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Forum Theme:

“Together for a Just and Peaceful Pacific”

Plenary Session 6 Theme:

**“Good Governance: Weaving Good
Governance into Pacific Societies in Transition”**

Presentation Topic:

**“Intersecting, Integrating & Interspersing
Governance in the Pacific: Weaving Our
Beautiful *Kupesi** into Our Mat”**

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(*Please note: The word *kupesi* means the set of elaborate, complex and beautiful geometric designs derived from *tufunga lalava*, the Pacific master art of line-space intersection, and reproduced in such art forms as mat-weaving, tapa-making, tattooing and incorporated in others such as house-building, dance and voyaging)

Presentation Abstract:

This brief paper will critique the concept and practice of governance. Governance is, by nature, both complex and conflicting in form, content and function. As a highly problematic concept and practice, governance will be critiqued in terms of both its bigger and smaller pictures. As for the bigger picture, governance will be investigated by means of a number of interconnected and intersected Western and Pacific cultural and historical contexts, beginning with imperialism and colonialism through traditionalism and modernity to modernisation and globalisation. By way of the smaller picture, governance will be explored in the context of my newly-developed Pacific general *tā-vā*, 'time-space' theory of nature, mind and society, where both the irreconcilable Pacific and Western senses of time and space are formally, substantially and functionally integrated in the social process (In progress, SUNY Press). In effect, this new general theory examines these competing spatio-temporal senses at the interface of the problematic relationships between the collective and the individual and the conflicts arising from the opposing circular and linear arrangements of time and space.

Governance, Art and Literature

PISINISI MOE KALATUA

1. Kuo movete `ihe kolope
`Ae ngaahi tui `o `lulope
Afuhia ai ē `Otu Felenite
`O fele he me`a fai vevele
Hake`uta me`a fakatauele

2. Ko `ena ha tuinga sisitemi
He `ikonōmika fio politiki
Kominusi ē moe `olikaki
Fāsisi ha pule fakamālohi
Kepitalisi moe temokalati

3. Koe pisinisi moe kalatua
He tākanga ka kuo fesītu`a
`lfiolosia `ena ē taautaha
Kae teoli ē `oe lukufua
Toki vete `ehe tā moe vā

Tau:

Ka koe hā nai ha`au lau `au?
Fai pē ā ha`o fakamaau
`E ma`u pē `ihe feilaulau
Ka kumi ē potupotutatau
Tala atu ha fonua malu

Fatu & liliu `e
`Okusitino Māhina

BUSINESS AND CULTURE

1. *Diffused throughout the globe
Are the many beliefs of Europe
Sprinkling over the Friendly Isles
Scattering yet uncompromising
Overflowing yet tempting*

2. *There is a string of systems
Of economics mixed with politics
Of communism and oligarchy
Of fascism a rule of tyranny
Of capitalism and democracy*

3. *Business and culture
They co-exist yet oppose
One, the ideology of individualism
The other, a theory of collectivism
Resolved only by time and space*

Chorus:

*But, what is your say?
Make your judgement
Acquired only through sacrifice
Should you seek harmony
It is in the land of peace*

Composed & translated by
`Okusitino Māhina

Governance in Perspective

What is Governance?

“... governance [is] ... the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development ...” (Mellor & Jabes, 2004: ix).

Issues & Problems

“In the Pacific, the governance agenda has been ... concerned about the region’s lack of sustained economic development (particularly, its lack of consistent growth); its rising political instability; the increasingly visible mismanagement of public funds in many countries; and an upsurge in the so-called ideology of traditionalism” (Huffer, 2005: 118).

“Governance problems in the Pacific find their roots in deeply embedded political and social issues such as the structures of government, the quality of leadership, and the capacity of civil society to hold government accountable” (Saldanha, 2004: 30).

Problems & Solutions

“The recipe put forward to cure these ills, in the Pacific ... has to promote liberal democracy, the rule of law, government workforce reduction (“right-sizing”), and more open markets” (Huffer, 2005: 118).

ADB-led definition of governance:

- Accountability (i.e., leadership);**
- Participation (i.e., people-centred);**
- Predictability (i.e., rule of law); and**
- Transparency (i.e., free flow of information)**

(Mellor & Jabes, 2004: 4)

Governance, The Bigger Picture

Imperialism, Colonialism & Decolonisation

As a European-Pacific-culture-contact-encounters phenomenon, imperialism can be viewed as a Western economic programme -- expanded through colonialism as a political instrument -- and ideologically imposed via Western religion, education and technology --involving domination and exploitation of Pacific colonies for the building of Western imperial centres.

With decolonisation came neo-colonialism and post-colonialism, new forms of Western colonialism and Pacific anti-colonial encounters.

Traditionalism, Modernisation & Development

A post-WWII phenomenon, development can be viewed as an economic (capitalist) instrument facilitating the transition from traditionalism to modernity, i.e., mediation of cultural and historical tensions between the Pacific and the West.

Modernisation, Globalisation & Governance

A post-Cold War phenomenon, (good) governance can be viewed as a (democratic) political instrument facilitating the transition from modernisation to globalisation, i.e., mediation of cultural and historical tensions between the Pacific and the West.

Colonisation, Modernisation & Globalisation

Colonisation is a Western political programme (with religion, education and technology as a tool); modernisation a Western social programme (with development as a tool); and globalisation a Western economic programme (with governance as a tool).

Globalisation & Governance

As a new form of Western imperialism, globalisation is facilitated through governance as a form of neo-colonialism -- exacted ideologically, politically, technologically and, worst still, militarily -- and executed immediately by powerful Western transnational financial institutions and ultimately by Western powers. With globalisation came the domination and exploitation of the world's two most important resources, ecology and society.

Development (& Governance): The West versus The Pacific

The all-round failure of Western development (and governance) is largely due to its conception and practice in relativist and evolutionist terms, i.e., as a predominantly lineal, mono-cultural and one-directional movement away from the Pacific to the West, thought of as providing the only norms for all human cultures.

The new Pacific theory provides us with a realistic basis for rethinking Western development (and governance) -- seen not as spatio-temporally lineal, mono-cultural and one-directional movement -- but rather taken as a spiral-cyclical, trans-cultural and multi-directional time-space transformation.

Governance, the Smaller Picture

Matter of theory: Theorising Governance in New Ways, Towards a New Pacific General *tā-vā*, 'Time-Space' Theory of Nature, Mind and Society

As a general theory of reality, it, by dealing with the formal, substantial and functional dimensions of nature, mind and society, enters into all and across disciplines, (i.e., multidisciplinary & interdisciplinary).

Some general and specific tenets of theory:

- based on *tā and vā*, 'time' and 'space' as common medium in which all things are, in a single level of reality or spatio-temporality – the ontological dimension;
- based on *tā and vā*, 'time' and 'space' as human constructs, i.e., their social arrangement across cultures – the epistemological dimension;
- based on historical fact that all things in reality, i.e., nature, mind and society, stand in relations of exchange to one another; and
- based on the historical fact that relations of exchange within and across nature, mind and society can be either *symmetrical* in nature or *asymmetrical* in character.
- based on *tā and vā*, 'time' and 'space' as *abstract* dimension of reality (and of existence);
- based on *fuo and uho*, 'form' and 'content' as *concrete* dimension of reality (and of existence);
- based on the philosophical fact that *tā-vā*, 'time'-'space', *fuo-uho*, 'form'-'content' are as entities inseparable in theory and practice; and
- based on *tā and vā* as pan-Pacific concepts and practices of 'time' and 'space', their English equivalents ...

Matter of Practice: Putting the New Pacific General Tā-Vā, 'Time-Space' Theory of Nature, Mind and Society to Use

A harmonisation project is proposed, where there is a requirement for a sense of balance to be practically restored by bringing interconnected and intersected Western and Pacific cultural and historical realities into a unified Pacific social context.

The harmonisation project is based on some of the tenets of the above-named theory as follows:

- that *tā and vā*, 'time' and 'space' as human constructs, involving their socially relative and trans-cultural arrangement (or cultural relativism) – the epistemological dimension;
- that all things in reality, i.e., nature, mind and society, stand in complementary and opposed relations of exchange to one another; and
- that all conflicting relations of exchange within and across nature, mind and society can be either *symmetrical* in nature or *asymmetrical* in character.

Matter of Unity of Theory & Practice of Governance

A constant check on the unity of theory and practice of governance must take into account:

- The unity of mind and *tā-vā*, 'time-space' as the common medium in which all things are, be they nature, mind or society, in a single level of reality (ontology); and
- The inevitable conflicts deriving from the relative trans-cultural arrangement of *tā-vā*, 'time-space' across human societies (epistemology).

Relative Social Arrangement of Tā and Vā, 'Time' and 'Space' Across the Pacific and the West

In the Pacific, *tā* and *vā* are arranged in plural, collectivistic, holistic and circular ways.

For example, it is thought that Pacific people walk forward into the past (*kuongamu`a*, 'age in the front') and walk backward into the future (*kuongamui*, 'age in the back'), where the seemingly fixed past and the elusively, yet-to-take-place, shifting future are permanently mediated in the ever changing, eternally conflicting present (*kuongalotoloto*, 'age in the middle').

Thus, the Pacific conception of *tā* and *vā* is theoretically and practically, yet critically, informed by a sense of classicism, realism and aestheticism.

In the West, time and space are arranged in singular, individualistic, analytical and linear ways (NB: *Responsible for this are Western science (in limited ways), and Western technological, capitalist and democratic culture*).

For example, the Western classification of human societies is made in terms of lower (i.e., simple, primitive, irrational, mythical, backward societies) or higher (i.e., complex, modern, rational, scientific, advanced societies) levels of reality, thereby treating them by privileging status over and above difference. Consequently, the Western conception of time and space is theoretically and practically, albeit problematically, dictated by a sense of evolutionism, rationalism and romanticism.

Taki Lelei mo e Taki Kovi, “Good Governance” and “Bad Governance” in the Pacific, Some Specific Examples, Then & Now

Taki, Fatongia & Tauhivā, “Leadership”, “Obligations” & “Socio-spatial Relations” Then

Traditionally, in Tonga, as in the Pacific, leadership is freely achieved, on all levels of society, by means of ongoing performance of *fatongia* or ‘obligations’ through the cultural practice of *tauhivā*, ‘beating or keeping-spaces’ -- the maintenance of which was ensured via equal generalised and specialised of relations of exchange between individuals, groups and institutions – with the symmetrical multiple flows of material and human resources and services within and across the whole social spectrum -- made fair, just and equitable.

For example, Queen Sālote’s reign squarely hinges on her unique political philosophy, emphasising both *fatongia* and *tauhivā*, viz., *pule`anga mo hono kakai, mo e kakai mo honua pule`anga* “government and its people and people and their government”; *Kuini mo hono kakai, mo e kakai mo honua Kuini* “Queen and her people and people and their Queen”, etc., and functioning to acquire a state of *vālelei* or ‘good-spaces’, i.e., social stability.

This is a recipe for relative political peace, economic prosperity and social harmony.

Taki, Kavenga & Tu`utu`uni, "Leadership", "Socio-economic Burdens" & "Political Coercion or Dictation" Now

In Tonga now, as in the Pacific, leadership is forcibly achieved, on all social levels, by means of ongoing political enforcement of *kavenga* or unwarranted 'socio-economic burdens' by means of *tu`utu`uni* or 'political coercion or dictation' -- where the unequal multiple flows of material and human resources and services through asymmetrical exchange between individuals, groups and institutions -- tend to concentrate in the hands of a highly privileged few -- with the poor many fated to a constant life of unnecessary poverty and misery.

For example, the late King George Tupou IV's reign privileges *kavenga* and *tu`utu`uni* over above *fatongia* and *tauhivā* -- viz., *kakai mo honua pule`anga, mo e pule`anga pe kiate ia* "people and their government and government unto itself"; and *kakai mo honua Tu`i, mo e Tu`i pe kiate ia* "people and their King and the King unto himself" -- thereby throwing Tonga into a state of social disequilibrium -- and yielding her to a condition of *vākovi* or 'bad spaces', i.e., social instability.

This is a recipe for disaster, characterised by political instability, economic chaos and social disharmony.

Conclusion

As the Tongan *heliaki* saying goes, *Ko e koloa `a Tonga ko e fakamālō*, "The treasure of Tonga is in saying thank-you". With sincere appreciation, I say *mālō* to you all. *Leveleva e malanga, ANFF, `ofa atu fau.*