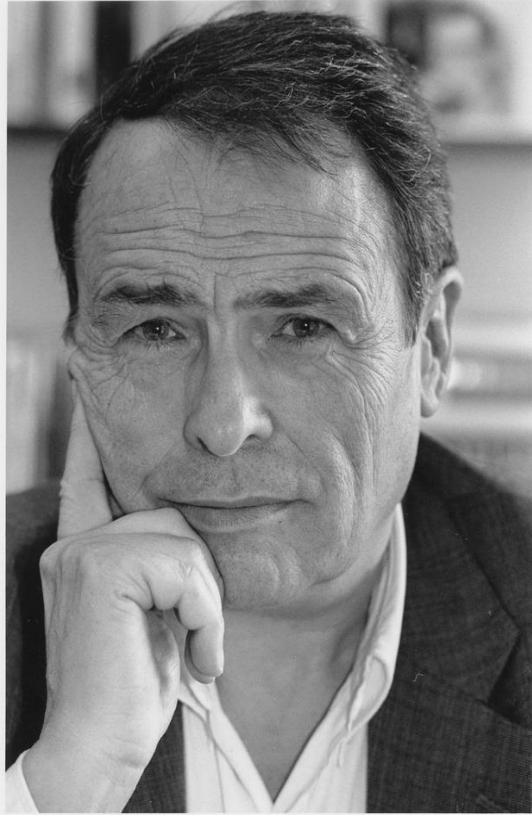


Mind the Gaps



**USING BOURDIEU TO UNDERSTAND
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH
PACIFIC**

Bourdieu in tourism studies



Bourdieu's ideas have rarely been employed by tourism academics investigating issues of sustainable tourism. Most writers have used him to illuminate the practices and ideologies of particular 'postmodern' forms of tourism.

e.g.

- 'Cultural consumption' (Britton, 1991)
- 'Heritage tourism' (Richards, 1996)
- 'Ecotourism' (Errington and Gewertz, 1989).
- 'Rural tourism' (Bessière, 1999)
- 'Egotourism' (Munt, 1994)

Bourdieu's social theory



HABITUS:

A set of dispositions that incline agents to act and react in specific ways



FIELD:

Arenas of activity within which agents engage and compete with each other to achieve their objectives



CAPITAL:

A range of resources, often directly derived from an agent's habitus, that can be applied in given fields

Social change?



HABITUS

In this confrontation [between habitus and field], habitus operates as a structuring structure able to selectively perceive and to transform the objective structure according to its own structure, while, at the same time, being restructured, transformed ... by the pressure of the objective structure. This means, that habitus changes ... but within the limits inherent in its originatory structure, that is within certain bounds of continuity (Bourdieu, 2005: 46-47).

FIELD

Social change?



HABITUS

- Increased reflexivity?
- Increased critical consciousness?
- Increased agency?
- “Misfit” behaviour ?
(Uncommon)

FIELD

Social change?



HABITUS

Change will be:

-Partial

-Uneven

-Contradictory



FIELD

Pacific Island Communities *are* Bourdieuan misfits!



Historically entrenched habitus :

Community; reciprocity; common ownership of productive resources; centrality of kinship networks and localised hierarchies; spiritual world views.

Field of international tourism development:

Neoliberal environment; heavy foreign ownership and control; intense competition; 'western' values and culture; introduction of cash economies entailing increased materialism and individualisation.

Pacific Island Communities *are* Bourdieuan misfits!



In negotiating the gap between habitus and field PICs have exercised significant **creativity, innovation and reflexivity**:

- Holistic approaches to development (Milne, 2005)
- Prioritisation of community wellbeing and environmental sustainability over purely economic concerns (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008)
- Development policy that seeks to hybridise the demands of multinational capitalism with the desire to protect and maintain indigenous forms of life (Connell, 2007)

Pacific Island Communities States *are* Bourdieuian misfits!



However...

Increasing focus on competing in global tourism markets has also entailed:

- Heavy dependence on foreign investment and therefore ownership of tourism infrastructure (Naryaran & Prasad, 2003)
- Increased influence of WTO, EU and tourism industry bodies in the formation of domestic development and economic policy (Schilcher, 2007)
- Economic reforms that have aggravated and entrenched poverty (Walsh, 2003; UNDP, 2007)
- Increased dependence on tourism as protection for agricultural sectors has been dismantled (Schilcher, 2007; Kelsey, 2005)

The Case of Fiji and the NLTB



The Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB) is the *institutional embodiment* of the attempt to negotiate the gap between habitus and field

- The NLTB has dual functions: 1.) To protect and support the institution of customary land tenure in Fiji 2.) To facilitate (usually foreign) commercial investment in customary land
- The NLTB has been the driving force between most large-scale tourism developments
- The government's tourism policy 2007-2015 wants to increase "Fijian socioeconomic equity and participation in the tourism industry", as well as double tourism arrivals and infrastructure by 2015 (Fiji Govt, 2007).
- The tension between these roles as resulted in both empowerment and disempowerment for indigenous communities engaged in tourism development

Dimensions of empowerment and disempowerment through tourism development

Empowerment

- Lease money (F\$200,000 annually for 500 bed resort)
- Wages through preferential employment at resort and contracted services (entertainment groups)
- Resort required to assist in improvement of village infrastructure (water supply, electrification)
- Resort required to contribute to education fund
- Limited governance role (1 seat on Board of Directors)
- Some informal opportunities for small business development.

Disempowerment

- Deregulated environment – 60% of tourism earnings are repatriated and approx 60% of food is imported (Berno, 2006).
- Very generous tax incentives for large-scale resorts saps govt. revenue
- Very low local ownership - in 2000 only 6% of ventures were locally owned
- Discouragement of joint ventures
- A the creation of a passive habitus that encourages Fijians to be beneficiaries rather than creators and owners of the tourism product

Dimensions of empowerment and disempowerment through tourism development



Quotes from Scheyvens & Russell, 2010.

Resorts have to give landowners priority. They [landowners] can do very well from this .

(Prof. Vijay Naidu, USP – June 2009)

[Tourism] has improved unity. All issues on tourism that concerns the village – the elders sit together and decide. The village development committee is a channel of communication from the hotel to the ...village headman and then to the village committee. So there is transparency and trust.

(Villager, 27 y/o Male – Feb 2010).

Dimensions of empowerment and disempowerment through tourism development



We say to young people that tourism should be the last option. We are worried that young people see tourism as the easy option.

(Landowner, F, 32 y/o – Feb 2010)

School trained people often end up in the hospitality sector. It does give them hope – but not hope that people can rise to the top and run a business in their own right.

(NGO Official – Feb 2010)

The Fijian people unfortunately need someone guiding them, you know? I think that's the whole problem with politics here: if you give them all a say they'll never agree. They need someone to just say; 'Look, it's this way!', and then it really works out better. (Owner, Medium-scale resort – Dec 09).

Why Bourdieu Matters



- Collapses dichotomy between macro/micro levels of analysis:

Discussions on empowerment at a local level must include an understanding of the wider political economy of tourism development. A Bourdieuan approach has in view both the restructuring of power relations that limit the choices of the poor, as well as the restructuring of power relations that limit the choices of poor governments.

- Collapses dichotomy between agency and determinism

Agency and determinism are hardly ever separate entities, more likely they are complexly intertwined: empowerment and disempowerment often occur *simultaneously*.

Why Bourdieu Matters



- Shifts analysis away from impacts towards *processes* (i.e. ‘rules of the game’).

Rather than attempting to measure perceived benefits, we must also look closely at the structures, processes and interactions between people, as well as investigating more subtle influences of culture and power.

- Alternative to depressing narratives on ‘modernity’.

Places like the South Pacific are sites of immense potentiality where capitalism is being transformed, where new meanings are being created in the context of significant inequality. Rather than attempting to reconcile dissonance between habitus and field, a Bourdieuan approach would involve identifying progressive responses to these gaps and seek to enhance an agent’s ability to negotiate this dissonance on their *own* terms.