

# Globalisation and Cultural Change in Pacific Island Countries: The Role of Tourism

Connectivity and Tourism Recovery from Covid-19  
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[HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/C/TRAVELPROFESSORS/](http://www.youtube.com/c/TravelProfessors/)

# Culture

- Plays a major role in and for tourism
- Serves as a **major attraction**
  - Has the ability to **preserve or revive** cultural practices
- Adverse effects of tourism on culture
  - Cultural appropriation
  - Commodification
    - Extensively discussed in tourism literature







# Culture

- “behaviour and beliefs that are learned and shared: learned so that it is not ‘instinctual’, shared so that it is not individual.” (Pieterse, 1995, p. 1390).
- This definition emphasizes the **social sharing aspect**, but it is not limited by any geographic borders; just a **shared common experience**. Culture refers as much to behaviour and beliefs held in common as those which are different



# Globalization

- Definition is much more contested.
- General agreement
  - Shaped by technological change
  - Involves the reconfiguration of nation states
  - Accompanies regionalization
  - Is uneven
- Defined from a cultural perspective as “a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people are increasingly aware that they are receding” (Waters, 1995, p. 3).



# Research Objectives

- To examine cultural change in PIC due to globalization, with a focus on tourism's role as one of the contributors to this change
- The context of PIC is appropriate:
  - The South Pacific is home to diverse cultures
  - Tourism forms one of the major economic activities for many PIC



# Culture & Globalisation

- Pieterse (1996) defines 3 paradigms of globalisation:
  - **Clash of Civilisations**
    - Clash between Western and non-Western cultures
  - **McDonaldisation**
    - Standardisation and commodification of culture
  - **Hybridisation**
    - Dynamic cultures interact and evolve

# Clash of Civilisations

- Globalization from a mainly political viewpoint
- Culture as an ideological tool
- World split into opposing forces
  - West versus the Rest
  - The 'Rest': Islamic world, Asian 'yellow peril' and the Iron Curtin and Communist threat
- 'Billiard ball' model where cultures are separate entities bumping into one another but not interacting





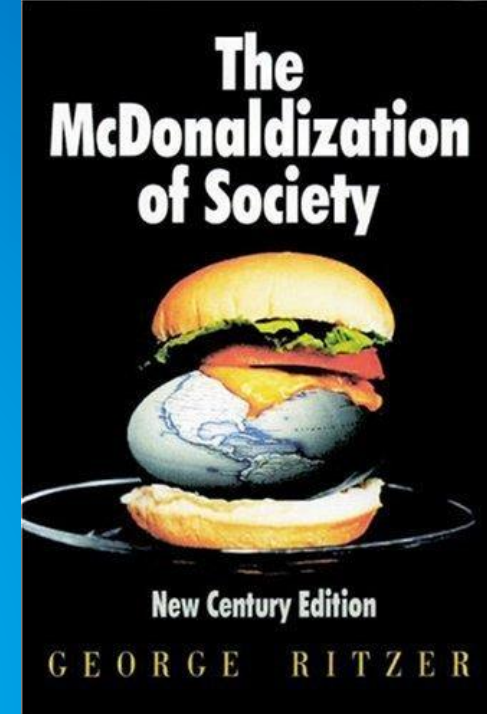
# Clash of Civilisations: Tourism

- Overriding Western tourist culture dominating or displacing the host culture
- Tourism is a new form of colonialism
  - Demonstration effect



# McDonaldisation

- Worldwide homogenisation of cultures through the impact of **multi-national corporations**
- Essentially Americanisation and alludes to the spread of **global capitalism**
- Built on:
  - Efficiency (rapid service)
  - Calculable (fast and inexpensive)
  - Predictable (no surprises)
  - Controls labour and customers



# McDonaldisation: Tourism

- Disney World is a prime example of McTourism
  - Fully rationalized
  - Highly commoditized
  - Inauthentic experience
- McDonaldisation of cruise tourism





# Hybridisation

- Blurs boundaries and involves cross-over of cultures
- Culture is fluid
- Sits between the previous two paradigms
- Goes by various terms:
  - Global localization
  - Local globalization
  - Glocalization

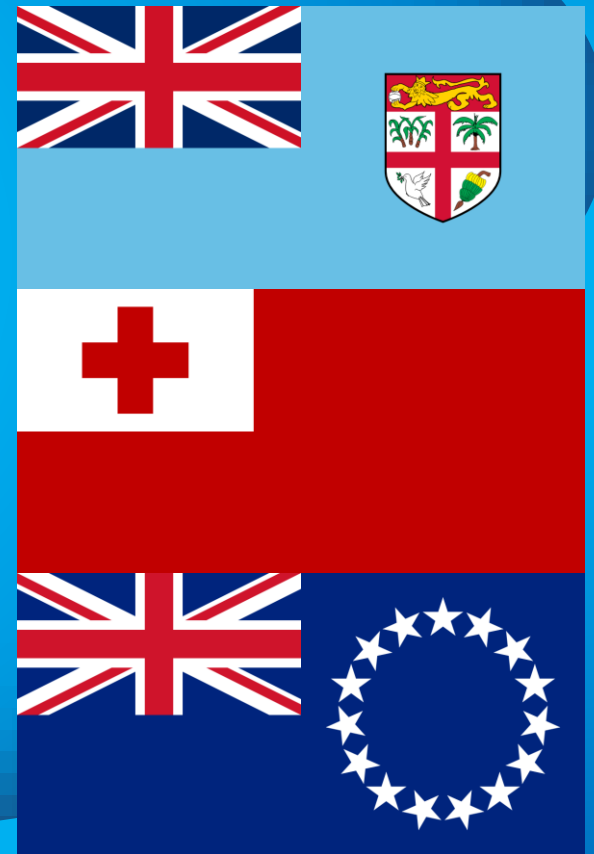
# Hybridisation: Tourism

- Foods
- Events and festivals that showcase aspects of the culture of diasporic populations



# Methods

- Qualitative study
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews
- 50 Interviews:
  - 19 in Fiji
  - 14 in Tonga
  - 17 in Cook Islands





# Clash of Civilisations

- Demonstration effect
  - But more so from diaspora and Pacific Islanders working overseas than tourists
    - The importance of PIC diaspora in New Zealand is exemplified by inclusion of Pacific artefacts into exhibitions of one of the major national museums in New Zealand, the Auckland War Memorial Museum
- Clashes based on religious grounds
  - Flights on Sabbath



# Clash of Civilisations

- Needs of the Industry vs Traditional Obligations

- Work according to a schedule (certain number of hours every week) making it difficult to fulfil certain traditional obligations (attending a funeral of a relative)
- *There is a phenomenon here: people will produce enough to meet some specific need, they don't mind doing a little bit every day, or a month or particular part of the year, but they will not engage in a workshop production, because they get enough money to satisfy their need. And then they stop. The market is not dominant. They engage in the market to meet a particular need... They are not wage slaves. They're not lazy. They have a very sensible attitude towards life and money isn't everything, work isn't everything. It's a balance of those things.*

# Clash of Civilisations

- Cultural clashes with new tourist markets:
- *“I hear that [Name of a Resort] is building a whole new other side of their hotel that will just cater for Chinese. But it will be an enclave that would be cut-off from the rest, because yet again when they try to mix markets, it didn't work and their main Australian market just boycotted them... Other luxury resorts that have entered these markets compare the Chinese to the Russians. You know, they find them very difficult to deal with and so what they have done is that they book off certain weeks and it's all Chinese or all Russian.” Academic, Fiji*





# Clash of Civilisations

- Ongoing suspicions of foreign interests in the Pacific:
- *“They want our fishing rights. We are very suspicious of Spanish, Chinese, Taiwanese and Japanese people coming here.”*  
Accommodation owner, Cook Islands

# McDonaldisation

- Moana
  - Reduced to a single monoculture
  - Movie trailer includes Fijian music, Tahitian drumming, and Samoan tattoos.
- Homogenisation of Pacific Cultures:

“It’s more and more of this fire dance, Polynesian singing, and hula dances, which is South Pacific. It’s the Disneyfication, Moana view of the South Pacific...”

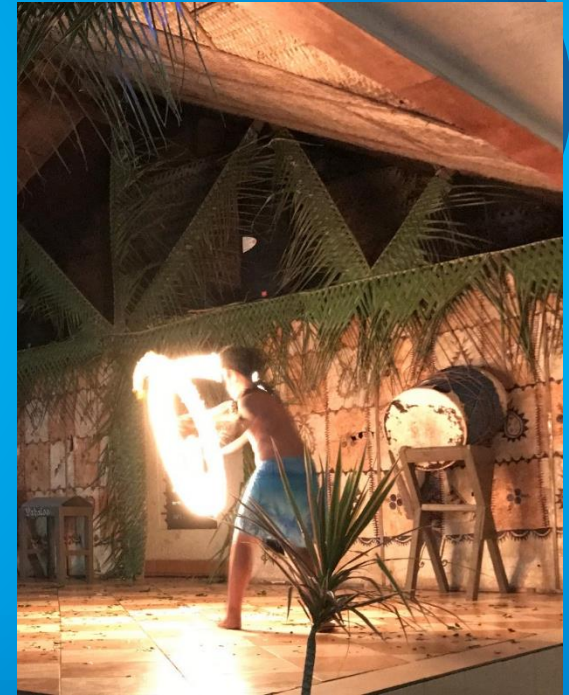
*Private sector, Fiji*



# McDonaldisation

- Pacific Islanders borrow from each other, e.g. Festival of Pacific Arts:

*“I noticed in the Pacific Arts Festival [a.k.a. Festival of the Pacific Arts]... You could see that some of the actions from that island has been picked up from another island.” NGO, Tonga*





# McDonaldisation

- ‘Bulanisation’ of Cook Islands:

*“We are at a tipping point now, with the Filipino staff and the Fijians... Especially, the Filipino staff, they are most amazing workers. And of course they are here and they don't have to go to funerals and that. They tick all the boxes, except the fact people come here to see Cook Islanders not Filipinos...”*

*Accommodation owner, Cook Islands*



# McDonaldisation

- The state of culture might've been worse without tourism:

*“Some of those cultural activities are being performed and maintained mainly because of the tourist dollar. I mean, if we didn't have that demand, the tourists coming in, we'd probably still do it, but let's say once or twice a year. But because there's a demand, there's a financial reward out of it.”*

*Academic, Tonga*





# Hybridisation

- Cultures evolve
- Contrasting opinions at the same time
  - Do not want to lose the traditions / nostalgic about the past
  - Embrace modernisation and connectedness to the world
- “*This idea of retaining primitive*, is what people are really talking about here as a manifestation of cultural things... Is it really trying to say that people should be encapsulated in a time warp and just be kept there? *I call that a zoological approach* ... I mean, people go to these countries to look at the animals in the zoo. Except that these animals are two-legged.”  
Private sector, Tonga





# Hybridisation

- The pace of change may be too fast
- Mobilities and technology play a role:

*“The lifestyle is moving so fast. And basically because of New Zealand, we're exposed to New Zealand, to Australia, to the States. And we have high-tech... We see what's happening overseas and they bring it over here, easy. Easy. And it is changing our mentality and the way we react to what is around us. You see, a lot of people have very little understand of our local language.”*

Public Sector, Cook Islands

# Hybridisation

- But what's authentic?

*“We didn’t wear skimpy clothes on the road 20 years ago, that was not seen. But now the tourists come in with their swim tops, because maybe it’s hot, or how they feel. And it’s accepted now. I know there have been notices in the accommodation areas, and in the tourism pamphlets asking tourists not to wear anything too revealing as well. Once upon a time, we were not wearing clothes, and, the Christian missionaries came and told us “you’ve got to cover yourself”, and then later on they come with no clothes on!”*

Public Sector, Cook Islands

# Hybridisation

- Who decides?

*“It's a constant process of evolution depending on the context that you find yourself in, and Cook Islanders do it very well. In terms of this agency determination thing they're very strong on the side of being active agents in what they're doing, you know what I mean? They are not victims of processes.”*

*Academic, Cook Islands*



# Discussion

- Cultures evolve
- Geopolitics and market changes need to be considered
- Youth involvement / Loss of skills
- Loss of language (Cook Islands)
- Role of tourism was downplayed by participants



# Conclusion

- Mobilities, migration, diaspora, technology, popular culture and tourism impact on Pacific Cultures
- Further research into how cultures evolve under different pressures is required
- Cultural preservation requires agency from the people of that culture



# Culture, Tourism and Cultural Tourism in the COVID-19 era

- Importance of Local Community
- Authentic experiences
- Challenges:
  - Nature rather than people/culture
  - Off the beaten track
  - Vulnerability of local populations
  - Vaccine hesitancy
- Vaccinations are key but disproportionate



Vinaka

Malo

Meitaki

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