GENDER AND BENEFIT-SHARING IN INDIGENOUS TOURISM MICROENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous entrepreneurship is not only driven by capitalistic ideas as inherent in Eurocentric microentrepreneurial thinking but also focuses on communal approaches where entire communities can gain social and/or economic benefits. The authors, who all worked at The University of the South Pacific in Fiji, share how they work and engage with students and indigenous communities involved in tourism microenterprises. Based on the authors' research and experience in the region, this chapter discusses the following two issues and their related best practices and implications. First, the balance and sometimes tensions between entrepreneurial self-benefit and benefit-sharing; and second, female participation and the related opportunities for empowerment of indigenous communities through tourism microentrepreneurship.

Keywords: Indigenous entrepreneurship; microbusiness; Fiji; community collaboration; empowerment; gender roles; benefit-sharing

INTRODUCTION

There is a common misconception that indigenous people are either not involved in commerce or—if they have become entrepreneurs—they get absorbed into capitalism and leave behind indigenous values including notions of collectivity which seem to constitute a barrier in a successful economy (Wuttunee, 2007). In

this chapter, however, the authors discuss notions of indigenous entrepreneurship where social capital in the form of community relations and collaborations play a crucial role in defining success of tourism business. Such a perspective is aligned with more recent research on indigenous entrepreneurship in the Pacific which recognizes that there are a range of noneconomic dimensions that come at play in indigenous-owned or managed businesses (Farrelly, 2009; Scheyvens, Banks, Meo-Sewabu, & Decena, 2017).

Following a literature review on indigenous entrepreneurship, the authors briefly outline the economic, sociocultural, and touristic context of Fiji. Fiji is an ethnically diverse country where the indigenous population constitutes approximately half of the population (Danver, 2015). Most land in Fiji is owned by indigenous communities and there are strong obligations between community members and chiefs. After a clarification of indigenous entrepreneurship and the regional context of Fiji, the paper then moves on to discuss the engagement of members of The University of the South Pacific's Discipline of Tourism and Hospitality Management (DTHM) with local indigenous communities through student fieldtrips and research. Through a number of activities, DTHM aims to create and maintain mutually beneficial long-term relationship with local communities. Subsequently, authors draw on existing case studies as well as on their own work and research experience in the region to discuss two eminent issues in regards to practice and implementation of indigenous tourism microentrepreneurship in the Fijian context. These relate to the opportunities and challenges of deploying community relations as a resource toward business operations, and second, to the prospects for female empowerment trough their participation in tourism microentrepreneurship.

INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mainstream notions of entrepreneurship focus on economic growth, innovation, and individual achievements. Yet, scholars have recognized that a conceptualization of entrepreneurship is influenced by context, thus entrepreneurial roles, behavior, and attitudes are negotiable and fluid depending on time, place, and social, cultural, economic, and political structures (Mika, Warren, Foley, & Palmer, 2017; Welter, 2011). The ideas that economic action is strongly embedded in social structures go back to the pioneering work of Karl Polanyi (1944) and are inherent in ongoing discussions about ethnic and indigenous entrepreneurship.

While there are ongoing debates on the term and usage of "indigenous" (see, e.g., Kenrick & Lewis, 2004), the United Nations definition states

> Indigenous people are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Despite their cultural differences, indigenous peoples from around the world share common problems related to the protection of their rights as distinct peoples. (UN Indigenous Peoples, 2019)

Conceptualizations of indigenous entrepreneurship often highlight that businesses are not only driven by capitalistic ideas as inherent in Euro- and US-centric microentrepreneurial thinking (Bruton, Zahra, & Cai, 2018). For indigenous

communities, entrepreneurial aspirations may range from narrow individualistic economic perspectives to communal approaches where entire communities can gain multiple social and/or economic benefits (Hindle & Lansdowne, 2005). The notion of "indigenous entrepreneurship" overlaps with general ideas of entrepreneurship but suggests an inclusion of noneconomic factors that play a role in running a business (Peredo, Anderson, Galbraith, Honig, & Dana, 2004; Scheyvens et al., 2017; Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017). Hindle and Lansdowne (2007) propose three essential elements of indigenous entrepreneurship. First, *the heritage positioning index* states that indigenous culture and heritage are central to such a form of entrepreneurship and that they do not only relate to a certain degree of indigenous ownership or involvement of a business but also to some explicit enterprise practice of management and growth where cultural heritage matters. Second, *the autonomy-accountability network* relates to the degree of enterprise autonomy, the extent to which stakeholders are accountable, and the way benefits are shared among business participants and stakeholders. Third, participants in the entrepreneurial process should possess a *twin skills inventory*, i.e., a relevant combination of both technical and "cultural" skills and knowledge. In an article on indigenous tourism from a Native American perspective, Bunten (2010) discusses concepts of indigenous capital (a form of accumulated wealth which is reinvested and redistributed to support the community) and spiritual capital (ways in which socioeconomic structures and dynamics are shaped by cultural influences).

Existing studies from the Asia Pacific region show that small enterprises cannot be understood without considering their social and cultural environments (Curry, 2007; Farrelly, 2009; Movono, 2017; Trupp, 2017). Indigenous Pacific values such as attachment to land and environment (Movono, 2017; Scheyvens et al., 2017), reciprocity, social obligations, and collectivism have often been presented as incompatible with entrepreneurship (Farrelly, 2009). Such community orientations can be aligned with the theoretical notion of collectivism stressing in-group loyalty, group orientation, and conformity while individualism pursues self-direction and self-achievement (Hofstede, 1983; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In the context of Fiji, the term *solesloevaki* refers to the notion of collectivism, a collective community effort where everyone is related and works together (Movono & Becken, 2018). Social relationships to other community or kin members therefore play a central role and can be conceptualized as social capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Research has shown that community relations constitute a form of social capital for small businesses that can both strengthen and undermine their long-term viability and success (Dabringer & Trupp, 2012; Movono & Becken, 2018). Research conducted by Trupp (2015) on ethnic minority souvenir vendors in Thailand's tourist areas found that the mobilization of social capital based on ties with co-ethnics served as important business requisite to gain information, establish security, and reduce expenses. However, simultaneously to such processes of collaboration, souvenir sellers developed strategies of individualization, i.e., sales are conducted independently and income is not shared. In her research on small and micro tourism enterprises in Fiji, Gibson (2012) found that it is difficult for indigenous entrepreneurs to maintain a

balance between seeking profit on the one hand and fulfilling communal and social obligations on the other. Along similar lines, Curry (2007)—based on research in Papua New Guinea—argues that profit and consumption may not be the primary motivators for small businesses and that dimensions of prestige and maintenance of social relationships need to be considered. However, when disparities in tourism earnings occur, this can often lead to a weakening in social capital, manifested in increasing levels of mistrust, feelings of discontent and conflict (Movono & Becken, 2018). Additionally, high levels of bonding social capital may lead to exclusion of outsiders from business opportunities because of communal solidarity, constraints on individual freedom, jealousy, and emerging inequalities within a group (Trupp, 2014b).

Another important debate when examining indigenous tourism micro-entrepreneurship is gender. Although women entrepreneurs make valuable contributions to local and national economies around the world in terms of job creation and wealth generation, they are still largely underrepresented in studies of entrepreneurship (Halkias, 2011). Generally, women's work in tourism mirrors their traditional household roles (Cabezas, 2009). Additionally as a testament to the masculinized Euro-centric nature of entrepreneurship literature, "traditional male traits of assertiveness and authority are considered indicators of entrepreneurship" (Ratten & Dana, 2017, p. 67). Differentiated and unequally distributed social values attached to male and female jobs produce a hierarchy in which women's work is regarded lowly and paid less. Tourism research shows that changing economic relations can transform cultural constructions of gender (Swain, 1993), but economic betterment does not necessarily go along with social and psychological empowerment (Trupp & Sunanta, 2017). Even though gender roles may differ across indigenous Fijian villages throughout the country, most Fijian women live under patriarchal systems (Adinkrah, 2001). UN Women (2019) reports that violence against women is widespread in Fiji and that only 39% of women over the age of 15 are classified as economically active and that one third of the informal workforce are female. Yet, recent research argues that women's participation in business has gained momentum in the South Pacific and that their empowerment is strengthened through participation in tourism (micro) businesses and in community leadership (Movono & Dahles, 2017).

Tourism Context in Fiji

The World Bank's 2017 Pacific Possible Report indicates that tourism provides significant opportunities for economic growth, shared prosperity, and improved quality of life into the future for this region (World Bank, 2017). Fiji currently captures 40% of total international visitor arrivals into the South Pacific region (South Pacific Tourism Organization Report, 2017). This country has seen its tourism industry grow steadily since it embraced tourism after World War II. International visitor arrivals to Fiji, dominated by Australia and New Zealand markets, grew from 300,000 in 1996 to 870,309 in 2018. The past two decades has seen Fiji's tourism industry develop to become the country's economic engine, providing direct employment for over 42,500 jobs, and directly contributing

US$704.8 m to Fiji's GDP in 2017, equivalent to 14.4% of Fiji's GDP. The total (direct, indirect, and induced) economic impact of travel and tourism in Fiji reached $1.9 billion in 2017, or 40.3% of GDP. In addition, the industry is expected to rise by 5% per annum to total $3.2 billion in economic impact and 43.4% of GDP by 2028 (WTTC Report, 2018a).

There are four main tourism regions in Fiji: Sigatoka/Nadroga (Coral Coast), Nadi (main town in the West and location of Fiji's international airport), the Mamanucas and Yasawa Islands (north-west of Nadi and home to 19 luxury island resorts), and Suva and its wider environs (see Fig. 1). These four regions account for 90% of Fiji's tourist room inventory and 69% of all tourist beds are on Fiji's main island of Viti Levu (Harrison & Prasad, 2013). Historically, tourism in the islands has been dominated by foreign enterprise (Britton, 1983). International hotel chains dominate the upper levels of accommodation in Fiji, accounting for 30% of premium and high-end category rooms (Harrison & Prasad, 2013). Local participation in terms of ownership is gradually increasing. There are about 30 indigenous Fijian owned backpacker lodging units, predominantly in the Yasawa Islands, reflecting the success of continued government efforts aimed at encouraging indigenous ownership and participation in the tourism industry, particularly targeting small medium tourism enterprises (Gibson, 2012). Additionally, 19 large island resorts with overseas born owners who have adopted Fijian citizenship make-up the remaining industry structure (Harrison & Prasad, 2013). AirBnb is growing as a key component of the Fijian accommodation sector, with 870 listings reflected as of November 2019 (AirBnB, 2019). The inbound tour operator market is dominated by local companies Rosie Holidays, Tour Managers and Pacific Destinationz who provide a wide array of island and mainland tourism experiences (Tourism Fiji, 2019).

Tourism and Customary Land

Customary land leased to tourism plays an important role in the development of indigenous entrepreneurship in tourism in Fiji. 82% of the land in Fiji is communally owned, and much of that land comprised of prime coastal land leased by resorts. These 99-year tourism leases are administered by a comprehensive legislative and policy framework managed by the I-Taukei Land Trust Board (ILTB). Fiji has both an introduced and customary land tenure system. Under the land tenure system, land is owned collectively within the clan, tribe, or family due to kinship ties. In line with British colonial goals to preserve native lands for Fijians, the Itaukei Land Trust Board was established in 1930 by the Native Land Trust Act to administer native land for the benefit of the landowners (ILTB, n.d.). The ILTB is required to secure a fair lease payment, provide regulation and protection of the interests of both parties during the lease period, as well as secure participation by Fijians in the tourism industry (Sofield, 2003). While the *mataqali* or Fijian landowning units are the owners of the leased land, it is the ILTB that manages the lease on their behalf. A core policy goal in the government's previous Tourism Policy for Native Land Lease 2006–2010 is to "increase Fijian socio-economic equity and participation in all aspects of the
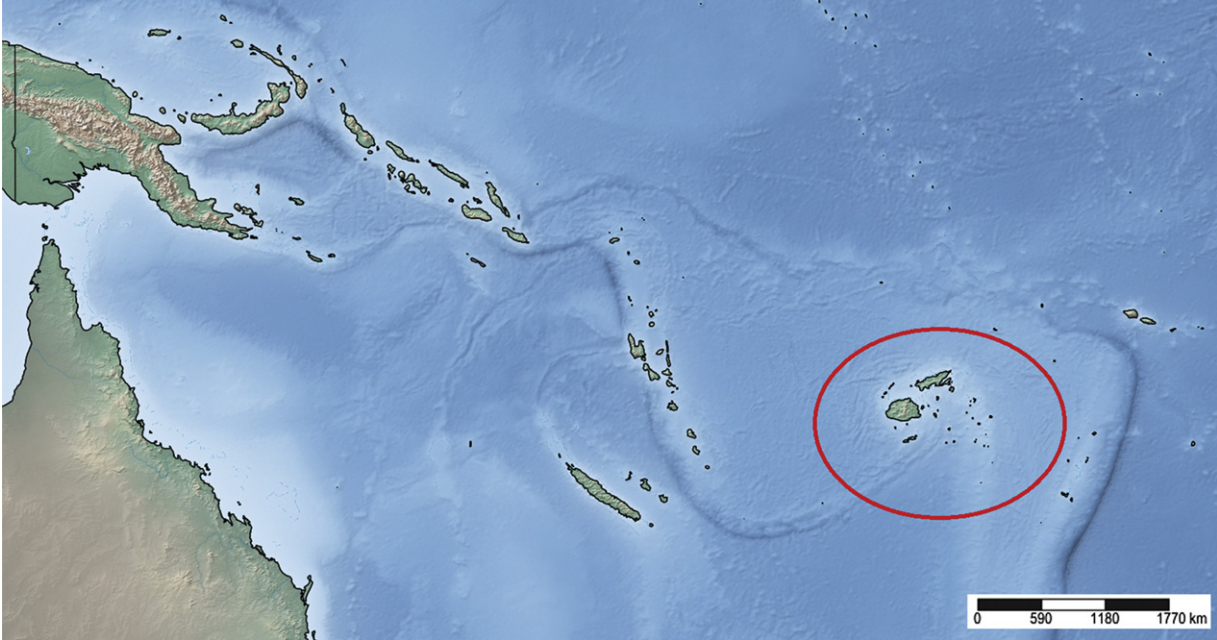
Fig. 1.   Fiji and Oceania. *Source:* Shorthouse (2010).

tourism industry." New tourism leases now require the lessee to contribute to the improvement of the landowning community's water supply, health provision, village hall, electrification, and educational scholarships (ILTB, 2016). The lessees are required to offer 5% of annual profit to the landowning community as part of the benefit of the lease agreement to the landowning community. This is part of the lease mechanisms designed to encourage more empowering partnership between landowners and lessees The policy also requires the landowning community to have a seat on the Board of Directors of the company, and that the unimproved capital value of the land be assessed every 10 years. The lessee is also expected to give first preference to all staff posts and small service operations like taxi stands or entertainment services as well as agricultural produce supply to landowners (ILTB, 2016). For example, in 2012, Scheyvens and Russell reported that the economic partnership between a 4.5 star resort and the landowning community in the Nadi area has led to what is now a successful taxi enterprise employing 10 villagers (six drivers and four staff members) generating between $900 and $1,600 on a weekly basis. The above benefits counter the common perception that customary land is a barrier to indigenous entrepreneurship in Pacific Island countries (Scheyvens et al., 2017).

Customary land ownership can be used in tourism as a solid foundation for indigenous communities to deliver socioeconomic, environmental benefits. For example, the popular Rivers Fiji ecotourism business was established in 1997 and reflects a distinctive partnership model that promotes conservation, entrepreneurial self-benefit, and indigenous community benefits (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2016). Rivers Fiji is a partnership between nine *mataqali* and two villages in the Namosi province to establish the Upper Navua Conservation Area (UNCA), a 615-acre conservation lease that not only is the first of its kind in the South Pacific but also delivers significant economic and sociocultural benefits to the local community through its lease structure (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2016). In partnership with the Itaukei Land Trust Board, Rivers Fiji has structured a unique payment system delivering economic benefits directly to the landowning communities. Benefits include a one-time lease payment by Rivers Fiji to the mataqalis and the villages. In addition, a payment structure was set up to ensure that a portion of each passenger's fee would go directly to each of the nine mataqalis and two villages that supported the conservation effort. This creates a win/win situation for all parties, and as the business grows everyone benefits from each river trip. Additional benefits to the landowners include Rivers Fiji supported projects like the provision of rugby jerseys to the local rugby team, the opportunity to sell kava to tourists. Indirect economic benefits also extended into the surrounding communities through the purchase of supplies, food, punt and road drivers, road crews, contractors, mechanics, and equipment (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2016).

Engagement through Student Fieldtrips and Research

For now more than 20 years, staff members of DTHM organize field trips that engage local indigenous communities as part of the program and curriculum. In addition, (action) research projects have further strengthened the relationships

between DTHM and indigenous communities. This way, the School can also maintain long-term relationships with indigenous communities involved in tourism.

One such engagement started in 2012 on Vorovoro Island in northern Fiji, the setting of the British Broadcasting Commission's reality TV show, Paradise or Bust. Upon completion of the *Tribewanted* project which invited visitors to volunteer in projects to help the local community, DTHM provided training to the landowners of Vorovoro Island on how to host groups on the Island as a means of earning income. The staff of the School traveled to Vorovoro Island to discuss logistics, provide training on budgeting, food management, and polish up on some of the hospitality and management skills acquired by villagers during the Tribe Wanted Project. Two weeks later, a group of 120 students and staff made the 11-hour journey to Vanualevu as a means to educate students about sustainable tourism operations, and also to provide hosts with the opportunity to practice how to run a tourism operation. The community now mainly focuses on hosting small groups interested in adventure and "authentic" experiences over luxury.

On a more recent field trip, students of a 3rd-year course on Sustainable Tourism spent the afternoon in a village-owned and operated pottery operation that supplies nearby hotels and resorts in the western part of Viti Levu. Upon arrival, students and staff were given a traditional kava welcome ceremony by the men in the community hall. This was followed by a presentation of traditional pottery making skills by the women in the village, who also served the students with fresh local fruits. Students welcomed the engagement with the local village, commenting that it taught them the importance of preserving traditional skills that could be used as an income-generating activity. The pottery tour is a form of indigenous micro-entrepreneurship and a strategy to achieve ethical, culturally appropriate and market-savvy indigenous engagement with the international tourism economy. The local community welcomed the opportunity to share their skills with students and also earned revenue from entry fees and the sale of pottery products.

Other field trips undertaken involve introducing students to the realities of post-natural disaster recovery and to help small-scale indigenous operators in their rebuilding efforts. After cyclone Winston, a category five storm sweeping through the Fiji Islands in 2016, the School organized an excursion where students at all levels undertook a field trip to Takalana Bay Resort to observe the impacts of natural disasters and engage in the first-hand contact with an affected resort operator. Importantly, students were also active in assisting the resort to clear debris and general clean up, with the owner commenting that students had completed four weeks' worth of work in one day. Such engagements reaffirm the school's commitment to integrated learning and a steady sense of corporate social responsibility. At the center of this approach is the exposure of our students to real life experiences and hands on approach to learning.

The exchange between DTHM and indigenous communities has not only been established through regular student visits to the village but also through ongoing research projects of staff members and postgraduate students. More than 10 years ago, an DTHM field trip group made their first visit to Vatuolailai village, situated along the coral coast where Fiji's resort tourism initially

developed more than half a century ago. The villagers have close relationships to the neighboring resort through land lease agreements and villagers' employment. Moreover, the village runs several tourism microbusinesses such as handicraft shops, massage services, or village tours. Movono (2012) began his engagement in Vatuolalai in 2008 as part of a final year undergraduate field trip to learn about sustainable coastal resource management and tourism. Movono continues to maintain close ties to the community as a consultant for villagers and providing regular advice to further local goals. Currently, he continues his longitudinal research engagement with the community and the greater Coral Coast region examining how these communities can leverage involvement in tourism to attain desired UN sustainable development goals. A number of publications and two degrees have come out of such long term and close relationships with a particular community, made possible through adopting an indigenous people-first approach to research engagement (Lemelin, Wiersma, & Stewart, 2011; Morais, Ferreira, Nazariadli, & Ghahramani, 2017). Using this approach allows researchers to assist communities in maximizing positive outcomes, making a stronger impact in extending knowledge about indigenous peoples and tourism. The community also benefits via their use of academic teams as resources, providing advice, assisting in training and working to keep local villagers well informed about development issues.

Another local staff research project was conducted by Ilisapeci Matatolu, who worked in Sautabu village in Viti Levu as part of her ethnographic case study which formed part of her Master thesis in Commerce in Tourism and Hospitality Management. Her thesis explored how ecotourism impacted the quality of life of this indigenous community. The staff member has also used her ethnographic research to pursue academic publishing opportunities which will lead to enhanced understanding of how to maximize tourism as a force for enabling indigenous communities to secure improved wellbeing (Matatolu, 2018; Usher & Morais, 2010).

However, postgraduate research students at DTHM doing fieldwork in indigenous communities come from different ethnic and national backgrounds. Chetan Shah, originally from India, examined the impacts of research related tourism to a Fijian indigenous host community (Shah, 2019). He conducted three staggered visits over a period of two months of fieldwork in the village, employing predominantly qualitative research methods. He highlighted his interaction with indigenous communities as a very strong learning experience and appreciated the important role of "the community," the family and the natural resources in the village on the outcome of his studies. One of the outcomes of Shah's research was a "standard research protocol," which aims to ensure that the benefits of research conducted in the village accrue to both the researchers and the host community.

These research activities briefly described above are part of DTHM's post-graduate program and provide a platform to constructively connect, through academic research and scholarship, with Fijian communities and also to develop a better understanding of indigenous cultural practices in Fiji. Linked to such longitudinal and participatory research efforts, the authors of this paper have

started to implement the "People-First Tourism" (P1t) initiative in Fiji. P1t was initially developed by scholars from North Carolina State University and today forms a global network of academic tourism programs which create research, publications, and teaching opportunities while supporting a web marketplace for buying and selling genuine tourism experiences provided by the indigenous communities that participate in the related studies (Morais et al., 2012, 2017).

The next section discusses two issues the authors experienced in the context of researching and implementing tourism microentrepreneurship in Fiji. These relate to (1) the process of achieving a balance between self-benefit and communal benefit and (2) the role of gender in the advancement of tourism microbusinesses in the Fijian context.

Tourism and Indigenous Microentrepreneurship in Practice

Balancing Self-benefit and Benefit Sharing. A key challenge in indigenous entrepreneurship in Fiji relates to the need to balance self-benefit with communal benefit. The revenue sharing model used at the Lawai Village pottery Tour provides an insightful gaze into how indigenous Fijian communities balance self-benefit and benefit-sharing as it relates to micro-business production, organization and profit-sharing. The Lawai pottery village tour is run by the Lawai Women's Pottery Club and showcases the traditional art of pottery-making using local know-how and natural resources. Open to the public from Monday to Saturday, the women operate a one-hour tour to the village that includes a guided walk around the village, a pottery-making demonstration, and traditional entertainment for an entry fee of $2.50 per adult. Women play a key role in running the entire operation, from collecting materials like clay and sand, to conducting the tours, and preparing financial statements. The village women are divided into five groups and each group is responsible for "running the show" each week.

Entry fees and pottery sales provide the main revenue streams from the tour. The entry fee is collected each day and deposited into the women's cooperative bank account. This revenue is then totaled at the end of the year and distributed within the village. 10% is distributed among the five mataqalis (i.e., land-owning clans) in the village, another 10% is given to the village's Development Committee, and the remaining 80% is kept by the Lawai Womens Pottery Club. The revenue from the sales of pottery pieces goes directly to the women that sell pottery to tourists in the "pottery tour bure," a purpose-built house that acts as a central point for the tour in the village. Given that there has not been any major conflicts or tensions within the village or women club in relation to the revenue sharing arrangement since the inception of the tour in the late 1980s, it is fairly safe to argue that the revenue-sharing model has worked relatively well.

This paper argues that there are significant factors at play to explain the success of the revenue-sharing model used by the Lawai Women's Pottery Club. The first factor is the indigenous Fijian practice of *solesolevaki* (communal collaboration) or working together as a community for a common cause. Women work together to collect sand and clay from the river bank and other materials

that are needed regularly for the production of pottery pieces. Ravuvu (1983) discusses the concept of communalism as a strong part of the Fijian ethos, defining the social dynamics of the Fijian way of life. The pottery tours provide a platform for this traditional communal practice to be used. In addition, the financial benefits provided by tourism for the women and their families provide a strong economic incentive to engage their continued support in this micro-business, particularly in a setting where there are few other livelihood opportunities. Discussions with the women in the village point out that the average monthly income for women in the village ranges between $370 and $925 monthly on an individual basis, a substantial amount when compared to the average national monthly wage of $300 (Statistics Fiji, 2019).

Microentrepreneurship and Female Empowerment. The roles of women in indigenous Fijian society are complex and differ greatly across the over 1,300 villages in the Fiji group. In some communities, land, and resource rights are transferred exclusively through matrilineal lines, where women inherit positions of chiefdom and can have paramount rule over villages, districts, provinces and confederacies (Seruvakula, 2000). In other places, power and control over resources are passed through the male line, a practice common in most parts of Melanesia. However, what is common throughout the Fiji group is the high status that women occupy within indigenous Fijian value and cultural systems. A Fijian phrase often recited during rituals refer to women as, *era noda iyau vakamareqeti uasivi na marama ni ra semata na vanua kina vanua, na dra ki na dra, na tamata kina nona Vanua* (women are our valued treasure because they connect one land to another, bloodlines between bloodlines and Fijians to their land).

Many complex rituals associated with courtship and marriage are focused on women and are still observed in indigenous Fijian communities today where in some instances, non-adherence will result in shaming and feuds (Seruvakula, 2000). Women are expected to be treated with dignity and any disrespect shown may often result in conflict between families, clans, and tribes. Recent literature suggests that Fijian women are multitaskers, and successful community leaders who dominate the (micro)entrepreneurial space, a reality often not noticed by onlookers or those who are foreign to the indigenous Fijian communal systems (Movono, 2017; Movono & Becken, 2018; Movono & Dahles, 2017). At first glance, observers might infer that Fijian women occupy the "back seat" at community meetings, and conclude that women are confined to the domestic domain and are economically inactive because of traditional economic and cultural barriers. These observations, often made by external researchers using quantitative methods, ignore the highly embedded nature of indigenous communities. Fijian indigenous cultures are highly complex and diverse, and therefore research approaches that are critical, immersive, and longitudinal are better suited to generate valid insights. In communities highly involved in tourism along the Coral Coast of Fiji for example, former hotel and tourism wage workers are leveraging their experience with the industry to develop small tourism micro-enterprises. According to Movono and Dahles (2017), women in Vatuolalai are aware of the necessities of cultural protocols in maintaining social order and overwhelmingly associate their happiness with their ability to tending to domestic

duties as well as operating businesses. Additionally, Fijian women were found to be able to manage chores at home, support village obligations, contribute to fundraising, and manage their own small tourism microenterprise quite successfully (Movono & Becken, 2018). Movono and Becken's findings show that women are dominant players in the small business scene, with many reporting the ability to have control over their affairs and skillfully overcoming many socioeconomic barriers. The majority of women microentrepreneurs are former hotel workers who have come together to collectively run women's associations aiming to support their livelihoods and to raise awareness about health, business, and other disparities.

On the other hand, it is also well documented that many Fijian villages are based on a patriarchal social system, where males are considered the protectors and providers for the *mataqali* (sub-clan or lineage) (Ravavu, 1983). So even though women make a tremendous contribution to tourism activities in their communities, their role is to support men's economic activities. In addition, women are still expected to attend to their traditional and family obligations (Lambeth et al., 2002).

Recent studies and the authors' observations affirm the important role of women in tourism microbusinesses in Fiji. Indeed, the majority of tourism and handicraft businesses (e.g., craft stalls at local markets) are run and managed by women. Therefore, recent literature and the authors' observations suggest that indigenous Fijian women are deliberately seeking ways to leverage their cultural knowledge and traditional skills to better their lives and improve their livelihoods by developing tourism microenterprises. Moreover, in many cases, women seem to be able to achieve these microentrepreneurial activities in ways that do not collide with their traditional household and village duties.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the notion of tourism microentrepreneurship in the indigenous Fijian context by highlighting the need for an engaged approach. The authors, Alex and Apisalome have since joined other universities have engaged with local indigenous communities involved in tourism. The School's aim to maintain mutually beneficial longitudinal relationships through student fieldtrips, research studies, and pro bono consultancies reflects Pacific research paradigms containing values and principles of respect, reciprocity, and long-term relationships (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Furthermore, this approach is consistent with the Participatory Action Research methodology employed by the global consortium of tourism programs pursuing People-First Tourism research (Morais et al., 2017).

Based on the authors' research and experience in the region, the chapter further reflected on two eminent issues of tourism microentrepreneurship in Fiji. First, the paper discussed the balance and sometimes tensions between entrepreneurial self-benefit and benefit-sharing. The paper reports that in Fijian communities there is a strong commitment and tradition toward collective and

community orientation despite ongoing socioeconomic, political, and technological transformation and impacts on economic practices. The paper further discussed female participation and the related opportunities and challenges in tourism microentrepreneurship. In a context of predominating patriarchal structures, tourism microentrepreneurship in Fiji is evidently playing a critical role toward women's greater economic and social empowerment.

The findings of this chapter can provide guidance and understanding about the complexities inherent to indigenous Fijian communities engaged in tourism microentrepreneurship. Sociocultural categories of entrepreneurship such as personal relationships, collective social and economic benefits, and women empowerment need to be incorporated for planning and measuring tourism microentrepreneurship in a Fijian and broader Pacific context. The authors hope that this paper also stimulates thought among other academics interested in exploring ways for tourism microentrepreneurship to be used by indigenous communities to engender equitable prosperity.