

University of Bergen

BERGEN PACIFIC STUDIES RESEARCH GROUP

“Cultural Heritage and Political Innovation in the Pacific”

SYMPOSIUM, Bergen, October 2006

SUMMARY

This international symposium, funded by the Research Council of Norway and the University of Bergen (Department of Social Anthropology and Bergen Museum/Cultural History) aims to explore contemporary connections in the Pacific Islands region between (1) expanding perceptions of cultural heritage (including objects and visual representations) and (2) the emergence of new political forms in response to challenges of global political economy. By drawing together experienced Pacific scholars from anthropology, archaeology, and political science, and engaging with museum collections in Europe and the Pacific (including Hawai'i), the symposium aspires to formulating a major research project that will generate multidisciplinary theoretical perspectives for understanding these processes in the Pacific, thereby to contribute to the general understanding of local responses to globalization. The ambition is to form, from the vantage point of the Pacific, innovative analytical perspectives on connections between indigenous peoples, nations and states, as well as museums and other collections and representations of artefacts.

From many parts of the world it has been documented how renewed and intensified interest in locally specific things, ideas and social formations accompany, and counteract, the assumedly de-localizing consequences of globalization. In recent years issues of “cultural heritage” has come to the centre of attention as a important concern worldwide not only among politicians and policy-makers, but also in terms of a more general trend in society towards placing value on locally and historically significant spheres in the face of nationalism and global influence. The Pacific islands region exemplifies this trend particularly well. In the present-day situation, after coups d'etat and civil war and the deterioration of the nation state in several Pacific Island countries, alternative movements such as church organizations, cults and locally based hierarchical orders are to varying degrees seen taking upon them to carry out what have usually been tasks of the state. It is crucial to understand how local values are articulated under these significant transformations of power, seen particularly well, for example, in Solomon Islands, a major research location of several senior scholars joining forces in this symposium.

The Bergen Research Group in Pacific Studies, organizer of this symposium, is pleased to welcome among the participants leading scholars from the University of Hawai'i and its Center for Pacific Islands Studies and Department of Anthropology (main collaborative partners of the University of Bergen in this event), the Pacific Islands Development Program of the East-West Center (Honolulu), the British Museum, James Cook University (Townsville) and several other US and UK universities, as well as two prominent leaders of Pacific Islands cultural policy: Mr. Lawrence Foana'ota, Director of the Solomon Islands National Museum, and Mr. Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Center and National Museum.

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

Monday 9th October

- 0915 Opening remarks by **Edvard Hviding & Knut Rio**
1000 **Geoffrey White & Lawrence Foana'ota**: “Solomon Islands Cultural Policy? A History of Practice”
1100 Plenary discussion
1200 LUNCH at På Høyden
1330 **Lamont Lindstrom**: “Dreaming of Unity and Cargo in Melanesia”
Screening of *Alors vint John Frum: Une tragedie culturelle des Mers du Sud*, documentary film from Tanna by Marc Tabani [in Bislama].
1600 Roundtable discussion: introduction to the project *Cultural Heritage and Political Innovation in the Pacific Islands* (chair: Edvard Hviding)

1930 OPENING DINNER (Mount Fløyen restaurant – access by funiculaire)

Tuesday 10th October

- 0900 **Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka:** “Culture and Artifacts in Solomon Islands Development”.
- 1000 **Lissant Bolton:** “Forms of description: anthropology, cultural revival and the politics of knowledge in Vanuatu”
- 1100 Plenary discussion
- 1200 LUNCH at På Høyden
- 1330 Roundtable discussion: Culture in the Melanesian Nation State (chair: Terence Wesley-Smith)
Talks on *project development*: research agendas and priorities

Wednesday 11th October

- 1000 **Terence Wesley-Smith:** “Rescuing Oceania from the Nation-State”.
- 1100 **Haidy Geismar:** “Cultures of the indigenous: linking sovereignty and cultural resources in Vanuatu and New Zealand”
Plenary discussion
- 1230 LUNCH at På Høyden
- 1400 Roundtable discussion: New Churches and the politics of faith (chair: Annelin Eriksen)
Talks on *project development*

Thursday 12th October

- 0900 **Ralph Regenvanu:** “The traditional money bank project”
- 1000 **David Roe:** “A retrospective on archaeology and heritage management in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu”
- 1100 Roundtable discussion: comparative Pacific Islands perspectives (chair: Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka)
- 1230 LUNCH at På Høyden
- 1400 Graeme Were (UCL) talks about the “Pacific Pattern” exhibition opened at the Bergen Museum (this event also for the general audience)
- 1500 *Roundtable discussion*: cultural heritage, copyright and intellectual property (chair: Ralph Regenvanu)
- 1700 **Bergen Filmforum:** Mini-Festival of Documentary Films from Solomon Islands produced at the University of Bergen (UNTIL 20:30)
- 2100 DINNER at downtown location, tba

Friday 13th October

- 0900 *Roundtable discussion*: cultural heritage and the roles of documentary film (includes samples of work-in-progress) (chair: Rolf Scott)
- 1030 Work in the ethnographic storerooms: Solomon Islands collection
- 1230 LUNCH at På Høyden
- 1400 Concluding talks on *project development* (including time frame, network, MoU, funding sources, and so forth)
- 1700 Departure by veteran ship ‘Bruvik’ to Holsenøy island. KAVA and SEAFOOD, return to hotel by taxi

Saturday 14th October

NORWAY IN A NUTSHELL TOUR (optional)
Departures for some participants

Sunday 15th October

DEPARTURES for remaining participants