

Book reviews

Hiroko Matsuda (2019). *Liminality of the Japanese Empire: Border Crossings from Okinawa to Colonial Taiwan*. 205pp. Honolulu, University of Hawaii University. ISBN: 9780824880019 (Hardcover) US\$68.00; ISBN: 978-0- 8248-8829-9 (Paperback). US\$28.00.

Drawing upon extensive historical documents and life stories of Okinawan immigrants, Hiroko Matsuda's latest volume seeks to explore the relationship between the liminal status of Okinawans and their subjectivities in reproducing discursive boundaries in the period between Japan's annexation of the Ryukyus and the beginning of US military rule in Okinawa. Matsuda revisits the concept of liminality with a focus on the Okinawan immigrants residing in colonized Taiwan, the otherwise often under-represented ethnic group.

Migration was a centuries-old process and has been much explored. The substantial body of literature cited in the book reveals that the shifts of Okinawan immigrants' identities were accompanied with the rise and fall of Japan's imperial expansion. Starting from the early 1920s, Okinawans moved across borders and were constantly translating their identities between colonial and colonized cultures. Among them, Okinawans in colonized Taiwan had grappled with identity problems of their own. Traditionally, the Japanese were positioned as the superior, the Taiwanese as the inferior, and the Okinawans between the two. In this book, Matsuda challenges the radical dichotomy of the colonizer and the colonized, arguing that "Okinawans cannot be simply understood through this inflexible hierarchical structure" (p. 11). On the contrary, their status, evolved from the liminal character, was socially mediated. As noted at the very beginning of the book, the Okinawans enjoyed a historical identity "less dominant and exploitative" than the Japanese (p. 1). Unlike many other border studies, this book sets out to provide a more diverse interpretation of the liminal status of the Okinawan immigrants, whose "in-betweenness" of identities was magnified in the colonized context of Taiwan and during the postwar period.

This book is divided into six chapters with an epilogue. Chapter 1 provides an overview of Okinawan immigrants in Taiwan, as compared to the massive migration of Okinawans across the globe. Chapter 2 reviews the history of how the commercial, social, and cultural networks were developed between Yaeyama and colonial Taiwan. It is concluded that "Yaeyama's socioeconomic transformation as well as its liminal state between the Japanese nation and the empire" (p. 57) had prompted the migration of Yaeyama islanders to a "civilized Taiwan". Chapter 3 illustrates Okinawans' struggles for survival in colonized Taiwan for career and educational advancement. In Chapter 4, Matsuda takes the discussion further by acknowledging the role of "imperial schooling" in empowering Okinawans to achieve social mobility. Medical education remained a powerful impetus for the migration of Okinawans to Taiwan. Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to in-depth analysis of Okinawans' negotiation of new identities in colonized Taiwan and in postwar Okinawa under the US temporary rule. Matsuda calls into question the common assumption that assimilation was the only way for Okinawans to advance socially in Taiwan. Alternatively, some of the second and third generations of Okinawan immigrants made conscious efforts in asserting their Okinawan pride by means of creolization. But when Okinawan repatriates from Taiwan returned to their homeland after the collapse of the Japanese Empire, they were again marginalized as the "other" due to a lack of shared colonial experiences with islanders who survived the Battle of Okinawa and the rest of the Okinawan diaspora. They were forced to

confront a new identity crisis: either becoming Ryukyuan or Japanese. Nevertheless, this group of Okinawans, with unique colonial experiences in Taiwan, had distinguished themselves as active agents in reproducing the desired ethnic boundaries.

By adopting a traditional anthropological methodology, Matsuda supplements the source data of autobiographies and oral histories with independent interviews. She endeavors to delve into the neglected experiences of Okinawan immigrants and their desire to find their “own place” across the changing borders of Japanese imperialism. On the nomadic journey from Okinawa to colonized Taiwan and back to afterwar Okinawa, Okinawan immigrants were constantly wrestling with their liminal status, as they were viewed as the “other” in either colonial setting. Identity crisis was strongly captured in the oral narratives. As Okinawans bridged the transition from one border to another, their desire to belong, had heightened rather than abated. Matsuda suggests that assimilation and creolization were two major forms practiced by Okinawans in seeking their own position in colonized Taiwan. It is evident that the formulation and reformulation of liminal identities are vested with power relationships shaped in different socio-political contexts. To sketch a bigger picture of the Okinawan community at large, Matsuda also approaches the survival of Okinawans through the lens of female Okinawan labor in the highly gendered job market. Other issues of concern in relation to the central issue are raised. For instance, the nature of settler colonialism is re-examined in consideration of Okinawans’ subjectivities and forms of agency through the notion of imperial careerism. The significant role of Okinawan repatriates was recognized in rebuilding the connections between the postwar Okinawa and Taiwan. Perspectives as such may serve to extend the discussion of liminality in the modern colonialism in a wider and richer scope.

However, as is pointed out by the author, the interrelationship between colonized Taiwanese locals and Okinawans has yet to be examined. The interaction between the two colonized groups in the Japanese imperialism was multi-layered. In addition to the historical, economic, and social ties between the two regions, the discrimination similarly experienced by colonized Taiwanese and Okinawans helped develop a special bond between them. Paradoxically, there was coexistence of harmony and clashes in the contact zones due to the disparity of identities. How did Okinawans’ interaction with Taiwanese subjects across borders, either in colonized Taiwan or Okinawa, affect the construction of identities on both sides? The inquiry into this question may yield more insights into the complexity and duality of liminal subjects.

Overall, this volume contributes to the growing body of research on liminality by engaging with diverse facets and varied experiences of the under-represented ethnic group in an entangled context. Amongst the book’s other achievements, the following are worth mentioning. The array of points of view are presented in an easily accessible manner and enriched by the authenticity of historical details and individual narratives. In addition, the scope of the questions addressed will carry weight on border studies and the analytic framework of liminality.

Xili Wu

Research Center for Indian Ocean Island Countries, South China University of Technology, China
wuxl@scut.edu.cn (corresponding author)

Huilong Li

School of Public Administration, South China University of Technology, China
lihuilong@scut.edu.cn

James E. Randall (2021). *An Introduction to Island Studies*. 291pp. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN: 978-1-78661-545-9 (Hardcover) US\$120.00; ISBN: 978-1-78661-546-6 (Paperback) US\$32.50; ISBN: 978-1-78661-547-3 (eBook) US\$30.50.

James Randall's much awaited book, *An Introduction to Island Studies*, makes accessible key concepts, literature reviews, and important discussions in island studies for a wide audience—from college students to interdisciplinary scholars of islands. Although the title suggests an introduction to the field, the purpose of the book is to develop an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the field which has been “emerging for the last twenty-five years” but “still in its infancy” in higher education globally, largely due to the historically constructed and imagined peripheral locations of islands and islanders in global geopolitics, and academia. In 11 chapters, Randall explores numerous locations, texts and with different disciplinary lenses, interweaving overarching conceptual themes of vulnerability and resilience, isolation and connectedness, diversity and cohesion.

Each conceptual pairing may present contradictions or dichotomies, but Randall assures that they are not mutually exclusive, and that together they constitute important aspects of island lives. For instance, according to Randall, while vulnerability is adapted by scholars all too simplistically to emphasize the short-term consequences of natural disasters, outmigration, or loss of identity, islanders entangle with vulnerability by developing adaptability and building resilience in the face of such natural disasters or outmigration. Isolation from continental resources also led to the development of distinct island cultures without continental influence, while connecting neighboring islands. Despite the apparent physical or cultural diversities of islands worldwide, islands share innate features of their geography and experiences and beliefs of islanders, which he calls “islandness.” The dual themes throughout the book, add needed depth to concepts and ideas which are often glossed over as given or established.

Chapters One through Five (‘Definitions and Classifications of Islands’, ‘Physical Processes and Islands’, ‘Images of Islands from Literature and the Popular Media’, ‘The Settling of Island and Indigenous-Outside Interactions’, and ‘Islands, Islandness, and Culture’) make up the first part of the book. They provide an overview of definitions and classifications of islands as understood through geomorphology, political science and humanities and social science. Tracing diversities of islands in their geological formations, artificial constructions, with or without human habitations and cultures, Randall demonstrates that the traditional definition of an island as a land completely surrounded by water is incomplete. Instead, he touts for a more flexible, nuanced, and adaptable definition of islands from the islanders’ point of view—a place holding meaning for islanders. Many islands have historically been defined by the imaginaries through the process of imperialism. As in Charles Darwin’s analysis of the Galapagos islands have been designated sites of “natural laboratories” for the development of evolutionary theories and zoology, or nuclear testing sites as in Bikini Atolls, or colonial plantations in Hawai’i, for instance. Randall however acknowledges that such designations of islands are premised on an etic Western science view, while there are emic Indigenous islander world views of islands that are relevant and valuable in seeking to understand the world they inhabit. Currently, they play an instrumental role in cultivating an ability to adapt climate change, as well as many “islands” being places to articulate a decolonial future.

Throughout the book Randall cautions readers from non-Indigenous island communities to keep their unconscious bias against non-Western worldviews in check, to avoid marginalizing Indigenous belief systems. He shows that islands are constructs of among

others; natural and artificial processes and that they are also part of larger social constructs. Applying an island studies lens to popular literature and popular media on islands, such as *The Odyssey*, Paul Gauguin's *Tea no areois*, and Elvis Presley's poster entitled 'Paradise: Hawaiian Style', Randall illustrates the ways in which the West contributed to constructions of the dominant ideologies of islandness. Often, islands are perceived as utopic paradises, while islanders themselves are portrayed as backward, savage or noble innocents, but socially constructed as the dichotomous 'other' to the West. Randall asserts that islandness for islanders "has less to do with the outside world and more to do with how islanders characterize themselves and their own identity" as their "sense of place is affected by the presence and role of water" because "islanders are rarely out of sight of the shoreline and for many, the sea plays an important part in their social and economic livelihoods" (p. 102).

The second part of the book, Chapters Five through Eleven ('Geopolitics and Island Governance', 'Islands, Population, and the Movement of People', 'Island Health and Epidemiology', 'Island Tourism', and 'Islands in the Age of Sustainability and Sustainable Development'), examines the geopolitical, economic, and touristic facets that have had implications for the overall governance, sustainability, health and wellbeing of islands and islanders. Crediting the United Nations for increasing awareness for sustainable islands agendas, Randall encourages readers to participate in the ongoing discussions between the UN and approximately 116 subnational island jurisdictions (SNIJs); including Hawai'i, Puerto Rico (US), British Virgin Islands (UK), and Canary Islands (Spain), highlighted in the book, and others not explicitly named in the book, such as Okinawa (Japan). Those SNIJs used the rhetoric of island vulnerability, to appeal to the goals identified by SIDS, which Randall calls an aspect of the "creativity and negotiation skills" of islands to have their agendas recognized globally.

Randall structures the field of island studies as relevant for islanders and non-islanders across various disciplines alike. He argues convincingly that island issues are really world issues, and continental people and scholars are complicit in the current situations which islands and islanders face from human-inflicted natural disasters, tourism, economical, and various postcolonial issues. Thus, as a start, Randall encourages readers to "use [their] own experiences and knowledge to question prevailing assumptions and beliefs." Guided by Randall's expertise, reviews, critiques, and further questions for topics that require in-depth consideration, new students to the field advance through various topics and gain a wide breadth in understanding them. Advanced scholars in island studies will also appreciate a refocusing of familiar topics with more nuanced definitions, and the sharpening of the questions permitted from the presented complexities of current global topics that islands and islanders articulate therein.

Ayano Ginoza

University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa

ginoza@eve.u-ryuyu.ac.jp

Andrew Spencer (2019). *Travel and Tourism in the Caribbean: Challenges and Opportunities for Small Island Developing States*. 121pp. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG. ISBN: 978-3-319-6958-5. (eBook) US\$59.99.

The author, building on experience in both academia and the industry arena of tourism management, provides a comprehensive overview of essential topics that should be on the agenda for Caribbean islands desirous of building resilience and sustainability within their tourism-based economies. The author introduces the reader to topics such as climate change, economic realities, social realities, and ICT in chapters that also highlight Caribbean best practices. Although the examples provided are geared towards the English-speaking Commonwealth Caribbean, as opposed to the non-Commonwealth Anglophone, Spanish, Dutch, and/or French Caribbean, they are nonetheless beneficial to the region. It should also be noted that the author's scope is premised upon the definition of small island developing states (SIDS) as delineated by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), which includes non-UN members that are not entirely self-governing or independent. However, other Caribbean islands that fall within this remit but are not SIDS as defined by UN-OHRLLS, may also benefit from this text. These include but are not limited to; Bonaire, San Andres, Providencia & Santa Catalina, Saba, Sint Eustatius, St. Barts and St. Martin).

Within the First Chapter, 'Synopsis of the Tourism Industry within the Caribbean', the author delves deeper into the past to explain the origins of tourism in the Caribbean. The scope of the book is international tourism (not domestic), and the author does a meticulous job at first explaining the major tenets of same. Tourism has been found to be present in the Caribbean since the 1800s and gained national importance in the 1950s onwards when Caribbean islands began to sever ties with their respective metropolises in the post-colonial period. Since then, tourism has become a main economic pillar and an avenue for development and employment. The author paints an honest picture of how developments of tourism within the Caribbean can also be seen as an extension of the hierarchies and exclusions within the historical societal fabric, a continuation of service and servitude (slavery), a form of neo-imperialism, as there is power asymmetry between islands and foreign owned large trans-national corporations. Thus, a caveat is provided by the author in terms of the externalities of tourism such as ecological degradation, economic leakages through high imports and expatriate labour, socio-economic polarization and profit repatriation. The author posits to expand on current Caribbean tourism literature by bringing more prominently on to the agenda, the critical relation between climate change and tourism, ICT and tourism and the economic and social Caribbean context in which these currently play out.

The Second Chapter, 'Climate Change and the Sustainable Development of the Tourism within the Caribbean', speaks to both mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the highly tourism dependent Caribbean. The author touches upon climate justice by educating the audience that SIDS are among the most vulnerable to climate change but having the least to contribute compared to more advanced economies of the Global North. The author explains how climate change impacts and is interwoven with the tourism industry's success and its substantial reach into Caribbean livelihoods. The author further provides insight into how the link between tourism and climate change has been addressed in both regional and international fora. A myriad of opportunities and best practices are presented,

such as strategic inclusion of climate in tourism planning, reducing dependence on carbon-based fuels, strengthening resilience in built infrastructure, disaster insurance schemes (Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility - CCRIF), carbon footprint assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for new developments, as well as nature-based solutions such as reforestation of mangroves and reefs for protection and implementation. The author mentions the need for financial mechanisms, but only briefly mentions the Caribbean nations' high debt-to-GDP ratio, which is a major impediment to investing in solutions and developing fiscal contingency budgets for disaster response (CRIFF does not cover other types of lower layer but more recurring disasters such as local floods and payouts do not always match actual emergency losses accrued), a point on which one would have liked to read more.

Within the Third and Fourth Chapters, 'Tourism and Economic Realities in the Caribbean' and 'Caribbean Tourism Public Perception and Social Realities', the author provides the reader with a more in-depth understanding of the far-reaching links between tourism and the economy and social context of Caribbean islands. The author offers compelling evidence to show that tourism is "all-encompassing" (p. 48) and "co-dependent" on other sectors like agriculture, transportation, construction, and IT (p. 49). For example, lack of product diversification, profits from all-inclusive resorts being repatriated, high demand for importation of foreign goods, and cruise tourism with few local economic benefits all contribute to high debt-to-GDP ratios and increasing reliance on aid from the Global North. In the following sections, the author discusses diversification (e.g., health and wellness), marketing, and pro-poor tourism (ability to reduce poverty) and promotes the concept of community-based tourism (CBT) to increase links with locally and regionally produced products (e.g., local handicrafts, local farmers) and thus reduce economic leakages. Local communities are both positively and badly impacted by tourism, and their view is important for the industry's sustainability. Islands' carrying capacity (impacts on biodiversity, natural resources, lack of coordinated land-use planning) and continuing growth are issues of concern to local residents. Investing in education, skills, and knowledge to promote upward mobility into managerial positions is therefore considered relevant. Finally, these Chapters reinforce the author's preceding Chapters' emphasis on addressing climate change for Caribbean livelihoods.

Within Chapter Five, 'ICT and Caribbean Tourism', ICT is seen as an avenue for further development, innovation, building competitive advantage and conveyed as most important, empowerment for local communities. The creation of an enabling environment for optimal ICT, as the author explains, can be the answer to the presented concerns within Caribbean economic and social realities. Economic leakage can be reduced by fostering involvement of locals, through increased access and visibility in community tourism products. Especially in support of local medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs). The author provides differing academic views on how to create this optimal ICT infrastructure, such as education, leadership and a competitive telecommunications industry. This chapter ties everything together by emphasizing the importance of ICT in supporting and ensuring the tourism industry's long-term sustainability. The author concludes with a chapter that summarizes this work of immense acquired knowledge, which is written with minimal jargon and thus may be of interest to scholars, students, and policymakers alike, interested in Caribbean tourism in general, or who desire to be introduced to the dimensions of climate change or ICT in particular. From an island studies standpoint, scholars should take caution

that although this book does not intend to form conclusions on sovereign versus non-sovereign island territories, studies show that the SIDS UN classification of island territories does not fully grasp realities of sovereignty, as some territories which are non-UN members have been found to have higher sovereignty scores than some UN member states.

Francielle Laclé

Sustainable Island Solutions through STEM (SISSTEM), University of Aruba

francielle.lacle@ua.aw

Lino Briguglio, Jessica Byron, Stefano Moncada, and Wouter Veenendaal (2020). *Handbook of Governance in Small States*. 456pp. London: Routledge. ISBN: 9780429061356 (eBook) US\$47.65. ISBN: 9780367183998 (Hardcover) US\$200.00.

Handbook of Governance in Small States is a timely and relevant addition to both academia and the policy world. It successfully advances one's understanding of the political economy of development in small states, with pertinent references to their viability in the context of climate change. From a practical standpoint, it offers policy solutions that – while requiring further consultation for strategic and effective implementation – contain high-level policy recommendations that can direct small states toward improving their governance performance. The book, therefore, is not only suitable for students and academics, but is a valuable tool for policy makers alike. Exoteric and insightful, the book will also connect with casual learners interested in issues affecting development in small states. The text comprises 26 chapters written by a group of scholars, researchers, and specialist practitioners; working in the fields of sociology, politics, economics, international political economy, development studies, environmental sciences, and engineering. The contributors work in various capacities across government agencies, universities, and international finance institutions, in some cases, criss-crossing platforms. They thus bring to the book a wealth of theoretical and practical knowledge in important, cross-cutting themes under social, economic, environmental, and political governance.

The Handbook is divided neatly into four parts: Political Governance, Environmental Governance, Social Governance, and Economic Governance. Each section has between six and eight chapters, outlining various topics under the respective themes. Generally, concepts are properly defined, and in cases where they are not, authors outline areas for further work to improve conceptual clarity. This extends to areas of limitations of data. Methodologically, chapters display intellectual rigour, making use of quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method data gathering approaches. The chapters make judicious use of statistical tables where applicable and necessary, in order to enhance analytical clarity. The chapters make good use of multi-year data (as recent as 2019), as well as comparative analysis across small states, and between small states and large economies. Chapters are not overly long, yet comprehensive and thorough with adequate references for further delving into each topic.

In terms of content, most of the chapters outline the state-of-play of governance in small states, helping the reader to understand the extant issues. Chapters in the Political Governance section investigate questions pertaining to how small states carry out their governance, and how their polities differ from large states. The section explores questions regarding the effect of hyper-fragmentation of population on democracy in small states, including how decentralization affects democratization. It delves into how democratic systems have evolved in United Kingdom Overseas Territories, with appropriate comparisons to

independent small states. It further explores regional integration and cooperation as a form of governance, including various elements affecting development in small states, ranging from issues of corruption, legitimacy, poverty, and conflict, taken together as fragility traps.

The Environmental Governance Section similarly examines extant initiatives in small states, such as policy frameworks and action plans governing and informing broad environmental themes of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and mitigation. It also delves into more narrow areas involving land management and energy policies. The Social Governance section looks at elements that define social governance, such as health, education, and social cohesion, but also delves into the narrower areas of voluntary and forced migration. Chapters in this section also cleverly interlink environmental with social governance, such as the role of social capital in climate adaptation. Finally, chapters in the Economic Governance section look at the role of innovative financing in building resilience in small states, and the relationship between economies of scale in provision of goods and services and its impact on tax burdens. The section explores the impact of remittance on growth, a novel and most poignant area of study, and more broadly, examines macroeconomic policy and institutional challenges in small states, making recommendations for the strengthening of fiscal frameworks.

The book's major strengths are its contemporaneity, and applicability as a tool for best practice. It accurately outlines major, current issues affecting small states, tied mainly to their economic and environmental vulnerability, as well as their social and political fragility. The contemporary nature of the book is complemented by chapters remaining at the cutting edge, touching on such areas as governance and data protection, and the state's use of ICT and data management, specifically as it relates to data privacy and protection. This is a critical area as more small state governments are applying digital technologies to improve their governance performance. Another progressive issue discussed in the Handbook is that of modern energy frameworks for energy efficient, cost-saving, state occupied buildings, with identification of policy needs and actions plans for their promotion and implementation. The book's contemporaneity thus informs its main value, that of being a useful collection of applicable, implementable best practices. By being a compilation of case studies on governance in small states, policy frameworks and action plans outlined and those recommended by the authors can serve as useful examples for other countries to follow.

One thing that might have set the stage for the analysis in the book, is a re-engagement with the age-old debate regarding what, exactly, constitutes a small state. Indeed, while the fluidity of the concept allows each chapter to pursue its own analytical agenda, the text, rather than tackle this perennial issue, has instead kicked the can a little further down the academic road. Another apparent oversight is the book's omission of trade governance. This seems striking because small states – particularly SIDS – are substantially dependent on international trade. The book could have therefore benefitted from a separate section devoted to Trade Governance, or a few chapters on the subject within the Economic Governance section. Another relative shortcoming pertains to some chapters which read more like technical reports, diverging from the true spirit of the book dealing with the state-of-play of governance in small states. They were thus a little more descriptive than other chapters that were more explanatory. These chapters, however, do provide more granular data and more specific policy recommendations for improved economic governance.

In sum, such as large interdisciplinary undertaking as this will always generate some unevenness, especially when chapters are written by academics and policymakers alike. However, the *Handbook of Governance in Small States* is a relevant, timely, and important work and will remain required reading for anyone interested in the subject of governance in small states for many years to come.

Courtney Lindsay
Independent Scholar
courtneyolindsay@gmail.com

Jaine Beswick (2019). *Identity, Language and Belonging on Jersey: Migration and the Channel Islands*. 288pp. Springer Nature Switzerland AG. ISBN: 978-3-319-97564-1 (Hardcover) US\$109.99.

Grounded in the major historical events leading to important migrations to and from Jersey (the largest and southernmost island in the Channel Islands), *Identity, Language and Belonging on Jersey: Migration and the Channel Islands*, as the title of the book indicates, centers on transnational identities, language use, and group belonging. In the second half of the 20th century, globalization became the main theme of the times. Globalization has caused cross-border mobility to affect more groups, rendering the definition and boundaries of national groups much more ambiguous, and multiple languages coexisting in a single country. This book keeps abreast of the times when globalization is further creeping into our daily lives and migration has become commonplace. Jaine Beswick centers on multiple languages existing on Jersey, and constructs relevant conceptualization regarding inhabitants' identities and belongings, with a particular focus on the Madeiran Portuguese diaspora.

The author divides the book into two main parts, in addition to Chapter One being an Introduction and Chapter Seven a Summary. Part I focuses on the relevant historical events and sets the conceptual framework, whereas Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the elaboration of main theoretical concepts contained in the field of island studies relevant to sociolinguistic research in order to support the empirical investigation in the second part. In Part II, Chapter 4 reviews the nature of multilingual migration on Jersey over the past 70 years, revealing its consistency with current principles of transnational migration and island identity; Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the representation and interpretation of Jersey's image, including "the expression of local identity, island identity and the role of language (i.e. English, Standard French, Jersey French, and Madeiran Portuguese)" (p.14).

Since English is the official language of the island of Jersey, it has a well-established linguistic value and plays an important role in the construction of Jersey's identity. Therefore, English is a top priority for the author's investigation. Beswick points out, "English often functions as a lingua franca in the multicultural and multilingual Jersey space" (p. 103). This is consistent with both Jersey's historical trajectory and contemporary global trends. Throughout the 20th century, Jersey was defined as an English-speaking island with the arrival of more British retirees, and this identity was consolidated and reinforced by the increasing number of economic migrants from Britain. Jersey families previously tended to migrate to other English-speaking countries, such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where economies are strong and well-paying jobs are plentiful. However, in recent years, more and more people have been returning to Jersey, a place with outstanding economic strength.

Thus, why some immigrant families, especially the elder generations in their later years, are deciding to return to Jersey is a question worth pondering. Beswick has done a series of surveys and interviews to explore this issue and has given us a fascinating and convincing explanation in her work.

The author also explores the impact of other languages on identity construction on Jersey. For example, first, French was once the official language of Jersey, and it was also the most competitive counterpart to English. As seen from the prejudice people once had against the French shown by the author, it is obvious that the people on Jersey admire Britain, and it can even be justifiably speculated that they have a sort of British-ism complex. Second, *Jèrriais*, known in English as Jersey French or Jersey Norman French, is also one of the multiple languages that exist on Jersey. It came about with the influx of immigrants and is a more localized way of language use on Jersey which has largely contributed to the formation of the elder groups' identity on Jersey. Third, the author also focuses on another interesting group: one that is from or associated with the Madeiran Portuguese diaspora. This group has been one of the most important migratory movements to Jersey in the last fifty years. Through an intergenerational analysis, the author finds that the spatial aggregation of many families in the Madeiran Quarter reflects a strong sense of belonging. Thus, identity is based on areas with the same cultural background and identity, rather than on the country.

This book has made an important contribution to a better understanding of migration, identity and language on Jersey, and provides scholars in the field with an established framework to build upon for fieldwork-based island studies. Although the main arena of Beswick's survey in this book is Jersey, it is more like a microcosm of the world whose language use, identities, and belonging of people may seem complex but are actually interconnected. Different languages shape diverse identities, which endow people living in the same geographic space with various sense of belonging. Therefore, the publication of this book advances the study of language use against migration, transnational life, and globalization. In addition, the remarkable methodology within can be drawn upon by scholars in island studies or ethnography. Utilizing a multidisciplinary approach that includes island studies, sociolinguistics, psychology, anthropology, and other research methods, the author aims to fill "a gap in current research on the nature, positioning, and import of discursive practices" behind immigrants' overt rather than ascribed representations of self-identity (p. 6).

One shortcoming observed, was that the groups that were analyzed seemed disproportionate, perhaps resulting in a questioning of some conclusions drawn. Beswick reasonably divides her respondents into 10 groups based on common group identities (p. 80). Yet, one group is vastly smaller than the other groups, having only 3 members as opposed to an average of 11.6 respondents in the others. The author indicates earlier in the book that this group has increased significantly, and as such this should have resulted in greater representation of that group. Therefore, the study would have benefitted from the justification of the number of respondents in each group. Overall, whilst there is some justifiable critique of the size of groups used by Beswick, this book will make a prominent contribution to the related field in terms of both content and methodology. As for the content, the innovative language behavior in multilingual environments as demonstrated in the current study will undoubtedly play an important role in related research. As for the methodology, Beswick's interdisciplinary approach can be applied to both sociolinguistic and island studies models, providing a valuable contribution to growing migration studies.

Xianlong Zhu

Research Center for Indian ocean island countries, South China University of Technology, China
flzhuxl@scut.edu.cn

Yutong Yuan

Research center for Indian ocean island countries, South China University of Technology
flyyt2020@mail.scut.edu.cn (corresponding author)

Anders Emil Rasmussen (2015). *In the Absence of the Gift: New Forms of Value and Personhood in a Papua New Guinea Community*. 210pp. New York & Oxford: Berghahn. ISBN: 978-1-78238-781-7 (Hardcover) US\$135.00.

Anders Emil Rasmussen's monograph *In the Absence of the Gift* takes its readers to the Mbuke Islands in Papua New Guinea's (PNG) Manus Province. The Mbuke people are a relatively small but unique population in comparison to "many other rural Papua New Guineans" because of their involvement in "an economy heavily reliant on education, migration" (p. 27). Rasmussen estimates that there are approximately 1.500 Mbuke Islanders of which about 40 per cent are (temporarily) absent from the Mbuke Islands due to labour mobility. The migrants earn their living in one of PNG's towns and many occupy well-paid jobs (academics, bureaucrats, skilled labourers etc.). They form a "highly educated migrant diaspora" (p. 2) and remit especially money, mainly by way of demand-sharing or singaut, i.e. everyday processes of social reproduction among close kin and friends that take the form of the solicited sharing and/or demanding of remittances with and by immediate kin (see pp. 44-45 for a summary of singaut). The book draws on twenty months of ethnographic fieldwork (see pp. 17-22) and is concerned with novel forms of value and personhood intrinsic to Mbuke sociality (as the subtitle of the book suggests). One key argument is that these are produced "by ongoing and occasionally conflicting human judgements, rather than being determined by social norms and cultural precepts" (p. 4) and fuelled by singaut and Mbuke peoples' involvement in the 'community'.

Chapters Two to Four focus on singaut and discuss the ways Mbuke people value and evaluate kin relations and personhood through flows of remittances (i.e. processes of exchange and sharing) between migrants and relatives in rural areas. In addition, chapter three adds another perspective on singaut by taking into consideration requests made towards wealthy villagers. Rasmussen asks how "the formation of value and personhood look like in PNG in the absence of the gift" (p. 4). Here, he refers to ceremonial gift exchange, i.e. an aspect of Melanesian sociality which has been a mantra for many ethnographers of Melanesia but about whose "workings and complexities" younger Mbuke "have very limited knowledge of" and which they consider "as 'a waste of money'" (p. 32). Contrastingly, the author focuses on "the small-scale, informal and pragmatic sharing of daily life" (p. 49). Drawing on his rich ethnographic material, he reveals how relations, persons and their value become "visible in action" (i.e. how they are seen) and "material and visual forms" (i.e. in persons or relationships) by way of "a dialectic between questions and answers" (p. 56). While there is a clear focus on practices of demand-sharing, the author explicates that singaut also involves verbal elements which can take the form of cursing, blessing and gossiping and "address and call upon the effects caused by a third party, an audience" (p. 78).

Rasmussen demonstrates that the developments from a gift-economy towards demand-sharing do not push Mbuke people towards (possessive) individualism. On the contrary, the value of social reproduction and personhood remain a relational endeavour and a matter of ongoing negotiations and acts of will. Not being subjected to singaut or neglecting relations and obligations would mean a lack “of much needed social recognition” (p. 47) and “make the [Mbuke] person appear not to embody a meaningful sociality” (p. 99; cf. pp. 85–90 for a discussion on how cursing is avoided through providing remittances). Drawing on the example of trade store owners and their customers, the author explains that this understanding of sociality sometimes allows debtors to manipulate the pressure those in a position to provide are put under (see especially chapter four).

Chapters Five to Seven are devoted to Mbuke conceptions of ‘community’ “as a social totality” (p. 121). Here, Rasmussen adds another layer of critical engagement to debates on gift-exchange practices in Melanesia. One of the strengths of the book might not catch the reader’s attention at first glance. Anthropologists (and scholars) whose academic endeavour heavily rely on ethnography, commonly go to great length to meticulously dissect their interlocutors’ discourses and practices to expose the complexities of human life worlds. Yet, they often find out that notions such as ‘community’ which are criticized or dismissed widely in academic circles, feature prominently in their interlocutors’ ways of being and belonging (e.g. pp. 15–16).

Taking this insight seriously, *In the Absence of the Gift* reveals how for the Mbuke people the ‘community’ is an emic and historically-grown “indigenous category” (p. 3) which is closely tied up with a well-known social movement in PNG (the Paliau Movement). It materializes temporarily and in contested and fragile ways when it is made to appear by its members (e.g. pp. 140–141). Here, the ‘community’ is only one of various “forms of organization of social relations [which] can coexist” (p. 130; cf. especially chapter six). While some Mbuke people might perceive the ‘community’ “as a kind of collective individual ... to whom singaut can be directed ... others (migrants especially) look upon it as a form of organization that could potentially lessen singaut” (p. 121). Therefore, being part of a kinship network and a member of a ‘community’ refers to different social processes, positions and practices, of which the latter reveals forms of individualism which should, however, not be mistaken for possessive individualism. Rather, Rasmussen proposes to understand Mbuke community members as collective individuals (p. 157). Nevertheless, singaut and ‘community’ build on “ongoing and long-term negotiations between different concepts of sociality and personhood” (p. 11). They are complicated by the fact that “Mbuke people engage in a number of different kinds of relationship, even with the same person” (p. 23) which needs to be considered in specific contexts (see especially chapter seven for a detailed example).

Scholars of Oceania might wonder why the author has chosen to add material from places such as Siberia to strengthen some of his arguments about singaut (pp. 114–115), whereas certain prominent cases of demand-sharing within Oceania – the Fijian institution of kerekere (lit. ‘to ask for’ or ‘to request’) comes to mind – have not been considered. Nonetheless, *In the Absence of the Gift* is a sophisticatedly written monograph and commendable piece of work. Given its ethnographic focus and theoretical framework the book might draw interest mainly from anthropologists of Melanesia. Yet, it should be appealing to island studies scholars more generally as it highlights broader sociocultural developments with regard to the changing and challenging ways of being and belonging of small island populations entangled in the wider contemporary world.

Dominik Schieder

Department of Social Sciences, Siegen University, Germany

dominik.schieder@uni-siegen.de