

Institution: University of St Andrews 
Unit of Assessment: 24 – Anthropology and Development Studies
Title of case study: Pacific Connections: Making European Union External Actions More Effective
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Dr Tony Crook’s research on knowledge-practices solved a long-standing theoretical problem in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Key insights have been developed into a working method for knowledge exchange - ‘Pacific Connections’ - with application for national and international policy contexts that confront misunderstandings between Euro-American and Pacific knowledges.</p> <p>The EU is the second largest international donor of development assistance to the Pacific region, contributing €665m between 2008-2013. Through on-going collaborations, and a series of EU-funded workshops and high level roundtables, involving EU and European Commission policy makers and diplomatic counterparts from a range of Pacific states, Dr Crook is implementing ‘Pacific Connections’ as the method by which social science research is informing and enabling European external actions to more effectively connect to Pacific concerns. As a consequence of Dr Crook’s work, Europe’s capacity and ability to more effectively engage its Pacific partners has been significantly enhanced.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The Min peoples of Papua New Guinea are renowned for their secret male initiation rituals and have proven to be one of the most enigmatic cultures in anthropological experience: Min knowledge-practices defeated anthropologists for over forty years – a long-standing interpretative impasse known as the infamous ‘Min Problem’. Since joining St Andrews, Crook’s innovative solution to the Min Problem was recognized in winning the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monograph Competition (2007a).</p> <p>Crook’s research argues that the Min Problem was of Anthropology’s own making: what is at stake for the Min is not the content or meaning of knowledge, but rather the differentiated personal capacities and social positions that their knowledge-exchange relations create (2009). Pacific knowledge-exchanges focus on defining and maintaining social positions and hierarchies – and so previous analytical attempts to meaningfully reconcile different and incomplete pieces of some knowledge puzzle missed the point entirely. A key finding and lesson here is that Pacific epistemologies take the differentiation and incommensurability of knowers and what they know for granted, and work by accommodating diverse positions rather than attempting to homogenise them and thus offend and collapse the very relations through which knowledge is made effective.</p> <p>Crook’s research has involved fieldwork with three Min groups in the context of villages and a mining township - as an undergraduate in 1990, postgraduate in 1994-1996, and postdoctorate in 1997, 1999, 2000-1. But his solution to the Min problem was only finalized since joining St Andrews in 2003 and confirmed during fieldwork in 2004 and 2006-7 and published as a monograph in 2007 as <i>Anthropological Knowledge, Secrecy and Bolivip, Papua New Guinea: Exchanging Skin</i> (British Academy/OUP 2007a). Subsequently, Crook’s research has examined the similarly profound misunderstandings of the Min lifeworld evident in the mis-management of the social and cultural impacts of the Ok Tedi mine (2004, 2007b, 2007c).</p> <p>Crook’s research focuses on the vernacular terms of indigenous epistemology—in which ‘knowledge’ (<i>kál</i>) is a water-like substance in the skin (<i>ka</i>) that circulates between people, plants and food gardens—and the knowledge exchanges that take place both outwith and during male initiation ritual, and amongst both men <i>and</i> women. Min knowledge practices take incommensurability, asymmetry and incomprehension for granted: figured as the difference between the crown of a tree—where multiple branches, twigs and leaves exhibit differentiation and movement which is likened to confusion—and the base of a tree where the different ‘examples’ (<i>kukup</i>) come together, aligned in straightness and stillness. By conceiving of the positions in knowledge in this way, and by treating knowledge exchange as the skin of one person being laid</p>

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over the skin of another person, Min epistemology assumes that positions in knowledge are inside-out to each other.

In this light, the problem of Euro-American encounters with Pacific lifeworlds is not simply a matter of cultural or even epistemological difference—but rather the problem of assuming that knowledge exchange and cross-cultural understanding can and should overcome issues of incommensurability, when in the Pacific *actively respecting and creating this* is the very means to knowing another's position and thereby making knowledge for oneself and making it effective.

In demonstrating his solution to the Min problem, Crook borrowed his ethnographic method of setting up an exchange between different knowledges from the Min peoples who taught him the lesson—and has since trialled and developed a practical method for knowledge-exchange that acknowledges the value of respecting and creating differentiation as the very relational basis for meaningful dialogue with Pacific peoples.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Relevant publications

- 2009** 'Exchanging Skin: Making a Science of the Relation between Bolivip and Barth', *Social Analysis*, 53:2, 94-107. [Outcome of Wenner-Gren funded dual-sited conference in Lisbon and St Andrews in 2007]. DOI: 10.3167/sa.2009.530206
- 2007a** *Anthropological Knowledge, Secrecy and Bolivip, Papua New Guinea: Exchanging Skin*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. [British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monograph Competition winner]. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197264003.001.0001>
- 2007b** 'If you don't believe our story, at least give us half of the money': Claiming Ownership of the Ok Tedi Mine, PNG', *Journal de la Société des Océaniste*, 125. pp221-228. [Special Edition presenting highlights of the European Society for Oceanists conference in Marseille, 2005]. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/jso.939>
- 2007c** 'Machine-Thinking: Changing Social and Bodily Divisions around the Ok Tedi Mine', in S. Bamford ed., *Embodying Modernity and PostModernity: Ritual, Praxis and Social Change in Melanesia*, Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. [Volume developed from an invited panel at the American Anthropological Association conference in 1999]. <http://www.cap-press.com/books/isbn/9780890894767/Embodying-Modernity-and-Post-Modernity>
- 2004** 'Transactions in Perpetual Motion', *Transaction and Creations: Property Debates and the Stimulus of Melanesia*, Hirsch, E. & M. Strathern eds., Oxford: Berghahn Books. [Summative collection from the Cambridge-Brunel ESRC funded 'Property, Transactions and Creations: New Economic Relations in the Pacific' project, 1998-2001]. ISBN 9781571816153 <http://www.berghahnbooks.com/title.php?rowtag=HirschTransactions>

Relevant Awards and Grants

Since appointment to St Andrews in 2002, Crook's research on knowledge exchange led to him winning the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monograph Competition (see 2007a), and to the successful award of several funding grants associated with this research, and for which end of grant reports are available: 1. ECOPAS, European Consortium for Pacific Studies, EU Framework 7 funded project, including €350k for St Andrews work package 'Knowledge Exchange: Research-Policy Interfaces', 2012-2015, 2. 'Dialogues between Anthropology, Customary Law and Statute Law in Resource Development Contexts', Leverhulme Trust Visiting Professorship, (James F. Weiner), Principal Investigator, £52k, 2008-10, 3. 'Exchanging Knowledge in Oceania', Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Conference Grant, CONF-530, European Society for Oceanists, 8th Conference, Principal Investigator, US\$15k, 2010, 4. 'Pacific Connections', Russell Trust Development Award, University of St Andrews, Principal Investigator, £2.5k, 2010.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

This case-study focuses on EU-Pacific international relations and development policy, and provides evidence that as a result of Crook's 'own research on knowledge practices and method for knowledge-exchanges in a Europe-Pacific context' we now have 'an enhanced effectiveness to the EU's external actions in the Pacific' [1].

In terms of a widely applicable method for knowledge-exchange, Crook's research suggests that there is both necessity and real productive virtue in respecting and maintaining differentiation, and in working with incommensurability rather than against it: 'the acknowledgment and creation of gaps between the EU officials, the European researchers, and the Pacific researchers involved in

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ECOPAS project, i.e. Dr. Crook's concept of knowledge transfer, has been instrumental in bringing a critical mass for the process to be launched' [2].

Since joining St Andrews, Crook's development of the 'Pacific Connections' method for knowledge-exchanges has been trialled, put into practice and impacted upon different kinds of audiences - **mining industry, general public, UK and EU international policy** – and met with different receptions, and led to diverse forms of impact evidence.

Whilst Crook's research insights have, since 1997, been communicated to the **mining industry** (in person, and through publications 2004, 2007b, 2007c), the internal corporate impact of research perceived as a reputational challenge to change behaviour, or as an adversarial critique, is necessarily harder to evidence than where a more positive user-friendly relation exists: in 1997 Ok Tedi managers told Crook to disappear, kicked him out of town in 2001 and withdrew cooperation in 2004; in 2010 Crook made two presentations to the International Council on Mining and Metals – evidence of their internal impact took the form of the ICMM's subsequent disengagement.

In 2010, Crook organized and participated in a series of 'Pacific Connections' **public events [6]** to coincide with his organization of ESfO2010, the 8th conference of the European Society for Oceanists (which he chaired, 2008-10) [7]. These public events included 'Double Visions', an exhibition of contemporary PNG art (co-organized with Fife Contemporary Arts and Crafts, and shown in Kirkcaldy and St Andrews), and a public talk Crook gave in Kirkcaldy about the exhibition which drew on the 'double visions' required to comprehend Melanesian knowledge-practices; 'Lost Land of the Volcano' which engaged the BBC producer and a presenter of the TV series and which questioned the inter-relation between indigenous knowledge and biodiversity; and 'Avatar' which was designed around the participation of the movie's anthropological consultant, and involved an anthropologist employed by a PNG mine, a PNG researcher and activist, and Global Witness to discuss the commodity chains and 'resource wars' linking the UK and PNG.

In a **UK international policy** context, Crook was invited by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to speak at a high level roundtable involving UK Ministers and Pacific Ambassadors, invited by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to speak alongside the Papua New Guinea High Commissioner in Westminster Hall on the Millennium Development Goals ['your insight into social relationships in [PNG] society'... were 'fascinating', 'we received wonderful feedback' 3], and to provide a video film to kick-off FCO Minister Swire's debate with University of Papua New Guinea students in Apr 2013 [8].

However, the central focus of this impact case-study is on the **European Union** and highlights the context of a large bureaucracy in which policy-making is geared to a hierarchy of political decisions and research evidence. Impacts are made evident in the responses of research users as a relationship of trust is built up and is manifested by step-wise requests for subsequent inputs into new contexts and by remarks over previous inputs.

In early 2010, the EU EEAS Pacific Division, recognized that the research it drew upon mainly originated beyond Europe, and when Crook sent details of his research and of the ESfO2010 conference and invited them to attend, EEAS phoned Crook to discuss the thinking behind the conference rubric: this derived directly from Crook's Min research [2007a, 2007b]. EEAS and DG-RTD sent delegates who addressed the opening plenary [7], and asked Crook to nominate participants for a meeting in St Andrews with European research leaders, and then again to give a keynote talk, and to nominate speakers and delegates who would be offered EU-funding for a large workshop in Brussels [9]. At this workshop, the EU announced that the ESfO2010 conference had leveraged their policy aim for a research network and policy interface, and the EEAS Head of Pacific Division publicly thanked Crook for demonstrating a method for the knowledge-exchange relations that they could work with, saying it was 'clearly going to be very important and a really key part of making the proposed network and policy interface a success' [1]. Additional evidence of impact at the workshop is that EEAS and DG-RES publically called for St Andrews to play a lead role in responding to their FP7 funding call. This resulted in the ECOPAS consortium with Crook as a point of contact for DG-RTD and EEAS which expressed a hope that Crook would be involved in the knowledge-exchange policy interface with several EU and EC units with a Pacific remit.

EEAS also invited Crook to assist them in organizing a High Level Panel focused on the Pacific at the European Development Days event in Warsaw (Dec, 2011) and were so taken with Crook's 'Pacific Connections' method (which won a competitive slot at EDD2011) to create a dialogue

between EU attempts to connect development ideas to Pacific ways, and Pacific attempts to connect to development initiatives, that they asked to merge this HLP with their own. 'Pacific Connections' responded to EEAS' request for recommendations to the EU as it seeks to renew its development partnership with the Pacific. The EC's Commissioner for Development asked Crook to draft his introductory remarks, and of his own accord praised the research linkages between different scales. The EU Ambassador to the Pacific closed the event by acknowledging the profound insight it had given him into Pacific people's lives and future EU-Pacific relations, and summing up that 'this marks the day Europe was initiated into the Pacific' [2, 10]. The deputy head (Pacific, EEAS) wrote to Crook thanking him for his work and results in delivering the EDD event, which he described as 'excellent', and as indication of the impact on EEAS policy thinking, asked Crook to provide advice on how policy related to the Pacific (which is covered by the Cotonou Agreement with the ACP regions), might be accommodated by the EC's internal re-organization (in 2011) which has separated the Pacific from other ACP regions and re-aligned it in with Asia.

ECOPAS was awarded FP7 funding and, since the project started in December 2012, Crook has been engaged in close cooperation with EEAS and knowledge-exchange with various EC units, has chaired a series of Pacific Connections events in Brussels (at the European Parliament and EEAS), and in St Andrews on gender inequality and on sustainable development attended by EEAS [2]. For example, in May 2013, two roundtables held in EEAS focused on sustainable development and gender issues attracted 48 participants from 24 units and organizations across and beyond the EC, including four Pacific ambassadors and the Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community: 'the success of such an event is normally very difficult to ensure', 'Dr Tony Crook...managed to transfer knowledge and inform policy stakeholders successfully, creating moreover significant and sustainable links' and 'All these successes were down to the design of the format based on the method for knowledge exchange designed by Dr Tony Crook' [4].

Each of these events have involved diplomats, policy-makers and regional organizations from the Pacific who have endorsed the Pacific Connections approach, and encouraged and commended the EU for making their external actions more effective in this manner. Indeed, the language of 'Pacific Connections' has been adopted by an internal EU review, and now provides the terms in which European external actions are conceived. Crook's research insights into, and method based upon, Melanesian knowledge-exchange have been 'instrumental' [5] in making EU external actions in the Pacific more effective.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Impact Evidence Letter 1 (Head of Pacific Division, European External Action Service).
2. Impact Evidence Letter 2 (ECOPAS liaison and Pacific Desk Officer, European External Action Service).
3. Impact Evidence Letter 3 (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK).
4. Impact Evidence Letter 4 (ECOPAS Research Programme Officer, DG Research and Innovation).
5. Impact Evidence Letter 5 (incoming Head of Pacific Division, European External Action Service).
6. Pacific Connections: Anthropology and Pacific Peoples, public events, Kirkaldy and St Andrews. http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/esfo2010/docs/pacific_connections.pdf & Fife Contemporary Arts and Crafts, 'Double Visions' exhibition, talk by Dr Tony Crook, Fife TV clip http://www.fcac.co.uk/fcac_programme/search_archive/detail/?nojs=1&pid=44
7. ESfO2010 'Exchanging Knowledge in Oceania', conference, St Andrews. Includes video of Crook's keynote introduction, and of plenary address by DG-RTD and EEAS (DG-DEV). <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/esfo2010/>
8. 'Re-Thinking Gender in the Pacific', short film made for FCO at request of British High Commissioner in Port Moresby <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/pacificstudies/news/gender.html>
9. 'EU Research and External Relations: Together in the Pacific', workshop, Brussels, 2010. Includes video interview with Head of Pacific Division, EEAS. http://ec.europa.eu/development/services/events/eupacific/index_en.html
10. Official EDD 2011 Pacific Connections video report, and High Level Panel speaker videos including EC Commissioner for Development and EU Ambassador to the Pacific <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/pacificstudies/news/connections.html>