaries with atoll, island, and national borders actively navigated for reasons such as education, employment, celebrations, ceremonies, and healthcare (Alexeyeff, 2008; Koteka-Wright, 2007; Horan, 2012; Marsters, Lewis & Friesen, 2006; Marsters, 2011; Underhill, 1989). The weaving of livelihoods between the Cook Islands and New Zealand by Cook Islanders is a phenomenon which is often taken for granted, and Free Association as an alternative to independence is often supported in an unquestioning fashion. However, small groups of people, within both the current Cook Islands government and the transnational Cook Islands communities, are raising important questions about the future of the Cook Islands' sovereignty. The question is: will the links between citizenship and state remain in this multiple form, or will the concepts of identity and citizenship continue to evolve?

### Sovereignty, Free Association or Independence?

The specifics of the Free Association agreement have become opaque over time as the concepts of identity, citizenship, borders, place and economy have become, for some people, fluid across space and through time (see Vertovec, 2004) and many Cook Islanders consider their nation to be operating in a state of full independence. For example, prior to being renamed 'Te Maeva Nui', the annual Cook Islands constitution celebrations were referred to by many as 'Indepen-

Source: Evelyn Marsters.



Figure 4: Migration Mural on the side of the library and museum in Rarotonga.

dence Day Celebrations’ or ‘Constitution Day Celebrations’. In the minds of Cook Islanders, the weeklong event celebrates the combination of nationhood, self-government, and independence. This is a reflection of the fact that the Cook Islands’ political relationship with New Zealand has become known as operating in a simultaneously independent, integrated, and interdependent manner. Furthermore, many Cook Islanders uncritically perceive that the Cook Islands have reached their final point in the trajectory of economic development, self-determination, and sovereignty.

The intention here is not to imply political apathy among Cook Islanders. Quite the contrary. Many among the Cook Islands population are politically active at multiple scales, at the village, island, national and New Zealand level. I am a New Zealand-born Cook Islander who has focussed multiple research projects on trying to uncover the various manifestations of Cook Islands transnational livelihoods and I have some understanding of how Cook Islanders leverage the ties that tether them to New Zealand. For my family, and for many others, New Zealand citizenship remains a most tightly protected dimension of Free Association by Cook Islanders, affording Cook Islanders notions of independence whilst offering integration with New Zealand.

In 2015, Henry Puna, the current Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, reopened the conversation regarding the Cook Islands’ aspirations for United Nations Membership. The dialogue between Henry Puna, the

giving position on the global world stage. In an official statement, Henry Puna stated that “it made sense as a maturing and growing country to aspire to be part of the UN...Our country is strong enough to stand on its own feet. We are proud of that fact” (Kumar, 2015). Henry Puna’s aspiration for UN memberships demonstrates an openness to explore new possibilities for the Cook Islands political trajectory, and a willingness to reconceptualise the Cook Islands existing international relationships in this globalised era. However, the conversation regarding UN membership in this case was, and has in the past been, abruptly stymied because of the uncertainty these questions pose in regards to New Zealand citizenship. The appeal for UN Membership is a divisive issue in the Cook Islands Parliament and the Democratic Party has publically expressed opposition to the formulation of a UN membership bid (Kumar, 2015). According to the Democratic Party, the progression of a UN bid will threaten the rights to New Zealand citizenship for Cook Islanders, and the framing of this dichotomy has been used to gain favour with Cook Islands transnational public, as well with as the current New Zealand Government. In a statement from the spokesperson for John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, it was made clear that New Zealand would not support the Cook Islands membership to the UN under the existing constitutional status, and that any change to the constitutional status would change the shared citizenship agreement (Kumar, 2015).

New Zealand government and the Opposition party in the Cook Islands party has appeared only in popular media, nevertheless the different standpoints on this issue illustrate an ongoing tension between the ties that bind the Cook Islands to New Zealand, and the Cook Islands’ emer-

The bid for UN membership by the Cook Islands has not been advanced, however the topic has seen the re-emergence of questions regarding the future of the Cook Islands. Since the formalisation of the Free Association agreement in 1965, the Cook Islands have reached an “advanced stage of Free Association” and have developed their own governance structures, political capacity and capability. The Cook Islands’ government participates in a range of international relationships beyond New Zealand, and is party to many multilateral agreements but the existing relationships do not bring into question Cook Islanders’ rights to New Zealand Citizenship under Free Association. In this current age where memberships in international organisations and multilateral agreements exert real influence on governance structures and economic sustainability, the Cook Islands, while remaining tethered to New Zealand, needs to re-evaluate historical and contemporary political relationships.

## Conclusion

Free Association has become a taken-for-granted, positive outcome of the historical colonial relationship by both New Zealand and the Cook Islands. Cook Islanders navigate the complicated networks created by this relationship, and in a sense, navigate pathways via citizenship to New Zealand and further afield. There is a lack of information and critical analysis about the motivations for seeking UN membership on behalf of Henry Puna’s government, and the possible reasons why New Zealand continues to halt conversations in such a paternalistic manner. Beyond the small statements generated by the media about the Cook Islands, New Zealand citizenship, and UN membership, the people of the Cook Islands in both the islands and in New Zealand are not substantially informed on this issue. Furthermore, Cook Islanders’ participation in the discussions regarding our sovereignty and citizenship is as limited now, as it was in the 1960s.

The relationship between new modalities of aid, dependencies, sovereignty, and pervasive forms of colonial authority needs to be investigated in the Cook Islands context (see Banks & McGregor, 2011; Murray & Overton, 2011; Teaiwa, 2012).



On the international world stage, the Cook Islands now operates in a manner that has evolved and expanded beyond a focused binary relationship with New Zealand. The conversations regarding Cook Islands' membership to the UN are likely to resurface, and when they do, substantive critical analysis of how this could exist outside of, or within relationships with New Zealand must be conducted. The potential loss of New Zealand citizenship should not be used to prohibit the re-evaluation of the Cook Islands constitution in today's globalised political environment.

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Figure 5: Pareau stall at the Punanga Nui Markets, Rarotonga.

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## Book review

# Hanoi Hospital

Britta Schmitz



I have to admit: I am a fan of crime fiction. There is nothing better for a long train or plane ride than a gripping thriller. A lot of my first impressions of Sweden came from the novels written by Mankell and Co. It was only when I moved to Sweden that I realized that mine and grumpy, old Wallander's Scania were maybe not exactly the same. So, I was all the more eager to read "Hanoi Hospital" by David Frogier de Ponlevoy when I got my hands on it. After all, I have lived in Vietnam for a while. Would I be able to recognize the Hanoi I experienced while living there myself? Would the author succeed in explaining daily life in Vietnam to his Western readers and at the same time manage to captivate them with a thought through arc of suspense?

To begin with, this book wants to be a lot of things: It wants to be a classical whodunit, a coming-of-age story, a city novel and a report casting light on Vietnam's social problems in the age of economic transformation.

The story takes us to Hanoi, where some mysterious fatalities occur. Patients die while they are treated in public hospitals or they just disappear. A young girl hits a corpse and soon she and her cousin are hot on the trail of villains in lab coats, discovering

criminal schemes in Vietnam's medical system.

First of all, Frogier de Ponlevoy knows his stuff; he is – as far as a Westerner can be – an insider of the Vietnamese culture. He used to live in Vietnam from 2006-2014 and apparently did not spend those years in an "expat-bubble", secluded from the life of the ordinary people. His knowledge about the country and its customs as well as social and family structures seems to be really extensive.

So extensive that some passages of the novel might get tiring – especially when he indulges in describing seemingly endless lists of food or let his characters quote from Vietnam's ancient national epos "The Tale of Kieu".

But with this story he takes us deep inside the contemporary Vietnamese society and shows it to us from many angles; describing the events from five different perspectives. That is to say, the book does not have only one protagonist. Each chapter is dedicated to one of the four main characters representing different members of today's Vietnamese society. There is Linh, the shy "All-Vietnamese girl"; Anne, half Vietnamese – half German and stuck in an identity crisis, Tuan the migrant worker, who had to bury his dream of a better life in the capital and finally the doctor, highly educated but without moral conscience. Vietnam's ever growing expat circles are portrayed in Jonathan Axen, a





Source: David Frogier de Ponlevoy.

German expat-manager, who is drunk with success in business and thinking of himself as a one-off womanizer.

While it is an excellent idea to tell the story from different perspectives, this concept does not give enough room for deeper insights into the character's developments. Some of the protagonists appear rather woodcut-like or extremely exaggerated. The motives of the doctor for example can't be described by anything else than megalomania. Linh's development from being a conformist, shy translator to becoming a brave and highly-engaged journalist seems a bit over-the-top. And it stays unclear, why exactly the girls are getting so engaged in solving this case. However, Jonathan Axen, the arrogant expat, who seems to be portrayed in an especially exaggerated way, might be more realistic than one would like to think.

**Britta Schmitz [schmitzbritta@gmx.de] travels a lot and has always a crime novel in her luggage. But she also knows Asia quite well with a Master in Modern China Studies and more than 10 years of living, studying and working in China and Vietnam.**

Asia is full of this kind of expats, living pretentiously, loud and ostentatious. However, in "Hanoi Hospital" it is not just the "ugly foreigners" committing crimes against the poor Vietnamese people, Westerners and Vietnamese are hand in hand involved in criminal machinations.

The topic of the plot – crime and ethical violations in the medical sector – is more relevant than ever, not only in Vietnam. It leaves the reader wondering how medical advancement, profit for the economic actors and moral values can be combined ensuring the patients' welfare. Besides, when I first read the novel I was convinced that things like the falsified pharmaceutical study could not be happening that easily. But it seems that here, too, the author did an excellent research job. A friend of mine, who is global regulatory affairs manager for a big pharma firm

confirmed, that sadly enough a lot of misuse and manipulations are possible in the initial phases of pharma studies – even in countries like Vietnam where the legislation itself is quite strict.

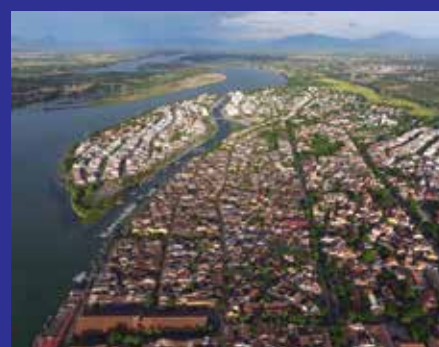
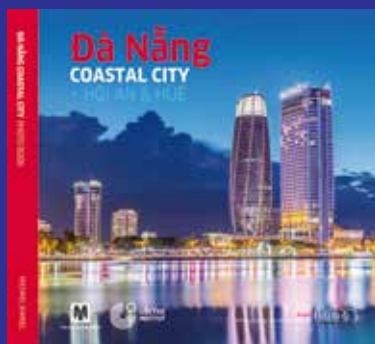
"Hanoi Hospital" is an entertaining read while at the same time it is packed with insights and facts about Vietnam. The story has its weaknesses as a thriller and Linh is for sure not the new Lisbeth Salander, but it captivates with its vivid descriptions of life in Hanoi. I definitely recommend the book for everyone planning to travel to Vietnam or for those who just came back and want to keep that special Vietnam-feeling just a bit longer.

#### **Bibliographic details**

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### Excerpt from greeting of the Director of Goethe-Institut Vietnam, Dr. Almuth Meyer-Zollitsch:

Approaching Da Nang by plane, one immediately feels drawn to the long curving coastline: a white sandy beach like an endless ribbon bordering the deep blue of the sea with its colorful scattering of fishing boats. A wide curve, and on the approach to the new international airport a view of the skyline of a modern metropolis, with its striking high-rise city hall, generous sports facilities, wide streets and numerous bridges that soar over the river. From fishing village to eco-city is Da Nang's success story in a nutshell. Experience Da Nang, Hoi An and Hue from perspectives never before seen and feel the fascination of a rich urban culture which is proud of its history and ideally equipped for the future.

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