

North American Edition

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**Featured
Research:**

**Exploring Fijian's Sense of Place After
Exposure to Tourism Development**

From: Kerstetter and Bricker



OVERVIEW

As part of a larger study on tourism development impacts on the Nacula Tikina (Fiji), researchers used photo elicitation to understand the meanings that indigenous populations attach to their place (i.e., villages). Your destination can use this method to give residents a “visual voice” on how their community is being affected by tourism development.

PHOTO ELICITATION PROCESS

The researchers used a two-step process, as summarized in the figure below:

Step One: Photo Elicitation

- Village chiefs identified study participants based on selection criteria.
- Participants were given a camera and asked to take pictures of “things in their village that are important to them and represent what is special about their village” and “things that mean the most to them or that they would miss if they moved away.”
- Participants were asked to create a list of the pictures and document what each picture represented/meant to them.

Step Two: Interviews

- Interviews with participants were conducted after processing the pictures and creating albums for each participant.
- Participants were asked to interpret their pictures. This was done to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on and verbalize the meaning of their place.

Details about how the researchers worked with indigenous populations on data collection are provided in the article.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following are three (3) key takeaways from this research:

Tourism stakeholders can use the results of this type of research to guide their sustainable tourism development activities in ways that preserve things in their community that residents feel are important and represent what is special about their community.

“...researchers, whose findings can inform and potentially influence the development of policy, should utilize tools such as photographs to obtain a holistic, in-depth understanding of the meaning places have for indigenous people, many of whom do not have a strong political voice and stand to lose all that makes their “place” special” (p. 704).

Ongoing, longitudinal research should be conducted because place meanings typically evolve over time.

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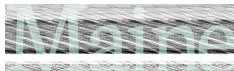
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