

# 1 Tourism in Pacific island countries

## Current issues and future challenges

*David Harrison and Stephen Pratt*

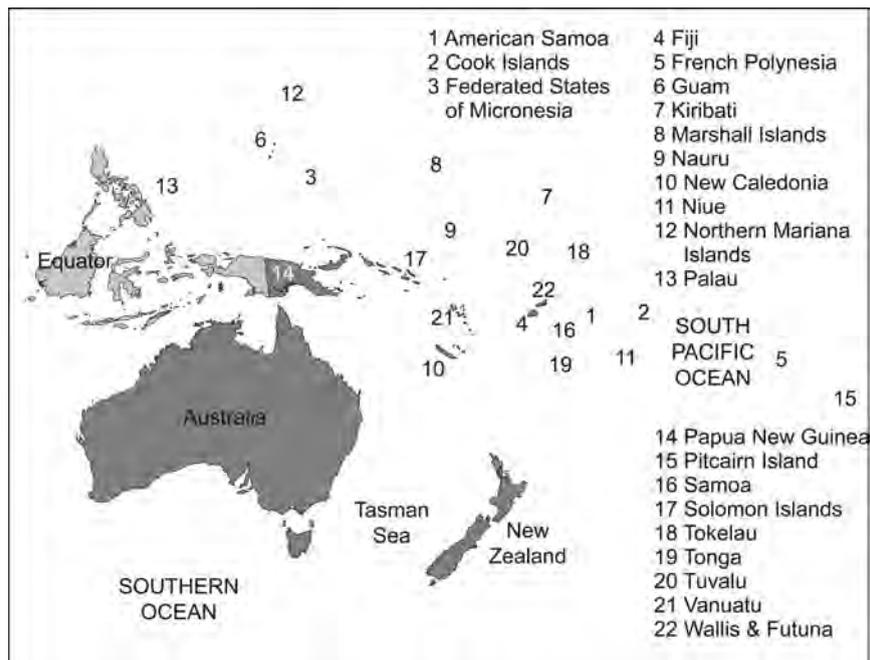


Figure 1.1 The Pacific

Source: [www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/pacific/](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/pacific/)

### Background

Islands in the developing world are often said to share similar characteristics. Prominent among these are isolation, smallness of scale and weak economies, all of which affect the cost of 'development, access to markets and expertise', and result in a limited resource base, small domestic markets, 'limited infrastructure and institutional mechanisms, and dependency on external forces' (Carlsen and Butler, 2011: 1–2). However, regions defined as 'islands' also

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differ in numerous physical, economic or social characteristics, and (conversely) some landlocked territories may, in fact, evidence ‘island’ features (Butler, Harrison and Filho, 1996: 1). With regard to Pacific island countries (PICs), it is certainly the case that they come in all shapes and sizes:

Coral atolls are common in Polynesia, where a total population of some half a million is widely dispersed, but the more populous Melanesian islands tend to be volcanic and more densely populated, and two thirds of their six million people are in Papua New Guinea. Even within Pacific island national societies, there are considerable differences. The relative ethnic homogeneity of Tonga, for example, contrasts with the fascinating but troubled ethnic mix that so dominates Fiji’s politics. It is thus not surprising that generalising about Pacific islands is fraught with difficulty.  
(Harrison, 2004: 2)

Nevertheless, some generalisations can be made. As argued elsewhere (Harrison, 2004: 2–4), the introduction of Christianity and colonisation throughout the region has meant that few islands retained their independence, irrespective of their previous or current affiliation, but colonialism’s impacts differed considerably across the region. Following combinations of neglect, (perhaps misplaced) altruism, and ‘modernising’ policies, patterns of land tenure now range from communal ownership, as across much of Melanesia, to highly commoditised and capitalised land holding, as in French Polynesia and New Caledonia. Under communal land ownership, subsistence agriculture was and continues to be the norm. By contrast, where land was commoditised, efforts were made to develop the stereotypical colonial export economy. Here, the focus was on such export crops as copra and sugar, though in some islands (for example, Nauru, Palau, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and New Guinea) exploitation of mineral resources occurred, often causing much environmental damage. Destruction of a different kind was experienced when colonial affiliations involved islands in the wars of their colonial masters and, later, saw their exploitation as sites for experiments with nuclear weapons.

Among other features of the decades following the Second World War, two are especially relevant in the present context, and they are connected. First, it was a period of formal decolonisation. In 1962, Samoa became the first PIC to obtain independence, self-government in the Cook Islands followed in 1965, and over the next decade other colonies either achieved formal independence from or developed some form of association with former colonial powers: Nauru, 1968; Fiji and Tonga (formerly a British Protectorate), 1970; Niue, in association with New Zealand, 1974; Papua New Guinea, 1975; Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, 1978; Kiribati, 1979; and Vanuatu, 1980. In 1986 the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands became independent in association with the USA, with Palau following in 1994. At least officially, the problems of ‘development’ in these ‘new nations’ were in local hands (Croccombe, 2008: 403–22). Here, we come to the second common

feature of the post 1945 period: as in developing countries elsewhere, their leaders increasingly felt that tourism would be their 'passport to development' (de Kadt, 1979).

### **Tourist arrivals to Pacific island countries**

As indicated elsewhere (Harrison and Prasad, 2013), tourism is a key driver in the economies of several PICs and it is becoming increasingly important in others. However, the *growth* of tourism in PICs has been consistently less than in the world as a whole or in the Asia-Pacific region, as indicated in Table 1.1. Since 2015, global tourism has grown by 29.5%, that of Asia/Pacific 52%, and that of PICs by only 10.5%. When one examines the fortunes over the same period of different PICs, they are variable. Such PICs as Niue, Tuvalu, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Kiribati are so small, and start from such a small base, that almost any variation in arrivals has a drastic impact on the statistics. Others, which continue to be administratively linked to former colonial powers, have struggled to maintain momentum. In 2012, French Polynesia, for example, actually received 18.8% fewer tourists than in 2005, and over the same period numbers visiting the Marshall Islands plummeted by 50%. Guam managed only an 8.3% increase and Palau a more respectable 38.2%, primarily because of the introduction of Saipan Airline in 2012. Except for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, both in some respects special cases, the most obvious success stories among PICs are Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa. Tiny fish in the massive Pacific pool, with small or relatively small populations (about 15,000, 255,000 and 190,000, respectively), they epitomise how a few tourists can make a huge difference to small societies. Since 2008, tourism in all three has increased by well over the regional average (but only in Vanuatu at a greater pace than the rest of the Asia/Pacific region). Tourism to Fiji, too, increased over the period, but its tourism has been consistently undermined by a series of coups since the mid-1980s (Harrison and Pratt, 2012).

Most PICs are primarily holiday destinations (Table 1.2), whose attractions are primarily sun, sea and (sometimes) sand. Exceptions are Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, in particular, which possess considerable economic potential and attract a high percentage of business tourists, as do Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia and Niue, while many visitors to Tonga, Samoa, Niue and Kiribati are migrants returning to visit friends and relatives. Often dismissed as 'only locals', their impact on the economy is nevertheless considerable, even though their patterns of expenditure differ from that of other international visitors (Tauatofua and Craig-Smith, 2010).

Geographical propinquity and previous metropolitan affiliation help determine tourists' destination choice. As discussed elsewhere (Harrison and Pratt, 2013: 7–8), Australians make up the majority of visitors to 'Melanesian' Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; the 'Polynesian' Cook Islands, Niue and Tonga, especially, attract New Zealanders, and a high

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Table 1.1 Tourist arrivals to PICs: selected years, 2000–12

Country	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	% market share of PICs 2012	% increase 2005–12
Cook Islands	72,994	88,405	104,265	112,643	121,757	3.59	37.7
FSM	20,501	18,958	20,580	18,986	20,141	0.59	6.2
Fiji	294,070	545,145	631,868	675,050	660,590	19.50	21.2
French Polynesia	233,326	208,067	153,919	162,776	168,978	4.99	-18.8
Guam	1,279,243	1,184,928	1,170,857	1,122,921	1,283,000	37.88	8.3
Kiribati	4,829	4,693	3,490	2,194	4,907	0.14	4.6
Marshall Islands	5,246	9,173	4,563	4,559	4,590	0.14	-50.0
New Caledonia	109,587	100,651	98,562	111,875	112,204	3.34	11.5
Niue	1,939	2,793	6,214	6,000	5,048	0.15	80.7
Northern Marianas	526,111	529,557	379,091	340,957	400,296	11.82	24.4
Palau	57,732	86,124	85,593	109,057	119,000	3.51	38.2
Papua New Guinea	58,448	69,251	148,943	164,993	169,975	5.02	145.4
Samoa	87,688	101,807	129,500	127,604	134,660	3.98	32.3
Solomon Islands	10,134	9,400	20,521	24,497	23,925	0.71	154.5
Tonga	34,694	43,380	48,740	46,005	49,010	1.45	13.0
Tuvalu	1,079	1,085	1,657	1,232	1,019	0.03	-6.1
Vanuatu	57,591	62,123	97,180	93,960	108,145	3.19	74.1
Total PICs	2,855,212	3,065,540	3,105,543	3,125,309	3,387,245	100	10.5
Asia/Pacific ('000,000)	110.1	153.6	204.4	217.0	233.5		52
World ('000,000)	674	799	940	983	1,035		29.5
PICs as % of Asia-Pacific	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.4	1.5		
PICs as % of world	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3		

Source: Harrison and Pratt, 2013: 6; UNWTO, 2014: 4; www.sboc.fm

Table 1.2 Pacific destinations by purpose of trip

Country	Holiday	Business	VFR	Other	Year
Cook Islands	86%	4%	8%	2%	2013
Federated States of Micronesia	70%	24%	3%	3%	2006
Fiji	75%	6%	8%	11%	2012
French Polynesia	81%	6%	11%	2%	2011
Guam	85%	7%	2%	6%	2011
Kiribati	11%	49%	28%	13%	2008
Marshall Islands	33%	33%	10%	27%	2005
New Caledonia	46%	17%	22%	15%	2011
Niue	50%	20%	30%	0%	2009
Palau	89%	6%		5%	2013
Papua New Guinea	22%	73%	4%	1%	2011
Samoa	30%	12%	36%	22%	1996
Solomon Islands	22%	67%	9%	3%	2007
Tonga	39%	11%	43%	7%	2011
Tuvalu	22%	58%	11%	9%	2010
Vanuatu	83%	9%	8%	1%	2013

percentage of visitors to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands are from the USA, to which they are affiliated, or (like Guam and the Northern Marianas) from Asia, especially Japan. By contrast, however, French Polynesia, commonly considered a mature and somewhat expensive destination, is highly reliant on tourists from Europe (mainly France) and North America (Cottom, 2006).

Finally, as indicated earlier, small numbers of tourists can be economically important to Pacific island countries. Unfortunately, precise figures on economic benefits are hard to find. Current estimates of tourism's benefits to Fiji, an established destination, for example, are projected from data obtained in the early 1990s (Tourism Council of the South Pacific, 1992), and even then they were problematic. Now, when tourism in Fiji is more extensive and structurally different, it is a very rough yardstick against which to measure tourism's importance. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013 was FJ\$1,055.1 million (13.8% of GDP), and this was forecast to increase by 7.9% in 2014 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014). Travel and tourism in Fiji also generated 43,000 jobs directly in 2013 (12.4% of total employment), and this was forecast to grow by 6.4% in 2014 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014). Nevertheless, it is obvious that tourism has a substantial impact on the overall economies of several PICs, as seen in its contribution to GDP, foreign exchange and employment.

As noted by Harrison and Prasad (2013), for Pacific island developing economies as a group, the share of tourism in their GDP averaged 11.9%. There is a large degree of variation between PICs. Palau and Cook Islands, where tourism's economic contribution is 67.1% and 50.0% of GDP, respectively, could be classified as small island tourism economies (SITES). In other PICs, tourism is less important. Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, for example, where tourism's economic contribution to GDP is 1.7% and 0.1%, respectively, are resource rich and hence do not prioritise tourism. Alternatively, several Pacific island countries lack the resources, among other factors, for tourism to provide significant economic benefits. Marshall Islands, Tonga and Federated States of Micronesia can be classified as MIRAB (migration remittances aid bureaucracy) states (Bertram and Watters, 1985). Here, tourism contributes 2.9%, 6.0% and 7.3% of GDP, respectively. Somewhere in between MIRAB states and SITES can be found such economies as Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa and French Polynesia, where tourism contributes 10%–30% of GDP. Compared to MIRAB states, small island tourism economies exhibit more favourable characteristics on a range of economic, social and demographic indicators (McElroy and Hamma, 2010; McSorley and McElroy, 2007).

### **Issues and challenges**

This book is an introduction to international tourism in PICs. As editors, we are mindful of the dangers inherent in generalising about relatively small

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island nations and dependencies scattered in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. We are also conscious of an unevenness in our coverage of PICs, which reflects the patchy nature of research into Pacific island tourism (and, in all likelihood, our own limitations). At the same time, there are many common features, aspirations and constraints in PIC attempts to develop their tourism sectors and these are addressed in the following chapters.

The second chapter is d’Hauteserre’s introduction to tourism in PICs most closely associated with France. Because of their continued reliance on the former colonial power, and the subsidies it provides, the *intrusion*<sup>1</sup> of tourism into these PICs is somewhat different from that of many other PICs. In Tahiti, transnational corporations dominate the accommodation sector and emphasis is on the higher end of the market, while in other islands poor planning, a lack of regional cooperation, distance from France and difficulties in air access, environmental pollution, and competition from other PICs and islands further afield, together ensure that tourism in these French territories is languishing. D’Hauteserre suggests that the islands’ arts and crafts, though already noteworthy, have potential for further development, as does the culture of the region, and she correlates a *lack* of attention to culture as a tourism resource to the pervasive but negative portrayals of indigenous people, arguing that ‘varieties of Polynesian culture, especially Chinese and French, could be more effective in distinguishing the French Pacific from its competitors than non-existent beaches and seductive *vahines* [women of Polynesian descent]’. Readers requiring evidence for her assertions need only glance at online publicity for the region, for example, the official website of Tahiti Tourisme ([www.tahiti-tourisme.com](http://www.tahiti-tourisme.com)), to discover that images presented of French Polynesia differ but little from those of Fiji and other PICs: sun, sea, sand, sunsets, scenery and beautiful, welcoming islanders, while searching online for ‘*vahine*’ and ‘Tahiti’ will soon confirm the longevity of the image of the Tahitienne as the erotic and exotic ‘other’.

Several themes raised by d’Hauteserre are picked up in the following chapters, which are broadly divided into three sections. The first focus is on the question of *image*, namely, stereotypes of a destination held by tourists and potential tourists, the extent to which residents, for their part, really welcome visitors, and the role tourism might play in changing pre-established images. The second theme is tourism’s impacts, notably the economic and socio-cultural effects of international tourism’s intrusion in the region which, though often hotly debated, have attracted relatively little empirical research (Harrison, 2003: 11–14). Yet, when apparently sacrosanct traditions are confronted by international tourism and its attendant economic, social and cultural imperatives, the internal challenges are considerable and far-reaching. The third focus is on the (sometimes contradictory) challenges of how PICs articulate with their external geo-political and physical environment. These involve, *inter alia*, existing relations with formal colonial centres, geographical isolation, the need for greater air access to the outside world and for more

tourists, and the continuing threat to several PICs of global warming, which increased air travel will inevitably exacerbate.

### *Images of Pacific island countries*

Both editors have spent time working at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, an admission that frequently prompted an envious response. The dominant image of PICs continues to be positive and highly romantic, even if it bears only a passing resemblance to (another?) reality. Such stereotyping, where tropical islands are often portrayed as a welcoming 'paradise' or a latter-day Garden of Eden, dates back to the earliest years of colonisation (Harrison, 2001b). In the third chapter of this book, Harrison explores how long-held images of Fiji (and, by extension, other PICs) were reinforced and perpetuated by the picture postcards that were so ubiquitous in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Produced by and for people of European origin, they generally presented prettified nature, largely without human presence, colonial towns and the economy and, to a lesser extent, ceremonial activities or the 'picturesque' military or police. When ethnic Fijians were portrayed, men were usually in traditional dress, and women were often Fijian versions of their Edwardian counterparts, of ethnographic interest or – perhaps less so than 'Polynesian' Samoan women – examples of the undressed and erotic 'other'. Many such themes are reproduced in current tourist brochures and online advertising, not only in Fiji, but also throughout the South Pacific. Worthy of note, too, is that Fijians of Indian descent were almost totally absent from the postcards, just as they are in contemporary tourism brochures (Harrison, 1998: 134).

Natives of PICs do not necessarily conform to their stereotype. As Kanemasu suggests in the fourth chapter, tourism's benefits to Fiji have been contested, and the welcome to tourists is not always guaranteed. Indeed, from the 1960s to the 1980s, tourism was often viewed with ambivalence and some scepticism, and it took a vigorous campaign by the media and the increasingly powerful Hotel Association in the 1990s to turn public opinion around. Even in 1996, it was alleged indigenous Fijians received only 'crumbs from the table' (Samy, 1996), and had to 'make do with the leftovers' from Pacific tourism (Le Fevre, 1996). While she accepts that Fiji tourism currently has extensive public support, Kanemasu cites numerous recent conflicts with landowners and argues that resentment still surfaces, fuelled by foreign ownership and control in the hotel sector, low wages, the poor representation of locals in management positions and, especially, inequalities in the distribution of monies paid for the lease of customary owned native land.

Legislation enacted in 2013 might reduce this problem in Fiji, where customary owned land is 88% of the total land area,<sup>2</sup> but in Fiji and many other PICs, where customary land tenure is as extensive as, but less institutionalised than Fiji, conflicts between traditional landowners and the tourism sector have undoubtedly been common and virulent (Harrison, 1997: 173–76;

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Sofield, 2003: 225–58; Slatter, 2006; Commonwealth of Australia, 2008: 3–8; Boydell and Baya, 2014).

Landowners appear in a very different guise in the chapter by Cheer, Reeves and Laing. They examine the significance of Chief Roi Mata's Domain, in Vanuatu, which in 2008 became Vanuatu's first World Heritage Site. In fact, there are three associated sites. One contains the tomb of Roi Mata, the last holder of the title of Paramount Chief, who was buried in about 1600 along with 50 or so of his domestic entourage. Their remains in a mass grave suggest that some, at least, did not go willingly to their deaths. Roi Mata is now revered as a peacemaker, and Cheer and his co-authors see this example of dark tourism as a useful and quite *deliberate* corrective to the prevailing touristic image of Vanuatu as yet another island paradise. In effect, the World Heritage Site (also discussed later in this chapter) presents a darker (and more realistic?) image of Vanuatu than tourist brochures and, at the same time, enables the empowered landowners to gain a livelihood from tourism while revering Roi Mata as a peacemaker, role model and symbol of national unity, even though his achievements may, in fact, have been an historical amalgam of several chiefs rather than of one man.

### *The socio-economic context*

Critics of tourism in developing countries tend to assess tourism's impact on indigenous culture and tradition as negative, though value judgements and ideologies tend to overwhelm empirical evidence (Harrison, 2001c: 256–60). In fact, the intrusion of tourism is tempered by pre-existing geo-political and structural conditions (Harrison, 2001d: 28–33). Furthermore, as Simpson has noted, community-based tourism initiatives (CBTIs) and resident participation take many forms, and speculation on the optimum type of community participation may be less important than the extent of benefits actually received by residents (Simpson, 2008). Two chapters in this book, by Movono and his co-authors and by Dawn Gibson, are especially relevant to this debate, as both examine indigenous Fijian involvement in the tourism sector.

The two villages studied by Movono, Pratt and Harrison have been exposed to tourism for more than three decades and employment at two transnational-operated hotels nearby is the major source of cash income for both villages. In addition, some villagers 'piggy back' on the success of tourism in the area by running their own businesses – for example, village stays and nature tours, massage parlours and jet skis. Overall, the material benefits brought by tourism were highly appreciated and there was general agreement that standards of living had improved, to the extent that the villages were among the most highly developed in Fiji. Certainly, Vatuolalai and Votua should not be cited as epitomising the downside of tourism. However, while villagers showed no resentment towards foreign-owned hotels and the unequal income distribution at the hotels that had been previously reported in Fiji (Burns, 2003: 86–87), some believed the wage economy had led to reduced time spent on

subsistence farming and fishing, and that young people and women had become less dependent on traditional village authorities. Importantly, too, young people in the landowning *mataqalis* (clans), who had priority in jobs at the hotels, were leaving school early to take up low-paying positions rather than staying on to further their education. Clearly, tourism was seen as a mixed blessing, but no one in these villages wanted to turn the clock back.

The participation in tourism of residents of Vatuolalai and Votua was primarily through their employment in hotels. By contrast, Gibson studied *i-Taukei* landowner entrepreneurs in Wayalailai, a backpacker resort in the Yasawa chain of islands, Fiji, recording the challenges they face and the extent the community's priorities were met through the resort's operations. As Gibson and others also indicate elsewhere (Rodman, 1987; de Burlo, 2003; Gibson, 2013a, 2013b), indigenous entrepreneurs must balance traditional obligations and business imperatives, and at the same time continue to live in the community. For them, profit is not the only or even the major criterion. Rather, what matters is being able to contribute to village development and meet their traditional obligations to church and community.

Most employment opportunities for villagers from Votua and Vatuolalai are provided by the Naviti and the Warwick International Resort and Spa, two of four hotels in Fiji owned by Warwick International Hotels. In Fiji, transnational companies (TNCs) operate more than half the rooms in the premium and high categories in Fiji, and they also dominate the tourism sector in French Polynesia, Vanuatu, Guam and Palau (Harrison and Pratt, 2013: 17). As a rule of thumb, except for the special case of the Cook Islands,<sup>3</sup> the more developed the tourism industry in a PIC, the greater the role of TNCs. This overall *structure* of international tourism in PICs was outlined more than two decades ago by Britton (1982, 1987, 1989; Britton and Clarke, 1987), who followed a classic dependency line in arguing that when TNCs were so strongly present, 'local elites and foreign interests were the primary beneficiaries of tourism (Britton, 1982: 335). Britton's preference was the type of small-scale, indigenous-owned tourism found in the 'rigid monarchic structure of Tonga', where the Tongan elite 'sheltered the country from outside forces' (Britton, 1982: 349), a view somewhat puzzling in the light of his assertion that Tonga also suffered as a result of *not* being colonised (Britton, 1987: 131).

One of several difficulties with Britton's position is that, for no apparent good reason, he supported local against foreign capital, a stance common among *dependistas* (Phillips, 1977: 19). Not only this, but it is unclear why he does oppose foreign capital, except perhaps because it *is* foreign. An alternative argument is that large-scale tourism, concentrated as it is both within and across PICs, is easier to control and more sustainable than small-scale tourism. Furthermore, what evidence there is suggests that TNCs pay more, have better training schemes, offer better career prospects than their local counterparts and, in many cases, engage more in corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Harrison and Prasad, 2013: 750–55).

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Building on previous research (Scheyvens and Russell, 2010), Scheyvens and Hughes note the increasing importance attributed to CSR. They cite examples from PICs, most notably Vanuatu and Fiji, where CSR in tourism plays a significant role, both in the companies' pursuance of their core business (for example, in food procurement) and in their charitable donations. At first sight, the list of CSR initiatives is impressive, but Scheyvens and Hughes conclude that, on a scale ranging from minimalist activities, through philanthropy, long-term partnerships ('encompassing') and comprehensive social activism, most tourism companies engage in CSR at the lower levels. The potential is there, but at present CSR in PICs is somewhat ad hoc. Much remains to be done.

The involvement of local farmers and producers of other goods in mainstream tourism, and the more general development of backward linkages to tourism, has long been advocated for small island developing states (SIDS) (Bélisle, 1983; Momsen, 1986; Meyer, 2006; Hampton and Jeyacheya, 2013: 23–28, 54–65), and in recent years, analysis of value chains by proponents of pro-poor tourism (PPT) has shown it can make a considerable difference to local incomes (Mitchell and Ashley, 2006; Weiermair, 2006; Van der Duim, 2008). Clearly, the idea has merit, and isolated advances can be reported, as in Jamaica (Hampton and Jeyacheya, 2013: 24–25), but overall progress has been slow, which is probably why the recommendation is recycled decade after decade, outlining the same constraints and challenges, often accompanied by the observation that the agricultural sector in SIDS is declining (Gomez, 1993; Dodman and Rhiney, 2008: 116–18; UNWTO, 2012).

Such difficulties are apparent in the chapter by Singh and her co-authors, on Niue, a tiny PIC with a (declining) population of about 1,300 (although 20,000 Niueans live in New Zealand) and about 5,000 annual visitors. She finds minimal linkages of agriculture and tourism, and suggests even most food consumed by the local population is imported. The small commercial agriculture sector produces crops for export, farmers cultivate subsistence crops, hotels rely on imports for good-quality foodstuffs and reliable supply, and tourists are perceived to have no interest in local cuisine, about which, in any case, they know little. In an economy that is already barely viable, the links between tourism and agriculture remain negligible.

The story is similar in more developed PICs. Reporting on the results of a value chain analysis of agriculture and tourism in Samoa, Sofield and Tamasese estimate that 'linkages [of agriculture] with tourism are weak ... [T] here is a high leakage factor in terms of food and beverages (F and B). Commercial accommodation properties import almost 70% of their F and B requirements' (Sofield and Tamasese, 2011: 6). This is especially noteworthy because in Samoa, where most accommodation units and restaurants are small-scale and locally owned, we should expect a higher propensity to buy local.

In more 'developed' Fiji, where larger, TNC-operated hotels are common, hotel demand for some fruit can be met locally, and there is potential for

considerably more import substitution in other fruits and vegetables (Young and Vinning, 2007). However, an as yet unpublished value chain analysis of hotel purchases of food and beverages in the Mamanuca chain of islands, carried out in 2011 by Sofield, Harrison and Pratt, indicates that more than 67% of their food and beverages were imported. Some food crops are undoubtedly difficult to produce in Fiji, and much of the tourist demand for alcoholic drinks has to be met by imports, but considerable potential remains. At present, though, the agricultural sector is simply not structured to cater for tourist demand, *i-Taukei* farmers focus primarily on subsistence crops and know little of the crops or cuisine favoured by visiting tourists, and hoteliers of international-standard hotels turn to imports to ensure consistency in both quantity and quality. Mere tinkering with menus and attempting to make local foodstuffs more palatable to international visitors will not bring about lasting change. The problems involved in linking tourism and agriculture are *structural* and *cultural* and can be solved *only* by structural and cultural change.

In their chapter, Anand and his co-authors show how pearl and mother of pearl jewellery industries in Fiji bring in foreign exchange and provide incomes and employment, including work outside the main island of Viti Levu. Second, they show that – as in the Cook Islands and Tahiti – these industries can have a genuinely mutually beneficial relationship with tourism. A wide range of tourists already purchase their products, and further development is clearly possible. Third, members of several ethnic groups in Fiji, including *i-Taukei*, are among the entrepreneurs. This is important, because it is often argued that *i-Taukei* are somehow culturally unsuited to take entrepreneurial roles (Rao, 2004). Fourth, the industry has been developed with government support, though such assistance will be a tiny proportion of the \$25 million a year the government allocates to Tourism Fiji to market the country to holidaymakers. Finally, not only are pearls and mother of pearl products valued as souvenirs by a wide range of tourists, but also the pearl farms themselves are an additional secondary attraction and thus a useful (and culturally interesting) supplement to the more stereotypical appeal of sun, sea and sand.

Like other sections of the tourism ‘industry’, the pearl and mother of pearl jewellery industries take a natural resource, commoditise it, and then use it as a tool for development. More contentious, perhaps, is the extent to which PIC *culture* can or should be packaged and sold by tourism marketing agencies to increase tourist numbers. The issue has been debated since social scientists first started studying tourism and was highlighted by Greenwood’s (later modified) attack on Spanish tourism authorities for selling ‘culture by the pound’ (Greenwood, 1978, 1989; Harrison, 2001d: 28–33). In PICs, too, the commoditisation of local culture and tradition has long been disputed (Tupouniua, Crocombe and Slatter, 1975; Rajotte and Crocombe, 1980), and again emerged when the town of Levuka, the first colonial capital of Fiji, was mooted as a World Heritage Site (Harrison, 2005), finally being placed on the

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list in 2013 ([whc.unesco.org/en/list/1399/](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1399/)). It is noteworthy that the significance of Levuka was contested, as some *i-Taukei* insisted it was an example of ‘half-caste’ history, a history chequered with tribal conflict, and not a site with which indigenous Fijians could identify.

By contrast, in their chapter on Chief Roi Mata’s Domain in Vanuatu, the World Heritage Site discussed earlier, Cheer and his co-authors suggest that commoditisation of this site serves several positive functions: it assists in the ‘debunking’ of the image of Vanuatu as ‘paradise’; it is *specifically* set up to provide work in tourism for local people and to reduce the rate of urbanisation, and it establishes Chief Roi Mata, a peacemaker, as a national role model, culture hero and moderniser. According to this view, commoditisation is a process to be welcomed and developed. Culture by the dollar or the pound? Please sir, I’d like some more.

### *PICs and the outside world*

If they are to increase tourist numbers, PICs must ensure that tourists can actually make the trip, and that it is affordable, and two chapters in this book discuss the challenges and constraints experienced by PICs in relation to air transport. For Taumoepeau, small is not beautiful. Economic growth in most PICs is limited by smallness in size and population, geographical isolation, a lack of natural resources, and small domestic markets. Consequently, airlines cannot make economies of scale, and low load factors make their operations even more economically unsustainable. Problems are compounded because in developed countries, the source of most PIC tourists, airport charges are high, as are costs of fuel, spare parts and replacement aircraft, whether leased or purchased. In view of such constraints, PIC options are limited. Partnerships with regional airlines are one possibility, and another is to operate their own national airline, alone or bilaterally with other partners, which may have nationalistic appeal but inevitably raises financial problems. At the management level, governments are often unable to define airline objectives or exert adequate financial control, and are be committed to heavy financial outlay for aircraft and ongoing government operational subsidies. Another option for governments is to deregulate, increase the competition (which will then affect the viability of their own airlines) and encourage low-cost carriers (LCCs) to enter the market, a policy Taumoepeau suggests has led to substantially increased tourist numbers in some PICs.

Kaufmann and Nakagawa examine changes in demand for tourism in Fiji over the period 1979 to 2009. Despite coups and attempted coups, tourism in Fiji increased, assisted by such internal factors as the 2004 decision to deregulate air transport and encourage competition from LCCs. Arguably, though, external factors are more important. The global financial crisis (GFC) that began in 2008, for example, had huge negative effects worldwide, as well as in Fiji, where its impacts were exacerbated early in 2009 by floods in Nadi. However, its impacts on Fiji tourism were cushioned by the resilience of the

Australian economy (thus sustaining tourism demand), substantial discounting by hotels and the national airline, and the 20% devaluation of the Fiji dollar in 2009. As a consequence, tourist *numbers* did not decline catastrophically, although *earnings* from tourism were reduced (Harrison and Prasad, 2013: 745).

According to Kaufmann and Nakagawa, other decisions made elsewhere in the world also affected Fiji. In 2000, the discontinuation by Japan Airlines of direct flights to Fiji (apparently prompted by the attempted coup that year) had an untoward affect. On the positive side, continued direct flights to Fiji by Korean Airlines from Seoul, an international hub of importance to Fiji for its connections with East Asia, works to Fiji's advantage and opens up the possibility of developing new markets, for example, in India and China, both of which have been targeted by the Fiji government.

While air travel is the main method of transporting tourists to PIC destinations, it is not the only one, and India and China are not the only new markets that might be targeted by PICs. Bluewater sailors, who are discussed in Koth's chapter, are a distinct niche market, and for them the journey itself is intrinsic to their long-term holiday experience. Unlike most other tourists, they do not require accommodation or other specialised infrastructure. Their main needs are safety and security for their boats and themselves, supplies of potable water and fresh fruit and vegetables (in quantities that locals should be able to provide), skilled workers to help them repair and maintain their boats, and opportunities to socialise with one another and with local residents, whom they may often assist with community projects. Koth's recommendations to policy makers interested in attracting bluewater sailors, a category of tourist that might be especially appropriate to small PICs, are simple and few: at a time when other parts of the world are becoming dangerous, consider the needs of these sailors, provide separate facilities from other marine traffic, and in so doing you can reap the benefits of a small-scale, low-impact and sustainable form of tourism development which can bring several social and economic benefits to host communities.

In fact, sustainable tourism development (STD) in PICs is honoured much in rhetoric but little in practice. Reviewers of Fiji's *Tourism Development Plan 1998–2005* (Ministry of Transport and Tourism, 1997) criticised its advocacy of tourism development areas (TDAs) and large-scale tourism, and suggested, instead, the prioritisation of smaller-scale and more appropriate forms of tourism (Levett and McNally, 2003: xi–xv). This did not happen. Instead, the following plan (Ministry of Tourism and Environment, 2007), completed during the 2006 coup, *retained* TDAs and discussed three possible scenarios ('managed growth', 'low growth' and 'aggressive growth'), all of which envisaged a much greater increase in tourist numbers than, in fact, was to occur (Ministry of Tourism and Environment, 2007: 28).

Samoa's experience is similarly instructive. Most of its accommodation is locally owned and operated (Harrison and Prasad, 2013: 749), and it received many plaudits when it adopted a coherent series of sustainable tourism

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indicators (Twining-Ward, 2003). Within a few years, though, hoteliers were admitting they were too complex to implement, and the *Samoa Tourism Development Plan: 2009–2013* ambitiously aimed to increase tourist numbers by 40% and visitor nights to more than 1 million (Samoa Tourism Authority, 2009: 2), assisted by an increasing emphasis on overseas investment. It remains to be seen if Samoa's claims for sustainability can continue, following recently announced cooperation with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, there are internal challenges to achieve sustainable tourism development but, by contrast, climate change is an externally generated threat to tropical islands, including PICs, and their tourism industries (Becken, 2004; Becken and Hay, 2007: 45–58; Bueno, Herzfeld, Stanton and Ackerman, 2008). Ironically, the threat would be increased if PICs were able to attract more flights and bring in more tourists. By and large, though, climate change results from factors outside the control of PIC governments. They cannot stop it, but they can try to reduce their vulnerability and adapt.

The last two chapters in this book deal with the external challenge of climate change and the need of PICs to counter its impacts. Klint and her co-authors first discuss the general implications of increases in sea levels, beach erosion, and the frequency and intensity of cyclones, all of which have knock-on effects on tourism. They then focus specifically on Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu, elaborate on changes to the natural resources that are so vital in attracting tourists, and suggest a variety of adaptation measures that might be implemented. These include coastal protection, desalination plants, rainwater tanks, relocation of tourism infrastructure, higher building standards, and attempts to redirect tourist demand to a wider range of tourism products.

By contrast, Min Jiang and her colleagues focus specifically on Samoa and outline its vulnerability to climate change – a task perhaps made both easier and more urgent as a result of the 2009 tsunami. They identify community perceptions of where Samoan tourism is most vulnerable to climate change and where it is most resilient when faced with external climate shocks. For their informants, limited marketing resources, limited access to finance capital and insurance, insecurities in employment, poor infrastructure and transport, inadequate support from and communication with government, weakness in disaster preparedness, and lack of local finance to aid recovery are all factors that make enterprises vulnerable to climate change. Importantly, they note the tendency for government and the private sector to rebuild on land previously devastated by the tsunami. However, vulnerability can be balanced by resilience, and informants also indicate where they believe Samoan enterprises are resilient, identifying: strong family and kinship ties; multi-occupations (including access to productive land); consistent arrivals throughout the year; remittance support from Samoans resident overseas; and strong (and hierarchical) local governance. They also see evidence that some communities and tourism enterprises are attempting to guard against future disaster by building sea walls, moving inland and constructing more durable buildings.

Both these chapters indicate challenges presented by climate change to PICs, and outline how they might be met by governments, but if threats are to be successfully countered, they will need international support and understanding. This is already happening, though clearly more aid is required. PIC governments not only need the awareness of what should be done, but also the commitment to implement policies that are so obviously required. Whether or not the necessary aid will be forthcoming, and commitment exists, remains to be seen.

In the following chapters, the issues and challenges summarised in this introduction will be discussed in some detail. They include the origin and role of a destination's *image*, the *impacts* of international tourism on economies and cultures of PICs, and the internal and external challenges with which PICs must contend. There are, of course, other challenges: huge disparities in income exist within the tourism sector, especially between locals and expatriates; indigenisation of higher levels of management has advanced but little; education and training institutions in tourism and hospitality in the region are stretched to meet the demands of employers and governments (who often undervalue education in favour of training), and there is a sound case for making the career structure in tourism and hospitality throughout PICs more attractive. Put simply, while there are attempts to address these problems (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2013), meeting the human resource needs of the travel and tourism sector in PICs is a major challenge for governments and the private sector.

Finally, perhaps the greatest challenge is to ensure that tourism *is* a passport to development. More than increasing tourist numbers (a priority too little questioned) and GDP, governments of PICs need to ensure economic benefits from tourism are used for progressing the common good, and not only that of an economic elite. That would certainly give residents of destination areas something to smile about.

## Notes

- 1 The term 'intrusion' is borrowed from geology, where it refers to liquid rock that forms under the earth's surface and then pushes upwards, thus producing new formations in the overlying strata. It seems a useful analogy, in that tourism is a new phenomenon, inserted into established socio-cultural and economic structures, which thus take on a different appearance and suffer varying degrees of displacement and topographical change.
- 2 In 2013, the Bainamarama government issued Decree 61 of 2010 (Native Land Trust (Leases and Licenses) Amendment Regulations 2010), allocating lease monies equally among owners of customary land and thus overturning the previous system, in which chiefs had received a disproportionate share of such lease payments (Boydell and Baya, 2014: 8–9). As Kanemasu notes, at the time of writing it was too early to assess how far the legislation had succeeded in creating a more equal system of distribution and satisfying the critics.
- 3 The Cook Islands is clearly a special case. Accommodation in this country is small scale and, at least in theory, owned and operated by Cook Islands citizens. However, it is hardly a typical PIC: it has a per capita income of about NZ \$25,000,

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mainly because of its situation as a freely associated state of New Zealand, from which it receives considerable overseas aid. Its citizens are *also* citizens of New Zealand, to which they can freely travel without restriction. Tourism accounts for about 75% of GDP, and some 63% of its visitors come from New Zealand, while 15% and 12%, respectively, come from Australia and Europe (Cook Islands Statistics Office, 2014; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2014).

- 4 In March 2014, Samoa became the first PIC to complete the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's Early Adopter Program. According to the press release, 'The Early Adopter Program is overseen by GSTC's Destination Working Group and implemented by NGO [non-governmental organisation] partner Sustainable Travel International. It applies the recently developed GSTC Destination criteria in assessing current sustainability levels and providing direction for future improvements. These guidelines complement the existing GSTC Criteria for Hotels and Tour Operators, which is the worldwide sustainability standard for tourism businesses' ([www.gstccouncil.org/blog/1215/samoa](http://www.gstccouncil.org/blog/1215/samoa), accessed 7 July 2014). This seems impressive but at the time of writing it was too early to assess how far Samoa would be able to benchmark its sustainable tourism practices against international criteria.

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