SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE PACIFIC:
A TALE OF A RESORT, TWO TRIBES AND A VILLAGE IN FIJI

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Presentation overview

• Background - study area & case study
• Key concepts
• Methods
• Findings
• Conclusions/recommendations
Study area
Key concepts


- Roots in ecology and natural sciences views entities as social and ecological systems
- Conceptualizes communities as having unique sets of interrelated components
- Characterized by panarchy


- Considers that capital exists in various forms
- Considers social capital as a means to attain livelihoods
- Social capital networks depend on the scope of network connections
- Social capital as a means to develop
Methods

Methods: Ethnographic post-modernist approach
Specifically bundled to suit the highly embedded indigenous Fijian context
- Immersion/relationship-trust building
- Complete participant observation (fieldwork)
- Living as a villager
- Conversational interviews or talanoa conducted at various levels – allowed for extraction of historical data
- Researcher administered survey questionnaires as a mean to gather demographic data.

Central paradigm:
The Fiji Vanua Research Framework (FVRF) (Nabobo-Baba, 2008)
- An attempt to localize research methods and “decolonize” research
- Encourages indigenous research by indigenous peoples in indigenous communities
- Based on interpretive social sciences, qualitative methods, in particular ethnography.
- Allows access to rich historical data
Findings: Indigenous Fijian Systems

Indigenous Fijian communities:

- Have a unique set of embedded elements connecting people to nature and each other through traditional knowledge, customs, livelihoods activities, and observance of specific cultural values (Movono, 2017).
- Customary livelihoods practice, traditional knowledge and totemic associations govern the activities and interactions between indigenous Fijians and nature, and which are entrenched within indigenous Fijian notions of time and place.
- **Solesolevaki**, reciprocity and communalism features prominently in social relations and is considered culturally as a primary source of wealth.
- Social capital, community & kinship relations are therefore is essential for development, fulfilling cultural obligations and determine the structure and strength of a community over time.
Pre-tourism setting 1940s-1970s

High Social Capital

Social interactions

Goodwill
Trust
Respect
Unity
Collective action
Reciprocity

Yavusa A
Mataqali A
Tokatoka A
9 households

Tokatoka B
8 households

Yavusa B
Mataqali B
Tokatoka A
8 households

Tokatoka B
7 households

Copra cutting
Semi-subistence farming
Semi-subistence fishing

Little disparity
Communal solidarity
Communal action
Clear bonds and relationship
High conformance to culture
Post-tourism setting: 1974 - 2017

Yavusa A
  Mataqali A
    Tokatoka A 9 Households
    Tokatoka B 8 Households

Yavusa B
  Mataqali B
    Tokatoka A 8 Households
    Tokatoka B 7 Households

Low Social Capital
- Inequality
- Mistrust
- Individualism
- Obscured relationships
- Conflicts
- Disparity

High Social Capital
- Diminished community social capital
- Segmented collective action

Tribal Associations
Women's Association
Youth Association
Entrepreneurs Association

Employment
Village Tours
Hotel contracts
Land lease payment
Housing

Employment
Village Tours
Small businesses

High dependence
Lethargic tendencies
Less farming/fishing
High unemployment
Reduced focus on education
Less resilience

Diversified livelihoods
Invest in education
Entrepreneurial
Innovative
More resilient to change
Communally active
Resilience
Conclusions

• Although not as sudden, or as abrupt as natural disasters, tourism development is profound in its ability to stimulate long-term structural changes within society.

• The changes observed in this village are not necessarily directly linked to having a job in a hotel (although these are important too), but they are of an indirect nature in that the whole system of livelihoods, culture, traditions, and identity changes.

• Tourism has lead to dependency by landowners & opportunity seeking behaviours in the non-landowning unit.

• There needs to be the establishment of internal development structures that promote communal cooperation and development.

• Implement TIK within village institutions that promote social capital development.

• Ultimately, the findings show that money alone does not create development – but rather tourism and access to a variety of capital does.
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