

## **Introduction to the edition - Resilience, Adaptation, and Indigenous Knowledges: Engaging with Pacific Philosophies and Methodologies**

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At the heart of this issue of Pacific Dynamics are themes around the critical intersections between power, authority, leadership, and the dynamics of culture, embracing Pacific knowledges and epistemologies. The papers range widely in specific subject matter, but find common ground in these themes. Whether the focus is on health systems, sport, gender and sexuality, education and training, food crops and climate change, or on culture, community and Indigenous philosophy and methodology, the papers all in different ways speak to these key themes. Many of the papers demonstrate the ways in which qualitative and quantitative field-based research engaging with Pacific methodologies can be successfully deployed for a wide range of projects.

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### **Climate Crisis, Resilience, and Poverty Reduction**

This group of papers looks at the various ways in which Pacific peoples have shown resilience and adaptation to meet the challenges of the climate crisis and the pandemic. They explore how such strategies can be harnessed to achieve successful crop production, revitalise important village economies such as tourism in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, and alleviate poverty. While village-based approaches are critical to addressing these challenges, it is also useful to explore the role played by the United Nations and its agencies. In this latter context, Nicholas Metherall, Joeli Veitayaki, Hilda Waqa-Sakiti, Sara Beavis, Semi Qamese, and Elisabeth Holland examine the work that the United Nations Global Environment Fund (GEF) is carrying out in funding biodiversity and climate

adaptation and mitigation in the Pacific region. In their paper, GEF in the Pacific Islands: incorporating monitoring, ecosystem theory, and stewardship, these authors engage with a critical literature review, inter-disciplinary analysis and a case study to discuss the role of ecosystems theory and environmental monitoring in GEF's work in this region, among other aspects of its programs.

The resilience and adaptive strengths that are underpinned by Pacific Indigenous knowledges and philosophies are central to farming and sustainable crop production; activities that are also important as strategies to mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis and to reduce poverty. Ilisoni Leweniqila and Nick Rāhiri Roskrugé discuss the crucial role of Indigenous knowledge in food crop production among Fijian farmers in their paper "Sa Vosa na Vanua" – The Land Speaks - Agriculture Knowledge (IAK): The philosophy of life values and epistemology, and relationship to kumala production in Ra. Engaging with the Fijian Vanua Research Framework, the paper seeks to understand the role that Indigenous agricultural knowledge has in contributing to food security and achieving Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) in Fijian farming systems, with a focus on kumala (sweet potato - *Ipomoea batatas*) farming in Ra province in Fiji. The paper includes discussion on how the knowledge base of Indigenous people can transform their understanding of their 'social currency', the solesolevaki. In a related contribution, Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) production in Fiji: challenges and opportunities for smallholder potato growers in Fiji, Ilisoni Leweniqila, Atami Vurebe and Tetalo Tuivanualevu examine the challenges faced by potato farmers in Fiji, and future opportunities for the socio-economic viability of smallholder potato production in Fiji.

The resilience of Pacific people in the face of crises is the subject of Beyond bouncing back: A framework for tourism resilience building in the Pacific by Apisalome Movono, Regina Scheyvens and Steven Ratuva. These authors argue that the Covid-19 pandemic provided incentives to develop a collective Pacific-centred approach, drawing on to recovery and reviving the tourist industry, a vital element for Pacific economies. As with most of the papers in this volume, so too does this one emphasise the role of Pacific peoples' agency and self-determination.

Another contribution on the role of Indigenous knowledge in addressing the climate crisis is Indigenous knowledge systems role in addressing sea level rise and dried water source: A Fijian case study, by Kolaia Raisele and Rosiana Lagi. Here again we see the focus on local Pacific communities' own stories and discourses, embedded by their knowledges and practices. This paper, as with all of them in this collection, engages with methodologies including case studies and qualitative research.

The development of crops and sustainable agriculture, and of important industries such as tourism are all, in different ways, informed by the need to alleviate and prevent poverty among Pacific peoples. In Colonial political economy, social policy and origins of poverty in Fiji: 1874-1970, Nii-K Plange takes a historical look at the ways in which the emergence of poverty in Fiji has informed social policy, which has profound implications for a range of societal issues including housing, employment and labour relations, and welfare. The paper situates the discussion on social policy and poverty within a frame providing a critical analysis of the colonial-imperial project and its attendant forms of capitalist production.

## **Gender, Culture and Methodology**

Many of the papers in this volume are concerned with the role of Pacific-centred approaches, methodologies, and discourses. The question of gender and gender relations is another important element that must be considered in this context. Bridget Fa'amatuainu's paper, *Talanoa methodology in Samoa law and gender research: The case for a Samoan critical legal theory and gender methodology* calls for a reflection on ways in which Samoan voices and Indigenous methodologies can be harnessed to provide an alternative to one-dimensional approaches to gender and law research. The paper engages with a Samoan critical theory to explore a more inclusive and uniquely Samoan approach to gender research underpinned by fa'asamoa principles.

The dynamics of gender relations are also critical when it comes to understanding violence in family situations. In their paper *Storying gender-based violence (GBV) in Niue*, Erin Thomas, Charlene Tukiuha, Yvonne Underhill-Sem, and Jama'l Talagi examine how to work with the family space in Niue to eliminate violence in social relations and to promote healthy relationships. The paper draws on interviews, and constructs a fictionalised dialogue based on careful analysis of these interviews, and argues that creative writing can be a rigorous method for writing GBV research which can provide useful policy insights while preserving the privacy of research collaborators.

## **Culture, Power and Leadership**

Continuing the theme of the critical role that Pacific Indigenous concepts, epistemologies and philosophies has in all facets of peoples' lives, two papers explore this in regard to sport and leadership respectively. In *My power is my culture: Athletes of color in American football*, Dion Enari and Sierra Keung show how professional athletes from a migrant group have positively used their cultural values and pride in the sporting arena. In their paper *Talanoa he vā māfana: An indigenous Tongan approach to leadership*, Mele Katea Paea, Linitā Manu'atu, Fred Rohorua, David Taufui Mikato Fa'avae, and Sione Paea discuss talanoa he vā māfana as a useful concept for exploring the ideas of leadership that are exercised by Kakai Tonga (Tongan people) across given contexts. The paper argues that the Talanoa he vā māfana approach goes beyond the existing talanoa research methodology, enabling conversations that engage with and embrace the lotu, the heart and soul of the people. It also provides a Tongan perspective on, and new insights into, the qualities of meaningful leadership within non-indigenous organisations.

## **Education and Training**

In another perspective on the central place of Pacific ways, concepts and livelihoods, two papers in this volume explore these themes in the context of education and training in different contexts. In *The gift of health: Cuban medical cooperation in Kiribati*, Christine Werle, Sharon McLennan and Helen Leslie examine the issues around the work of Cuban trained medical practitioners in Kiribati. Using qualitative fieldwork, the paper shows how the assimilation of Cuban-trained doctors into medical practice is complicated by challenges related to clinical skills, language and

contextual knowledge. While these challenges, the authors argue, have been successfully addressed with the development of the Kiribati Internship Training Programme, there remain some problems in the relationship between the prevention-focussed medicine taught in Cuba, and the curative orientation of the Kiribati health system. Additionally, the paper finds, more needs to be done regarding the internship programme, and graduates' knowledge and experience of primary and preventative care is not yet well utilised. The authors suggest that the challenge now is to ensure that the knowledge and skills gained by the Cuban graduates at all steps of this journey are utilised in order to bring better health outcomes for the people of Kiribati.

Taking education as their focus, in their paper *An evaluation of a generic course at a university in the Pacific Islands*, Loriza Zinnie Rafiq and Jeremy Dorovolomo use an interview based methodology to evaluate a course at the University of the South Pacific. The purpose of this research was to elucidate gaps, as well as strengths in the course, and it showed the course to be achieving its objectives, with a strength in engaging with Pacific concepts, and promoting Pacific consciousness and has very clear and attainable learning outcomes and expectations.

The collection of papers in this issue demonstrate that Pacific methodologies, concepts and philosophies, and the strength and resilience of communities' adaptation strategies, including the crucial role of Indigenous knowledges, are all vitally important in their application to a diverse range of subject matter.

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### **Author's biography**

Dr Michael Davis is a historian and interdisciplinary researcher. He is an Honorary Research Affiliate with the MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury, and also an editor for the Pacific Dynamics Journal. He is an honorary research fellow with the University of Sydney and works in history, environmental humanities, climate change, including its impacts in the Pacific and Australia, Indigenous/European histories of encounter, history of anthropology, and postcolonial studies. His work engages with academia and government, and with Australian Aboriginal community, and other non-government organisations. Michael is well published, with recent works including 'River thinking: towards a holistic approach to watery places in the human imaginary', in *Voicing Rivers*, Special Issue of *River Research and Applications Journal*. Michael's writings also include a co-edited collection (with Joni Adamson), *Humanities for the Environment: Integrating Knowledges, Forging New Constellations of Practice* (Routledge Earthscan, 2017), and *Writing Heritage: The Depiction of Indigenous Heritage in European-Australian Writings* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2007).

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