

Helen Lee (Ed.). (2019). *Pacific youth: Local and global futures*. Canberra, Australia: ANU Press, 298pp. Pbk. ISBN: 978-1-7604-6321-2. AUD\$50.

This book provides a ‘snapshot’ of contemporary Pacific youth and their futures amidst social change. The youth population of Pacific countries is increasing. It is therefore more important than ever to research their experiences so as to better inform policy. This cohort is not only the future of the Pacific, but a large part of its present story. Geopolitical rivalry between the West and Asia, rising decolonisation movements and the effects of climate change are crucial contexts in which Pacific youth are being socialised. In 12 Chapters from a variety of perspectives from across the region, this book captures the everyday lives, ambitions and challenges of our youth. The main takeaway is that in an ever increasingly interconnected world, via technological advancements and frequent travel, Pacific youth are more engaged in international discourse, than ever before.

The introduction, written by Helen Lee and Aidan Craney, highlights previous research on Pacific youth, whilst emphasising the importance of ensuring research is current. This is followed by an exploration of youth employment and unemployment in Tonga by Mary Good, who shows the tensions between neoliberal capitalism and social transformation among this group.

In Chapter 3, Doris Bacalzo discusses the positive ways young people are incorporated in lineage groups in an age of corporate control and ownership of land. This is followed by Daniel Evans, who reviews the historical relations between outsiders and urban Solomon Island youth. This chapter highlights the importance of acknowledging the intricacies of political, economic, social and cultural drivers, in order to affect transformational change among the youth of the Solomon Islands. Next, Helen Lee studies the ‘new nobility’: young traditional leaders in Tonga, who are children of royal or noble blood ties, and their intent to nurture a new generation of traditional leaders.

Aidan Craney draws on case studies from emerging youth activists from Fiji and the Solomon Islands in Chapter 6. This chapter further suggests that this cohort have the skills to positively impact the civil society. The chapter that follows is by Aaron John Robarts Ferguson; it is based on ethnographic fieldwork showing how contemporary youth (re)define concepts of ‘Samoaness’. The youth in this group draw upon their historical past coupled with both local and global experiences, in their (re)definition of what being Samoan is. In Chapter 8, Imelda Ambelye draws on doctoral research, with a focus on youth, and educated young women and empowerment. This chapter acknowledges the complex nature of displaced aggression, and attributes some of the causes to releasing frustration and the unsustainable nature of extractive industries.

In Chapter 9, Laurence Marshall Carucci introduces readers to Marshallese youth and their encounters with hard drugs within a globalised context. Chapter 10 also looks at the experiences of Micronesian youth, with Mary Spencer aiming to show new directions of research for Micronesian children while calling for more consideration of the cultural capital they acquire from home.

Caleb Marsters and Jemaima Tiatia-Seath show how young Pacific male athletes define mental health in Chapter 11. This chapter is significant in allowing young Pacific male athletes to define themselves in terms of their own ‘lived experiences’. The final chapter, by Lila Moosad, is based on ethnographic research on Pasifika young woman in Melbourne’s West. This research analyses the wellbeing of Pasifika women who moved from Aotearoa/ New

D. Enari

Zealand to Australia after 2001. In essence, this chapter shows how restricted access to economic and educational resources can negatively affect the wellbeing of this cohort.

All 12 chapters conspire to provide a deeper understanding of Pacific youth issues by moving beyond simplistic and shallow narratives sometimes displayed in the media, especially in Australia, New Zealand and to a lesser extent the US. The reader is invited to read Pacific youth in ways that are not always visible in public discourse. This book also challenges the reader to acknowledge the complexities of Pacific youth, and the intricate interplay between local and global contexts.

The book could be improved with the inclusion of more Pacific researchers and authors. Not only could the inclusion of more insider researchers from the community mean deeper access and better understanding of cultural nuances, it would also mean those who are genealogically connected to these indigenous knowledge systems and people are able tell these narratives. Better yet, it would be fitting to have Pacific youth themselves as co-authors; this would empower them to gain respect and sovereignty over their own stories. After all, this research wouldn't occur without them. May their truths and visions be privileged, in all its glory and honour, with the youth themselves leading the way. Nevertheless, this book adds to the expanding literature that documents Pacific youth stories. *Ia manuia.*

Dion Enari
Auckland University of Technology
New Zealand
dion.enari@aut.ac.nz