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Abstract

Land und Konflikt: Das Beispiel Fidschi

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The question of land in Fiji is a question of fundamental importance. Besides of its use for subsistence agriculture, land has an identity-forming function. Beyond that it is fair to say that land and specifically the economic use of land has been applied a political dimension within existing traditional control mechanisms. Should these mechanisms be violated or manipulated, conflicts arise, even more pronounced when existing power structures based on property are jeopardized and the respective life existences are at risk. Land in Fiji is politically used to maintain existing power relations. Fiji's split into native and Indo-Fijians as the two major ethnic groups is often seen as a reason for the Fijian conflict. However, land plays also a major role in this conflict which is being justified as well as fuelled by restrictive land rights. The nature of the conflict in Fiji demonstrates the economical and political relevance of land as a non-defined cultural treasure. The Indo-Fijians are considered newcomers, who should serve the old-established landowners. The article argues firstly that the difference is not so much between ethnic groups, but between landowners on the one hand, and those without land on the other. Secondly it shows that Fiji's governance structures fail to manage this conflict-prone difference.

Keywords: Fiji, politics, history, land rights, conflict, racial tension, coups d'tat