Recovering, Uncovering and Covering Micronesia: Some Thoughts on Fluid Boundaries and Area Studies

‘Area studies’ has apparently been in crisis, as in anthropology and archaeology, in relation to a general realisation that an ‘us’ and ‘them’ approach is no longer sustainable, but also due to a notion that the process of Globalisation has created ‘dynamic borderzones’ - boundaries that are “particularly blurred and porous” (Wesley-Smith 2000). Yet, as the basic premise to this session indicates, boundaries are always challenged, and I would suggest that because of this area studies have not necessarily run their political course, but are relevant today. The assumption that global forces are reducing difference and distinction in regard to various regions of the earth can be reversed in proposing that an increase in contact and communication can actually further highlight the distinctive aspects of particular places and that this is best achieved through the crossing of inter-disciplinary borders envisaged by area studies. In this paper I will review a number of different notions of what may be regarded as constituting the fluid boundaries of the area commonly termed Micronesia.