RESEARCHING INDIGENOUS AND MARGINAL PEOPLES – INTRODUCTION

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Those promoting tourism often seek to highlight that which is unique about their destinations in order to attract tourists. Many countries have beautiful landscapes, rich histories and heritage, and the tourist may come to see linkages of landscape and history across different countries and indeed possibly across continents. However, in the search for the unique, those countries with ethnic minority or other minority groups demarcated by factors other than ethnicity but characterised by special belief systems or ways of life living within their borders (e.g. the Amish) are truly able to offer the tourist a glimpse of something that will not be found in other parts of the world. Accordingly, and being aware that holiday makers are not lay anthropologists and may be seeking little more than an entertainment, minorities and their culture have become in many places a staged show based primarily on song and dance. Indeed, such has been the process that Xie (2011, p. 196) provides an example from the island of Hainan, China, where tourism promoters have created 'the authentic Chiyou tribe' to entertain tourists – a tribe developed purely for entertainment based on concepts of the exotic and primitive and only loosely based on the culture of the native Li people. One partial result described by Xie (2011) has been that the Li themselves have become confused as to their own culture.

This is not the place to examine more carefully the arguments about the role of tourism in the cultural, economic and social developments of minority and marginal peoples – such arguments have been examined by Butler and Hinch (2007), Robinson and Boniface (1999) and Ryan and Aicken (2005) among others. But the existence of such product and concerns clearly indicates the complexities that face any researcher seeking to better understand the issues. The stakeholders are obviously the minority or marginalised peoples themselves, the tourists, those responsible for the design and promotion of tourism product and those who sell such product including tour operators; all of whom, with notable exceptions, are rarely academic researchers themselves (certainly in the mainstream tourism academic literature). Hence, commercial requirements co-exist with the needs of marginalised groups to find, and subsequently use, a 'voice' in the political and economic mainstream. Issues of power therefore underline many of these studies.

As an aside, in New Zealand, as one suspects in other countries, a whole new generation of university educated indigenous people such as Shirley Barnett, Anna Thompson and others are following in the footsteps of people such as Te Awekotuku (1981) in researching their own peoples and the interactions with mainstream society and its tourism, and although they do not always publish in the tourism journals, their work is available through libraries and other sources – but sadly tourism researchers from outside of the country in question seem rarely to access such works. This observation thus raises questions about forms of research that are published by researchers external to the country to which their publication relates – and here one writes as both such a researcher and as an editor. As a researcher who has written a number of articles relating to China, there are obvious issues as to language and immersion in Chinese society – and hence there is the need to not only work with colleagues from the destinations being studied but also to make several visits to that country and wherever possible only write about places visited so that interpretations are informed by direct involvement, shared experiences informed by working with colleagues native to the place and one's own past research experiences and knowledge of the literature. When working in such teams, the outsider possesses an advantage in that coming to a problem with a different perspective can challenge and supplement the work of the local researcher. Yet on the other hand, as an editor, I have received manuscripts by authors who have stayed briefly in a country, picked up brochures relating to minority peoples and offered a deconstruction of the text that offers no voice to the people so gazed upon. Additionally, such texts are contrary to

notions of gift giving as espoused by at least the Maori of my own country of New Zealand.

Such considerations must therefore require of the case study writer and researcher into issues of indigenous, minority and marginalised peoples a number of skills in addition to the problems discussed in the other chapters of this book. Among these challenges is the ability to cross-cultural divides and immerse themselves into the daily lives about whom one is writing. It is a learning experience on the part of the researcher that requires empathy. In the following chapters, this emerges quite clearly. Swanson and Devereaux (2012) write of the importance of collaboration with Hopi Indians in their study, of numerous visits, of establishing trust and of a mutual process of learning between the research team and the Hopi peoples. For her part, Amoamo (2012) notes that her research began with accompanying her husband for a stay of 12 months on Pitcairn Island. As a researcher, she became sensitive to the different nuances of the island community and this enabled her to establish a framework of questioning and observation for a more formal period of fieldwork on subsequent visits. A reiterative process follows as the framework is tested and amended – a process only made possible by again adopting processes of immersion and trust building. Such ethnographic approaches to fieldwork are time-consuming, but rewarding, at least intrinsically.

Ren and Liburd (2012) share their experiences of a project that was initially perceived as a form of consultancy. As they note in their chapter 'At first glance, the project design appeared unambiguous …', but as they describe the numbers of stakeholders swelled as they came to better know the island for which the research was being done, and how presentation of results to residents simply unearthed an increased numbers of nuanced and specific differences. Indeed, as they comment, 'Knowledge is never innocent' and increasingly as differences emerged between stakeholders they eventually felt unable to continue their research project for the original commissioning party.

The remaining contribution in this section of the book is by Singh, Milne, and Hull (2012) and again relates to an island community, that of Niue. In this instance, the researchers utilised a mixed-methods case study approach of assessing the problems relating to tourism and the island's agricultural sector by first conducting a series of interviews of a semi-structured pattern with growers, government officials and small-scale entrepreneurs and second by conducting a web-based online survey of tourists to the island having obtained email addresses at the island's airport.

The nature of the case study as embracing a number of research methods is hence again identified in this section, ranging as it does from the ethnographic that is additionally informed by personal observations, secondary documentation and historic sources, to the engagement of cross-cultural understandings, a growing involvement whereby the role of the researcher as an objective neutral becomes a position impossible to sustain, to the more conventional methods of data collection primarily based on single interviews and self-completion questionnaires. There are also obvious differences in scale, duration, location and numbers of researchers involved in each of these case studies. Where, one might ask, is the commonality? In each of the three situations, there is an importance placed on face-to-face contact with individuals and the collection of data in ways that permit the respondents to help set an agenda – hypothesis building emerges from the interactions that researchers engage in rather than the empiricist approach that entails the collection of data to assess whether propositions are supported by the data. These issues are discussed more fully by Ryan's chapter in the next section of the book, but the question also arises as to what degree does the case study of the marginal differ when compared to other forms of case study work?

The first response to this question is obvious, and that is that the similarities with other forms of case study work may be greater than the differences, but there is one major difference that any researcher has to approach – and that is the researcher enters into a social pattern different to that space they normally occupy. That space may have different forms: the geographical differences of islands as in these instances, or the difference of culture that is quite marked in Swanson and Devereaux's example. Such social, cultural and physical spaces require more intense periods of learning on the part of the researcher before they can commence a movement towards achieving the purposes of their research. There is a need to continually examine that which is thought to be known, and that testing is re-examined in the light of subsequent sequences of interviews with the same informants as they too become exposed to new knowledge. Such case studies tend to be patterns of reiteration as the researcher moves to a point of 'knowledge exhaustion' where additional patterns produce but small increments to the existing stock of opinions, perceptions and attitudes. Of course, having collected such perceptions, the remaining question is to what degree do perceived 'things' equate to more objective measures of those self same 'things' – in short is the perceived truth, an actual truth in whatever sense that question itself has meaning?

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