

## Editor's Note

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This volume of the *Pacific Asia Inquiry* (PAI) comes on the heels of a momentous year for Guam in the context of its regional and international collaboration and growth. In 2016, the island played host to several esteemed conferences, summits, and other gatherings, all with notable emphases on issues and concerns specific to the Pacific Islands region, and to neighboring Asia in some cases. These included the 22<sup>nd</sup> Biennial Pacific History Association (PHA) Conference, the 20<sup>th</sup> South East Asia-Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) Conference, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Summit, and several others. The many organizations that convened these gatherings, all of which select alternating countries as conference hosts, descended on Guam to coincide, to some extent, with the island's first-ever hosting of the much-anticipated 12<sup>th</sup> Festival of Pacific Arts (FestPac).

Convening every four years since its founding in 1972, FestPac stands out as a major international gathering of artists and cultural practitioners featuring delegations from twenty-seven Pacific Island nations and territories. Beyond FestPac's most obvious and pragmatic goal of showcasing indigenous Pacific Islander arts and culture, the festival along with the many events hosted in Guam provoked a notably heightened consciousness among many on the island with regard to their place in the larger region of Oceania. And thus, the festival facilitated productive dialogue and careful reflection on a broad spectrum of issues and concerns. So too does this seventh volume of the *Pacific Asia Inquiry*.

This volume of PAI offers interdisciplinary considerations of issues prominent in islands situated in all three of Oceania's subregions known as Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia, as well as explorations of issues that transcend the established geographical borders of the Pacific and Asia regions. Though these contributions do not provide an exhaustive representation of the places and peoples throughout the Oceanic subregions or Asia, the PAI editorial board sees these contributions as indicative of our ongoing growth toward serving as a truly regional repository of critical inquiry and scholarship. Though there is still much growth that lies ahead for the PAI, the works contained in this volume offer us valuable glimpses into a range of historical and contemporary issues that, though situated in specific times and places, transcend the confines of geographical, political, temporal, and other boundaries, speaking at large to the diversity and richness that flow within and between the Pacific and Asia regions.

The first contributions that appear of this volume, at first glance, appear obviously situated in the academic discipline of history. David Chappell's "Water Nations" examines political, social, cultural, and other histories specific to the present-day nations of Tuvalu and Kiribati. These developments are examined within a trajectory of colonial bordering that began with the British construct of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony (GEIC) and continues into present-day struggles to accommodate the impact of global climate change on such borders. Mark Ombrello similarly examines colonial constructs of space in his exploration of twentieth century Japanese discourse specific to the island worlds south of Japan during its rise as an Asian imperial power. Historical inquiry continues with Devan Jensen's consideration of the aftermath of Japanese, as well as American, imperialism in Micronesia and the establishment of self-rule in the region alongside a Mormon presence. Though each of these looks into the past in ways that reinterpret the impact of imperialism on Pacific Islander lives, these contributions transcend limited views of cross-cultural exchange that can remain exclusive to political, economic,

spiritual, and other colonially imposed upheavals. Rather, they delve in to the more complex nexus of race, nationalism, language, and identity, each offering us new avenues toward understanding the ways in which these permeate in the present as the vestiges of colonialism continue to play roles in Islander lives.

Michael Lujan Bevacqua and Ruth Faleolo continue in the vein of exploring Pacific Islander negotiations with colonialism and identity formation in the present. Bevacqua considers the promise in American popular culture and music as “discursive artifacts or socio-political metaphors” that illuminate the complexities of contemporary negotiations of identity and decolonization among Chamorros in contemporary Guam and in the context of ongoing American colonialism. Faleolo similarly considers the ways in which *Pasifika* (Tongan and Samoan groups) navigate the Polynesian diaspora across the Tasman Sea between New Zealand and Australia in ways that embrace indigenous concepts of family, spirituality, and interdependence in the context of what is perceived as “well-being.” Specifically, Faleolo draws rich insight from an *e-Talanoa* methodology that utilizes online intercourse through social media as a rich site from which to draw broader understanding of experiences among members of the Polynesian diaspora. Both Lujan and Faleolo offer useful frameworks for embracing seemingly non-traditional sites of scholarly inquiry and methodology. These contributions provoke more nuanced and revealing lenses useful in interrogating ongoing developments in identity formation.

Historical and contemporary issues of colonialism, decolonization, and identity are situated in this issue alongside contributions that speak to timely and pressing concerns specific to development in Asia and the Pacific. Fred Schumann, for example, provides a broad summary of the success of the One Village One Produce (OVOP) development model in rural areas of a considerable cross-section of Asia to include communities in China, Japan, Thailand, Nepal and the Kyrgyz Republic. Drawing from these success stories of the OVOP Movement, Schumann offers a useful model for potential and sustainable ways that small island states such as Yap might approach ongoing concerns specific to development, human resources capacity, urbanization, and globalization. Dhruv Charan, Manpreet Kaur, and Priyatma Singh address similar issues in the context of the increasing concerns throughout the world specific to disaster risk management and climate change. Their article approaches these concerns as they manifest among Fijian women specifically. Despite what is framed as gender inequality and the vulnerability of women in Fiji today, this contribution offers concluding insight toward possibilities for women’s empowerment and gender mainstreaming. This contribution highlights the vital importance of practical advocacy in increasing the visibility of Fijian women and the potential for growing their participation in the public sphere and greater climate change discourse.

In addition to the articles that appear in this volume, several critical book reviews are offered by scholars based at University of Guam. The works they assess mirror the content of this issue in their attention to issues of race, colonialism, identity, and political transformation. Of notable mention is a film review of *War for Guam* provided by Sylvia Frain of the University of Otago. This contribution constitutes the first film review to be published by the PAI. The journal looks forward to creating space for future explorations of the medium of film. The increasing production of documentaries and other film genres that address an array of complex issues proves promising in our ongoing efforts to employ interdisciplinarity, technology, and multiple forms of expression in engaging critical inquiry specific to our regions.

The contributions that comprise this current volume of the PAI prove diverse on several levels. Primarily, the editorial board is pleased to present contributions from authors whose

professional affiliations represent a range of regional institutions to include the University of Guam, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, University of Queensland, University of Fiji, University of Otago, Brigham Young University, and Kansai University. These contributors, ranging from the well-established scholar to those in the earlier stages of their academic careers, embody a breadth of academic disciplinary approaches in their work, moving between the fields of history, political science, literature, religious studies, business administration, gender studies, and more. The methods these authors employ prove just as broad in scope, ranging from more traditional practices that interrogate archival and empirical sources to those that embrace ethnographic and other theoretical approaches.

As 2016 draws to a close, the *Pacific Asia Inquiry* is pleased to offer these glimpses into the larger discussions, debates, and concerns that have been brought to the fore in Guam through critical and collaborative efforts that found their crowning moments in the two-week Festival of Pacific Arts. Given Guam’s unique history of multiple and ongoing colonialisms, the island has often been disconnected from the social, political, commercial, cultural, and other contexts of its neighboring islands. But both FestPac and the ideas and questions provoked by the contributors to this issue lend to an increased awareness in Guam about the potential for cultivating greater connections with neighboring islands and societies in these contexts. It is our hope that such regional understanding may be facilitated by this and future issues of PAI beyond Guam’s shores. We extend a sincere *sen dangkulo na si Yu’os ma’āse’* (deepest thanks) to the contributors and peer-reviewers of this volume whose efforts not only provide rich insight, but serve to provoke ongoing critical inquiry and examination of the rich, fascinating, and complex worlds that are the Pacific and Asia regions.