

Preface

The world is confronted with multiple issues of security challenges, and how we understand these challenges is often based on parochial prisms that serve our own political, ideological and economic interests. This self-centric framing of security is part of the challenge that we must confront. This book is an attempt to address some of these challenges by exploring how the use of multiple lenses could help enrich our understanding of the interconnected layers of security thinking and practices. Although the case studies used are from the Pacific, the broader conceptual narratives have universal resonance. In a world where security issues are linked to socioeconomic, political, ethnic, ideological and environmental issues, unpacking these connections in a way that makes analytical and policy sense is imperative.

The book is a result of data accumulated over three years of research (both field and archival), conferences, workshops and seminars. It is one of four books I have written that were funded by a New Zealand Marsden Fund research grant. Like any other book in social science, it is a kind of 'work in progress', in the sense that, by the time the book is published, it will already be overtaken by continuously unfolding security issues. Hence there is a temptation to update either by producing another edition or even a separate follow-up volume. But this is not the intention, at least for the time being.

Security by its very nature is contested, and the debate about regional security in the Pacific is multidimensional and reflects the transforming and precarious nature of global security. What constitutes security is subject to multiple discourses, and to privilege one set of security variables over another, as is often done by researchers and policy-makers, can be unwise given the multifarious factors that shape our security environment. The book attempts to weave together both conceptual analysis and applied narratives in a symbiotic way, where one informs and shapes the other.

It has an interdisciplinary approach and is meant to be used by academics, researchers, policy-makers, security experts, regional and international agencies, civil society organisations and the public at large.

Ultimately, it is hoped that the book will contribute to understanding some of the deeper issues of conflict that continue to fracture communities with the hope of finding lasting solutions for a peaceful Pacific and a peaceful humanity.

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