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RESEARCH NOTE

Critical Geographies of Tourism in the South Pacific

Changes suggested by Reviewers	Where in the paper change made
<p>If the Note is to really pick up on the book's themes, as suggested in the first paragraph, there should be some initial attempt to spell out what these are, and then a summary of the content of the eight papers, followed by a discussion as to how they really do pick up on the themes from the book and how they might be addressed by current and future research.</p>	<p>This has been addressed in the opening paragraph with a deeper acknowledgement of the emergent themes in Pratt and Harrison (2015).</p> <p>Also paragraph 2 links the discourse with Pratt and Harrison (2015) alongside the papers presented.</p>
<p>The issues raised in the discussion are interesting, but perhaps need to be explored at greater length (if they are indeed part of the themes being developed).</p>	<p>The limitation of the Research Note format prevents an exploration at greater length. Instead, the revised Note strives to link the themes in Pratt and Harrison (2015) more closely to the themes of the papers presented</p>
<p>If Britton's contribution is to be criticised, and a new political economy of the region developed, it should be more systematically done than in this piece (and situated within a proper review of research in the region).</p>	<p>Criticism of Britton has been curtailed given the constraints of the Research Note format. That requires a full article. Instead a general comment is made that links into secondary reports including the Lowy Institute (2016) and World Bank (2012).</p>
<p>The suggestion that the 'geo-political alignment' of Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu has shifted, again, needs to be substantiated and situated within a more focused note on the book's themes and the papers presented.</p>	<p>Substantiation of these points has been provided in the form of reports from the Lowy Institute (2016) and the World Bank (2012). Additionally, Feeny's (2014) work has also been referenced.</p>
<p>Similarly, the relationship of authenticity and tradition, which is actually quite nuanced in the Pratt and Harrison book, is stated somewhat starkly in the Research Note, as is the apparent 'threat for communitiesin the tourism-driven growth agenda' (which is considerably varied in intensity across the region).</p>	<p>The acknowledgement of variability across the region has been made several times throughout the Note.</p> <p>References to authenticity and tradition have also been moderated to acknowledge Pratt and Harrison (2015) within the constraints of the Research Note format.</p>
<p>It is suggested that the plan outlined in the first paragraph is taken up. This could simply result in a conference report or - if developed into a serious exploration of themes and a coherent literature review - a longer review article. .</p>	<p>The recommendation has been taken up and the Note is presented more in line with a conference report that links to Pratt & Harrison (2015). Although we think that this should still be published as a Note, the fact that it draws from a bunch of conference papers means that we remain open to it</p>

	being published as Conference Report.
You should write and submit a longer research note/paper which develops further on the panel session.	The preference is to have this remain as a Research Note given it is reports on emergent works in response to Pratt & Harrison (2015) with longer papers reserved for each of the cases in their own right.
A better developed (necessarily longer) piece which engages more fully with the extant literature it proposes to build on would be of more interest to readers, in my opinion.	This is to come and will be as described above.

Critical Geographies of Tourism in the South Pacific

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Highlights

- Caution against rampant deployment of cultural heritage without consideration of long-term implications is overdue
- Contemporary reframing of tourism is overdue and rests on the capacity to exercise consistently effective governance
- Where tourism is embedded in village economies, diminished levels of quality of life are conveyed
- Reconciling the promise of tourism with actualities that meet the needs of Pacific Island societies, cultures and economies continues to be a prevailing challenge
- Shifts in geo-political alignment is influencing development pathways

RESEARCH NOTE

Critical Geographies of Tourism in the South Pacific

Pratt and Harrison's (2015) *Tourism in Pacific Islands: Current Issues and Future Challenges* is the most recent attempt to capture the nuances of tourism development in a region undergoing rapid change. The work is compartmentalised into three sections; images of Pacific Island countries (PICs); socio-economic impacts; and the interaction of PICs with the world. Throughout, several reoccurring themes appear including the issue of authenticity and agency concerning who the arbiters of authenticity might be, how the 'authentic' or 'traditional' is portrayed and thirdly, whether authenticity really matters? An overarching leitmotif was the encounter with modernity and attendant socio-economic development. Pratt and Harrison affirm that the role of tourism as a passport to development is complex, multivalent and contested. For example, while air transportation is vital to linking PICs, it is also a contributor to climate change. Also, while community-based tourism can empower, whether it can make substantive increases in living standards is limited by scale.

This Note picks up on key themes expounded in Pratt and Harrison (2015) and sets out to signpost incremental progress to theoretical and empirical understandings of tourism in PICs. Eight papers grouped under the theme *Critical Geographies of Tourism Development, Culture and Heritage in the South Pacific: New and Emerging Critiques* were presented at the 6th Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) conference at James Cook University, Australia. Several participants of this session also contributed to Pratt and Harrison (2015) and this Note demonstrates the development of their continuing investigations. Critical multi-disciplinary exemplifications of tourism in a region often described as the most vulnerable, isolated and least successful in terms of development progress, yet culturally, ethnically and socially diverse were offered. As was exemplified in Pratt and Harrison (2015), tourism's importance as a mainstay of socioeconomic development was reinforced and the eight papers that this Note draws from, showcase examples of how this is happening.

In drawing on Pratt and Harrison (2015), Stephenson and Bianchi's (2016) paper argued that more critical dialogues beyond the seminal work of Britton (1982 & 1983) are required to recast tourism within the contemporary political economy of PICs. In spite of rapid tourism development transformations since the 1970s, social deprivation and economic impoverishment is evident in many cases, with high levels of unemployment, limited economic opportunities, poor housing, inadequate local infrastructure and high crime rates, particularly in urban areas prevailing (Feeny, 2014; World Bank, 2012). It is contended that the dependency approach is too deterministic, ignoring the geographically uneven nature of tourism and capitalist development. Overall, since the period that Britton was writing, many PIC's have shifted their geo-political alliances significantly, thus influencing development pathways (Lowy Institute, 2016).

Reinforcing Pratt & Harrison's (2015) sentiments that tourism is a mixed blessing, Pratt' (2016) paper emphasised that where tourism is embedded in village economies, diminished levels of quality of life are conveyed as contrasted with contexts where the traditional economy predominates. In contrast, Gibson (2016) asserted in her paper that community-based tourism in Fiji has produced positive outcomes. Gibson leveled

1 concerns at the negatively changing behaviour of younger generations but accedes
2 that solely attributing this to tourism is problematic. In alignment with Pratt and
3 Harrison (2015), Gibson illustrates that tourism can provide extensive socio-economic
4 benefits for marginalised communities however deference to cultural values must
5 remain for tourism's poverty alleviation potential to be optimised.
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7 The issue of culture and links to authenticity and tradition was a prominent thread in
8 Harrison and Pratt (2015) and in response, Tolkach's (2016) paper contends that
9 where culture is emphasised, the construction or re-construction of distinctive ways to
10 authenticate and celebrate 'tradition' is mobilised for competitive advantage. Tolkach
11 points to Kanemasu (2015) who outlines that since gaining independence, many PICs
12 continue to invoke images of an idyllic paradise, and that besides the colonial legacy,
13 economic incentive and ethno-nationalism contributes to the development of tourism
14 imagery. Accordingly, in his paper, Mavono (2016) asserts that for indigenous
15 Fijians, tourism development relies largely on indigenous land, culture and people
16 meaning that communities must be major stakeholders. Similarly, Gabriel et al's
17 paper point out that in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the tentative World Heritage area
18 of the Nakanai Mountains has raised hopes of a tourism boom and the urgency is in
19 understanding how tourism can be deployed for more effective local-level
20 advancement.
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25 Pratt and Harrison (2016) maintain that the need is to ensure that tourism *is* indeed a
26 passport to development. Cheer and Matou's (2016) paper advances on this arguing
27 that the laxity of government tourism policy and planning is one of the principle
28 reasons why the 'trickle down' of economic benefits tends to be constrained. The call
29 is for tourism policy and planning to manage, in a systemic way, the development of
30 long-term legacies and for the state to have a more functional approach. Lati (2016)
31 also preaches caution against rampant tourism expansion without consideration of
32 long-term implications using the case of the Mali, a traditional dance performed by
33 the Enga to illustrate his point. Embedded in traditionalisms, the Mali exemplifies
34 societal cohesion and while tourism has encouraged a resurgence of its performative
35 aspects, it has lost its purpose and authenticity. Preserving the Mali while respecting
36 cultural tradition, yet enabling the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods is called for.
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41 This Note affirms that moving beyond a preoccupation with international visitor
42 arrivals and expenditure is urgent. This accords with Pratt and Harrison (2015) who
43 outline that the challenges in optimising tourism's contribution remains formidable
44 for most PICs. To generalise tourism as mostly negative or positive is fraught on
45 account of largely variable experiences across the region. Therefore, reframing
46 tourism is critical to the future-proofing of communities from the vicissitudes of what
47 can be a volatile sector prone to internal and external shocks. And while development
48 concerns persist, the long-held view that tourism is a key pillar of local and national
49 livelihoods in the PICs will endure given the dearth of other avenues for development.
50 Reconciling the promises of tourism with actualities that meet the needs of Pacific
51 Island societies, cultures and economies will prevail and this is central to the
52 foundations set down by Pratt and Harrison, and now taken up by contributors to this
53 Note. The challenge for researcher's now is not to offer simplified and hackneyed
54 critiques only, but instead, to explore new approaches to examining tourism
55 development that recognises and fosters local agency, as well as enabling the
56 pragmatic concerns of industry sustainability.
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