genesis as a reader on globalisation and culture change. Despite Lockwood’s excellent introduction, the collection occasionally feels a little disjointed, a condition that could have been remedied by the inclusion of a concluding chapter to draw out the common themes and highlight the dissonances. However, as it stands, Globalization and Culture Change in the Pacific Islands offers an invaluable teaching and reference resource for all students of the Pacific.

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Pacific Island Tourism

Tourism—which in this context means international tourism—forms a significant component of the foreign exchange earnings of a number of Pacific island states. Recent data from the South Pacific Tourism Organisation indicate that the tourism sector comprises over 40 per cent of GDP in the Cook Islands (a sudden legacy of a diversion of tourists from post-coup Fiji), and around 15 per cent in Vanuatu and Tonga. The same source lists tourism employment as accounting for about 10 per cent of the labour force in Fiji and Samoa. Even if a little rubbery, these are impressive figures, indicative of the importance of the expenditures of foreign visitors to the economic well-being of countries in many parts of the region.

But while tourists may bring financial benefits to island communities, they also impose costs, seen most directly in the adverse impact their presence can have on the natural environment and on the societies and cultures of host countries. Such a negative impact is particularly acute at the mass-tourism end of the market, where high-volume low-yield tourists can easily overwhelm the environmental, social and cultural resources of a local area, as has happened in a number of popular tourist destinations in other parts of the world. Fortunately, the Pacific has so far largely escaped the worst excesses of this sort of tourism but, with tourism operators constantly searching for new locations to exploit, continuing global expansion of the mass-market industry holds many threats for the future.

At the other extreme lies the phenomenon of ecotourism, involving low-volume high-yield tourists who are drawn to a particular location in order to experience at first hand its specific environmental or cultural features. Typically these tourists are well-informed and sensitive to the effects they may have on host communities and on the natural resources they encounter during their visit. This is not to say, however, that they do not create problems; indeed even the most sensitive ecotourists can, wittingly or otherwise, leave quite a noticeable footprint behind them.

It is this latter type of tourism that is the principal concern of this book. Despite the generality of its title, this is a book mainly about micro-level ecologically aware tourism management. There is little in the book about the macroeconomic implications of tourism in the Pacific, or about the economic benefits and costs of tourism development, either actually or potentially, across the region as a whole. The book grew out of papers initially presented at sessions on tourism at the Pacific Science Association Inter-Congress held in Suva as long ago as 1997, and the contributors are primarily anthropologists, sociologists and geographers with specialised interests in sustainable tourism. Indeed, it is the overarching concept of sustainability that binds the disparate
chapters of this book together. There may be differences in disciplinary approach, analytical content and geographical location between the various contributions, but all the authors would seem to agree with the proposition that the future viability of tourism in the islands depends on its being ecologically, socially and culturally sustainable. In this context, ‘sustainable tourism’ covers all components of the industry, not just the specialised ecotourism market.

The only paper in the volume that attempts to place the idea of sustainable tourism in a generalised analytical context is Peter B. Meyer’s early chapter in which he asks whether ecotourism should be construed as equivalent to mining an exhaustible resource or as service provision. He distinguishes between the stocks of ecological resources and the flows of services they provide, arguing that a continuing capacity to meet the environmental (and social and cultural) demands of tourists will depend on safeguarding the basic stocks of natural, social and cultural capital. He construes ecological resources as common property resources, and although his analysis falls short of being a comprehensive application of the theory of common property resources in all its richness to this problem, it is at least suggestive of further lines of theoretical development.

Subsequent chapters present a variety of case studies of tourism projects in different parts of the Pacific, including Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and the Cook Islands. There are also two chapters dealing with the eastern and western extremes of the Pacific region—respectively Easter Island in the east and the Whitsundays to the west. All of these make for interesting and engaging reading, even if in most cases the analysis is not very deep. Some of the projects described have been successful, others less so. For example, Georgette Leah Burns’ chapter on indigenous responses to tourism in Fiji paints a bleak picture of several developments there; local people resent the foreign ownership and control of tourist resorts built in their midst, and communities have been adversely affected by the uneven distribution of rewards from the tourist industry. By contrast, Tracy Berno’s research, reported in the next chapter, suggests that in the Cook Islands tourism interactions between visitors and host communities have been well managed on the whole, with a reasonably good ‘fit’ between the type of tourists attracted and the sorts of services the islanders are able to offer.

The volume begins and ends with chapters by the editor, David Harrison. His introductory chapter on themes in Pacific island tourism focuses on the sustainability issue in order to set the scene for what follows. In the concluding chapter he presents a policy strategy for ecotourism and village-based tourism in Fiji, derived from an official document prepared in 1999 for the Fijian Ministry of Tourism and Transport. The recommendations contained in this chapter paint an upbeat picture for the future of this sort of tourism in Fiji, provided it is carefully managed.

In a disarmingly frank foreword to this volume, the editor writes

I am well aware that there are flaws and inconsistencies in the following pages…This should not be a matter for concern, for it is the way to wider debate (p. v).

He is certainly right on the first count, and hopefully right on the second.

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