

'The Political Economy of Tourism in the Islands of the South Pacific'

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Political Economy of Tourism in the South Pacific



The work of S. Britton (1979, 1980, 1982).

1. Progressive application of dependency and underdevelopment debates to tourism development (incl. Bryden, 1973; Kent, 1973; Turner & Ash, 1975).
2. Third world countries suffer from structural distortion in their social & economic makeup.
3. Colonial & imperialist domination - designed to meet the economic and political requirements of the colonial powers (Baran, 1957; Wallerstein, 1974).

Political Economy of Tourism in the South Pacific



4. “Dependency involves the subordination of national economic autonomy to meet the interests of foreign pressure groups & privileged local classes..”(1982:334)
5. Expropriation of economic surpluses produced in the 3rd world, locking UDCs into a situation of dependency
6. MNCs controlling the profits (& levels of the supply chain), rechanneling these to the tourist source country
 - MNCs determine organization & operation of tourism in the periphery.

Critique & Update

1. Ignored the geographically uneven nature of tourism & capitalist development, & systematic variations in the local conditions of tourism development (Pratt *et al* 2015)
2. Too deterministic: 'destinations are underdeveloped and exploited as a consequence of the dominance of metropolitan tourism enterprises' (see informal sectors)
3. Did not account for the diverse experiences of capitalistic development and tourism (multilayered class relations and stratification systems)
4. Geopolitical realignment of external sources, and geopolitical/ideological involvement (Brant & Dorman 2014)

Critique & Update

5. Culture of dependency (Hughes, 2003) & psychological underdevelopment (Dhaouadi, 1994) & emancipatory politics.
6. Postcolonial tourism development (Carrigan, 2011);
 - Tourism as a form of emancipation & equity.
7. Capacity to choose own development pathway?
(Poon, 1989).
 - Strategies: poverty reduction, CBT, FTT, (eg. beach fale- Scheyvens, 2005)
8. Import substitution & agricultural linkages

Musket Cove Island Resort (Malolo Islands)

- Malolo Lailai organic farm created in 2002, planting pineapples and fruit trees, followed by planting of fruit, herbs and vegetables.
 - now harvesting their first batch of honey & developing coconut plantation
 - oils, coconut candies, etc., to sell via their own brand
 - localized soil fertilizers
 - selling to other resorts



Prevailing PE based Concerns in the Pacific

- Smaller economies at far more risk in retaining tourism dollars (Pratt, 2015)
- Limitations in fair distribution of resources in tourism (Scheyvens & Russell, 2011; Leah Burns 2003)
- Current socio-economic conditions indicate significant structural concerns
 - UNDP (2014)- Poverty & inequality are growing
 - Uneven spatial developments
 - High youth employment
 - Lower HDIs

Human Development Index – (UNDP, 2015)



Country	Position
Norway	1
Australia	2
Switzerland	3
US	8
New Zealand	9
UK	14
Malaysia	16
China	90
Fiji	90
Tonga	100

Human Development Index – (UNDP, 2015)



Country	Position
Samoa	105
Egypt	108
India	130
Kiribati	137
Solomon Islands	156
Papua New Guinea	158
Chad	185
Eritrea	186
Central African Republic	187
Niger	188

Challenges

- Territorialized spaces/ places
- How do we address rural poverty through tourism and agriculture: agri-tourism?
- Opportunities exist (Gibson 2014): 'all is not lost'.
- Need for structural synergy between gov. divisions.
- Corporate citizenship (Bianchi & Stephenson 2014) (localized development; 'farm to table tourism').
- Challenge 'fake authenticity' via 'innovative authenticity'.
 - Investment in innovation
- Food is a significant aspect of the tourist's experience of a destination ('glocal').
- Is tourism development always the answer?
 - Local resistance
 - 'Development first'
 - Is migration always seen as the answer?

Political Implications of Local Protests

- Protest movements & civil / active citizenship (Bianchi & Stephenson, 2014)
- Reacting against libertarian & neo-liberal concerns over the right to travel & subsequent impacts: active resistance (eg., Easter Island) & passive resistance (eg., Rotuma village councils; Namalata Dev Committee)
- Opposing non-indigenous ownership (Anuha Island Resort, SI; Bekana resort, FJ)
- Asserting workers ('hosts') rights (cf. Sutherland, 1992)