

Power, Participation and Development:

A Case Study of Theoretical
Doctrines and International Agency
Practice in Tuvalu

Nicki Wrighton

- *'You know Nicki, this happens all the time, they grumble about us never being here because we are always at meetings yet the same people grumble about us if we say we can't come to their meetings because we are too busy. We can't win.'* (Anonymous, Personal Communication, 2008)

The Participation Paradigm

- Assumption - participation and consultation essential to good development outcomes
- Critique existed as long as paradigm existed (Rahnema 1992)

Aid Effectiveness Agenda

- Tension - multiplicity development partners and recipient country ability to absorb.
- Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness signed in March 2005

Quick Time™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Tuvalu: small country big issues

- **Small - vulnerable** (Bertram and Watters 1985, Warrington, 1998, Baldacchino, 2006).
- **'Bleak' literature on size that concentrates on a sense of weakness, and isolation on the part of these smaller nations.** (Warrington, 1998).
- **Small = open** (Baldacchino, 2006)

Researching in the Pacific

- ‘Consent is not so much given for a project or specific set of questions but for a person for their credibility’ (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999)

Methodology

- Rapid Appraisal of visitor arrivals Oct 2009 and Apr 2010
- Semi Structured interviews with Tuvalu officials - October 2009

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Rapid Appraisal Findings

Development Related Visitors to Tuvalu

	Oct-09	10-Apr
Bilateral consultants/officials	5	4
Regional consultants/officials	13	8
Multilateral consultants/officials	6	6
Other	9	13
TOTAL	33	31

(Wrighton 2010)

Development Mathematics

- 900 visitors x 6 meetings x 2 officials = 10,488 hours to attend meetings
- 5% of total civil service time just to attend meetings.

Voices of Tuvalu Officials

- *‘Missions often want a lot of meetings because of pressing issues for them and they want to move things along’*
- *‘I feel I am becoming ineffective – I attend too many meetings taking too much time away’*
- *‘They all claim to be assisting towards Kakeega [the national planning document] but many things they do are overlapping, that they do not communicate with each other is making more work for us’.*

Voices of Tuvalu Officials

- *‘On some occasions we are informed only one or two days in advance of the arrival of a mission’.*
- *‘We only got the draft document about two days before the arrival of the mission that was coming to sign it’.*
- *‘It felt like they didn’t know basic information and just wanted me to provide it’.*
- *‘I would love to see more consultants who are scientifically prepared and don’t waste my time’.*

A Balanced Relationship?

- One side: Tuvalu - lacks institutional capacity to engage with the high level of interaction, planning and accountability associated with contemporary development aid practice.
- Other side: - development partners who are large, relatively well resourced in terms of staffing and capability, and hold the purse strings.

What next?

- Successful Marsden Grant Application
- “The inverse sovereignty effect: The new aid agenda in Pacific Island States”