

verge on unnecessary self-biographical data of the author. The reader may sometimes also get the impression that some personal experiences are overrated and lead to generalizations of Muslim behavior. Students unfamiliar with the subject matter can be grateful for the glossary. Scholars looking for special information can appreciate the index and the access to the full version of the book chapters online at Cambridge University Press.

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**Beer, Bettina, and Tobias Schwoerer** (eds.): *Capital and Inequality in Rural Papua New Guinea*. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2022. 199 pp. ISBN: 978-17604-6518-6. (Asia-Pacific Environment Monograph, 16). Price: \$ 55.00 (free download available at <press.anu.edu.au>)

Social inequality driven by internationally operating corporations' resource projects in the South Pacific island state Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the topic of the present anthology. It discusses the emergence and deepening of conflicts over the distribution of dividends, royalties, compensation, and other benefits from large-scale and capital-intensive projects in mining, oil and gas production (liquefied natural gas/LNG), and from agri-industrial plantations in rural and semi-rural regions, which result from the commercial use of land under traditional tenure. Forestry as the fifth component of such investments (land grabbing) is not addressed in the volume. Whereas 97 per cent of land was under traditional tenure at independence in 1975, and just three per cent were considered dispossessed, eleven per cent of land was transferred, mostly illegally, to corporations in the form of Special Agricultural Business Leases (SABL) between 2008 and 2011 alone. Material and cultural processes of change to local Melanesian lifeworlds in an economic system not or only partly following free-market principles are at stake here, processes in which the new social inequality and societal stratification are created, intensified, and reproduced across generations. This is the case especially concerning the inception of such projects.

The introduction by Bettina Beer and Tobias Schwoerer provides an overview of the anthropological research on inequality in PNG, which is structured along ethnicity, gender, age, and other categorical distinctions in the traditional societies. Three of the seven chapters examine the Wampar ethnic group, which settles along the middle Markham River near the city of Lae in Morobe Province. Despite the fact that the tradition of mining in PNG spans more than one hundred years, research began to focus on the consequences of resource extraction for local communities only in the 1980s after the start-up of the Ok Tedi Mine in Western Province and the civil war around the Panguna Mine

in Bougainville. The massive social upheavals caused by the projects, such as migration, violence, crime, alcoholism, gambling, polygyny, sexual slavery, and the loss of livelihoods at the expense of women, are well-documented, comparable to the ecological disaster. Although the payments by corporations are open to scrutiny (not least because of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative/EITI), it remains unclear to this day how the monies are used by landowners and sub-national governments. Here, this leads to the key questions as to who are the legitimate landowners, who represents them, who distributes the monies received, and how.

Chapters 2 and 3 explore claims to land as one of the most important features of inequality, which results in new hierarchies of power and dependence within and between groups of landowners. Tobias Schwoerer outlines the consequences of the entry of two competing corporations, both of which seek to establish large-scale plantations on Wampar land (oil palm plantations by New Britain Palm Oil Ltd., owned by Malaysia's Sime Darby Plantation, and eucalyptus plantations for energy production by PNG Biomass, a subsidiary of PNG's Oil Search Ltd. that merged with Australia's Santos in 2021). The author shows not only that the legal changes to the system of land tenure and leasing, which he presents in detail here, stoke conflicts around leadership, membership, project boundaries, and benefit distribution, but also provides evidence of ubiquitous irregularities on the part of the actors and authorities. Willem Church, in turn, demonstrates in his study how the legal competition between various groups concerning the establishment of the Wafi-Golpu Mine, which was also carried out in the courts, can cement communities' claims to land even decades before the investment decision. He sees in this example the emergence of hierarchical factions led by members of the local elite that are linked to their followers in networks of promised clientelism. These members of the elite are well-educated older men with experience in politics and administration who have access to information and are capable of forming alliances.

Chapter 4, by Monica Minnegal and Peter Dwyer, is about the rise and fall of a broker over 40 years and thus about questions of leading and representing the community on the upper Strickland River (Western Province) in the case of its potential connection to the LNG project, which however is not realised. It is about the hope for a "good life" thanks to a resource project in an isolated region that came into contact with the colonial government only in the 1960s. Then, Bettina Beer takes up the changes in the ethical life of the Wampar living close to the city. Beginning with experiences of stinginess, greed, and gossip documented in the 1970s, she compares them with her own fieldwork from 2013 and 2017. The verifiable increasing importance of

individualism, the nuclear family, money, and consumer goods not only leads to violations of the rule of reciprocity, but also to new forms of competitive displays of wealth. Social sanctions such as gossip and sorcery accusations have become less effective because material wealth relativises people's previous dependence on their own community.

In chapter 6, comparable to Minnegal and Dwyer, Bruce Knauff examines the impacts of resource projects in the remote Strickland-Bosavi area (Western Province) in which even the (unfulfilled) expectation of connection to the LNG und P'nyang projects bring about cultural dynamics and social inequality. This is a forgotten region without state institutions ("The government has died," 172), infrastructure, radio contact, and wage labour in which marijuana is the only (illegal) article of trade. The author first describes such mining projects' horrifying dynamics of violence and social disintegration using the example of the Porgera Mine. He sees a catastrophic mismatch between the plans and the actual outcomes of such projects, which foment and escalate contention, inequality, and misery.

Their extremely negative record notwithstanding, resource projects represent the epitome of hope and positive promise of a rapid path to wealth and thus of modernity and progress both to policymakers and the general population. According to Knauff, they are a shining symbol of one's own backwardness. What is more, they are "the pinnacle not only of fantasised projection but also of ultimate inequity bequeathed by modern development" (179). Finally, the epilogue (chap. 7) by Glenn Banks takes up the topics relating to resource-driven inequality addressed in the volume and places them within the context of his own household surveys on social inequality in the Porgera Valley in the early 1990s and 2019. He sees three threads that run through most of the case studies: land as the most important factor affecting the emergence of inequality, the issue of community leadership, and the various different flows of information. He considers the new inequality to be structured along four axes: geography, gender, hierarchy, and residential status.

In sum, this well-crafted anthology broadens the horizons of the studies on the socio-economic and cultural consequences of global resource projects in PNG. Yet the hypothesis of the introduction (8) that large-scale mining in PNG has not resulted in widespread impoverishment comparable to other countries of the Global South remains questionable. The impoverishment, and to an even greater extent the pauperisation of large segments of the population of the Western Province, which is heavily impacted by the Ok Tedi Mine, are evidence of the opposite. Here, Knauff rightly speaks of ecocide, and referring to PNG as a whole, of a textbook case of the extractive resource curse in developing countries.

The development of a township near the Nadzab airport, promoted by the governor newly in office since the parliamentary election of 2022, and the construction and operation of the Wafi-Golpu Mine will massively accelerate the negative dynamic of societal stratification and social disintegration, in particular among the Wampar. Reasons enough for further research.

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**Blum, Françoise, et al. (dir.) :** *Socialismes en Afrique. Socialisms in Africa.* Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2021. 716 pp. ISBN 978-2-7351-2698-9. (Collectif, 54) Prix : € 39.00

L'un des privilèges des sciences historiques est de redonner aux individus, acteurs, actrices et à certains événements la place qui leur revient dans l'histoire d'un pays, d'un continent, voire du monde. Il en est ainsi du socialisme africain qui n'a pas encore pleinement bénéficié de ce privilège et auquel le présent ouvrage tente d'aménager une place dans l'historiographie générale des mouvements se réclamant de ce courant de pensée et d'action. Le mérite de cette initiative dans le monde francophone revient à Françoise Blum dont les travaux ont consacré la richesse des mouvements et savoirs militants africains aussi bien dans leur dynamique propre (mouvements étudiants) que dans leur expérience plurielle. C'est en toute logique que ces travaux ont abouti au colloque "Socialismes africains/Socialismes en Afrique" qui s'est tenu au site Pouchet du CNRS à Paris du 7 au 9 avril 2016, que le présent ouvrage restitue grâce au dynamisme de l'équipe éditoriale de jeunes chercheuses et chercheurs que Françoise Blum a pu réunir autour d'elle.

Comment rendre compte du foisonnement de ce livre sans en édulcorer le propos? D'autant que chaque cas soulevé ouvre d'autres pistes que l'on perçoit en filigrane dans les conclusions des auteurs. Tel est le dilemme auquel cette recension nous renvoie et auquel nous ne saurons répondre que de manière subjective à travers les interpellations qu'elle éveille en nous. Et les questionnements auxquels elle donne droit.

L'histoire du socialisme en Afrique est aussi vieille, pourrait-on dire, que la conquête coloniale, indissociable de l'extension du capitalisme sous sa forme impériale dont Lénine disait qu'elle était le dernier stade du capitalisme, de l'éveil de la conscience de classe parmi les ouvriers dans les métropoles européennes, de leur regroupement en unions et syndicats, enfin de la naissance des partis se revendiquant de cet idéal social. Autant d'éléments qui trouveront leur excroissance dans les colonies et auxquels il faut ajouter, à l'âge des premières tentatives révolutionnaires, l'influence des pays nés de la révolution d'Octobre 1917, de la révolution chinoise en 1949 ou cubaine dix ans plus tard. C'est