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**Business Va'avanua:
Cultural Hybridisation and Indigenous
Entrepreneurship in the Boumā National
Heritage Park, Fiji**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

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in
Social Anthropology**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ways community-based ecotourism development in the Boumā National Heritage Park was negotiated at the nexus of Western entrepreneurship and the *vanua*, an indigenous epistemology.

In 1990, the Boumā tribe of Taveuni, Fiji established the Boumā National Heritage Park. A growing dependence on the market economy and a desire to find an economic alternative to commercial logging on their communally-tenured land, led to their decision to approach the New Zealand government for assistance to establish the Park. The four villages involved have since developed their own community-based ecotourism enterprises. Despite receiving first place in a British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award category in 2002, there was a growing sense of social dysfunction in Boumā during the research period. According to my participants, this was partly due to the community-based ecotourism development process which had paid little attention to the *vanua*. Largely through *talanoa* as discussion, the people of Boumā have become increasingly conscious of references to the *vanua* values in their own evaluation and management of the projects.

This thesis draws on Tim Ingold's (2000) 'taskscape' as, like the *vanua*, they relationally link humans with other elements of the environment within their landscape. This contrasts with a common Western epistemological approach of treating humans as independent of other cosmological and physical elements and as positioned against the landscape. Largely due to its communal nature, it may be argued that the *vanua* is incompatible with values associated with Boumā's Western, capitalist-based ecotourism models. However, in this thesis I argue that despite numerous obstacles, the Boumā National Heritage Park is one example of a tribe's endeavours to culturally hybridise the *vanua* with entrepreneurship to create a locally meaningful form of indigenous entrepreneurship for the wellbeing of its people. The Boumā people call this hybrid 'business *va'avanua*'. Informal *talanoa* is presented in this thesis as a potential tool for political agency in negotiating issues surrounding community-based ecotourism and business *va'avanua*.

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Chapter One

Introduction

My entrée into field work in Fiji started in 1997 with a trip to Beachcomber Island and the Coral Coast with some students from International Pacific College in Palmerston North, New Zealand, where I was teaching at the time. I was impressed by the openness of the Fijian people when discussing Fijian culture and politics. Later, in April 2002, I attended an ecotourism conference in Nadi. There was a clear disregard for cultural values in discussions about ecotourism development and I knew that I wanted to return to explore this in greater depth. In June the following year I travelled back to Fiji for one month with my, then infant son Jacob, to select a field site. During this visit I talked with government officials and non-government organisation (NGO) workers about potential sites for my research.

After concentrating on the Coral Coast's largest resorts as possible sites of interesting cultural and environmental relationships with local communities, I met a woman from the Fiji Visitors Bureau (FVB) in Suva. During this meeting I was informed that of any of the community conservation areas with ecotourism as the commercial focus, Boumā National Heritage Park (BNHP) was the one that she felt required the closest attention. She said the park consisted of four villages and seven settlements of Vanua Boumā (the tribe of Boumā and their land). Within the park area, the *mataqali* (or landowning clans) from each of the four villages had established their own ecotourism project.

The park, she said, had been developed with the advice of Tourism Resource Consultants (TRC): a private consultancy commissioned by NZAID (formerly New Zealand Overseas Development Agency [NZODA]). TRC describe their approach to tourism development as a participatory approach with a focus on poverty-alleviation:

TRC projects regularly combine “bottom-up”, participatory planning techniques with hard-edged market analysis and business assessments.

Many of TRC's international projects have poverty eradication as the overriding rationale (Tourism Resource Consultants, 2008, Economic and Social Development section).

TRC had submitted an application for the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award in November 2002 on Boumā's behalf. The park was consequently presented with an award under the Protected Areas and National Park category. British Airways in conjunction with the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) stated that the project was highly commended for creating 'sustainable livelihoods for the four villages of Boumā whilst preserving natural and cultural traditions'. It is also described as a 'role model for ecotourism practices, given the strong local community support and environmental protection elements that drive the project'. Finally, the award states, 'This is a key example of tourism businesses being developed to complement lifestyles within a protected area' (British Airways, 2003, p. 1). However, the implication made by the FVB employee was that the award may mislead the global community into believing that all was well in Vanua Boumā. Indeed, I later discovered that the Boumā National Heritage Park had been touted as a blueprint for success in developing other community-based ecotourism projects (e.g. Crosby, 2002; Seroma, 1995; Ragogo, 2002). Despite my fears for the isolation of the field site relative to other options I had explored on the Coral Coast, this was the place I decided to conduct my research.

Ecotourism has the potential to aid in protecting endemic species, and to provide alternative or supplementary livelihoods and thereby potentially alleviate poverty (UNEP, 2002, cited in UNIS, 2002). In so doing, it has the potential to empower local communities (Sofield, 2003; Scheyvens, 1999, 2000, 2002). In many cases tourism has contributed to the conservation and revival of endangered cultures (Grünewald, 2002). However, due to the penetrative, rapid-moving and globally-interconnected nature of tourism, it also has a high potential to be damaging to local cultures, economies and environments (de Kadt, 1979; Krippendorf, 1987; Weaver, 1998, 2006).

Tourism has been a major source of foreign exchange in Fiji since the 1980s and is now Fiji's largest foreign exchange earner (Narayan, 2008, p. 14). The ecotourism sector has become a popular development tool at the grassroots level in rural Fiji. Although it was not referred to as ecotourism at the time, 'nature-based tourism' strategies were implemented in the 1970s and early eighties as a form of 'alternative development' to mass resort tourism (Harrison, 1997). Aside from ecotourism's environmental ethic, its popularity is likely to be due to its modest size, and low start-up capital and operating costs relative to mass resort tourism.

During a reconnaissance trip to Boumā early in 2004, accompanied by a cultural advisor from the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB), I became aware that there had been a strong focus on conservation strategies and in some cases (particularly that of the Waitabu marine reserve) there was a wealth of information that could contribute to both an ecological baseline as well as the ongoing health of the marine ecosystem through regular reef checks. For example, the Waitabu Biological report (2006) showed a dramatic increase in coral cover as a direct result of the marine protected area in Waitabu's Marine Park (Coral Reef Alliance, 2008).

There have been unsupported claims that ecotourism has increased the incomes of villagers in Nakavika (Bricker, 2001), Boumā and Abaca (Corbett, 2000 cited in Hall & Boyd, 2005, p. 174). However, apart from an ethnolinguistic study of Waitabu in 1988 by Annette Schmidt, there had been no cultural, political, or economic baseline or ongoing socio-cultural studies conducted in Boumā. It was only a few weeks into the fieldwork proper in 2004 that I was able to confirm that the ecotourism projects in Boumā did not match their British Airways Award description. Nor did the projects match the success implied by descriptions of Boumā found on various web sites, tourist publications, academic texts, and state media (e.g. Tikotani, 2002; Seroma, 1995; Miller, Jones & Pinheiro, 2003; Corbett, 2000 cited in Hall & Boyd, 2005; Watson, 2000; Malani, 2002; Tui Tai Adventure Cruises, n.d.; Taveuni Estates, 2005).

While the Boumā National Heritage Park as a whole has been established for almost twenty years now, each of the four projects within it has been initiated at varying times since the park's establishment in 1990. Each of these projects has also experienced their own levels of success and failure. The attrition rate for community-based ecotourism in the Pacific has been high (Heher 2003; Klein 2002; Bauld, 2005; Scheyvens & Purdie, 1999). I wanted to go some way to explaining this high attrition rate. I also wanted to know if the Boumā projects were likely to join this statistic.

Vanua¹

I had learned from my cultural advisor during a preliminary visit to Fiji that the *vanua* is a complex core cultural concept involving social, ecological, and spiritual elements which places people firmly within their environment rather than treating people and the place in which they dwell as separate entities. The *vanua* then is an all-encompassing way of knowing and living the Fijian way. All Fijians live their lives to a greater or lesser degree through the *vanua*. It is also place-specific and, therefore, also historically and politically specific. It became clear to me that, through the multidimensional nature of the *vanua* concept and of community-based ecotourism, the socio-cultural and micro-political implications of community-based ecotourism could be examined through a wide lens.

Note: Throughout the thesis, the <i>vanua</i> as a concept and as meaning 'land' is presented in lower capitals and italicized; <i>Vanua</i> as a generic reference to a tribe is spelt with a capital 'V' and italicized; and Vanua used as a proper noun is spelt with a capital 'V' and with no italics (e.g. Vanua Boumā).

¹ *Vanua* will be explored in more detail in Chapter Four.

Lavena Village

My intention was to focus equally on the four villages and their settlements that are situated within the Boumā National Heritage Park. However, it soon became clear to me that loyalty to one village was very important in cementing stronger relationships of trust. Transport to all four villages also became very difficult, particularly when travelling with my one year-old son. Because my family was to spend most of our time living in Lavena village, this became the focus of the study and I became most familiar with the socio-cultural and political environment here. Lavena is the last village on the road to Boumā. In 1993, the Lavena community established its own ecotourism project within the park with points of difference from those of other projects in the park. After a number of ‘false starts’, the *yavusa* (village community including *mataqalis*) built the Lavena Backpacker Lodge and cleared a coastal walk to the Wainibau Falls (a three hour leisurely return trip). They also set up small sea kayak business.

Because we stayed in Waitabu village for the first month of the fieldwork period, we became reasonably familiar with the situation in Waitabu. However, after living in Lavena for six months, my loyalty to the village was rewarded with a greater involvement in community activities and in private and public *talanoa* (discussion). My sensitivity to the nuances of community politics and culture improved with time as a result. Therefore, while the study will focus on Lavena village and its ecotourism project, the Lavena Coastal Walk and Backpacker Lodge, the other three projects in Boumā will be included for support or contrast throughout the thesis. Research on the other three projects will draw on a one month period living in Waitabu Village with almost daily trips either to Vidawa and Korovou. While we were living in Lavena, we continued to make regular trips to the other three villages though these were less often made to Korovou as we had not formed firm relationships with many of the community members there.

The Thesis

Community-based ecotourism development as a participatory development model emerged as one response to the argument that the direction of development should come from Third World communities rather than imposed by the West (Johnston, 2000; Pathak & Kothari, 2003). However, while participatory forms of development such as community-based ecotourism involve local communities, many of these development initiatives remain based on the epistemologies and ontologies of the West (Gegeo, 2000; Wall, 1995 cited in Telfer; 2000; Johnston, 2000; Pathak & Kothari, 2003).

While recognising that community-based ecotourism was not the only agent of change impacting on Boumā culture and environment, I was interested to know how the core cultural values and worldviews of the Boumā people had been altered through ecotourism development: could they consolidate what they refer to as traditional² Fijian cultural values with the Western epistemologies and ontologies that come part and parcel with community-based ecotourism development (conceived in, delivered, and largely perpetuated by the West)? How was the *vanua* as a core cultural framework in Boumā evolving³? Did Western conceptualizations of the goals of ecotourism fit with Boumā's desires for the future of their communities? If not, were they being accepted, rejected or hybridized in new and innovative ways? All these questions converge to form the focus of this thesis: the exploration of the intersections of community-based ecotourism as a participatory approach to development and the *vanua* as Boumā's epistemological and ontological compass.

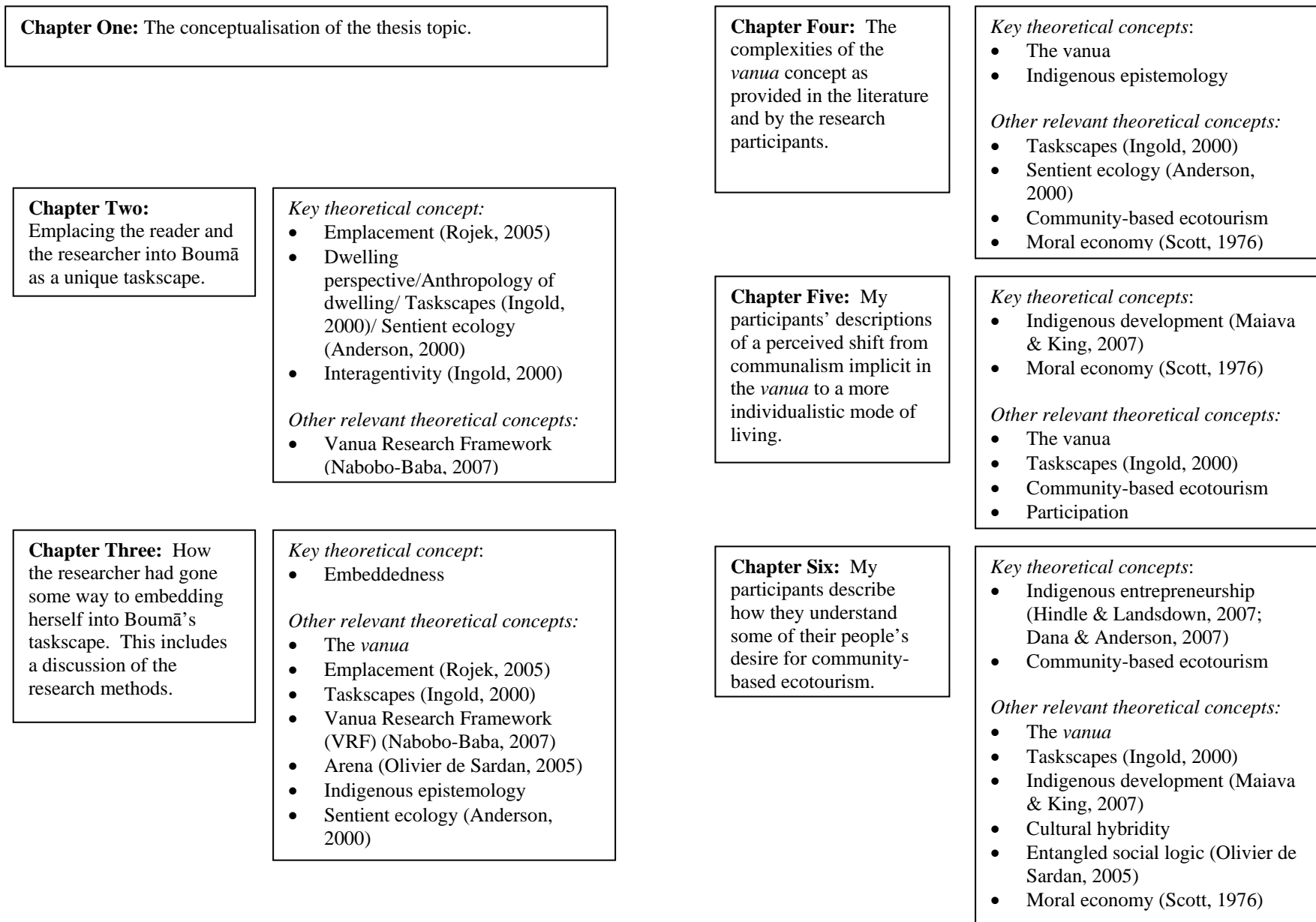
² The term 'tradition' will be used throughout this thesis in line with Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) 'invented tradition' because it is always coming into being. There can be no static definition of tradition. Hobsbawm and Ranger's invented tradition is described as

a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.... However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of 'invented' traditions is that the continuity with it is largely fictitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition (p. 1f).

³ This should not be interpreted as linear change but rather as change in a general sense.

The subsequent diagram presents the thesis outline and the key theoretical concepts as they are woven throughout the thesis chapters. A statement of the focus of each chapter can be found in the boxes on the left; the boxes on the right list the key and supplementary theoretical concepts included in the same chapter.

Figure 1: Thesis outline and key theoretical concepts



Chapter Seven and

Eight: A chronological account of the establishment of the Boumā National Heritage Park, the division of the Park into separate commercial enterprises, and local responses to the ways in which the Park has been externally managed.

Key theoretical concepts:

- Community-based ecotourism
- Participation
- Cultural hybridity
- Entangled social logic (Olivier de Sardan, 2005)

Other relevant theoretical concepts:

- The vanua
- Taskscapes (Ingold, 2000)
- Indigenous entrepreneurship (Hindle & Landsdown, 2007; Dana & Anderson, 2007)
- Moral economy (Scott, 1976)

Chapter Nine: My participants' expected benefits of community-based ecotourism development is weighed against the actual costs and benefits. Intentional deviance is discussed here as a method to challenge the costs of community-based ecotourism.

Key theoretical concepts:

- Intentional deviance (Scott, 1990)
- Myth of 'community' (Wertheim, 1965, Guijt & Shah, 1999)

Other relevant theoretical concepts:

- The vanua
- Taskscapes (Ingold, 2000)
- Embeddedness
- Indigenous epistemology
- Indigenous development (Maiava & King, 2007)
- Indigenous entrepreneurship (Hindle & Landsdown, 2007; Dana & Anderson, 2007).
- Dwelling perspective/ Anthropology of dwelling (Ingold, 2000)
- Community-based ecotourism
- Participation

Chapter Ten: Business *va'avanua* is explored as a hybrid of the entrepreneurial values of community-based ecotourism and the values of the *vanua*.

Key theoretical concepts:

- Indigenous entrepreneurship (Hindle & Landsdown, 2007; Dana & Anderson, 2007).
- Indigenous development (Maiava & King, 2007)
- Affordances (Gibson, 1979)
- Capital (Bourdieu, 1977)
- Cultural hybridity

Other relevant theoretical concepts:

- The vanua
- Taskscapes (Ingold, 2000)
- Indigenous development (Maiava & King, 2007)
- Dwelling perspective/ anthropology of dwelling (Ingold, 2000)
- Community-based ecotourism
- Moral economy (Scott, 1976)
- Intentional deviance (Scott, 1990)
- Participation

Chapter Two

Emplacement

This chapter discusses two processes of emplacement. The first is a broad process of ‘emplacement’ involving embedding the researcher and the reader into the geographical, economic and historical ‘place’ that is Boumā National Heritage Park, Taveuni, Fiji. The second process of emplacement involves the researcher’s first experiences of the field site. Therefore, the second type of ‘emplacement’ is a more personal process involving myself (as researcher) finding my footing in Boumā and introducing my intention to live and conduct research there to the Boumā people. In presenting my own first experiences with the people and place that is Boumā, the reader, too, may develop an initial ‘sense of place’ and a sensual concept of the people and the place that is Boumā.

According to Rojek (2005), ‘emplacement refers to the direct and immediate cultural and physical environment in which action occurs’ (p. 15). Emplacement means more than simply putting oneself into a place and acquiring some kind of objective sense of what I as subject see as myself in relation to ‘them’ or the Boumā people as ‘other’ from me. On the contrary, for me, as researcher, developing my own ‘sense of place’ involved an embodied ‘subjective soaking’ (Clammer, 1984, p. 77). This involved not only fully engaging with the people of Boumā and observing how they interacted with their environment. It also involved developing an awareness of my own engagement with the environment. It is through my own experience of temporarily ‘dwelling’ in Boumā (or more specifically the Waitabu and Lavena villages) that I am able to in some way emplace the reader in Boumā.

The process of emplacement is made all the more complex by the fact that the environment can never be treated as stable, static and independent. On the contrary, environments both condition practice and are conditioned by individual behaviour. Thus, in the process of emplacement, we are presented with intersubjectivity or rather *interagency* (Ingold, 2000, p. 47) in which entire persons (not disembodied minds)

dwelling in the world engage with each other and with other elements of the environment. As a consequence of this interagentivity, the environment and persons dwelling within it are in a constant state of ‘coming into being’. Thus, I as researcher influenced the people and the environment of Boumā as the environment influenced me. The built environment of Boumā has altered as a consequence of my presence there. There now stands a traditional *bure* in Lavena where my family and I resided during the fieldwork period. As will be explained later, that *bure* has had significant socio-political, socio-cultural, educational and economic implications for the community. In addition, the legacies of the content of our *talanoa* (discussions) in which ideas were shared and tested will be long-lasting. Our on-going contributions of educational resources to Boumā and other *Vanua* in Taveuni will also continue to affect Boumā’s taskscape⁴ (Ingold, 1993, 2000). Tim Ingold’s taskscape, like the *vanua* concept, conceptualizes the world as a place in which humans are relationally linked with other elements of the environment *within* their landscape rather than treating humans as independent of other cosmological and physical elements *against* the landscape.

Ingold’s (2000) ‘interagentivity’ explains his ‘dwelling perspective’ or ‘anthropology of dwelling’. This sentient ecology approach that has recently emerged in the social sciences will be further illuminated by explanation of its ‘taskscape’ throughout this thesis⁵. Ingold’s taskscapes render social relationships as inherently spatial and contingent on space:

Social life is no longer to be seen as unfolding through space but with space, that is, spatially. It is what people do, not where they are... In other words,

⁴ Appadurai’s “scapes” (ethno-, media-, techno-, finance-, and ideo-) describe the landscape as various, amorphous, and flowing. They are the “building blocks,” Appadurai suggests, of contemporary imagined worlds. Within these worlds, individuals can contest and even subvert the flows of these scapes (1996, p. 33). Ingold’s ‘taskscapes’, embeds actors in their environments. While Ingold’s taskscapes are also dynamic sites, they are not sites of place and people. Rather, Ingold’s taskscapes emphasises the fundamental indissolubility of people and landscape. A taskscape may also be referred to as a habitat reflecting the needs and practical skills of people ‘dwelling’ in a particular place and time or ‘a pattern of dwelling activities’ (Ingold, 2000, p. 154).

⁵ This is something Ingold likens to David Anderson’s (2000) ‘sentient ecology’ and is an approach also taken up by the likes of Kay Milton’s approach to environmentalism (1996) and Laura Rival in her work with the Huaorani Indians of Amazonian Ecuador (e.g. 1998, 2002).

people relate to and engage with landscape in various ways because social relationships are inherently spatial (Corsínjiménez, 2003, p. 143).

The taskscape of Boumā has also entered me. The experience I had there has changed my way of thinking. That change in thinking is reflected in this thesis. When I remember my time there, I physically react to those memories. Depending on my memory, my heart may beat faster; I can feel a palpable sense of joy or loss; or I can find myself spontaneously grinning to myself. Photos, voice recordings and video amplify these feelings in me. For me, as for Vattimo (1997), this interagentivity is a source of hope, possibility and celebration (cited in Cooper, 1997, p. 695). No longer am I as researcher treated as static and unchanging and nor are my subjects and the environment in which they live. There is always agency and in agency there is possibility and hope. These are all concepts central to this thesis.

Situating Boumā within Taveuni, Fiji

Taveuni is the third largest island (470 square kilometres) and part of the Vanua Levu group in Northern Fiji. According to the 2006 Fiji consensus, Taveuni is home to around 15,000 people compared with the total population of Fiji which was estimated to be 827, 900 (473,983 Fijians, 311,591 Indo-Fijians and 42,326 others) (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Taveuni belongs to the province of Cakaudrove, one of Fiji's fourteen provinces, which also covers the south-eastern third of Vanua Levu. The majority of those who inhabit Taveuni live on the more sheltered Western side of the island. Waiyevo, situated halfway down the west coast of the island, is Taveuni's administrative centre and is where the district office, police station and the hospital are situated. The ferry leaves from Waiyevo and travels across the Somosomo Strait to Buca Bay near Savusavu on Vanua Levu. Naqara, an Indo-Fijian settlement on the north-Western side of the island is the commercial centre of Taveuni. Local buses leave from Naqara to the outlying areas including Boumā on the eastern side of the island three times a day. The airport and the closest supermarket to Boumā are at Matei

further to the north of the island. Matei is also where most resorts, backpacker lodges and villas can be found.

Boumā is populated only by indigenous Fijians and all of the land is communally owned. The people of Boumā are proud of their ancestors' successes in Taveuni's historical warfare. Somosomo is considered the paramount village of Taveuni. This is where the great meeting hall was built for the 1986 Great Council of Chiefs meeting (Lal, 2006. p. 76). It was also here that the Tui Cakau (the king of Cakaudrove) moved from his seat on Cakaudrove Island in Faun Harbour. This was also the site of the Bau war in 1841 when the Tui Cakau's son, Tui Kilakila (or Tui 'Ila'ila in Cakaudrove dialect⁶) mustered forces from Boumā and Wainekeli to fight Bau as it was believed that Bau's dominion was accumulating too much power (Derrick, 2001). The people of Vuna in Taveuni had grown sympathetic to the people of Bau. According to Crosby (1994), the chief of Boumā asked that a messenger be sent to the Tui Vuna to *soro* (apologise) to Somosomo for their new allegiance with the enemy. However, the messenger was ignored and Tui 'Ila'ila's army won the war. As a consequence, the people of Vuna, fearing a direct assault on their town, sent peace-offerings including the chief's daughter. Their town of Vuna was burned as punishment and they were forcibly moved to Somosomo until they had rebuilt their town (Derrick, 2001).

Boumā's ancestors were also instrumental in the defeat of the Tongan warlord Enele Ma'afu at Wairiki in the Tongan War (*I Valu ni Toga*) in the 1860s. The people of Boumā are particularly proud of this victory. Ma'afu had conquered the Lau islands and had taken control of much of Fiji, but was defeated by Ratu Golea's 3000 strong army in Wairiki. As a resident on Taveuni at the time, Father Fabriano Terrien's account of what happened is as follows. En route to battle, Ratu Golea stopped to request God's blessing from a local Catholic priest to guide him in the war against the Tongans. The priest, Father Favre, presented him with a small cross telling him that the

⁶ Wainekeli and Boumā have a distinct dialect from the rest of Fiji in that it features a glottal stop to replace the 'k'. Although locals may deny this, this language feature is a characteristic of Tongan influence. Grammatical and vocabulary features of Boumā have been analyzed by Dixon (1988). Basic features of the language and vocabulary of this area may be found in Geraghty (1983) and Dixon (1988).

cross would be their weapon. After the week-long war, there were only 46 Tongan survivors. The battle on Taveuni was the first to defeat Ma'afu and ended Ma'afu's reign in Fiji resulting in the installation of the Tui Cakau. Following the battle, Ratu Golea gathered the province of Cakaudrove before Father Favre and proclaimed Cakaudrove a Catholic province (Terrien, 1922). The story of the cross at Wairiki is not only one of territorial pride but of great religious significance for the people of Taveuni.

Communal land tenure

Eighty-seven point nine percent of the land in Fiji is native Fijian land while 3.9% is state land. Freehold land comprises of 7.9% and Rotuman land⁷ is 0.3% (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) is responsible for the control and administration of native Fijian land. Indigenous land is classified as either "native lease" or "reserve". Reserve land may only be utilized by indigenous owners unless there is a specific agreement between the landowners and the NLTB that releases the land for lease or other purpose. Leased land, on the other hand, comprises tracts of land normally surplus to the requirements of the landowner and may be leased to Fijians or non-Fijians. The Government Lands Department administers the remaining land resources including freehold land (NLTB, 2008; Seroma, 2002). Fijian land ownership is dependent on customary usage, occupation and history. These connections between land and ownership are often described as a 'Bundle of Rights' to highlight the complexities involved in land ownership (Buck, 1998, p. 3; Tanner, 2007; Nawaikula, 2008; Seroma, 1995). This thesis will go some way to explaining these complexities.

There have been ongoing tensions in Fiji regarding communally and independently held land. These tensions reflect the nation's conflicting negotiations between maintaining indigenous Fijian customs and values and a compulsion to become a legitimate player in the global economy and to strengthen the nation's economic base.

⁷ Rotuma is an island of Fijian dependency and is located approximately 465 km north of Fiji.

The NLTB was previously known as the Native Lands Commission. The Native Lands Commission was established after colonial rule in 1940. In the 1940s, the primary role of the Native Lands Commission under advice from the Great Council of Chiefs was to register each *mataqali*⁸ as the main proprietary units (France, 1969). During this time a set of ‘Native Regulations’ was established. This was intended to govern indigenous Fijians within their traditional customs. The Native Regulations were based on the eastern Fijian cultural model (including Taveuni) as this area was deemed more hierarchical than in the west with a strong chiefly structure (Brookfield, 1988).

There have been diverse responses to traditional indigenous land management. One response has been the *galala*⁹ movement during WWII in which individually farmed land was encouraged by the Department of Agriculture for contribution to the nation’s food supply. Those who chose to farm individually paid a commutation tax to compensate the village community for the exclusion of their labour. In doing so, however, they clashed with the Fijian authorities. The *galala* movement sharply contrasted with the 1944 changes to the Fijian Regulations which re-emphasised Fiji tradition and heredity by endowing the Great Council of Chiefs and the new Fijian Affairs Board with the role of preservers of the Fijian way of life (Brookfield, 1988).

Concerns over economic progress under the 1944 system grew in the 1950s. In 1958, Professor O. H. K. Spate of The Australian National University led a commission of enquiry to consider how the indigenous Fijian social structure was hindering economic progress and went on to make recommendations (Spate, 1959). One of those recommendations involved the individualisation of land to form a community of individual farmers ‘living and working on holdings heritable and alienable at least between Fijians’ (cited in Lal, 1992, p. 182). The Burns Commission set up by the colonial government had more far-reaching implications.

⁸ Land owning kinship unit

⁹ This is a move to live and farm independently of the village. In this way the individual operates outside the communal obligations of the village with a focus on economic development over social development.

The Colonial Government commissioned Sir Alan Burns, former governor of the Gold Coast (Ghana), to inquire into the natural resources and population trends of Fiji in 1960. Spate was supported by the Commissions on Natural Resources and Population Trends otherwise known as the Burns Commission. The report of the Burns Commission into the *Natural Resources and Population Trends of Fiji* was published in February of 1960 (Lal, 1992, p. xxvii). The Burns Commission, ‘made sweeping recommendations for change and reform in the administrative structures of Fijian society, for the promotion of greater individualism and personal freedom among Fijians’ (Lal, 1992, p. 28).

In other words, the Burns Commission recommended the abolition of the Fijian Administration including the Great Council of Chiefs in favour of a multi-racial local government. The Fijian Administration was designed to govern indigenous Fijian villagers as a separate ethnic group with the British colony and to protect them from European and Indian economic and political domination. Belshaw (2004) writes that it is for this reason that proponents of the Fijian Administration are so vigorously supportive of it today. The Fijian Administration has been criticised for inhibiting the development of the indigenous Fijian people and being ineffective in its policies. Belshaw (2004), however, argues that the Administration is archaic but also suggests that it may be fairly easily ‘transformed into a system of positive local government’ (p. 221) and has a profound effect on economic growth. The weakest element of the Fijian Administration, he says, is its Provincial Councils which, because they appear to operate with a different set of rules from the Administration, separates the villager from the Administration (see more on this in Belshaw, 2004).

The individualisation of land was rejected by the Council of Chiefs who argued that *mataqali* should continue to be the landowning unit (Brookfield, 1988, p. 18). The Commission was strong enough to establish the modern policy of resource-based development and overturn the decision of the Great Council of Chiefs (Brookfield, 1988). Commutation tax and the policies supporting *galala* were abandoned in the 1960s but those who live outside the village are still sometimes referred to as *galala*

(Overton, 1986). Tanner (2007) noted that, in his field site in the interior of Viti Levu, only a few individuals lived outside the village and most were not *galala*, choosing instead to maintain their traditional obligations to their village (p. 74).

In 1982, the NLTB reported that about 20% of indigenous Fijians farmed land outside the village system (Ward, 1987, p. 38). In 1995, Ward and Kingdon reported that many Fijian farmers held NLTB leases which may include leases over their own *mataqali* land giving them the right to use land removed from the communal sector. Others still live within the village system while operating their farms as individual holdings. At the same time, they maintain usufruct rights to *mataqali* land. Clearly, communal land is recognised as having a major impact on the national economy. This issue of communal land is particularly pertinent to this thesis as there is a growing recognition that land ownership is key to sustainable development processes, cultural sustainability, likelihood of fuller community participation in, and ownership of, development initiatives (e.g. Zeppel, 2007, p. 286; Charnley, 2005; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008).

Economy

Taveuni is widely referred to as the ‘garden island’ due to its high rainfall, volcanic soil, and south-easterly winds. Consequently, most of Fiji’s agricultural produce and resources are found there and agriculture is the economic mainstay of Taveuni with produce including *dalo* (taro), *yaqona* (kava), copra, coconut, and to a lesser extent, pineapples and coffee. The first European traders and settlers (first arriving in the early 19th century) in Taveuni had some success growing cotton but when the cotton prices collapsed they abandoned cotton for sugar-cane. These failed due to the high rainfall in Taveuni (Siegel, 1982). One of the most successful crops in Taveuni has been copra. However, when the prices of copra collapsed in the 1950s, many farmers moved away from this labour intensive farming favouring *yaqona* (kava) and *dalo* (taro). *Dalo* is currently, Taveuni’s main export crop and it is estimated that Taveuni supplies approximately 70 percent of Fiji’s exported *dalo*. Prior to large-scale taro farming, Taveuni’s most successful crop was *yaqona*. Unfortunately, the *yaqona* industry was

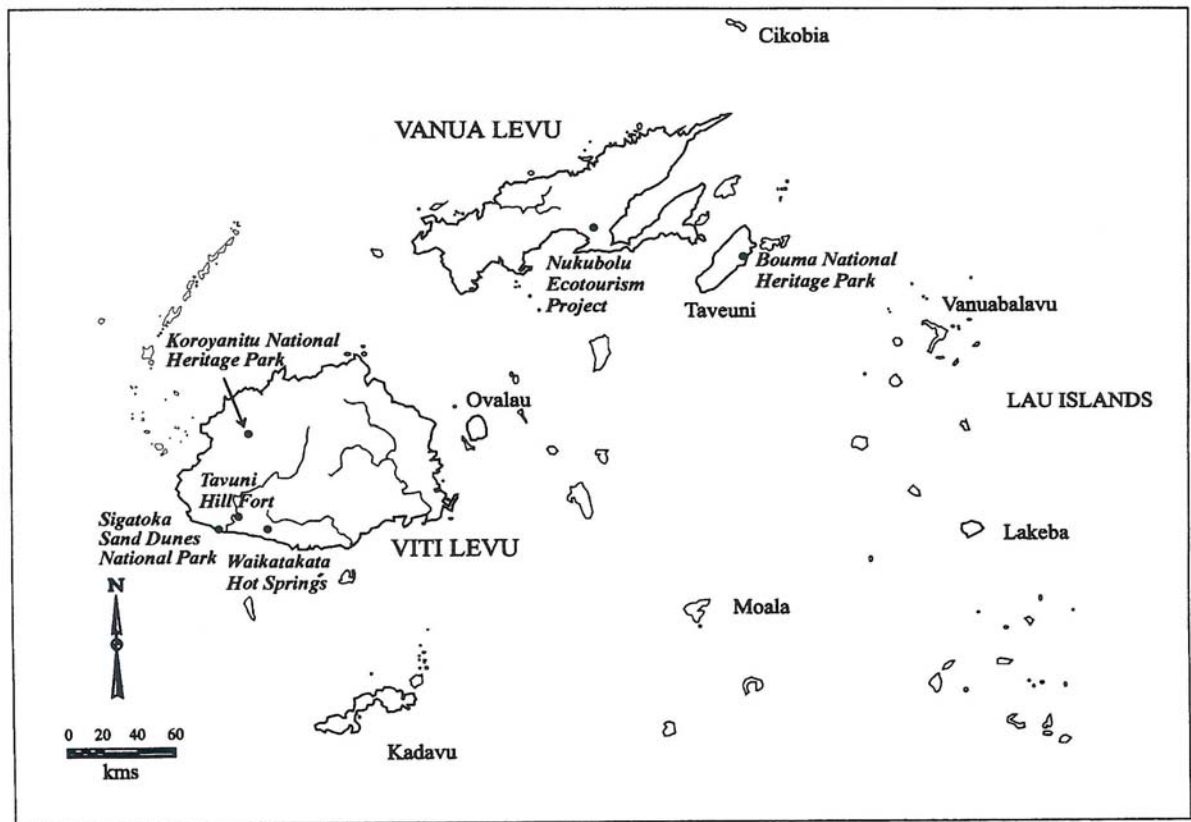
destroyed by the cyclones of the early 1990s and kava dieback disease (Adams, n.d., p. 1).

In 2007, the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics reported that Fiji's gross earnings from tourism for July to September, 2007 were estimated at approximately FJD210.4 million. Tourism has become a strong generator of foreign exchange in Fiji despite political instability. For example, visitor arrival numbers dipped from 409,955 in 1999 down to 294, 286 in 2000 due to the coup. However, these numbers have risen each year and in 2004, arrival numbers had almost doubled from 2000, peaking at 502, 765 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Taveuni has contributed to Fiji's tourist statistics. Taveuni offers about a dozen small resorts providing accommodation options for visitors and some employment and business opportunities to the local population. The Boumā National Heritage Park, established in 1990, has had a major contribution to tourist numbers in Taveuni. For example, in 2002, 7, 000 people visited the Boumā National Heritage Park (Malani, 2002, p. 52).

Boumā National Heritage Park

Boumā National Heritage Park is one of five national parks in Fiji. Its boundaries are that of the land held by the tribe of Boumā or Vanua Boumā.

Map 1. Map of Fiji



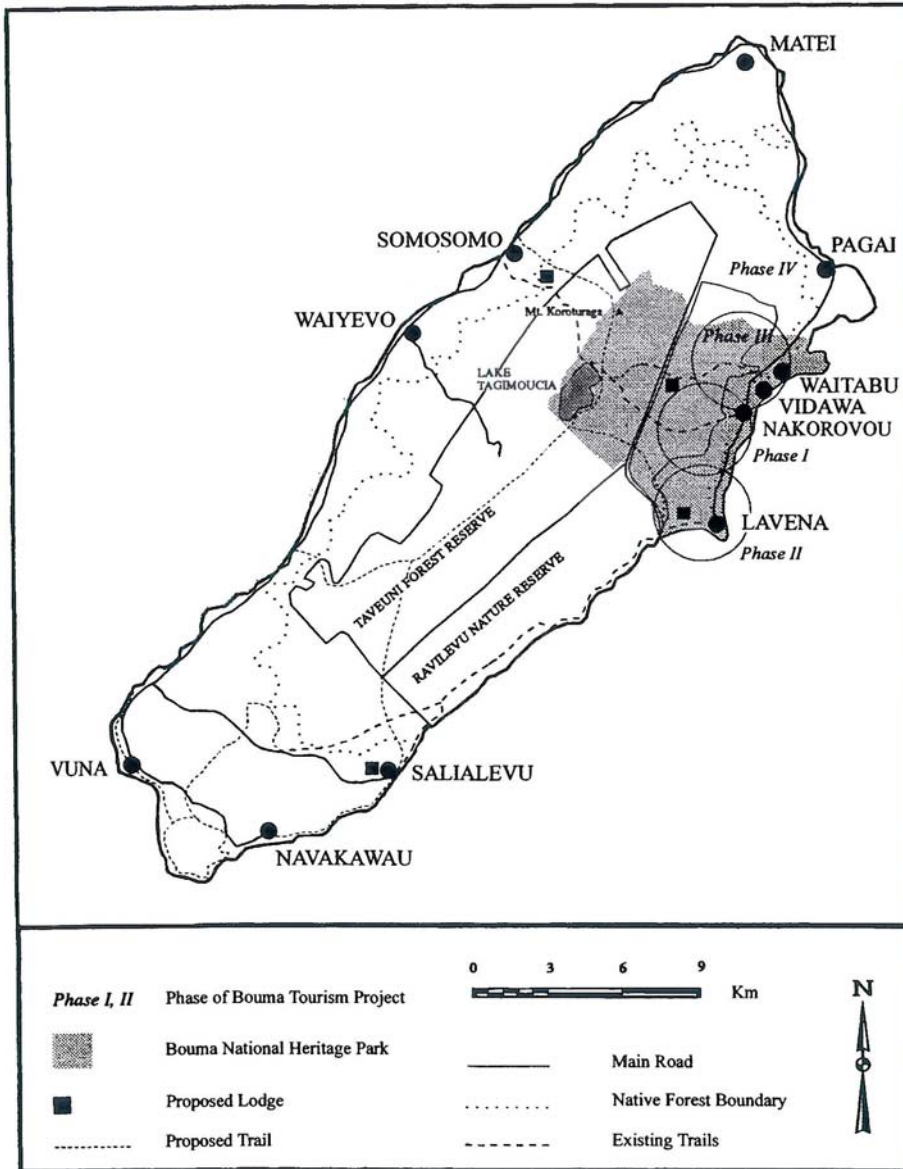
Source: Crosby, 2002, p. 370.

Boumā National Heritage Park alone covers 1603 hectares (Seroma, 1995; Crosby, 2002). Tourists are attracted to the park's unique natural and historical features. These include an abundance of endemic birds (including the rare orange dove), white sandy beaches, waterfalls, bushwalks and water-based activities, the Navuga hill fortification and other archaeological attractions as well as Lake Tagimoucia hosting the rare tagimoucia flower.

The park is the product of a community-based project. While the area is now referred to as a 'park', it is private communal land belonging to Vanua Boumā (the tribe of Boumā). The *Vanua* consists of four villages/*koro* (Korovou, Lavena, Waitabu and Vidawa) each consisting of a kinship group (*yavusa*) and their seven settlements (see Map 2). Within these four villages reside eight *mataqali* or landowning clans (Vidawa, Waitabu, Naituku, Lekutu, Vunivesi, Waisoki, Veiniu, Matakuro, and Qali).

The Boumā National Heritage Park (1603ha) consists of large tracts of land already protected by the state: The Taveuni Forest Reserve (11, 290 ha) including Lake Tagimoucia and the Ravilevu Nature Reserve (4000ha). The Taveuni Forest Reserve is one of sixteen reserves in Fiji and was established in 1914 under the Forestry Ordinance (later known as the Forestry Act). Commercial activities in a Forest Reserve in Fiji are prohibited ‘unless approved in writing by the Conservator of Forests, under contract or grant’ (Tabunakawa et al., 1993, p.17, cited in Waqaisavou, 1999, p. 97). In 1959, the Ravilevu Nature Reserve was established on state land and is intended to protect the forest and the animals and birds within it (Waqaisavou, 1999). No tourist activities, fishing, cutting or cultivation are allowed to take place within nature reserves in Fiji (Drysdale, 2005). The Ravilevu Forest reserve protects the forest on the south-west boundary of the Boumā National Heritage Park and across the Wainibau stream at the end of the Lavena Coastal Walk. Some interested parties have advocated for a combination of both the Ravilevu Nature Reserve and the Taveuni Forest Reserve to create a larger national park which will be maintained under stronger legislation (Drysdale, 2005). The people of Vanua Boumā are paid a small annual fee by the Fiji government for not using resources in the Taveuni Forest Reserve area high above their plantations.

Map 2. Map of Taveuni Island showing Boumā National Heritage Park



Source: Crosby, 2002, p. 372.

Emplacing the researcher: Na navunavuci (conception) and na va'ava'arau (preparation)

As has been explained in the introduction, my first step in emplacing myself in Boumā as a locale for field work started with the 1997 trip to Beachcomber Island and the Coral Coast. However, it was the Regional Ecotourism Conference for Asia and the Pacific Islands in held in Nadi April 2002 that confirmed for me that I wanted to research ecotourism somewhere in Fiji. In June, 2003, I travelled again to Fiji for a reconnaissance trip. It was after speaking to a woman who worked for the Fiji Visitors Bureau during this visit that I decided on Boumā as my research site (depending on the approval of the communities there).

My first reaction was sheer terror at the thought of taking my young family to a place where the nearest hospital was a two-hour drive over pot-holed and often flooded dirt roads. This, too, was a site with the highest recorded cases of filiriasis also known as elephantiasis, (a medical condition affecting the lymph system caused by roundworm or nematodes), and it had seen some devastating hurricanes in recent years. However, the more I thought about Boumā as a research site, the more intrigued I became. This appeared to be the most worthwhile and interesting research option yet. I remember being very sick the day that I met with the woman at the Fiji Visitors Bureau and having to run out of the meeting to the bathroom carrying my son: she certainly had not forgotten me when I was to contact her again from New Zealand months later to ask her more about Boumā.

Between July 2003 and March 2004, I worked hard to secure a 'cultural advisor' as required by the Massey University Ethics Committee. I found one in a representative of the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB). I commissioned him to introduce me to the Boumā community. While there, I gauged whether my research and my family would be welcome, whether it was going to be safe enough for my family, and whether the research would be feasible.

The methodology of this research is guided by Nabobo-Baba's (2007) Vanua Research Framework (VRF) as a way of conducting research from an indigenous epistemological and ontological standpoint. Although I was not informed by this framework at the time of fieldwork, I later found that the VRF was a useful way to discuss the way in which I approached my research. The conception stage of the VRF involves the theorisation and conceptualisation of the research. Nabobo-Baba suggests at this stage, permission should be sought from various chiefs and leaders of the researched community (2007, para. 10). With the assistance of my cultural advisor, I sought full permission from community leaders in *sevusevus* or entry rituals.

Na i sevusevu (entry)

Jacob, my one-year-old son, and I travelled to Matei in Taveuni in March 2004. We had arranged to meet my cultural advisor (I will call him Vili) at the Tovutovu tourist *bures*¹⁰ the day after I arrived on Taveuni, but days later he still had not made an appearance. It was rainy season and I noticed that the pearl farm jetty that we could see from our *bure* was becoming increasingly swamped by the waves. The owners of the *bures* had to strap canvas around the restaurant deck to protect its customers from the wind and the rain. Jacob was fascinated by the toads and I became highly skilled at dodging them on the way to and from my *bure* in my jandals as they flip-flopped across the concrete footpaths in the rain. Having little else to do, Jacob and I spent days watching the *lairo* (land crabs) scuttle in and out of the many holes they had made in the front lawn. After school hours, we played with the owners' son and daughter and their two dogs. One afternoon, Jacob dropped a jar of cream into one of the *lairo* holes. I was told it would be irretrievable as all the holes were likely to be connected in one complex network of tunnels under the sand. I was astounded to find that one of the crabs had pushed this obstacle out of the hole the next morning.

After the third day and no sign of Vili, I was very concerned that he was never going to turn up and I had little money to spend on hanging around in tourist accommodation. I

¹⁰ Unlike these more modern structures, traditional *bures* are dwellings built of all natural local resources such as *gasau* (cane) and *sasa* (coconut leaves).

was relying on him for two more reasons: I understood that an *'eivalagi* (foreigner) cannot simply turn up at a Fijian village unannounced and unaccompanied. I would be expected to present a *sevusevu* to the Boumā villages. A *sevusevu* is a ceremony involving the offering of a *waka* (kava root) to (in this case) a host. This is accepted in the customary way and is a symbol of recognition and acceptance of one another. In addition, it was a requirement of the Massey University Ethics Committee that I consult with a cultural advisor. It was a relief, though slightly puzzling, when he turned up four days after we had planned to meet with barely an apology. He said he had been delayed at a project on the mainland on the way to Taveuni.

Vili suggested we stop at Bula Bhai, the 'local' superette in Matei (Matei is a three-quarter to one hour rough and bumpy ride away from Boumā). Here, he indicated which items we should purchase and present to Waitabu village on our arrival. This included butter, jam, coffee, tea, rice, sugar, salt, flour, and cartons of UHT milk. We loaded our shopping into the back of the taxi van and set off for Boumā. After Naselesele, five minutes into the journey, the tarmac transformed into rough metal and dust punctuated by frequent large potholes and corrugations. It was hard to talk for the noise of the road and I was fearful for my baby's neck as we landed heavily in our seats with every bump. However, I soon relaxed a little and went with it. The scenery helped to take my mind off the discomfort of the journey.

The road took us through lush landscapes often with lower canopies completely cloaked by emerald vines. It took us through settlements of scant and simple housing: some of wooden boards brightly painted in purples and blues or greens and reds; others of more conservative display in wood, corrugated iron or concrete block. These dotted the green landscape. Occasionally, we would see pigs tethered to trees and a few large glossy black bulls but livestock became less common the further we drove. At one point, the road took us up a hill and closer to the coast where the trees opened out and we gained a clear vantage point of rock and then sandy white beaches dotted with palm trees. We passed a couple of wiry men carrying what I later learned were *dalo* slung over poles and resting on strong dark shoulders. They did a double-take when they saw

Vili. Vili leaned far out of the window and shouted and waved to the men who shouted excitedly to him as we drove past. Vili was recognised and greeted with surprise and enthusiasm by almost everyone walking down the road as we drove past on the way to Boumā. I was amazed at how many names he knew.

We finally slowed at a sign that read 'Waitabu Marine Park'. The driver took us down a narrow and very steep dirt road leading toward the beach. We were very warmly greeted by the Waitabu village community and it was at this point that I was to meet Sala, the Waitabu ecotourism project manager for the first time. She was a smiling, warm woman, but with a slight reserve about her. I was uncertain at this point about whether this was due to pride or shyness. Regardless, I felt immediately drawn to her. After presenting our purchased items I explained my intended research and we had tea. Sala appeared interested and encouraging. I was later to learn that she had worked in Suva in the hospitality industry for many years and that she had presented a conference paper on how the Waitabu ecotourism project related to local livelihoods at a conference in New Zealand. We said our farewells and gave our thanks and then moved on to Vidawa and then Korovou where we presented a *waqa* (kava root) at a *sevusevu* (introductory ceremony) with the *Vunisa* (the Head Chief of Boumā).

After this we set off for Lavena where Jacob and I would stay at Lavena Lodge for the rest of the week. As we drove toward Lavena, the road started to hug the coast. Despite having passed a health centre just before Korovou Village, I wondered when the road would end and became anxious that we would be too isolated from hospitals and other amenities considering I would be bringing a toddler into the field. The road finally stopped at what appeared to be the end of a peninsula. Lavena Lodge was to our left and to our right was a small open area which separated the village from the Lodge. There was no fence or other physical boundary between them. The beach here really was worthy of the 'Return to the Blue Lagoon' movie set it had become famous for and the lodge was built as close to the beach as was possible. Later that night we presented *yaqona* and some washing soap to the *turaga ni vanua* (chief) of Lavena. I had wanted to tuck Jacob into bed hours before but had to wait until I was told it was a good time to

present the *sevusevu*. Vili noticed that Jacob was getting grizzly and sent someone to see if the chief could meet us earlier than planned. The messenger returned to say that it was fine for us to come now. The chief had kind, rheumy eyes and appeared quite frail. His English was very good. He chuckled good-naturedly as I repeatedly warded Jacob away from the kerosene lamp sitting on the floor that shed a warm glow on the small group cross-legged around it.

At the end of the day, I felt that we had been warmly welcomed to Boumā and I had a sense of genuine acceptance and hope for the future of the research. Vili proved invaluable in helping me navigate my way through the complex web of cultural protocols necessary to make my presence known and my research intentions and requests understood to the right people in a very short timeframe (only about a week after his delayed arrival). Although each day meant a later start than anticipated, I was impressed with his ability to drink *kava* well into the early hours of the morning while still fulfilling his obligations to me. He insisted on giving me a one-to-one workshop on the ‘*vanua* concept’ and I eagerly accepted. We sat on Lavena Lodge’s back porch (the best part of the lodge because it overlooks a most exquisite white sandy beach and water of the lightest blue). He used large pieces of newsprint and an ink marker to illustrate his points and I wrote as fast as I could throughout the tutorial. He had clearly presented this material many times before in his capacity within Fijian Affairs and he was a pleasure to listen to. He also had the additional benefit of local knowledge due to his long-term association with Boumā.

Despite *sevusevus* to community leaders during this time, I did not meet with groups of the general public and most thought I was a tourist. In most of the *sevusevus*, it was very difficult to know what many really understood about the research and how happy they were for me to return with my family as everyone seemed polite and (at this juncture) no one had questioned my intentions or the research. It was arranged that I would come back with my family and stay for half of the research period with the Waitabu Project Manager and the rest of the time with one of the *turaga ni yavusa* Lavena’s [chief of Lavena] sons and his wife in Lavena. Vili left on the fifth day. He

decided to take a taxi rather than the local bus. The taxi driver returned the same evening to request \$30 for Vili's taxi.

I returned to Fiji and to Boumā during the rainy season on the 29th of May, 2004 with Jacob and my then partner, Matt (we were married during the fieldwork period). After a bumpy flight from Nadi, we arrived at Matei in the afternoon and bought supplies at Bula Bhai for Sala and her family. I was anxious about how many baby supplies to purchase at this point. We had arrived with an arsenal of medical supplies so I felt confident we were covered there. I had also brought ten tins of soya milk formula for Jacob from New Zealand as he was lactose intolerant but I hadn't brought any baby food in case he refused the local food. Consequently, I stocked up large quantities of this.

After this, we took a taxi to Waitabu where we were warmly welcomed. We were embarrassed by a number of things on our arrival: the number of bags we had brought with us to Sala's house (we had forgotten to buy bread and jam to their disappointment); and that Sala had bought a double bed, painted her bedroom and vacated it for us to sleep in (one of only two separate rooms in the house). Instead, she was to sleep on the *loga* (mats) in the main room with five other family members. This was to be indicative of a constant flow of gestures of selfless hospitality we were to experience during our time in Boumā.

That night, we made a *sevusevu* for the chief's daughter, Martina and the Waitabu pastor, Bill. We were told, 'Forget you are from New Zealand while you are here. You are *'ai Waitabu* (of Waitabu). What is ours is yours. Anything you need, you just ask'. We were also informed that a *bure* (traditional dwelling) would be built for us after they had finished building one for the Peace Corps Officer who was due to arrive in a couple of months. The plan was to stay with Sala until July, then Lavena until August and then return to Waitabu when a *bure* would be built for us. When we left, 'our' *bure* would be used for tourists. We did stay with Sala until July. However, our Lavena hosts, Jone and Mara, insisted we stay with them in Lavena and that they would talk to the village

about building us a *bure* which, too, would be later used for tourists. We felt torn. Whatever decision we made could create conflict between the two villages. I had asked Vili to sort this out when he had stayed in Boumā a couple of days before. Unfortunately, he had left without doing so. After presenting our dilemma to Sala, she recommended we go and stay in Lavena as her impression was that to stay in Waitabu could create more conflict than if we chose to live in Lavena. Sala was anxious for us to travel to Lavena as soon as possible to discuss the arrangements so as not to upset anyone. It was soon arranged that we were to stay with Mara and Jone in Lavena.

Despite their generous hospitality, after living in Jone and Mara's concrete block house for a month in Lavena, we were desperate for our own space and asked our hosts about the village's decision to build a *bure*. Our host said that the village had decided against building the *bure* and that we were to remain under their roof. We had been providing the family with all shop-bought food items every week to pay for our board. Compared to other families, our hosts may have been seen to benefit inequitably from our stay and they clearly enjoyed our company as their only son was boarding at Holy Cross College at Wainikeli. One family told us that that this had created some jealousy in the village and that our hosts had not only enjoyed the financial benefits of foreign company but also some prestige that came with it. We felt uncomfortable about this situation which only increased our need for our own place. Our hosts finally agreed to build us a house with the help of his family which they would later use for their own purposes when we left. We were to pay less for the house to be built than we would pay for rent in New Zealand over the same period and we would be helping the family by providing them with an extra building on our departure. Consequently, we agreed but requested a traditional *bure* rather than a modern house. This was met with some disbelief. Why would we choose a *bure* over a concrete block house when given the option?

Bure are warm in winter and cool in summer and they are the safest construction in the hurricanes that occasionally hit: the way they fall down leaves a protective gap for their inhabitants beneath. They also have a soft floor as they are layered with *sasa* (dried coconut leaves) and covered with *ibe/loka* (woven pandanus mats) providing a

wonderful sensation of walking or sleeping on air while the *sasa* is still fresh. It also has a lovely earthy smell to it. The corrugated iron houses, on the other hand, heat up like ovens in the summer. Even our host family, who had a concrete block house with a corrugated roof, would ask if they could sleep in our *bure* during the heat of the day as their house was too hot. When sheets of corrugation come loose in high winds, they can be extremely dangerous. The louvered windows in concrete block houses are also dangerous in high winds as long sheets of glass tend to come loose from the frames. Most corrugated and concrete block houses had concrete floors. Since the use of furniture is still fairly rare in Boumā, sitting and lying on the *sasa* floors of a *bure* is infinitely more comfortable than on concrete.

After about a month and a half of planning and purchasing and building we were living in ‘our’ quasi-traditional *bure*¹¹. A lot of good things came out of our little *bure*. Apart from our increased comfort, quiet and privacy, we were privileged to participate in one of the few traditional *bure* building events in Boumā (only five of the seventy households in Lavena were *bure*). *Bure* building is a dying art and we were heartened to observe elders teaching young men how to erect the poles, lash *gasau* (cane) together to make the walls and weave green *sasa* for roofing. I was also able to contribute by weaving some of the *sasa* roofing and help make the *drau ni moli* (lemon leaf tea) and *sikoni* (scones) for the workers with Mara and the other women from her and Jone’s *to’ato’a* (kin group). The positives that came from the building of our *bure* were only somewhat tainted when we were later informed by a couple of families that the community had not been approached to request a *bure* for us after all and that there was some question as to whether the *bure* would be used for the sole benefit of Jone’s family after our departure or for the good of the whole community as we were led to believe. It was difficult for us to form our own conclusions about the integrity of some of the community-members when contrasting stories regularly came at us from all sides.

¹¹ ‘Quasi’ because the *bure* was lashed with manufactured twine, and it had shelves and a collapsible desk in it.

The friendly greetings that met our charismatic Vili misled me to believe that he was loved by all who knew him in Boumā: many of my participants were to later divulge that they did not trust me when I arrived in Boumā purely by way of my association with him. I was immediately assumed to either work for the Fiji Government or for the Fiji Government through a New Zealand agency (and that my research was well-paid!). At that time I had no idea how cynical the people of Boumā had become about government departments. The FAB representative had been an officer with Fiji Forestry when the idea of the Boumā National Heritage Park was first conceived. It was Fiji Forestry that was later alleged to have stolen thousands of dollars worth of donated equipment from the Boumā people. Using Vili was the first of two major *faux pas* (amongst a number of more minor ones) I was to make during my fieldwork period.

The second mistake I made in settling my family into life in Boumā was not entirely my fault. My cultural advisor was supposed to ensure that I followed all the correct protocols to enable a smooth transition from tourist to resident researcher. However, he omitted to introduce me to the Lavena *turaga ni 'oro* (village headman). All official business (particularly government or otherwise externally related) should go first to the *turaga ni 'oro*. It is his role to then pass this information on to the chief and the village. It was not until we had been living in Lavena for some months that the *turaga ni 'oro* broached the subject. I was interviewing him and his wife with Dan Schmitt, the newly arrived Peace Corps Officer who was living in Lavena Lodge while he waited for his *bure* to be completed in Waitabu. At the end of the interview, his wife said that the *turaga ni 'oro* wanted to speak and we were told through his wife that her husband was most upset that neither Dan nor myself had followed the correct protocol and come to him first to present our intentions in Lavena. I was mortified (as was Dan) and could not apologise enough, but I was upset that I had not been correctly informed of this earlier.

From emplacement toward dwelling

In this chapter, the reader and the researcher are not only made more familiar with Boumā as an objectified space; we are now experiencing the more intimate (though clearly precarious) processes of ‘emplacement’. The following chapter will discuss in more detail how I actively chose to more deeply situate myself within Boumā (as a complex weave of socio-cultural and environmental elements) so that I could move from the tentative process of initial emplacement to a fuller and more practised experience of ‘dwelling’. Ingold (2000) describes dwelling as ‘a perspective which situates the practitioner...in the context of an active engagement with the constituents of his or her surroundings’ (p. 5). While Ingold suggests we dwell right from the start in our surroundings, the following chapter goes some way to explain how I learned to dwell more actively and more productively in my surroundings in Boumā to fulfil my role as anthropologist.

Chapter Three

Embeddedness

This chapter follows from the concept of emplacement as it was largely through the inter-subjectivity required by *talanoa* that I transcended the processes of emplacement to become more deeply embedded in Boumā's taskscape. Informal *talanoa* will be explained later in this chapter as 'informal chat' or 'gossip'. To some sociologists, embeddedness denotes an individual's integration into social networks (Moody & White, 2003). However, here I am also referring to a 'Merleau-Pontian' embeddedness in which a human is a 'being-in-the world' rather than a 'being looking in at the world'. This involves an embodied inter-subjectivity with the elements of the world. In this case, my aim was to become more deeply embedded in Boumā's taskscape. This includes the physical, social and cosmological elements of the *vanua*. As will be explained in this chapter, this was, however, a lengthy and delicate transcendence and did not occur in all events.

Talanoa requires inter-subjectivity or a deep sense of engagement and sharing of the self with others. Before I discuss my adoption of *talanoa* as a locally appropriate and articulated method of sharing knowledge, I will reflexively position myself as an anthropologist in this field as well as discuss issues related to conducting fieldwork with one's family. I, along with my family will be presented as affective and effective elements within the fieldwork arena¹² and, therefore, as elements of engagement with place and people in Boumā. Following this, I will present *talanoa* as something that evolved into a primary methodological tool throughout the research period. Finally, I will discuss why I chose to 'write up' *talanoa* as poetic narrative¹³.

¹² I have borrowed the 'arena' metaphor from Olivier de Sardan (2005). Olivier de Sardan's arena builds on Bourdieu's habitus which Olivier de Sardan describes as a space constituted by social structure 'institutions, its specialised agents, its hierarchy of positions, and its language' (p. 190). Olivier de Sardan's arena also transcends space and time but describes a locally bounded arena of concrete interactions where real people physically meet and interact (see also Bierschenk, 1988).

¹³ Note: Throughout the thesis, the *vanua* as a concept and as meaning 'land' is presented in lower capitals and italicized; *Vanua* as a generic reference to a tribe is spelt with a capital 'V' and italicized; and Vanua used as a proper noun is spelt with a capital 'V' and with no italics (e.g. Vanua Boumā).

My position as anthropologist

This section will identify the limits of my anthropological enquiry into Boumā life based on my identity and my political positioning within the tribe. Later in the discussion on *talanoa*, my situational characteristics and their limitations are offset by the greater opportunities they open up for me. This section will also explain through the premises of sentient ecology how the anthropologist that initially arrived in Boumā was not the same as the one that left, just as Boumā today is not the same as the Boumā that I left in August 2006 on my last visit there.

I am a New Zealander of Irish and British descent and have never lived in Fiji longer than the fieldwork period and other visits, totalling approximately nine months. Nevertheless, the people of Boumā called my family ‘*ai Waitabu* and subsequently ‘*ai Lavena* (‘*ai* meaning ‘native of’). Despite feeling, on the most part, very welcome to live amongst the people of Waitabu and Lavena, we could never, literally, be ‘natives of the land’. Regardless of this fact, we were almost always treated as very welcome ‘*ai palagi* (foreigners). Some, I think, perceived us as a novelty; others considered us to be potentially helpful in the development of the ecotourism project or in sorting out their internal conflicts by bringing true feelings anonymously out into the public; and a small number considered us a threat to social harmony¹⁴. The *bure* we paid to have built in Lavena would never be ours in perpetuity because it was built on someone else’s ancestral land. Although we were assured we could always come back and stay in the house, it would never really be ours because we were ‘*ai Lavena* in sentiment only.

Apart from the fact that we were not really ‘*ai Lavena*, we could not fully engage with the natural environment for a number of reasons. We did not have our own *teitei* (plantation) to work every day. Instead, we relied on our host family to provide produce and we reciprocated with store bought items. Nor did we fish. I suspect the reason why my constant request for someone to teach me to fish was ignored was that many men and women carried out unsustainable fishing practices and they feared I

¹⁴ This will be explained later in this chapter.

would disapprove. By the time I had left, I had only been fishing with a group of women once; I still struggled to find the dried flower of the coconut tree used for lighting fires; and many of the coconuts I brought home were rotten inside. I still feel disappointed that my family were not able to provide for ourselves and the community in Lavena and, consequently, I had not engaged with the physical environment in a way that more fully revealed what life in Boumā meant for those living there. We did not have an embodied connection to the locale in the same way as our participants nor cosmological connections with place and people. We had an ‘out’ if things became too uncomfortable and if one of us fell ill or we did not have what we needed to survive – they did not. While we may have developed our own ‘sense of place’ in Boumā and have carried away this place within us as memories in our minds and scars on our skin, we were not historically endowed with the necessary links to the land that made it our *vanua* and which identified and defined us. We were there for such a relatively short time that I could never fully understand Boumā culture. All I could do was observe, sensually immerse myself in the Boumā taskscape and record my participants’ interpretations of their lifeworlds¹⁵ and how they related to ecotourism development.

While I found that almost everyone spoke conversational English, this did not mean that I immediately and consistently understood the words spoken by my participants, the sequence of their words, nor the meaning implied by them. However, as will be explained later in this chapter, using poetic representation in my writing was an effective tool with which I was able to draw deeper meaning from fewer expressions. In addition, daily exposure to the language, word choices and the contexts in which the words were used in English to express concepts meant that my interpretation of my participants’ utterances became more and more refined. In the few instances where language was a barrier (either the participants could not, were not confident enough, or they chose not to speak English), I took up offers of help from a member of Lavena Village to act as interpreter. This is discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁵ The lifeworld is the background of communicative action. Some examples of components of the lifeworld are individuals, groups, values, and norms (cited in Bedrus, 2005, p. 3). Lifeworlds involve direct perception involving ‘seeing things as they are’ for their own sake, devoid of scientific or other preconceptions. These lifeworlds include relationships with the wider social context including development practitioners and myself as anthropologist.

Conversation was not a neutral activity. The politics and outcome of the interaction depended on who I was, who I spoke to and what I discussed. It took a long time for the Boumā people to trust me enough to share their genuine feelings about, and experiences of, ecotourism. As discussed in Chapter Two, we entered the field somewhat at a disadvantage because of my choice of cultural advisor. For a long time, people tried to work out my intentions in Boumā. Who was I working for and who was paying me? To whose advantage was I working? Was I pro-ecotourism or anti-ecotourism? To which family groups did I ally myself?

Because each *mataqali* (clan) had its own political agenda, we were placed in a non-neutral position by association. Our male host was one of the sons of the chief of Lavena and a member of the more prominent *mataqali* in the *yavusa* (village-based family unit). As a consequence of our living arrangements with him and his wife, those from another *mataqali* avoided talking to me for a long time (although it took me months to work out why). The excerpts from my diary below are illustrative of the kind of avoidance I frequently encountered early in the fieldwork period. Sometimes I suspected this was a political manoeuvre, but often I expect it was more a case of shyness, protocols of ‘silence’ (to be discussed later), fear of having to speak English, not having time or forgetting meeting times (since watches are seldom worn), or having felt obliged to politely agree to meet when not really wanting to do so.

June 7 2004

I have been trying to catch up with M....Matt saw her on the beach and asked if I could meet with her and when would be a good time. She suggested the evening after dinner. I asked S. if I should go to her house or if she would come to S's house. S sent A and Sm to ask her. M. said she would prefer after breakfast tomorrow morning.

June 8 2004

M. didn't come to see me today and I wonder how many others will choose to decline.

I had to constantly check my own personal biases and values. Often, in the field, the events, emotions, sights and sounds of Boumā overwhelmed me physically and emotionally. I sometimes retreated to my *bure* and my fieldwork diary to release pent up frustrations and occasionally, bitterness, sadness and disgust. As such, it became stressful to leave my diary anywhere for any amount of time, lest someone find it and read it. Consequently, when I did use my diary for this kind of cathartic writing, my writing was intentionally virtually illegible and stored in a locked box with tape recorded interviews.

Sentient ecology accepts that just as we as humans inscribe meaning in our environment our environment becomes inscribed in us (Milton, 1996; Ingold, 2000). I do carry Boumā with me as Ruth Dallas suggests in her poem *Deep in the Hills* (1947):

Once I thought the land I had loved and known
Lay curled my inmost self; musing alone
In the quiet room I unfolded the folded sea
Unlocked the forest and the lonely tree
Hill and mountain valley beach and stone
All these, I said, are here and exist in me.

Today, I still feel the horror at seeing children jamming sticks into the eyes of a tethered pig awaiting slaughter. The sound of that pig screaming can still haunt me if I let it. I still get upset when I think of how some of the physically weaker community members, the elderly and disabled, had been rejected to suffer a lonely and degrading decline. I can still smell the stench of rotting flesh from an elder's feet as he lay weeping on the floor of his house.

Despite these flashes of pain and sadness, my memories of Boumā are much more likely to bring moments of lightness and joy: I feel again the warmth of hope at watching the young men coming together to learn the traditional art of *bure* building as they constructed what was to be our temporary dwelling in Lavena Village. I feel pure

joy at the images of our wedding at Nukubalavu on the shores of the Waitabu Marine Reserve, the ceremony all organised by the Waitabu villagers. I remember the smiling faces of the children as they leapt about in the waves and their angelic voices as they softly sang hymns to themselves as they strolled through the village. I also recall many specific events of heartfelt hospitality and care we received from the communities, such as the time we were offered local medical and spiritual care for our son when he fell ill. Our son was treated by many as a special child of Waitabu first, and then Lavena Village. I loved the way our close male friends played ‘horsies’ and ‘tickle’ with him in the practised, boisterous, yet gentle way that only other fathers or older brothers can. The laughter of the women still rings in my ears: that wonderful raucous, no-holds-barred, shrieking laughter.

As will be explained throughout this thesis, there were also many elements of Boumā life that I found confounding, strange, and illogical. I no longer look upon these elements in the same way as I did when I first arrived in Boumā. These elements of Boumā life like ‘fluid pixels’ have become at least temporarily apprehensible as today I have been able to place these in context within the fuller multidimensional moving picture that is Boumā. This is not to say that I was merely the audience of Boumā’s moving picture. I was very much a part of it during my time there. We have also left our imprint in the taskscape there. The anthropologist I was when I arrived in Boumā was changed by it from the time of my entry and continues to change as I reflect back on it. I have been changed by my and my family’s inter-subjective engagement in the environment, the taskscape, the arena that is Boumā.

Conducting fieldwork with family

June 6 2004

Having J here has been a blessing and has also been much, much harder than I had thought. The sleep deprivation has really been affecting us. Trying to attend night activities is hard as we have to get up early in the morning for J. We both take turns attending to J in the morning because we have to try to keep him as quiet as possible in

our room while the others sleep. Plus it is still dark and there is nowhere else to play...Had a great day with J today. The children ran him up and down the beach showing him bright green fish they had caught, sea slugs and a snake. He was captivated by a variety of beautiful shells. A. wanted him to feel the current as he walked through the stream running into the sea...The children just couldn't leave J alone – pinching him and kissing him at every opportunity. I wonder if this fascination will get old with time.

As this diary entry shows, there are advantages and disadvantages particular to bringing a family to live with research participants in the field. This has been recognised by other anthropologists and social researchers (e.g. Flinn, Marshall, & Armstrong, 1998; Cupples & Kindon, 2003). The benefits include a greater opportunity to become subjectively saturated in the culture and to gain more insights into family life. Conversely, the disadvantages of research with children include finding time for research and for private family time. This was a very real struggle for our family. While I appreciated having Matt there to take the load off me as far as my parental responsibilities were concerned (washing and drying cloth nappies, cooking, and general childcare), I was constantly aware that this was not actually his ‘thing’ at all. He never wanted to be a near-solo full-time parent and parenting in such a different and challenging environment was twice as hard as parenting at home in New Zealand. Other parents and children in Boumā often encouraged our one (and later two) year old son to behave in ways we felt were unacceptable (e.g. to hit other children and to kill chicks). We were constantly fighting an uphill battle with our own discipline and boundaries for our son. Some days the heat made the simplest chore almost impossible and we came to fully embrace the Fijian expression *cegu mada* (please rest).

Matt’s presence also ensured I was not considered a ‘single’ woman. I had heard from a single European marine biologist who had visited Waitabu that living in a Fijian village was not so easy if you did not have a husband. She lived in a different *Vanua* on Taveuni and had the unnerving experience of having a single male knocking on her window late at night and early in the morning. Even single men were not immune, as

Dan (the Peace Corps representative Matt and I had befriended) had some problems with a single local woman pursuing him in Lavena. She, too, had knocked on his window late at night asking him if he wanted to go for a walk and made suggestive statements to him at every opportunity.

If nothing else, Jacob was a talking point and often managed to 'break the ice'. I was aware of what an annoyance I must be if I was constantly asking questions related to the research or otherwise. Jacob was a good excuse to simply sit with other women and *talanoa* (chat). This not only gave Matt a break, but allowed me to forge more meaningful and valuable relationships with those around me. However, when I did want to sit quietly and talk to people while tape recording, I found having Jacob with me very stressful. Often he would grizzle and I would have to stop the tape several times in an attempt to settle him enough to continue. Many times, I had to excuse myself to walk him to Matt (who was usually having a much deserved rest at the opposite end of the village).

I was constantly concerned about Jacob's health as almost all the children had scabies and runny noses and many had the swollen tummies that may have been indicative of worms. Despite this, I let him run freely with them as it would have been unrealistic and undesirable to try to quarantine him from his little friends. We wanted him to fully integrate with his peers and to experience life as a little Fijian would. Jacob did get sick, though. For about a fortnight he had occasional diarrhoea. He seemed well in himself all this time but was rapidly losing weight.

A healer called Miri came to visit a good friend of mine. Everything was big about Miri. She was a very big woman with big hair. She wore bright makeup and big bright *sulus*. She told outrageously bawdy jokes and was a lot of fun, but she told us that Jacob was the victim of black magic and that our *bure* had been built too close to a large rock which was the sacred site (*yavu*/house mound) of a malevolent ancestor. Miri said that a small group of men from the village had cast black magic on Jacob to make him sick. Even though my common sense told me to ignore all this, I must admit, I felt

truly fearful: if not of the ancestor then of my neighbours who wanted to make my baby ill. When I asked why they would want to do this a friend told me that it was because some families were jealous that we were giving our attention to one family: our host family. Miri massaged Jacob with coconut oil for twenty minutes to get the ‘cold’ out of him and a friend also offered to do some spiritual healing for Jacob. I wanted all the help I could get at this point and agreed. They told me to go home and that night they would collect Jacob and me when it was time.

They came to the *bure* late at night after Jacob had been asleep for some time. We all went to the church where a large group of people were sitting in a circle in the semi-darkness. Apart from some small smiles from a couple of familiar faces the atmosphere was solemn. To this day I am very glad Jacob slept through most of this because if not, I fear he may have been quite traumatised. This was a Fijian charismatic healing. The group of people cried, shook and wailed in waves together as they commanded the evil spirit out of my baby son. The next day Jacob started vomiting. I spent a fitful night worried sick about him before taking him to the hospital on the 6am bus the next morning. After a night on a drip in hospital, he was discharged and I brought him back to the village where he slowly regained weight. I felt shaken by this event for a long time afterwards. The healer had described the ancestor as very dark and tall. For many nights after the healing I would look up into the cross-beams of the *bure* and try not to see a tall dark figure. I became more protective of my son and many, many times during his illness considered simply packing our bags and leaving the next day.

From semi-structured interviews to talanoa

The research methods and theoretical approach for this research were inspired by sentient ecology. These include embodiment, intersubjectivity and reflexivity. Sentient ecology (Milton, 1996; Ingold, 2000) has been influenced by European phenomenological philosophy and American pragmatism and spurred by the growth of ‘interpretive anthropology’ or the anthropology of experience. This approach redirects the researcher from excessive abstraction to more rich and grounded accounts of ‘lived

experience'. The prime focus of analyses is 'being in the world' (or the way the world 'offers itself' to the experience of the individual). The world is the world as it appears to consciousness. Phenomenologists and, since the 1980s, sentient ecologists insist that our sense of self is a product of intersubjectivity: our engagement with others in our environment and the environment itself. All of this determines who we are as individuals. In other words, proponents of sentient ecology suggest that we come to know the world we live in through practical engagement with it. This involves the reflexive expressions of the researcher's intuition (sensitivity and responsiveness) as well as those of our participants. Another focus of sentient ecology is that of embodiment or the various ways in which we, as physical beings, inhabit the world and engage with others. Both embodiment and intersubjectivity require the researcher to report reflexively on experiences and observations in the field. This requires a 'self-conscious attempt to understand oneself and one's culture as influencing as well as being altered by the process of studying others and their cultures' (Omohundro, 2008, p. 416).

The research for this thesis was carried out through multiple in-depth and largely unstructured interviews as well as an embodied engagement in the everyday mundane activities of my participants. I 'fell into' *talanoa* as a local form of informal 'chat' or 'gossip' as I built rapport with local community members. *Talanoa* became my primary methodology because it is synonymous with the phenomenological approaches that I had set out to use in the field: it requires an emotional engagement between all parties; it necessitates a space where all parties can speak freely; and it requires shared knowledge. *Talanoa* often takes place while carrying out everyday activities. In this way, conversation and action combined provided frequent opportunities to more deeply understand local worldviews¹⁶.

I had always intended to base the research predominantly on interviews. However, I have always struggled with the term 'interview' because it has traditionally implied a one-way form of communication: that of the interviewer obtaining information from the

¹⁶ *Talanoa* is an essential characteristic of Unaisi Nabobo-Baba's (2007) Vanua Research Framework.

interviewee (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). For me, the very word implies a power relationship with the interviewer controlling the questions and therefore, the course and outcome of the interview (Naples, 2003; Ribbens, 1989). When applied to an indigenous context it also smacks of post-colonialism. This is not the way I wanted to conduct the research in Boumā. However, this was an evolutionary process for me. The interviews became more informal and less-unidirectional as I became more familiar with people and place.

I became comfortable and familiar with interview-based research through my honours research in which I interviewed more than 50 women about their gendered experiences in outdoor active pursuits in New Zealand¹⁷. I also wanted to engage with the everyday activities of my participants in an effort to afford myself a more embodied experience of my participants' lifeworlds. This included an intention to develop a nuanced and complex sense of place in Boumā in terms of its natural, cosmological, political, social, cultural and historical elements. In my previous research, I had applied a phenomenological approach in which, reflexivity, inter-subjectivity, and engagement were key to the research and I wanted to take the same approach here.

As in my honours research, I wanted to know how a wide range of community members genuinely felt about the research question. In this case, I wanted to know how my participants felt about the impacts of community-based ecotourism on their lives. It is for this reason that I intended to conduct interviews largely on a one-to-one or small group basis as I felt that in large group interviews, there is the potential for the perceptions of some to be silenced by the mere presence of others. I hoped that once I had gained my participants' trust, I could conduct interviews in a way that encouraged people to share their true feelings, unhindered by fear of disclosure. This is not to say that I did not conduct larger group interviews. On one occasion, I interviewed a *ti'oti'o*¹⁸ group of about twenty people. After that particular *talanoa* session, the

¹⁷ Prince, T. (2004). Exploring females' perceptions of the cultural construction of gender in active outdoor pursuits in New Zealand: A phenomenological perspective. *New Zealand Journal of Outdoor Education*, 3(1), 47-56. (Note: 'Prince' is my maiden name).

¹⁸ The *ti'ti'o* is the smallest kinship group aside from the household or *vūvale*.

participants described the experience as ‘an awakening’ and a ‘good chance to think and talk about our situation’. However, I still followed this up with smaller group and one-to-one interviews which proved more revealing than the group interview.

I felt that anthropology’s propensity for a one-to-one or small group interview was a better approach than some participatory development approaches that have the potential to conceal the perceptual and political differences within local communities and, thereby, ignore internal conflicts. For example, due to the public nature of participatory rural appraisal (PRA)¹⁹ questions are asked of community groups as ‘community consultation’. Within this context of enquiry, participants are rarely able to move beyond safe discourse (Bar-On & Prinsen, 1999, p. 288). It is, in part, the ‘unsafe’ context in which PRA ‘community consultations’ take place that silences many voices in the community and ignores those that use silence or ‘non-decision’ as a political tool. So while ‘power elites with a capacity to push their points of view and to protect their interests may be excluding significant components of a community population’ (Sofield, 2003, p. 105), community consultations may also exclude reasons people make a political decision not to participate. Hence, I did not want to consult purely with local elites (often those directly involved in development projects) which had largely been the case with NZAID’s management consultancy: Tourism Resource Consultants (TRC). While a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) had been conducted by Trudi Jones in 1998 which consulted with the broader community, according to my participants, apart from those directly involved in the tourism initiatives and the chiefs, few had met anyone from TRC. It was for these reasons that I wished to interview a broad cross-section of the community in safe spaces so that my participants could speak as freely as they wished. These spaces were always chosen by my participants and were usually their own homes.

¹⁹ PRA is the participatory method which was conducted in Boumā in 1998 by Trudy Jones, Lincoln University for the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s NZODA Ecotourism Programme, the Fiji Native Lands Trust Board and the local community. The purpose of the PRA at that time was to ‘increase understanding by those involved in managing ecotourism development in the area, regarding some of the issues facing the communities involved in the project’ (Jones, 1998, p. 4).

Written consent forms and surveys

I set out from New Zealand with a set of laminated sheets: a consent form, a summary of my research intentions, a letter of support for the research from the CEO of Fijian Affairs, a letter of reference from my supervisor, and a set of key questions. I instinctively knew I would never use the consent forms but I brought them anyway as I was required by the Massey University Ethics Committee to use them in the field. When I showed these to Vili, my cultural advisor, he just shook his head: ‘You won’t be needing those’, he said. ‘We don’t work that way here. This is a community that values their oral traditions’. Many in Boumā cannot read or write English, although most converse quite comfortably in it. I felt it was embarrassing for some of them to be presented with a research form only to have to admit their limited literacy in Fijian or English. I was initially concerned about not having my participants sign consent forms for fear of repercussions from the Ethics Committee. However, following Vili’s advice and my own unwillingness to push something that was clearly at odds with the cultural norms of my participants, the forms were left in my *bure* until the day I left Boumā at the end of the research period seven months later.

I found that a more culturally appropriate method of obtaining consent was in the initial *sevusevus* (welcoming/request ceremony) with Vili when I first made contact with the communities although, in hindsight, my choice of cultural advisor would have been different. In addition, I attended regular village and park management meetings so that I could orally update the community members on the progress of the fieldwork or my intentions. This was usually done with the help of a translator (selected by the *turaga ni vanua*). I later discovered that Nabobo-Baba (2006) and Otsuka (2006) also found that consent forms were problematic in their Fijian research. Nabobo-Baba gained initial consent for her research through her *sevusevu*. Her maternal uncle told her not to show her consent forms too readily and advised her to ‘[t]alk to our people about what you are here for, more importantly, about what good this trip will do for us, then gradually ask them to sign. Most of them will not want to sign anyway...’ (2006, p. 33).

I attempted to conduct a survey to record which family member fulfilled what role and for what length of time in each household. Another survey distributed with this one requested information about plantation productivity. These were translated into Fijian first by Mala, a friend in Lavena, and then double-checked by Tio, a past project manager with excellent English proficiency. This proved very time consuming and frustrating not only for me but also for my participants. Many held on to their surveys waiting to see me again. When I asked if they had completed their survey, they would either reply, 'Not yet' or finally admit they could not understand it very well. After a while I realised that few understood the surveys, despite the Fijian translation including what I thought were clear instructions, and few were interested in filling them out. However, when I changed tack and decided to discard the idea of surveys to gather the same information through interviews, the same families appeared relieved at not having to deal with the surveys anymore, and at the same time, forthcoming with the information I required. Otsuka's (2005) attempts to conduct a survey in the Nadroga/Navosa province in Fiji, was similarly misguided in that his participants misinterpreted what he considered to be fairly straightforward questions.

The only laminated sheet I did use was the set of key questions I intended to ask my participants (Appendix 1). While I never used these in the interviews, I referred to them quite regularly and adjusted them as the research progressed. The questions were adjusted because I wanted to allow the interview responses to lead the research questions rather than the other way around. It was fascinating to look back on how my questions evolved throughout the fieldwork period.

Toward talanoa

While I regularly returned to this limited number of broad questions, the questions I asked in each individual interview were never limited to those questions; they merely worked as a guide. Therefore, my initial interviews may be described as 'semi-structured'. However, while Handwerker (2001) and others describe 'semi-structured' interviews as an 'informal' interview technique, in the first few months of fieldwork,

my interviews did not feel informal. This is because I still had not ‘emplaced’ myself as a trusted and constant member of the community. I use the word ‘constant’ because Boumā has seen many *palagis* (Europeans/visitors/tourists) come and go. These have included Peace Corps workers, development consultants, marine biologists, entrepreneurs, researchers and, of course, tourists and anthropologists. It wasn’t until my family had demonstrated our commitment to living in Lavena by having our *bure* built there that I felt a palpable change in the way people treated us. It was at this time the interviews became more informal and much of my most valuable data was incidental to other daily activities and took the form of spontaneous ‘chatter’.

My ‘discussion’ style of interview raised some questions for our Peace Corps friend, Dan. He had joined me for some interviews with the consent of the participants when he first arrived so that he could learn more about the place (and his place in it). After the first day’s interview in Qali, we were walking back down the road toward Lavena when he asked me if I was ever worried I was asking ‘leading’ questions. It was always my greatest fear that I would do this and I was disturbed that he thought that that was what I had been doing during this interview. I went back to my *bure* and immediately transcribed the tape from that interview. What I heard was a conversation between two people rather than a unidirectional interview: the participant asking me questions as much as I was asking her; me asking for her opinions; me sharing my thoughts on various matters; her contradicting me; her sharing her thoughts on various matters. I was satisfied that what had occurred was instead, a natural interaction involving genuine curiosity between two speakers. I was curious about life in Boumā and they were curious about my curiosity. I acknowledge, however, that the interview was requested by me for my own research and that I had arrived at the interview with a predetermined agenda: to find out how this participant felt ecotourism in Boumā affected her life and how she felt the *vanua* affected the projects. However, I felt comfortable that I had made that agenda explicit and that regardless of it we had engaged in a mutual exchange.

Since my first year as undergraduate student of anthropology I have become more aware that there is no definitive form of ‘culture’, only interpretations of it. These interpretations may vastly vary depending on who the researcher talks to or observes. As such, there are no ‘true’ or ‘false’ answers in participants’ responses. Rather they are indexical and say something about the relationship of the speaker to his or her society and its members, and to the researcher. My interviews then were not simple recordings of objective fact, but explorations of meaning. This exploration of meaning was negotiated between me as researcher and my participants in inter-subjective relationships (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Prus, 1996). When this started happening as the field work period progressed and I became more accepted and trusted, the interviews became less ‘interview’ and more *talanoa*. *Talanoa* became the primary mode through which this inter-subjective and engaged approach was realised.

Talanoa and ‘talking straight’

Talanoa may be described in a number of ways including ‘gossip’ (Brenneis, 1984); an ‘adjudicatory mechanism’ (Arno, 1980); ‘storytelling’ (Halapua, 2003) and a ‘philosophy’ (Halapua, n.d.), ‘epistemology’ (Prescott, 2007); and to ‘chat’ or ‘conversation’ (Geraghty, 1994, p. 144), and to ‘tell stories’ (Cappell, 1968, p. 215).

Informal discussion has always been a powerful research tool for anthropologists. A focus on *talanoa* provided me with more meaningful narratives. I interpreted these narratives as free expressions of how ecotourism as a development process had impacted on each of my participant’s lives. It is in informal contexts that *talanoa* was able to transcend some of the protocols in other social contexts which had restricted the speaker’s compulsion to speak freely (or in the words of my participants to ‘talk straight’). As in most other cultures, gossip or chat is commonplace in villages in Fiji. This provides opportunities for people to talk straight when they feel they are not able to in more public *talanoa* contexts, particularly where *tabu* or avoidance relationships exist.

Veiwe'ani (avoidance relationships), *madua* (shyness/manners) and *nomo* (silence) can prevent individuals and groups from 'talking straight' (as locally described). This has been a source of much frustration in Boumā, particularly in attempting to merge business with *va'avanua* (life lived in line with traditional core values) in the community management of ecotourism initiatives. A Lavena community member explains the difficulty of not being able to 'talk straight' in the running of the Lavena project:

*Tabu*²⁰ relationships
between yourself and your uncle
in the project can really happen.
Your relationship with your uncle
is a really serious one.
You can't talk straight to each other.
So when he asks you something,
you just say, 'yes'.
And you just have to say, 'yes'
all the time
whether you think it is good or not²¹.

The inability to 'talk straight' in more public forums such as village or project meetings therefore, is addressed, in part, by informal and less public *talanoa* as an outlet for feelings and desires that may otherwise be impossible to express.

Many writers discuss *talanoa* as a public form of expression in public fora (e.g. Halapua, 2003, Nabobo-Baba, 2006). However, in the context of this research, I am more interested in *talanoa* as private informal 'chat'. Less public forms of *talanoa* provide opportunities to 'talk straight'. Thus, in spaces where more private *talanoa* takes place, 'conscientizing' or advancing critical consciousness (Freire, 1968),

²⁰ Avoidance/prohibitive relationships.

²¹ This is an illustration of poetic narrative used to present the content of *talanoa* throughout the thesis.

creativity, and negotiation of new skills, knowledge and values can be played out without the restrictions of *veiwe'ani* (avoidance relationships). The researcher does not provide these spaces. This happens in Boumā anyway: *talanoa* is often described as the most popular past-time in Boumā. There were always small groups of people sitting somewhere talking and drinking *yaqona* or *kava* or eating together. *Yaqona* has been described as a 'soporific intoxicating beverage' (Aporosa, 2008a, p. 8) which plays a vital cultural role in Fiji: '[t]he consumption and cultural practices surrounding *yaqona* are deeply influenced by *va'aturaga* (*vakaturaga*)²² and the respect for others' (ibid, p. 21). Asesela Ravuvu describes *vakaturaga* or *va'aturaga* as 'ideal behaviour' including *veidokai* (respect), *vakarokoroko* (deference), *vakarorogo* (attentiveness and compliance), and *yalo malua* (humbleness) (1983, p. 103). Therefore, *yaqona* may be a reason to gather for informal *talanoa*, and facilitates respectful *talanoa*. It is also another symbol of reciprocation, communality and caring and sharing that central to life in Boumā.

While utilising pre-existing spaces and contexts where participants have the opportunity to talk freely has obvious benefits for the researcher, this also has a potential to benefit the larger community, particularly in the absence of strong chiefly leadership. In addition to multiple opportunities like these for private, group discussions, *talanoa* also functions as public forum in Boumā²³.

Sometimes, possibly due to *madua*, I felt some participants were telling me what I wanted to hear. Eventually, I learned to be quite explicit about what I was asking. I asked my participants to 'speak from their heart' if they could, while also reminding them that if they could not or did not want to speak from the heart, that was OK too. I told them I would understand and respect that. The response to this new way of requesting information was overwhelming openness and honesty. I often came away feeling privileged that they felt comfortable enough to speak as freely as they did.

²² Toren, C. (1989). *Mind, materiality and history: Explorations in Fijian ethnography*. London: Routledge.

²³ This will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

Along with this, however, came a strong feeling of obligation. I would treat that informant and the information they had offered with the utmost respect and anonymity.

All of the statements recorded in this thesis are the product of informal *talanoa* as ‘discussion’ or ‘chat’ and in some cases ‘gossip’ (involving talk about third parties). However, as Arno (1980) indicated in his research on Yanuyanu gossip, ‘a clear rule of conduct was that locals were not allowed to be party to *kakase*: talk about a third party that is not true or at least not known to be true’. This was an ‘implicit recognition that gossip, so defined, was too important to the group to be practiced in an idle or irresponsible way’ (p. 359). I could not always guarantee that this rule held true for *talanoa* in Boumā. However, the content of *kakase* can also be revealing. As Brenneis (1996) notes, gossip intensifies when there is only partial knowledge of an event and suggests that these ‘speculative fictions provide insights into local views of character, motive and logic’ (p. 42).

Talanoa with me as a *palagi* researcher transcended avoidance relationships and for some, in time, these encounters became conduits for cathartic expressions of hope. The *talanoa* I engaged in with those participants I became most familiar with were conducted largely outside of the norms, rules and protocols of the *vanua*. As I was not a *Vanua* member, the same rules and protocols did not apply in *talanoa* with me. This opened up opportunities for the more familiar of my participants to communicate more freely. Nabobo-Baba (2006) noted that because she was a member of the Fijian Vugalei community she studied she was often asked why she was asking questions about knowledge in Vugalei and was treated as showing a level of ignorance. Others asked her why she was pretending she didn’t know the answers to the questions she was asking (p. 31). I did not have to face those same issues. There was no doubt that I was an ignorant *palagi* (foreigner/visitor). Nabobo-Baba (2006) also states that she came into the field with ‘ancestral baggage’. She was also restricted from talking to some people because of *veiwe’ani*. I had none of those challenges to contend with. However, as a *palagi*, I had a larger set of challenges which largely involved a long road of rapport and trust-building and learning how to function in a very different social and

physical environment; learning *tovo* (custom); and understanding Boumā epistemologies and ontologies.

After a few months of slowly emplacing and then embedding myself and my family and allowing others to facilitate this process, *talanoa* as opposed to ‘interview’ became more frequent. The *talanoa* I engaged in took place in a variety of relaxed contexts whether over *ti* (tea/afternoon or morning tea) and *sikoni* (scones), or *yaqona* (kava) or simply during the course of mundane daily activities such as washing, walking, or preparing *voivoi* (pandanus). Near the end of my research period, people would stop me on the road or as I walked through the village to ask to talk with me. This contrasted with any pre-planned form of ‘interview’. However, with those I came to know well, sitting down specifically to talk about the research also became more relaxed and ‘free-style’. Some of the content of these *talanoa* (particularly with younger participants) could be described as ‘cheeky’, politically ‘risky’ and full of humour. Others were sombre, anxious, and secretive. They were always two-way conversations though. Occasionally, my participants would ask for my opinions or my experiences on a particular matter. The conversation would flow backward and forward, scattered with interjections, and stalled by long, quiet moments of contemplation (*vakanomodi*). In this way, my participants and I learned from one another.

I learned to be patient when awaiting a reply from my participants or for them to continue their contribution to the discussions. In the early days of my fieldwork, I thought my participants had chosen to ignore my questions until I realised that silences between utterances in conversations can be surprisingly lengthy. I also came to realise how valuable these silences could be. Nabobo-Baba writes that silence is not empty: ‘there is eloquence in silence... a pedagogy of deep engagement between participants’ (2006, p. 94). At the same time, silence does not necessarily infer agreement or disagreement. When I learned to let the silences happen, a depth of thought, emotion, connection with me, and connection with the content, emerged from it. The pace of

talanoa was indicative of the inter-cultural difference between researcher and participants of something as taken-for-granted as time.

Time

Time is a concept that is referred to throughout this thesis as it is noted that time for Fijians has a different value and meaning than time in Western countries. Few people wear a watch. To live in Boumā is to live in a place where phone contact and public transport is very limited. Successfully making contact with someone I wanted to talk to in a different village often took some effort. When I eventually did make contact and we had both settled on a time and place to meet, I could walk for hours or catch a bus (that I could not return on for the whole afternoon). I did this many times only to find that my participant may be ‘at his *teitei*’ (plantation) or she may be ‘still out fishing’. This was particularly irritating in the rainy season or when the heat of the sun was unbearable and I had my son with me. Early on in the fieldwork period I took it personally and concluded that they did not really want to speak with me but were too polite to reject my request. At other times, however, they sincerely apologised: they had to visit someone; they forgot; they did not notice the time and then they would set up another meeting time which they would honour. I had to adjust my Western conception of time to a localised, intuitive and fluid conception of time if I was to learn anything in Boumā.

It is normal for the people in Boumā to start a conversation by asking, ‘Have you already eaten?’ or ‘Where are you going?’ Following that, you may be asked how your children, your husband or your host family are or what they are doing. Before interviews start, there is likely to be a long interchange of personal information and a meal (see also Otsuka, 2006; Mo’ungatonga, 2003, cited in Vaioleti, 2003, pp. 3 & 4). This was another of my cultural *faux pas* as when I first entered the field I was concerned about wasting my participants’ time. For this reason, I tended to run at the interview head on like a ‘bull at a gate’: running roughshod over *vanua* protocol in the process. Thankfully, the school headmaster was kind enough to correct my behaviour

one day when I visited his house to interview him. If it were not for his advice, I may have insulted a great many more people. Relationships are precious, he reminded me, and relationships take time and nurturing. Therefore, time is an important element in the ongoing processes of fostering healthy social structures in Boumā. The inter-relational, emotive and sharing nature of *talanoa* begins a long time before the tape-recorder is revealed. It starts when the researcher enters the field in *sevusevu* and continues when she and her family leaves.

Multi-dialogue

Nabobo-Baba (2008) writes that indigenous peoples derive their knowledge, legitimacy and validation not from the academy alone, but from a multiplicity of sources. ‘This means looking beyond paradigms that partition knowledge, to see, for example, if we can arrive at a more coherent and holistic theory of research ethics and practice’ (Indigenous Fijian Epistemology section; see also Progler, 2004). She suggests we do this through engaging in a multiplicity of *talanoa* contexts. *Talanoa* as storytelling is analogous to narrative research employed by many anthropologists. Narrative research recognises that storytelling is an important means for representing and explaining personal and social experience. Narrative research includes life histories, biographies and autobiographies, auto-ethnographies, oral histories, and personal narratives. All of these assume that ‘storytelling is integral to the understanding of our lives and that it is ubiquitous’ (Rossmann & Rallis, 2003, p. 99). Parts of this research are based on oral life history material but governed by theme. In other words, I have not presented individual participants’ life histories in isolation. I have, instead, taken excerpts from them according to the theme that is discussed at the time in the thesis.

Key informants were chosen because of the depth of their knowledge of the projects: for example, past and present park managers; park staff; and board and committee members. The tone and content of these stories often contrasted with the average community member I interviewed who may or may not have had much knowledge of, involvement or interest in the projects. With the variability of informants’ perceptions

in mind, added to the mix must be the researcher's acknowledgement that the concept of the 'village community' is a myth (Dumont, 1966). The village is also part of the wider society (political, economic and social) with other villages, the larger locality, the district, the nation-state, the globe and it is also through individual connections with these networks that individuals within the village community come to form their own unique worldviews and evolving opinions of the projects and the ways in which they relate to the *vanua*.

I soon came to learn that the *Vanua* was both indivisible and divisible at the same time. Structurally, the *Vanua* was divided into four *yavusa* which was further divided by *mataqali*, *to'ato'a* and *ti'oti'o*. These sub-groups were further complicated by generational and gender splits of quite different worldviews and approaches to the *vanua* and experiences of, and approaches to, ecotourism. Some kinship groups had historically conflicted with others over particular matters (usually over land ownership or right to leadership). Therefore, historical and political accounts collected in this research, were compared with those of others. Going back over the transcriptions later with informants and noting revisions was a useful method (Shaw, 1980). However, not all contradictory stories could be resolved. I came to learn that each person's story is acceptable in its own right.

I learned this through two separate interviews of a Lekutu and a Naituku elder about Boumā history. Both made the same statement: if I was to record the histories of the Boumā people I was not to expect any of the narratives to support the claims of the others as everyone had their own stories to tell. It was claimed by some community members that many children had inherited stories that supported their family's claims to land, resources, and leadership, even if these were not entirely factual. For this reason, these two elders had independently requested that if they were to tell their story, they be told not as a universal truth, but as one of the many interpretations of the history of Boumā. I have honoured my promise I made to them.

Language

At the beginning of the fieldwork period I had no knowledge of the Fijian language. However, on my reconnaissance trip to Boumā I was relieved to learn that most people there spoke conversational English. Although the majority of the community could speak English, not everyone had the confidence to do so and it took a long time for some people to talk to me at all. The Waitabu project manager once told me that before my family came to stay in her house, all the young people used to come and play ‘flick’ there²⁴. They ceased to come when we moved because, she said, they were afraid they may have to speak English. Despite some reluctance to speak English, I would say that about 95 percent of the time, I managed to conduct interviews in Boumā with few communication problems.

About four months into my fieldwork I formed a friendship with Mala in Lavena who volunteered to help translate some interviews. Mala wanted me to talk to some families in a settlement (not of her *mataqali*) who she felt were being ostracised from the rest of the community. As their English was weak and hers was strong, she wished to help them to speak out through the research. I did not question her motivation for wanting to help the families as I had developed a friendship with her over a period of about six months and found her to be a genuinely caring and generous woman. She was very keen to practise her English. After leaving school about 25 years ago, Mala had built her English vocabulary almost purely through reading any English novels she could get her hands on (usually *via* tourists). Although she had had limited opportunity to speak English, we communicated very easily together. Despite her family’s struggles, she laughed easily. She had a daughter and a son in their early twenties and four-year-old twins. She was a heavy woman with hard soles on her feet as she never wore shoes. These came in handy on our walks along the rocky path from Lavena to Naba and on the dirt road from Lavena to Qali. She was about ten years older than me, and I imagined her as my Fijian ‘aunty’.

²⁴ A board game I recognised as ‘Kings’ in some other countries I have lived.

The first time I sat down with her to ask her questions about the research she explained that she was sad that her community was no longer working together and doing things for the good of the whole *vanua*. I believe that she felt that by translating the interviews she was going some way to redirecting the path back to life *va'avanua* for the community by including those who had been excluded from community-based ecotourism and other aspects of village life in the research. Without Mala, I would not have known that the people in the settlements were treated as 'outsiders' even though Lavena is their *vasu* (a powerful maternal tie to a village). Mala was particularly valuable in terms of explaining to these participants why she felt it so important that they 'talk straight' about what they really felt about the projects and how the projects were affecting their families.

Audio taping

As with other methods of data-collection, there are advantages and disadvantages to audio taping interviews and events. I found audio taping to be more useful and less distracting than taking notes during interviews as taking the time to make notes during interviews often broke up the flow of conversation and distracted the interviewee. Additionally, tape recorded information is fuller, and recording is more accurate than taking notes after interviews (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 145).

Audio taping was also invaluable for recording gatherings where there were too many people speaking at once to take suitable notes such as prayer and 'oro (village) meetings. I also took sound recordings of typical village sounds such as the slightly dampened 'tang – tang' of iron on iron as the pestle hit the mortar for pounding *yaqona* (kava) late at night and the sound of someone scraping *niu* (coconut) in the *vale ni 'uro* (kitchen) in the dark of early morning. My rationale for doing this was to gather the sensory tools necessary to mentally propel myself back into the field of Boumā while writing up back in New Zealand.

One limitation of *talanoa* as ‘research’ is that it does not always produce the same results as would spontaneous and natural *talanoa*. Although many times, information obtained from the field came from spontaneous *talanoa* with community members during the course of our mundane everyday domestic tasks, for example, more often this research information was obtained through pre-planned *talanoa*. Early on, when I did pull out my tape recorder, people immediately recognised that I had morphed from ‘Teresia²⁵, our foreign adoptee’ to ‘Teresia, the researcher’. Although, I always asked for their approval before turning on the tape recorder, their body language became visibly more formal and many spoke with a serious, almost earnest expression. They did not giggle or smile as much; for some, jokes were reduced in frequency; and words were selected more carefully. Some more sensitive issues were spoken about in lowered tones. The chief of Waitabu was one participant who spoke very good English, having spent a great deal of time in Suva. However, as soon as the tape recorder started, he chose to speak only Fijian. His interviews consisted of questions about the history of Waitabu and Boumā and one day I hope to translate these tapes and present Waitabu with an oral history as interpreted by their *turaga ni vanua* (chief).

Most often, as I came to build a strong rapport with people, they either quickly forgot the tape recorder was there or didn’t mind it from the outset. Drinking kava or sitting with women as they prepared food or *voivoi* (pandanus) for *loga* (mats) during *talanoa* was often beneficial in creating a more informal and less intimidating atmosphere. Regardless, I was always concerned that some approved the use of the tape recorder out of politeness rather than genuine consent.

Background noises were often a problem. This was particularly the case during the rainy season because of the crashing sounds of heavy rain on corrugated iron roofs. Children (including Jacob) were fascinated by the tape recorder and were almost always present during interviews. I partially overcame this problem by clipping a lapel microphone to my participants’ shirts.

²⁵ Teresia is the closest Fijian name to my original name and was easier for locals to pronounce. I accepted this name and referred to myself as such for simplicity. My husband Matt was also referred to as ‘Maciu’ and my son, Jacob, was called ‘Kobo’ for the same reasons.

I found tape recorded interviews invaluable in capturing a greater depth of experience including the sounds of my participants' voices and their intonations, background sounds and my own dynamic line of enquiry. Once back home again, tape recording allowed me to experience those moments again in a sensory and emotional way that would otherwise have faded between the time of the interview and the time of writing up.

Na i tu'utu'u (reporting/analysis/writing)

Nabobo-Baba states that reporting, analysis and writing the research should be 'closely guided by *vanua* values as well as protocols of knowledge' (2007, para. 15). It was important to me that my participants' voices rose above my own in the research. For this reason, the thesis relies heavily on participants' quotations from *talanoa* to tell the story. Due to the, oftentimes, highly political nature of the research however, real names are not used in the thesis. Information was frequently shared in hushed tones and some participants took a particularly long time to trust me enough to divulge it. Some participants wanted me to use their names, but these were rare and so I felt it was prudent to ensure anonymity for all. Because of the smallness of the Boumā community, it was difficult to provide detailed descriptions of those whose words I have recorded in this thesis without exposing their identity. Therefore, I have been purposely vague and non-descript in the introductions to each quotation.

Poetic representation

Initially, I was strongly averse to the Anglicisation of my participants' voices as I felt their Fijian English contributed to who they were. To 'fix' their English would be to depersonalise each one. However, one of the main goals of this thesis is to let the voices of the Boumā people be heard and I found if their thoughts were to be made crystal clear and accessible to the reader, I would have to manipulate their grammar and vocabulary. I finally concluded that this decision was in fairness to both the reader and the contributors of the material in this thesis. However, I wanted to maintain the rhythm

and flow of my participants' speech. I also wanted to match the emphasis made by each participant in relation to key points in their conversation. It was important to me that the way I wrote my participants' words would be true to their intentions. Whichever way I manipulated the original transcript would have to be justified ensuring the final result more clearly expressed the intention of the participant.

For these reasons, I chose to present my participants' contributions in the form of poetic representation. In its various manifestations, poetic representation has also come to be recognised as 'poetic transcription' (Richardson, 1992; Glesne, 1997) and 'narrative poems' (Richardson, 2003); and 'poetic narrative' (e.g. Eldridge, 1996). Poetic representation best fits the compromise I was seeking between the 'true' voice of my participants and the clarity of their messages.

Poetic representation was popularised by feminist sociologist, Laurel Richardson (1992, 2003). According to Richardson (2003), poetic representation addresses the issue of the construction of truth head on. When we read poetry, we automatically know that the text has been constructed. However, all text has been constructed, including prose. Tedlock, (1983, cited in Richardson, 2003, p. 516) states that speech is closer to poetry than sociological prose and Richardson argues that '...poetry helps problematize reliability, validity, transparency, and "truth"' (p. 515), qualities absent in most representations of prose. In addition,

[w]riting 'data' as poetic representations reveals the constraining belief that the purpose of a social science text is to convey information as facts or themes or notions existing independent of the contexts in which they were found or produced – as if the story we have recorded, transcribed, edited and written up in prose snippets is the one and only true one: a 'science' story. Standard prose writing conceals the handprint of the sociologist who produced the final written text (Richardson, 2003, pp. 515-516).

Frost (n.d., cited in Richardson, 2003) posits that poetry is ‘the shortest emotional distance between two points’ – the speaker and the reader (p. 515). Similarly, DeShazer (1986, p. 138, cited in Richardson, 2003, p. 515) claims that poetry is the closest we can come to sensual realisation of all relationships in the universe, as it engages the reader’s body into its contextualisations. In this way, poetry is well-suited to inter-subjectivities: of particular interest to this thesis due to its explorations of phenomenologically complex encounters.

Inspired by Richardson’s poetic representation, Glesne’s (1997) *That Rare Feeling: Representing Research Through Poetic Transcription*, has since inspired others to explore poetic representation in what she calls “poetic transcription” (e.g. Carr, 2003). Glesne (1997) describes poetic transcription as ‘the creation of poemlike compositions from the words of interviewees’ (p. 202). She identifies three rules that guide the process of poetic transcription for her: the words in the poetic transcription should be those of the participant rather than that of the researcher; she could extract phrases from anywhere in the transcripts and juxtapose them; and that she had to keep enough of the participant’s words together to present the poem according to her or his “speaking rhythm” (p. 205).

My interviews came from a variety of speakers rather than from one, as in Glesne’s case. Each transcription contained the words of one speaker at a time. However, in rare cases (as in the work of Glesne) some details were juxtaposed with those of other interviews for the primary purpose of maintaining anonymity when the sensitive nature of the content of their utterances would otherwise prove threatening to them. Instead of writing the entire course of the speakers utterances, these ‘poems’ were structured thematically and were edited accordingly. Therefore, chunks of each individual’s conversation were lifted out and stored thematically elsewhere in case they should be required under a different theme in the thesis at a later date. There was never any intention to create any predetermined pattern or rule to the poetic representations of my participants’ speech. I wrote them structurally with two things in mind: that the messages were easily accessible and that the rhythm of speech remained more or less

intact. If I were to prioritise one over the other, the former would come first. The only additional stylistic rule I used was that whenever the speaker cited direct speech from a third party, I have indented this further to the right hand side of the page to distinguish past and present representations of direct speech. I have also indented where there are additional speakers contributing to the poetic narrative.

Many people use a great deal of repetition in informal speech and tend not to speak in linear and logical sequence (at least not in a sequence that reads logically on paper). This is certainly true of Fijian speakers. Otsuka (2006) notes that Fijians tend not to proffer clear and straightforward answers to researchers' questions. I found that my participants' answers often circumnavigated the question and, at the time, appeared ambiguous and unfocussed. In *Pacific Ways of Talk: Hui and Talanoa* (2005) Robinson and Robinson describe *talanoa* as follows:

Talanoa is a traditional Pacific Island deliberation process that goes round in circles; it does not follow a straight line, aiming towards a final decision like many Western processes. It involves a lot of repetition, which it is believed can lead to avoidance of issues (p. 15)

I learned that my participants often let their words go unfettered by how thoughts should be structured though ever-mindful of respect for the other. One story flew off and generated a new story and another which almost always eventually came back to the original story again. Therefore, if I was patient and attentive and did not disturb the flow, I would be rewarded with a phenomenologically richer account than I would otherwise have gained from my participants. In presenting their words thematically through poetic narrative, however, I could lead the reader straight to the point rather than around in circles.

It was interesting to me that during the interviews/*talanoa* my participants' utterances appeared to be both logical and comprehensible. However, on transcribing these later, they were not at all as I had remembered them and it took some concentration to follow the interlocutors' lines of reasoning. After I had reorganised them in time sequence, as

a story would normally be told (from start to middle to end), the content of the conversation was much clearer. I further simplified my participants' utterances by removing repetition and numerous attempts at creating grammatically correct English phrases and sentences that came before the successful sentence was sometimes constructed (sometimes not).

Therefore, the changes I have made to original transcripts included selections of more grammatically correct phrases and sentence structures and more appropriate synonyms for the context in which the original vocabulary was used. I felt justified in manipulating my participants' utterances so that interested parties could read them the way I felt my participants wanted them to be communicated (in a way they may have communicated if they had more opportunities to learn and practice their English). I hope that my nearly twenty years of experience in English language teaching plus the hundreds of hours I had spent conversing with the people of Boumā, gave me some license to interpret the syntactic intentions of my participants.

There were many things I thought I had fully understood at the time of the interview. However, I often stood corrected as I teased out the true intentions from the redundancies, repetition, and confusing choices of English grammar and vocabulary. As I simplified their utterances at my desk at home, I was amazed at how much more clearly my participants' voices came through. In many cases, I found myself truly understanding the words for the first time. I could see myself sitting there with them - me nodding my head as if I understood. However, now in hindsight with a clearer, cleaner representation of their voices, I felt some degree of remorse that I had not really understood them at all.

One weakness of this method is that, while poetic narrative is useful in providing descriptive accounts, it does not work very well when providing a factual account. It is for this reason that I have chosen to pull these factual accounts out of direct speech (as poetic narrative) to present them as reported speech in the main paragraphs of each chapter.

Conclusion

This research prioritises inter-subjective experience as a methodological approach. Although I am not an indigenous researcher, *talanoa* was an extension of the natural processes of emplacement and embeddedness. Thus, I naturally fell into *talanoa* as the principle indigenous Fijian method of knowledge-sharing²⁶ in which I was able to more fully engage with my participants. With time, trust and rapport, *talanoa* provided me with the opportunity to gain some depth of understanding of authentic Boumā worldviews. In addition, through *talanoa* as an opportunity for the researcher to ‘subjectively soak’ in the micro-political milieu of the every day mundane life of the Fijian village, I could begin to appreciate the diversity and dynamic nature of local Boumā perspectives. Emplacement, embeddedness, *talanoa* and the *vanua* are all prerequisites for understanding the Boumā taskscape as a central aspect of Ingold’s anthropology of dwelling and therefore, for how the Boumā people have responded to community-based ecotourism. The following chapter will provide a window into how the Boumā people understand and value the *vanua*.

²⁶ And sharing in general (E.g. time, emotional energy, trust)

Chapter Four

Vanua

This section lays the foundation for understanding the past, the present, and the future of the *vanua* and community-based ecotourism in Vanua Boumā. The chapter focuses on communalism²⁷ which sits at the core of the *vanua*. The chapter first illustrates the *vanua* concept and its elements as they are defined in the literature and by a broad cross-section of Vanua Boumā. Next, the social dimension of the *vanua* is explained. This includes social structure and appropriate behaviour between kin (*veiwe'ani*). If we are to understand anything about what it means to be Fijian and what it is for the Boumā people to be involved in community-based ecotourism, we must first understand the *vanua* concept as a locally articulated way of expressing the Boumā worldview. This is living life as a 'good Fijian' in Boumā and is realised through adherence to *vanua* values, and this implies the maintenance of social integrity and harmony. This is not the main objective of community-based ecotourism as understood by most non-indigenous ecotourism development consultants. They are more likely to quantitatively measure a more concrete 'success' in terms of ecological sustainability and economics. While some consider development as something new in Boumā, the *vanua* concept should be understood as a pre-existing, and well-established, indigenous development model or moral economy based on social and cultural capital.

Reminder: As noted in Chapter Three, throughout the thesis, the *vanua* as a concept and as meaning 'land' is presented in lower capitals and italicized; *Vanua* as a generic reference to a tribe is spelt with a capital 'V' and italicized; and Vanua used as a proper noun is spelt with a capital 'V' and with no italics (e.g. Vanua Boumā).

²⁷ Communalism here is intended to denote communal living as 'encompassing shared religious, political, and other non-economic traditions....' However, it 'primarily signifies systems of communal ownership and reciprocal economic support' (Ewins, 1998, p. 149). See also Nancy's (2000) discussion of the ontological task of thematizing 'the "with" as the essential trait of Being and as its proper plural singular co-essence' (p. 34 cited in Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 82).

The vanua concept

As I explained in Chapter One, my cultural advisor, Vili, had first introduced me to the *vanua* concept from the perspective of someone familiar with Boumā but not from Boumā. While Vili had provided me with the concept as it was understood by the general indigenous Fijian population, I was more interested in how the concept was understood in Boumā. About a year after my return to New Zealand subsequent to my fieldwork period, I discovered sentient ecology (Ingold, 2000; Anderson, 2000; Milton, 1996). I found sentient ecology was useful for articulating the essence of the *vanua* to a Western audience: that the individual cannot be treated as separate from the place in which they dwell nor the actions, intuition and skills they employ in order to make sense of and survive in their environment. The following description of the *vanua*, then, a dynamic epistemological framework for knowing and acting in the world is vital if we are to understand anything about the people of Boumā and how they negotiate change in the face of community-based ecotourism development.

The *vanua* concept is a complex one, encompassing a number of interrelated and inseparable elements. It carries with it literal and symbolic as well as physical and social meanings. The treatment of the complexity of the term is diverse in the literature. For example, Vunisea (2002) defines *vanua* as ‘the land, the sea, and all the resources and people’ (p. 6) while Batibasaqa, Overton & Horsley (1999, pp. 100-101) suggest that while it is difficult to define the true ‘essence’ of the *vanua*, the meaning may be found somewhere in the bond between people and the land. Tuvuki (1995) and Ratuva (2002) describe the *vanua* as something that is dynamic, living and complex. This is in stark contrast to observers such as Nakarobi (1991), who refers to land as an entity that is timeless and eternal; disputing Ratuva’s claim that ‘land is a social entity in a state of functional dynamic relationship with humans and is perpetually in a state of transformation’ (2002 p. 2). Ratuva further supports this view by stating that Pacific Islanders have been traveling the islands for thousands of years and their connection with land each time they settled became a ‘complex social embrace’ in their search for security and permanence (ibid). Ratuva’s acknowledgement of the temporal dynamism

of the human-environment-cosmological relationship inherent in the *vanua* concept as well as the connection with land ownership is revealed in the following statement: ‘Land does not on its own possess a spiritual being, but is inculcated with a cosmological personality through the progressive humanization of nature over the ages. This is a way of ensuring primordial identification with the past and present and providing legitimacy to claim to a given territory’ (ibid).

Ravuvu (1983, 1987) and Ratuva (2002) describe the *vanua* as incorporating three inter-relationships: the territorial sphere including soil or land (*qele*); social kinship/primordial kinship (*veiwekani*); and its cosmological dimensions (*yavutu* and *vū*). For Tuwere (2002), the cosmological sphere may be replaced by the term *lotu* (loosely translated as general ‘religion’ or ‘belief’) since *lotu* incorporates the connection between land, ancestral spirits, and Christianity. Others have also described the *vanua* in terms of its *lotu* and have added another category, *matanitū* (bureaucratic government) (Garrett, 1982; Niukula, 1997; Tomlinson, 2002).

Perhaps it is Ravuvu who best sums up the interconnectedness and key functions of the *vanua* concept:

It does not mean only the land area one is identified with, and the vegetation, animal life and other objects on it, but it also includes the social and cultural system – the people, their traditions and customs, beliefs and values, and the various other institutions established for the sake of achieving harmony, solidarity and prosperity within a particular social context (1983, p. 70).

An elder of Mataqali Vidawa²⁸ explained that there was a clear distinction between the English interpretation of the *vanua* and that of those in Boumā:

²⁸ The Vidawa clan of Vanua Boumā

In English,
vanua is only land
but in Fiji,
the *vanua* is the land,
the trees,
the chief,
the god we serve,
and everything in the environment.

This,
is how far the Fijian goes
in the word *vanua*.

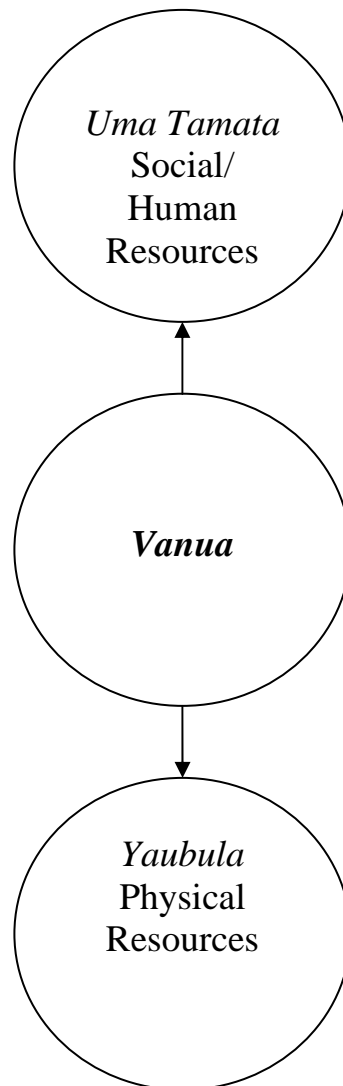
For example,
if you swear about Lau
and you say,
 Oh Lau people are very bad,
you are saying all these things are bad about Lau.

Hence, the Boumā understanding of the *vanua* is all-encompassing. Despite its complexity, it must be stated that the *vanua* is also ‘a social fact’ which is central to the life and meaning of every Fijian: ‘To be cast out of one’s *vanua* is to be cut off from one’s source of life: one’s mother as it were’ (Tuwere, 2002, p. 36). Therefore, an understanding of the *vanua* is central to any analysis of the human condition in Fiji – in this case socio-cultural responses to community-based ecotourism development.

For clarity, this chapter will be divided into the social and the physical dimensions of the *vanua*. These two categories will be discussed in relation to Tuwere’s (2002) conceptualization of the *vanua* as comprising of literal and symbolic elements. The literal includes the social or human resources (*uma tamata* - ‘a body of people’), and the physical (*yaubula*) refers to the natural environment (Fig. 1). The symbolic dimension

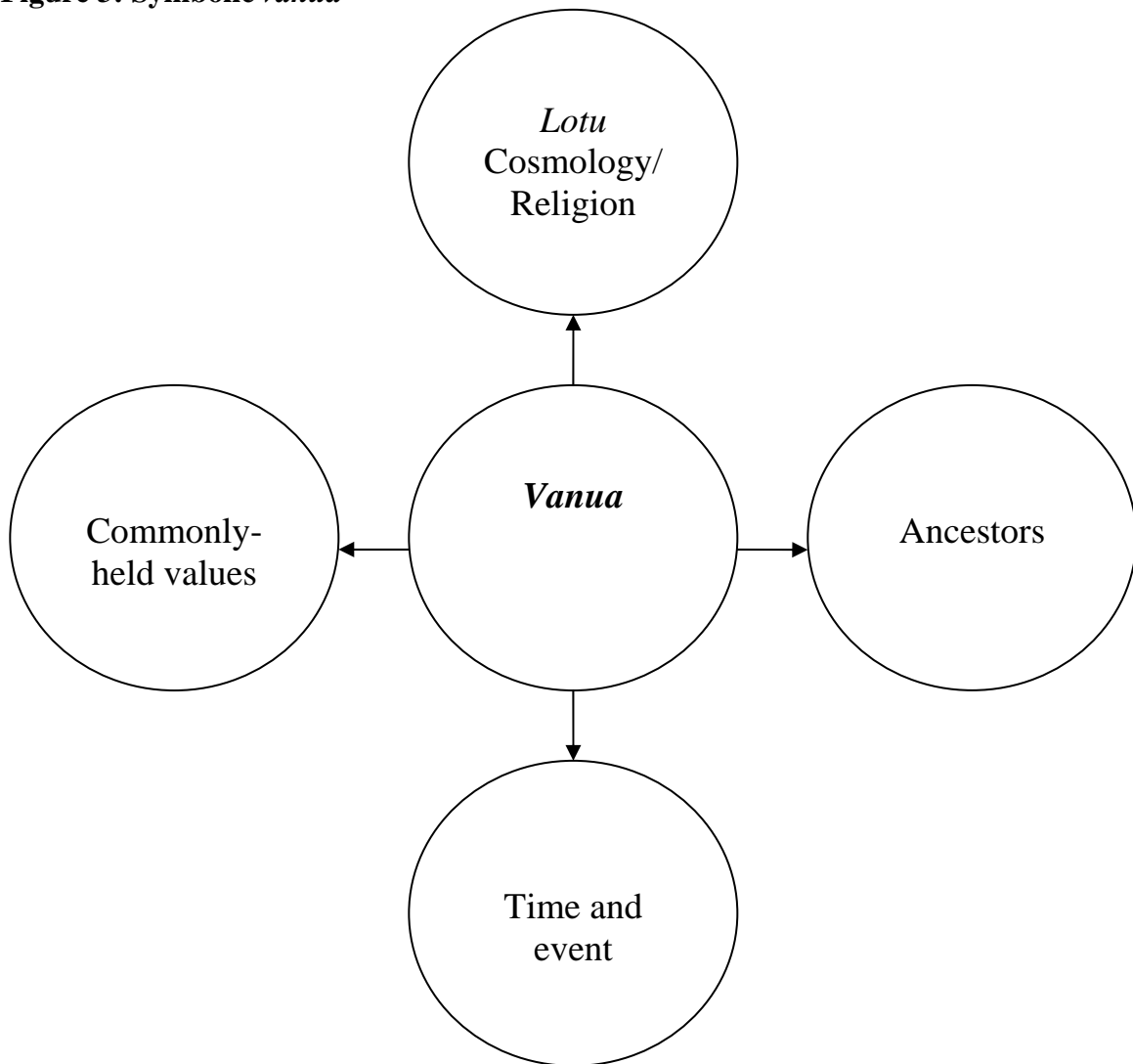
of the *vanua* includes the cosmological characteristics including belief (*lotu*); the ancestral ties of the *Vanua*; time and event (e.g. the traditional seasonal calendar); and commonly-held values (particularly that of *veidokai* - being respectful) (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Literal *vanua*



Source: Derived from Tuwere, 2002

Figure 3: Symbolic *vanua*



Source: Derived from Tuwere, 2002

Vakavanua (or in Boumā dialect, *va'avanua*) comes from the term *vanua* and means the way of the Fijian people, or 'in the nature of the land, people, and customs' (Ravuvu, 1983, p. 122). Nayacakalou (1985) describes *va'avanua* as pertaining to community matters or ('matters of the land') which involves 'the group in its relations with other groups in the village or outside it' (p. 31). *Va'avanua* is a highly diverse term depending largely on family origin, geography, and history. For this reason, it is not something that can be marketed and applied to community-based tourism as something tangible. Rather, *va'avanua* is largely conceptual and contextual. This is not to say that *va'avanua* is not a valuable tool for sustainability and, therefore, vital for community-

based ecotourism. As Pamela Godde (1998) suggests, interpretation of *va'avanua* to tourists enriches the tourist experience, and may be the focus of the tourist experience:

The message that lies in the notions of *vanua* and *vakavanua* are powerful and can transform a landscape into a culture-scape...what was once a geological or natural feature to the tourist becomes a natural and cultural garden full of history and meaning. At the same time, what has potential to be but a means of bringing in revenue to a community becomes a means of communicating a community's own history and custom.

Va'avanua and *vanua* are not terms popularised through media and marketing. Long-term effects of village exposure to ecotourists and the consequential impacts on *va'avanua* are not yet known (Godde, 1998). It took some time for me to discover that the people of Boumā were not familiar with the phrase '*vanua* concept'. While this term has been used in academic literature by indigenous Fijians and others, this was clearly not an everyday term in Boumā. However, *va'avanua* is used frequently. Once I started replacing '*vanua* concept' with '*va'avanua*' in *talanoa*, I began to learn a lot more about the concept and how it related to ecotourism development for the people of Boumā.

The social dimension

As has been explained, people are central to the *vanua* concept. This section will detail the social structure (*uma tamata*) of Boumā and how the *Vanua* as the tribe and largest kinship group in Boumā functions. It will also explain how these relate to the other dimensions of *va'avanua* including the literal and the symbolic.

***Vanua* (tribe)**

Ravuvu (1983) describes the people as the *lewe ni vanua* (or the flesh of the land) by which a particular *Vanua* is identified by others. Thus, the land and the people identify one another: ‘For a *vanua*²⁹ to be recognised, it must have people living on it and supporting and defending its rights and interests’ (Ravuvu, 1983, p. 76; see also Abramson, 2000) Therefore, territorial land is identified by those who live on it. However, identification with land is more entrenched than simply identifying those who live on and with the land because, while land is defined by kinship, kinship is, in turn, determined by links with ancestors and their cosmological positioning (Ratuva, 2002, p. 3).

However, to say that a certain kinship group has had eternal links with a certain territory is incorrect. Prior to 1874, there was a great deal of movement throughout the Pacific Islands and Fiji. Customary land tenure varied because of the culturally diverse nature of the settlers, tribal wars and the influence of the Tongan feudal system (Kamikamica, 1997, p. 266). Many groups eventually settled in *yavutu* (original settlements) and grouped themselves in *yavusa* under a chief (*turaga ni yavusa/turaga ni vanua*). Members of the *yavusa* were allocated specific roles to perform social and economic functions. These divisions were known as *mataqali* and were answerable to the *turaga ni mataqali* (head of the *mataqali*). Members of the *mataqali* are then divided into smaller family units or *tokatoka* (in Boumā dialect: *to’ato’a*) (see Fig. 3).

Just as there is inconsistency in the literature with reference to *vanua* as a concept, there is also inconsistency in the definition of *Vanua* as a kinship group. While the *yavusa* has been described by some in earlier literature as the largest kinship group, others have stated that the *Vanua* dominates this group in size. Ravuvu argues that it is the *Vanua* that is the ‘tribe’ and the ‘largest grouping of kinsmen [who are structured into] *yavusa*, *mataqali*, *tokatoka*’ (1983, p.76). However, according to Capell (1968), the *yavusa* is ‘the largest kinship and social division of Fiji society...’ (p. 291). Like Roth (1973)

²⁹ *Vanua* in my stylistic use of the term throughout the thesis

and Spate (1959), Capell refers to *Vanua* as ‘a confederation, a land or *yavusa* under a strong chief, in its turn combinable with other *Vanua* under a *matanitū*’ (p. 255). Tuwere (2002) describes the *Vanua* as a ‘socio-political association bound together and constantly strengthened by social and political ties of one kind or another and paying homage to a leading *turaga* [chief]’ (p. 35). Ravuvu, too, would agree that Figure 4 below denotes a *Vanua* and that it is the *Vanua* that is the largest kinship group and ‘tribe’ of the subordinate clans or *yavusa*. As the largest kinship group in Fiji, he argues, it is the ‘living soul or human manifestation of the physical environment which the members have since claimed to belong to them and to which they also belong’ (1983, p. 76). Schmidt (1988), however, simply refers to the *Vanua* in geographical terms as the ‘region’.

The reason for this confusion can be found in the historical formation of *Vanua*. *Yavusa* were not always as permanent as they have been treated in the literature though the dissolution of villages does not occur today as often as it did pre-1840s (France, 1969, p. 13). Due to wars and dissensions, *yavusa* became fractured and some families joined with some members of other *yavusa*, at the same time adopting their *vū* (ancestral god). The surrogate *yavusa* would subsequently gift the adopted member with *kanakana* (family land). Spate (1959) stated that in 1959 most *yavusa* claimed ‘to be able to trace their origin back to their original *kalou-vū*, and most of these pedigrees consist of about eight generations, ending at the senior living member.’ Spate continues by claiming it was during these times of war and dissension, that ‘several *yavusa*, or what remained of them, united together for mutual protection under a selected chief. Such a confederation was known as a ‘*vanua*’...’ (p. 32)³⁰. Therefore, the *yavusa* was the original and largest kinship group. It was not until later that the *Vanua* was fully realized. The *Vanua* was originally headed by a chief who was ‘strong enough to seize and hold the position’ but this later became a hereditary role (Derrick, 2001). The original *yavusa* in Vanua Boumā was Lekutu. Lekutu remains a *yavusa* in Vanua

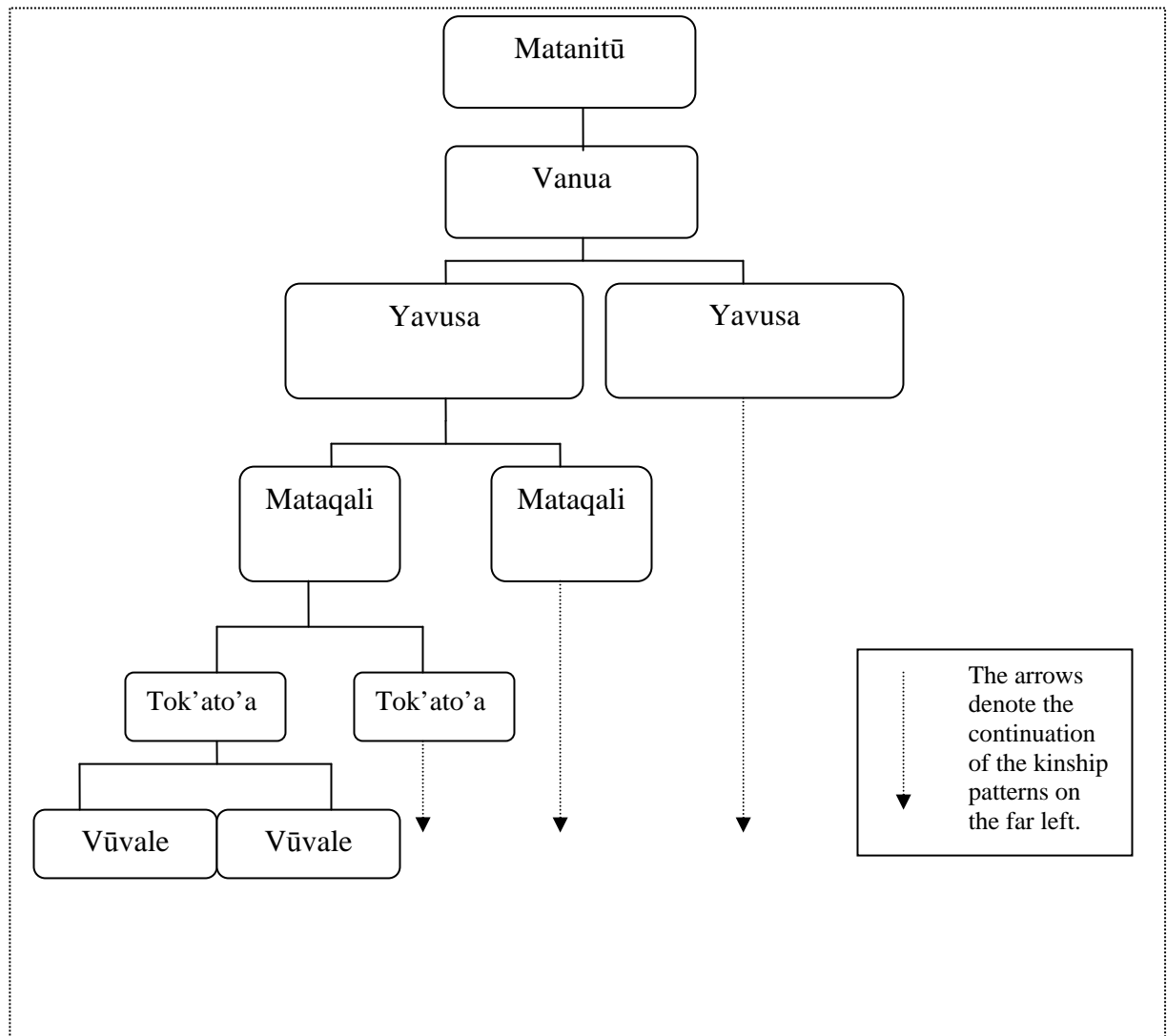
³⁰ It is important to note the fracturing and hybridisation of kinship groups, as it applies to later discussion regarding the perplexing nature of the exclusion of some village members from ecotourism development stating they are ‘not from here’.

Boumā, its members residing in Vidawa Village rather than in the chiefly village of Korovou³¹ in Vanua Boumā.

Figure 4 illustrates the various inter-connecting levels of kinship relationships (*veiwe'ani*) from the nuclear family (*vūvale*) to what will be referred to as the largest social unit (*Vanua*) and then to the overarching administrative body (the *matanitū*). This is not the traditional kinship structure but is the one given official recognition after cession (1874) at which time Fiji became a British colony. This structure was considered the key feature of customary land tenure structure and, hence, was the foundation of native land policy. Possibly a unique feature of the Boumā kinship system is their tendency to include the group *ti'oti'o*. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

³¹ Also known as Nakorovou

Figure 4: Kinship groups among Indigenous Fijians



The term *Vanua* is, by no means, a homogeneous term. The treatment of *Vanua* is context-specific. For example, ‘a *vanua*³² could refer to a village social setting, a provincial social setting or even the whole Fijian ethno-cultural setting. Its usage connotes assumed homogeneity in a common collective immemorial experience’ (Ratuva, 2002, p. 4). *Vanua* is referred to externally and internally: ‘our *Vanua*’ in the inclusive sense (*nodatou Vanua*) or ‘their *Vanua*’ (*nodratou Vanua*) and on a national inclusive level when referring to Native Land ‘our land’ (*noda qele nai Taukei*) (ibid).

³² *Vanua*

Yavusa

Anthropologists have had difficulty in interpreting exactly what a *yavusa* is. Geddes (1945) originally called a *yavusa* a 'lineage' following Meyer Fortes' description of the Tallensi (1945)³³ but later called it a 'phratry'³⁴ as Thomson had in 1940. Deane (1921) on the other hand, refers to a *mataqali* first as a 'clan' (p. 100) and then as a 'phratry' within his description of the division of clan labour (p. 101). Spencer (1941), then Gifford (1952) and Hocart (1952) all referred to a *yavusa* as a 'tribe' while Roth (1973) defined it as a 'federation' and Sahlins (1962) a 'stock' (Nayacakalou, 1985, p. 13). Nayacakalou on the other hand, calls a *yavusa* a 'patrilineal clan' (1985, p. 22).

Roth's (1973, p. 58) interpretation of the composition of Fijian social units is as follows:

Matanitū = state

Vanua = confederation

Yavusa = federation

Mataqali = community

I tokatoka = family group

Perhaps Tuwere is prudent in avoiding categorisations such as these, purely describing a *Vanua* today as consisting of a number of *yavusa*, their commoners and their representatives (chiefs) (Tuwere, 2002; see also Ewins, 1998; Nayacakalou, 1975; Ravuvu, 1983, 1987; Williksen-Bakker, 1990).

³³ 'An association of people of both sexes comprising all the recognized descendents by an accepted genealogy of a single named ancestor in a putatively continuous male line' (p. 30).

³⁴ A phratry is a term used to denote 'a grouping of clans which may or may not share common unilineal descent'. Geddes suggested this term was most appropriate because many *yavusa* today are comprised of *mataqali* of which some may have patrilineally descended from different *yavusa*. In such a case, he suggests calling the *mataqali* the clan as it may sometimes be the 'largest unilineal exogamous group in an area' (Geddes, 1959, p. 207).

The *yavusa* is named after the *yavu* (ancestral site or housemound) of the *yavutū* (settlement) and the *vū* (ancestor/one originator) of that *yavusa* (Roth, 1973, p. 54; Nayacakalou, 1997, p. 267). The *yavusa*, being the decedents of the same *vū*, recognise one *kalou-vū* (originating spirit). The *kalou-vū* is normally the father of the *vū*, and one totem or set of totems (*i cavuti*), may be inherited from the *kalou-vū*³⁵.

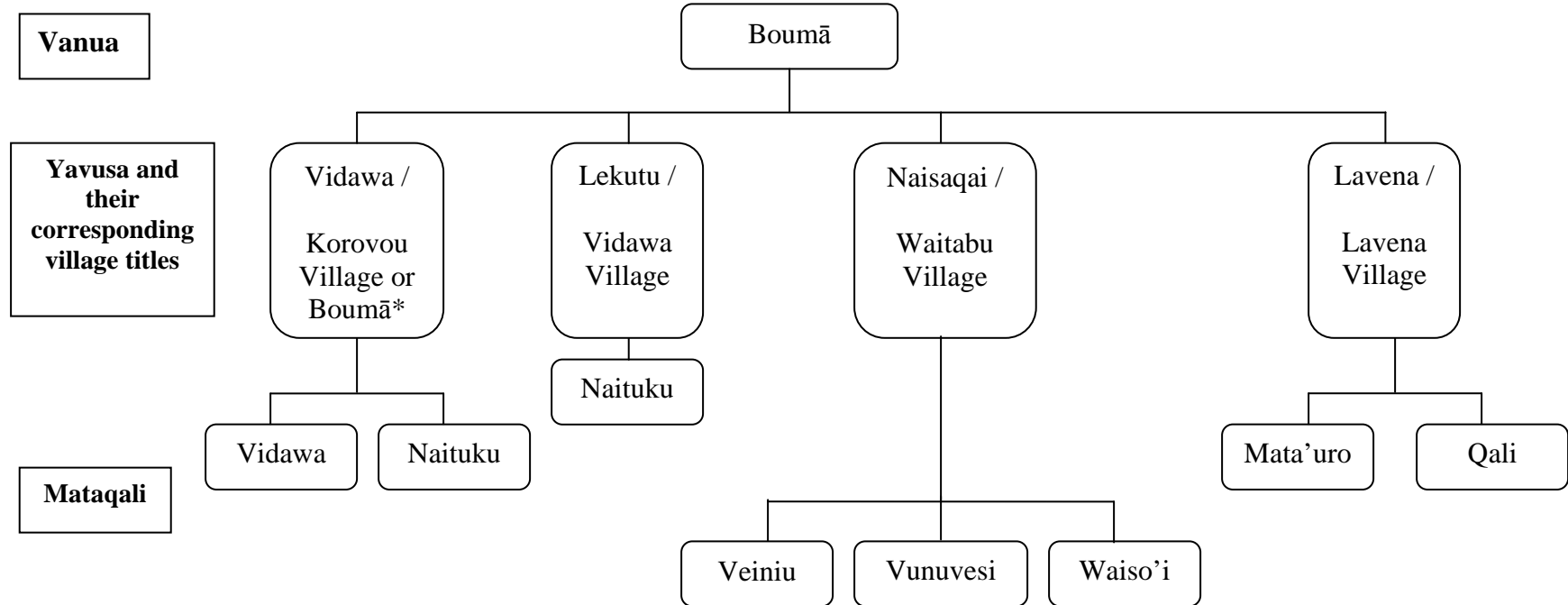
While *yavusa* are patrilineal groups, they are also spatially situated in separate villages. When several *yavusa* are present in one village, the *Vanua* may refer to that village by the name of that dominant *yavusa*. In such a way, we can view a *Vanua* as a group of villages. It would be unusual to find a village split between different *Vanua*. It is possible to find members of one *yavusa* living in villages with other *yavusa*, but they will all be part of the same *Vanua* (Nayacakalou, 1985, p. 22). A diagram depicting the names of the various *yavusa*³⁶ and *mataqali* of Vanua Boumā is included below:

³⁵ Capell (1968) also mentions the inheritance of a war-cry (*vakacaucau ni valu*) from the *kalou-vū* of a *yavusa*.

³⁶ The names of the *yavusa* do not bear the same names as the villages containing each *yavusa*.

Figure 5: Names of kinship groups and associated villages in Vanua Boumā

Error!



*The original (true) name for the ‘chiefly’ and largest village where the *Vunisā* (chief of Vanua Boumā resides) is Korovou (literally ‘old village’). However, newer generations have come to call it Boumā. This renaming is disappointing to many of the elders who feel that the new name is exclusive of all other villages and settlements that also belong to Vanua Boumā. For this reason, some feel, it is also potentially divisive.

Mataqali

As *yavusa* became too populous in the past, they became subdivided into *mataqali* and *i to'ato'a* (*i tokatoka*) (Nayacakalou, 1985, pp. 10-11). *Mataqali* have been referred to as 'clans' (Deane, 1921, p.100); 'an agnatically related social unit - usually a lineage of the larger clan'/'sub-clan' (Ravuvu, 1995, p.119/p. 77); 'community' (Roth, 1921); and 'local group', 'patrilineal group', and 'sub-clan' (Nayacakalou, 1985, p. 21).

The origins of *mataqali* may be briefly summarised as follows: A *vū* (originating ancestor) would take a woman of a neighbouring *yavusa*. When she had produced more than one son, the families of these sons would divide into separate *mataqali*. The descendants of each son would also form their own *mataqali*. The first sons of each *mataqali*, would then form their own *i tokatoka*. Later, several *yavusa* joined together to form a *Vanua* (Nayacakalou, 1985, p. 11). The Native Lands Commission in the 1890s, and again in 1910, accepted this as the origin of the *yavusa* and, on this, they built land tenure policy. Therefore, land claims relied on the ability to name a *yavusa*, a *mataqali*, and an *i to'ato'a*. It is no longer the case that each first son creates a new *mataqali* and then in turn a new *i to'ato'a*. Today, there are far fewer *mataqali* than there used to be with many merging within each *yavusa*.

Mataqali and *i to'ato'a* can be grouped locally or by patrilineage. That is, they can be grouped according to male descent or by unit of local residence. The *yavusa*, on the other hand, is a group based on patrilineal descent, actual or putative. This means that not everyone in a village belongs to a local *yavusa*. Today, although Fijians may not confidently name their *yavusa*, they should know which *mataqali* and *i to'ato'a* they belong to.

A young mother of three small children in Waitabu once attempted to explain what a *yavusa* is:

The *yavusa* is like a *mataqali*
but it is really...
I don't really know what a *yavusa* is.
I should really ask a man
to explain it
so I can translate it to you.

She also had some trouble explaining the *vanua*:

The *vanua* connects the land
and the people together.
Because if someone lives here...
Maybe someone else can tell you about that.
Maybe one of the chief's daughters.
If someone explains it in Fijian,
I can translate it to you.
I will ask for someone.

This was a recurring theme in Boumā. Few people could explain the *vanua*, *Vanua*, *mataqali*, or any of the lower kinship groups, even with the aid of a translator. For some, this may connote an implicit and lived understanding of these categories rather than a knowledge requiring verbal expression. However, elders and local school teachers later explained this as a loss of knowledge about identity.

Each *mataqali* has its own unique function in the community. If the founder of the family in a *yavusa* had more than one son, each son of this first family would form their own *mataqali* with its own name and social function. Geddes (1959) and Derrick (2001) suggest there are five *mataqali* roles in one *yavusa*:

- 1) The *mataqali* founded by the eldest carries the role and title of *mataqali turaga* (chiefly *mataqali*). This is the *mataqali* that provides the *yavusa* chiefs.

- 2) The *sauturaga* was that of executive to the chief.
- 3) The *matanivanua* was the master of ceremonies or chief's spokesman.
- 4) The *bete* was the village priest and vessel through which the *Kalou Vū* could speak directly to the *yavusa*.
- 5) The *bati* was the warrior.

According to my cultural advisor, Vili (personal communication, March 2004), no one role is more important or superior to the others. They are all considered equal. For example, the *turaga* role has no particular power of influence over the others. This is emphasized by Geddes:

Although these roles are associated with gradations of seniority, each is regarded honorable in itself and essential to the whole group structure, so that the status which a *mataqali* acquires in virtue of its role softens what might otherwise be too harsh a hierarchical system to survive the tensions which it would create (ibid).

This is in contrast to Schmidt's ethnolinguistic study of Waitabu Village in Vanua Boumā conducted in the late 1980s. Schmidt (1988) states that the *mataqali* and *to'ato'a* under each *yavusa* are ranked. In Waitabu, for example, she states that Mataqali Vunevesi is ranked above that of Waisoki. Durutalo (1986) suggests that missionary influence created a kind of racial hierarchy based on race and class comprising this *mataqali* structure.

...At the apex were the missionaries and paramount chiefs like Cakabau, Maafu [Ma'afu] and Tui Cakau, as well as the planters; on the second level were the native preachers [*bete*] and the lesser chiefs, followed by the *bati*³⁷ [warriors] and craftsmen [*mataisau*], and then the commoner Fijians who made up the bulk of Wesleyan

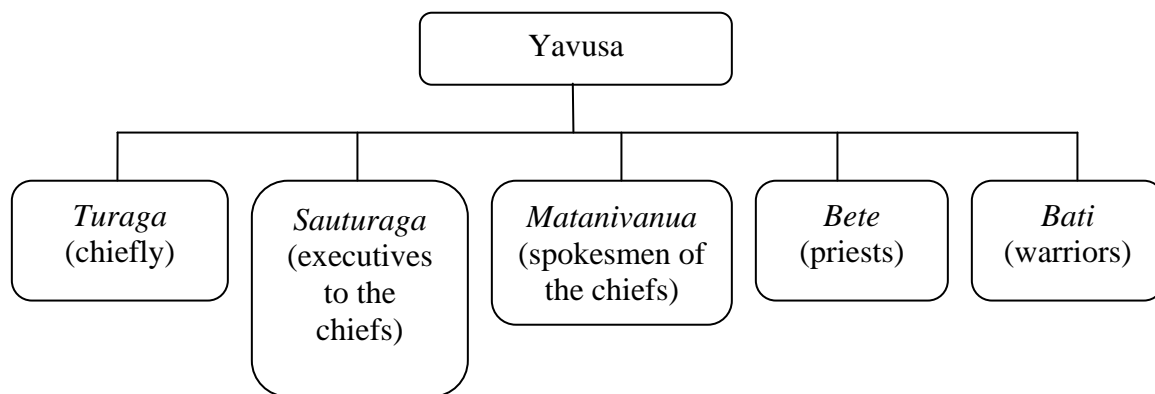
³⁷ The *bati* in modern Fiji society plays a pivotal role in advising the chief. The head of the *bati* is often referred to as the Chief's General (as in the army) (Manulevu, personal communication, 27 October, 2006). See also Halapua's discussion of the military role in *turagaism* (2003).

Methodism's Christian congregation (pp. 51-52, cited in Halapua, 2003a, p. 107).

While it was never made explicit during my time in Vanua Boumā, I did observe that one *mataqali* in Lavena were presented with more opportunities than those in another from time to time. Conversely, this was often contested as it was clear that all sub-groups of the *yavusa* needed to keep both *mataqali* on an equal footing within the *yavusa* for the sake of social harmony.

Figure 6 shows the structure 'as it existed in at least one of the *yavusa* on the island of Bau' as reported by Geddes in 1945 (p. 36) with five *mataqali* roles (see also Derrick 2001, p. 8). According to Geddes, the *bati* role (literally 'teeth' of the *yavusa*) may not exist in some *yavusa* and instead there may be a *mataqali* with no specific function.

Figure 6: Kinship structure in Bau

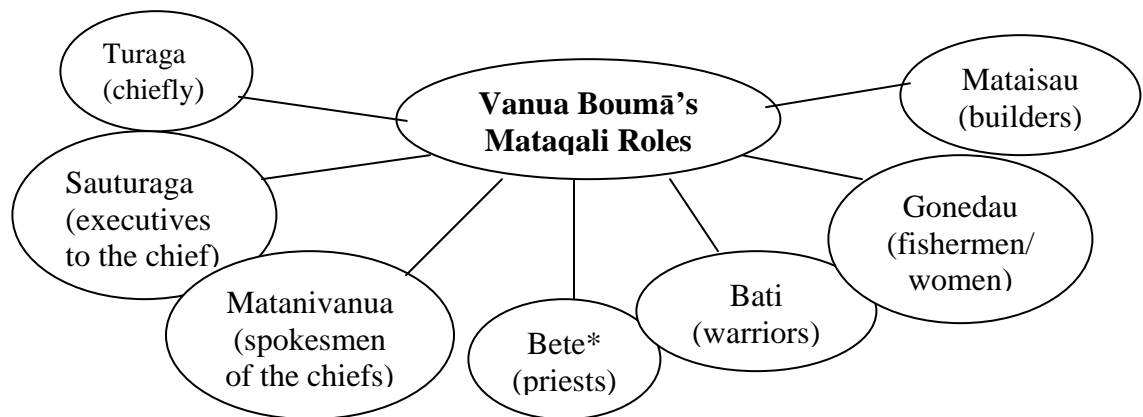


However, Deane (1921) mentions the 'fishermen-clan' (*gonedau*) and the 'carpenter-clan' (*mataisau*) as fulfilling two additional labour roles to Geddes' five. Deane describes these 'phratries' as having their own gods and religious uses. The knowledge of their skills was not to be revealed to those outside their *mataqali*. Roth (1973) describes the *mataisau* (builders) as separate from the *yavusa*, and only becoming members of the *yavusa* by consequence of wars and social unit divisions. The *gonedau* or fishermen, conversely, were not a separate social unit but were seldom landowners.

At the time of Roth's study (1953), money was already beginning to change the traditional functions of *mataqali* roles and payment may have been made for services originally done in kind. Traditional ceremonies were also being replaced with European alternatives (p. 63).

But these *mataqali* roles were not uniform throughout Fiji in Geddes and Roth's time and certainly not in Fijian villages today. In Vanua Boumā, for example, the original *yavusa* (Lekutu), later split into four (see similar description in Roth 1973, p. 64). These four *yavusa* (also distinguishable by separate villages) belong to the whole *Vanua* (Vanua Boumā) and also include seven settlements. Vanua Boumā was originally divided into seven different roles - now six with the dissolution of the *bete* (traditional priestly) role (see Fig. 7.). These roles are now distributed amongst the four *yavusa* that are represented by each of the four villages (and their settlements):

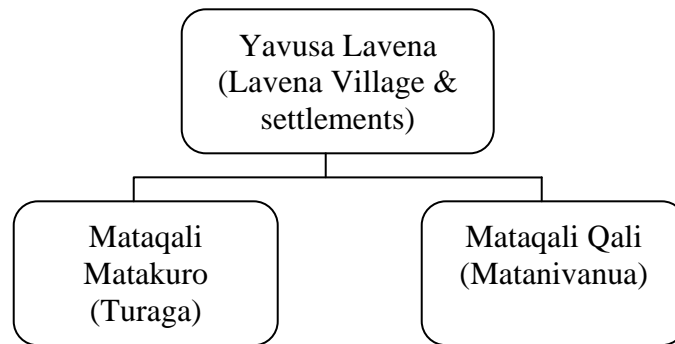
Figure 7: Current *mataqali* roles in Vanua Boumā



*As missionaries' influences became more widespread the *bete* was replaced with ordained ministers and catechists/lay preachers and pastors. The role of *bete*, therefore, no longer exists in Vanua Boumā. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

Because the *Vanua* is divided into separate *yavusa* in different geographical areas,³⁸ *mataqali* roles will be found scattered sometimes very thinly between villages and settlements. For example, there are only two *mataqali* under Yavusa Lavena (confined to Lavena Village and its settlements) (see Fig. 8). One of the reasons many Boumā people place great importance on working together as a whole *Vanua* is to fulfill all needs through these specialised skills.

Figure 8: *Mataqali* and their roles in Yavusa Lavena



I to'a to'a

Geddes (1959) refers to *i toka toka* (locally referred to as *i to'ato'a*) as a 'patrilineage' while Schmidt (1988) refers to *i toka toka* as 'lineages'. Nayacakalou describes *i to'a to'a* as 'an extended family; a branch of a *mataqali* (1978, p. 142). Tuwere, defines the *to'a to'a* as a sub-clan and the smallest social unit (2002, p. 21 & 35). Roth (1973) found *i to'a to'a* to be the general primary landowning units but he acknowledged that he had found other 'communities' (read *mataqali*) who were the common proprietary unit in other parts of Fiji (p. 59). Today, the *to'a to'a* is no longer the predominant landowning group. It is the *mataqali* that has been legalised at the proprietary unit³⁹ (see Tuwere, 2002, p. 75).

³⁸ That is, within the geographical area determined by native land tenure for the *Vanua*.

³⁹ ...translating English concepts into Fijian ones can only be approximate for no one person or group in Fiji has such exclusive rights as the English concept of 'proprietary' implies (Tuwere, 2002, p. 75).

Based on my fieldwork in Lavena Village, I have discerned the following are the *i to'ato'a* in Lavena Village (Yavusa Lavena)⁴⁰:

- Valelevu
- Namelobu (Melobu)
- Qali
- Lovoniqai (there is only one remaining member of Lovoniqai residing in the Lavena settlement of Qali. Therefore, many refer to this *to'ato'a* as no longer in existence).

Note: *Mataqali* and *i to'a to'a* may share the same names (e.g. *Qali*).

I ti'oti'o

I ti'iti'o is a Boumā family unit I have not found anywhere in the literature to be referred to as a 'social group' and it is not listed in the Native Land Commission records although it is one that plays a vital role in Vanua Boumā. It is described in the literature as referring to an 'abode' or dwelling' (Capell, 1968, p. 232) rather than as a kinship group. This is only part of the meaning for Lavena because although *i ti'o ti'o* are defined by segregated areas of the 'oro (koro/village) reserved for those from the same *i ti'o ti'o*, it is also referred to as the family group where all the members are the male descendents of the grandfather. This includes all the grandfather's sons and their sons' families including the women in their families.

These are important groups in Lavena, because while there are regular village meetings (*bose na'oro*), there are also regular *mataqali*, *i to'a to'a*, and *i ti'o ti'o* meetings within a *yavusa*. *I ti'o ti'o* play an important role in the lines of communication between each kin group and in the primary decision making groups of the *yavusa*. For example, the Lavena Park Committee members are represented by one member from each *i ti'o ti'o*.

⁴⁰ See Native Lands Commission Final Report, Volume 5 (HD 1121 F5 R3) for Macuata, Bua, Cakaudrove and Kadavu.

In Lavena there are five *ti'o ti'o*⁴¹:

- Ti'o ti'o Vonoi
- Ti'o ti'o Vunijali
- Ti'o ti'o Soto
- Ti'o ti'o Melobu
- Ti'o ti'o Naba

Vūvale

The *vūvale* is the smallest family unit which comprises those blood-relatives living in one house. These bear no administrative function until combined in *bose ni ti'o ti'o* (*ti'o ti'o* meetings) and beyond.

The vanua as indigenous epistemology

Indigenous epistemology guides the social construction of indigenous knowledge, and indigenous knowledge is the result of the practice of indigenous epistemology (Gegeo, 2000, p. 65).

David Gegeo argues that the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into rural development discourse and practice must not be made to the exclusion of 'how a group theorizes about creating new knowledge' (ibid). He continues to more precisely explain that rural development should be restricted to capacity building in the sense that locals are empowered to learn introduced skills but 'more profoundly, ...[it] involves learning and adapting introduced and new locally created knowledge toward positive change that supports life and affects villagers worldviews and systems of knowing, understanding, and reasoning (ibid, p. 66). I also suggest a focus on indigenous epistemologies is vital if we are to understand how new knowledge and skills are negotiated: rejected, accepted, trialled and hybridised when measured against pre-

⁴¹ *I ti'o ti'o* and *i to'a to'a* may share the same names (e.g. Melobu). Sometimes the geographical location of *i ti'o ti'o* may be identified by name. For example, Ti'o ti'o Soto and Ti'o ti'o Naba can be found in settlements bearing the same name.

existing knowledge and value systems. In Boumā, these pre-existing knowledge and value systems were rooted in the *vanua*.

As the research progressed, I came to understand that while the social element of the *vanua* is central, the *vanua* is not only a social structure with its roots in ancestor and nature-based cosmology but a way of understanding the world, the self and of generating new knowledge. The *Vanua* as it encompasses people and their identity, belonging and all the responsibilities that this entails are central to the *vanua* as epistemology. Knowledge, therefore, is based on a social context whereby *vanua* is the framework for knowledge discourse:

The learning and teaching of people, their histories, languages, relationships are considered first and foremost. Such is the nature of the epistemology, it is people centred, as people are deemed the most important component of the Vanua (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, Sautu section).

Nabobo-Baba conducted her PhD research within her Vugalei community on Viti Levu in the Kubuna confederacy. She describes knowledge construction in Vugalei as ‘a communal activity and dialogic in character’. I have already discussed *talanoa* in Chapter Three as it relates to Boumā. In Boumā, it is through *talanoa* that knowledge is tested and generated. As in Vugalei, knowledge in Boumā is also ‘deeply embedded in ecology and defined relationships of all things, secular and spiritual where there is an assumed taken for grantedness that “all who belong to place...” will display cultural responsibility for all that they deem of value and belonging to them, knowledge and epistemology included’ (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, Sautu section). Therefore, for the people of Boumā and the people of Vugalei (according to Nabobo-Baba) empiricism is only one way to verify truth alongside experimentation, the supernatural, the elements and nature, elders, chiefs’ *mana*, the *mana* of the *Vanua*, and the *matanivanua* (herald clan).

An understanding of the *vanua* in its unique social and geographical context is imperative for anyone wishing to understand indigenous Fijian life. For indigenous

Pacific Island researchers, conducting research from an indigenous epistemological standpoint will contribute to what (Meyer, 2005) has described as an ‘awakening Pacific’ (cited in Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Many also argue that research based on indigenous epistemological frameworks like the *vanua* will contribute to a decolonisation and dehegemonisation of the whole research process (e.g. de Oliveira, 2008; Gegeo, 1998; Smith, 1999). However, this must be done with a commitment to an exploration of the political climate within each context. In the absence of this, the researcher will lack an understanding of who is verifying knowledge in the face of change and how new knowledge is negotiated and generated. This will be addressed in detail in the following chapter.

Once I understood that *vanua* is as much ‘a way of knowing’ as it is a ‘way of living’, I was able to better comprehend how this contributed to what was perceived as ‘success’ in Boumā.

Sautu *and* na sala va’avanua

The notion of guidance toward a morally and culturally correct community-based ideal may be expressed in the terms *sautu* and *na sala vakavanua* (*na sala va’avanua*) (the *vanua* way⁴²) or *na sala dodonu* (the straight path⁴³).

Nabobo-Baba (2007) describes *sautu* as ‘good health and wealth’ whereby good health is explained in terms of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being, and health is determined not by economic terms but through the integrity of social networks. *Sautu* is determined by how well an individual observes the laws of the *vanua*:

A person is believed to be healthy and well if he behaves accordingly and appropriately to the expectations and demands of the traditional custom. If he is unwell then he will be generally considered ill and non-

⁴² In terms of adherence to *vanua* values.

⁴³ Again in terms of adherence to *vanua* values.

existent or lifeless, dead, although physically present, if he acted inappropriately and ignored tradition (Ravuvu, 1976, p. 45).

Sautu is directly related to *va'aturaga* as 'ideal behaviour' (see p. 59) or living life *va'avanua* (the *vanua* way). While the term *sautu* was never used in informal *talanoa* in Boumā that I was aware of (I later discovered this is a term used in more formal contexts) my research participants made reference to 'good Fijians'. Good Fijians were those who lived their life *va'avanua* or *va'aturaga*. Good Fijians were considered wealthy, healthy and prosperous as described by Nabobo-Baba and Ravuvu.

A deep appreciation of these concepts is vital for development practitioners and researchers. Otherwise, the goals and motivations of the people of Boumā cannot be understood. For example, these concepts imply that development should be more appropriately based on notions of communalism rather than on individualism. For the Boumā communities, deviation from *na sala va'avanua* or *na sala dodonu* in the management of the ecotourism initiatives and therefore, a deviation from a communal life, cast doubt on the appropriateness of the project to village life and justifications for its continuance.

A person may have many material goods and money but without a healthy network of relationships, they are not truly wealthy. 'Healthy relationships means a person attends to the needs of his/her relations when they call for help' (Nabobo-Baba, 2006, p. 74). Here the emphasis on success and development is less on economic capital but on social capital.

Social capital has been explored by many theorists (including Bourdieu, 1977, 1986; Putnam, 2000; & Fukuyama, 1999). According to Robert Putnam (2000), social networks have value. Putnam (2000) defines social capital as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for benefit" (p. 36) and believes that social capital can be measured by the amount of trust and "reciprocity" in a community or between individuals. For Putnam, social capital refers to the collective value of all "social networks" [who people know] and the

inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other [‘norms of reciprocity’]” (pp. 20 & 135). *Sautu*, then, is the product of living a Fijian life according to *na sala va’avanua* (the way of *vanua*/the correct path involved in building and maintaining those networks of trust and reciprocity).

Living *sala va’avanua* refers to living in a way that accords with Fijian village life and respects the law of God, ancestors and worldly chiefs. This is a moral ideal that all Boumā people strive for. In this way it ‘governs’ and guides Boumā people in their daily decision-making. All decisions made should first and foremost concern the maintenance of social harmony in the community. Richard Katz, in his (1999) book *The Straight Path: Ancestral Wisdom and Healing Traditions in Fiji* states, ‘the concept of being "straight" has particular relevance to patterns of decision making and conflict resolution. One who is straight is correct, right, and truthful; such a person learns how to "straighten things out" and to "make things right" - that is, to resolve conflict according to certain moral principles’ (p. 323). All the culturally accepted behaviors and standards of ethics (*Ai tovo/va’arau va’avanua va’a viti*) prescribed by *va’avanua* (the way of the *vanua*) are ‘the pillars of Fijian epistemology’ according to Nabobo-Baba (2007). A central tenet of living *va’avanua* is that ‘individualism for its own sake is abhorred’ (Nabobo-Baba, 2005, p. 193). The question of individualism as the antithesis of the communality inherent in the *vanua* concept will be a focus of this thesis.

Adherence to *na sala va’avanua* is perhaps epitomized in the manner and behaviour of individuals toward one another within kinship relationships: following ‘the straight path’ means maintaining and strengthening these relationships and may be understood through the structure of place-specific Fijian kinship systems and *veiwekani* or adherence to these systems.

The kinship system is vital for social, cultural, environmental, and economic sustainability and security and therefore must be nurtured. Veitayaki (2003) describes the Fijian kinship system as ‘a safety net’ as it enables ‘people to meet their needs in their harsh and uncertain surroundings’ (p. 9). The incentive to work is driven by

reciprocity rather than monetary reward. In other words, financial reward is secondary to kinship obligations (Nayacakalou, 1978, p.119) and Fijians know that if they foster the ties that bind the *Vanua* by assisting those who need help, this will be reciprocated at a time when they too require the assistance of their kin. Those who maintain strong relationships with one's people are considered 'wealthy', reaffirming that notions of 'development' and 'success' rely on the building and maintenance of strong social networks. This is also implicit in the concept *sautu*. Reciprocity and the application of appropriate behaviour toward kin members necessary for *vanua* integrity, *sautu* and *na sala va'avanua* is called *veiwekani*.

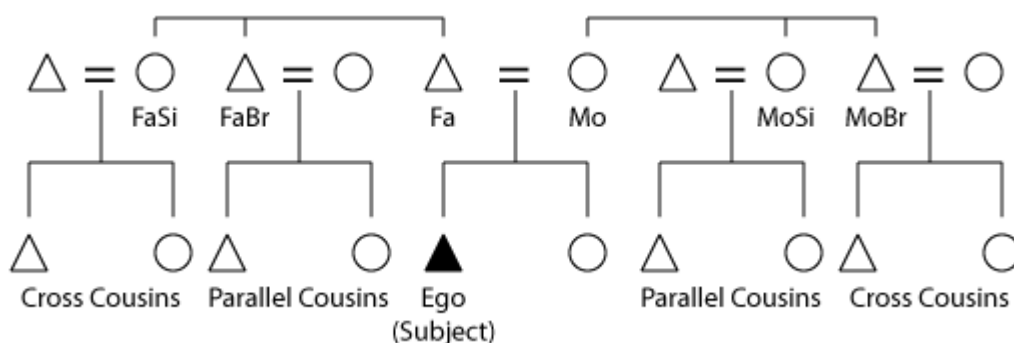
Veiwekani or respecting and applying the appropriate behaviour to *vanua* relationships and kinship networks are implicit to living *na sala va'avanua*. *Veiwekani* is guided by kinship terms and is incorporated in every bodily movement and every utterance a Fijian makes. The kinship terms of Waitabu, Boumā have been recorded in detail in Annette Schmidt's (1988) PhD thesis entitled *Language in a Fijian Village: An Ethnolinguistic Study*. I will only touch on some of the basic kinship relationships and observances here as this is a complex subject. As Schmidt writes; 'The Waitabu social fabric is...an intricate network of role relationships, ascribed to a large degree by the kinship system' (1988, p. 67). Kinship terms between *Vanua* often vary. As far as I am aware, Schmidt's is the only work that has studied the ethnolinguistics of Vanua Boumā. I have attached Schmidt's 'Table of Kin Terms of Reference and Address' (p. 83) (Appendix 2) for Waitabu as they are indicative of those used across Vanua Boumā.

Identifying who you are in relation to your kin is particularly vital in Boumā as marriage partners are most often chosen from within the *Vanua*, hence the need to avoid marrying someone too closely related. Often marriages are delayed for extended periods to ensure there is enough time for the families to check in the *vola ni kawa bula* (the Birth Register for indigenous Fijians held in Suva) that this does not happen. The roles (socially accepted modes of conduct) are also determined by these kinship relationships. The individual must know who they are in relation to their kin so they are able to adjust his/her role depending on whom they are dealing with. Role

relationships in Boumā belong to three main kinds of role-relationships: avoidance in which both parties practice restraint; joking in which both parties are free and non-restrained; and authority in which one member defers to the more powerful member (Schmidt, 1988, p. 68).

Some examples of kinship terms are *tavale*, *vugo* and *gane*. I will briefly outline these terms and the kinds of relationships accorded them. I have selected these terms because they are useful in illustrating *tabu* (prohibitive or avoidance) relationships which are problematic in terms of ecotourism management in Boumā. *Tavale* may be loosely referred to as ‘cross-cousins’:

Figure 9: Cross cousins



Tavale are on the opposite lineage group to Ego and are related to Ego by an opposite-sex sibling three or more generations removed. They may also be siblings-in-law except between two sisters-in-law which are referred to as *dauve*. The *matanitauwati* is a *tavale* of the opposite sex who may be a potential marriage partner. *Dauve* and *tavale* enjoy joking as the characteristic mode of behaviour. Conversation, sharing of clothes and space, are all unrestrained. This is a ‘joking’ (*veiwali*) relationship, a term first encountered by Radcliffe-Brown in the 1920s and is characterized by frequent ‘digs’ at one another, insults, sarcasm, and ‘bad’ jokes all made good-naturedly about each other. This is not a freedom enjoyed, for example, by *veiganeni* relationships or opposite sex sibling relationships which exist in stark contrast to joking relationships (Schmidt, 1988, p. 71).

Avoidance is practiced between Ego and *vugo* (Ego and their opposite sex children in-law) and Ego and *gane* (Ego's opposite-sex siblings). Avoidance within these kin relationships usually requires no direct conversation, necessitating communication through a third party. When communication is essential it is only allowed when discussing serious topics and speech will be soft, slow and low (ibid, p. 70). A person may not address their relatives by their personal name under these relationships. A Lavena villager shared the difficulty of conducting business around these avoidance relationships:

Tabu relationships
between yourself and your uncle
in the project can be very hard.
Your uncle is really serious.
You can't talk to each other.
So when he asks you to do something
you just say 'yes'
You have to say 'yes' all the time
whether his idea is good or not.

These relationships function to avoid confrontation and disregard for *vanua* rules and protocols.

Fijians, in general, will go to great lengths to avoid confrontation (Pirie, 2000). 'Fijian culture, like other Pacific cultures, is imbued with an impulse to avoid confrontation. Confrontation within a group or community certainly occurs, but when it does the visceral reaction is to dampen it, to quieten and dissipate it, not to stamp it out' (Fraser, 2000, para. 6). Arno (1980) provides one such example of conflict prevention as that of a Yanuyanu hypocritical language (called *veivakaisini*) which is employed to avoid shaming people publicly. As has been alluded to in Chapter Three, avoidance relationships mean that community members may not be able to 'talk straight'. In the

following dialogue, a member of Yavusa Lavena and a staff member of the Lavena project explains the difficulty of not being able to ‘talk straight’ particularly in terms of running a business as a whole *yavusa*.

It is very difficult
and sometimes I want to talk to them
about something straightforward
but because they are related
I have to talk to them another way
in order not to hurt their feelings.

I’ve got to tell them somehow
in a way so as not to hurt their feelings
but sometimes
when you are what you call ‘loaded’ with feelings
you are just sometimes
‘bang’
just head-on
and they say
‘You have hurt my feelings.’
which is difficult.
That is what is difficult.

A life that is lived according to the prescriptions of kinship (or *na ivakarau ni bula vakavei wekani*) is exemplified in acts of compassion toward kin (Toren, 1999, pp. 272-273). This may be shown in gestures of kindness such as helping by spreading someone’s pandanus to dry in the sun or providing labour for house-building, providing food and domestic assistance to a family with a sick parent or child, or taking down the washing of an absent family when the rain comes. Toren (1999) reported her participants had stated that attending church together with kin strengthened compassion as it was from God that the mutual compassion of true kinship came.

Schmidt (1988) noted that although the kinship system in Boumā appears rigid, individuals have the capacity to manipulate it to some degree, illustrating individual agency within social stratification:

The individual is not a passive entity whose sociolinguistic behaviour is totally predetermined by the kinship system. The kinship system merely provides the framework in which to act, by setting out the kin-categories and the associated modes of sociolinguistic conduct, i.e. rather than passive entities whose sociolinguistic behaviour is pre-programmed, individuals are more realistically viewed as actors who construct their behaviour within the framework of the kinship system. The individual appears to use the kinship system according to his communicative needs (pp. 79-80).

This may occur when an individual is linked to another through more than one genealogical line and is, therefore, ambiguous. In this situation, the individual may choose which role best suits their needs and is subject to interpretation. Perhaps this minimal fluidity in the kinship system has been taken advantage of to create what some may consider serious breaches of the laws of *veiwekani* as explained below.

Schmidt (1988) noted that, during the 1980s, some avoidance behaviour was being ignored despite the kinship system remaining unaltered. For her, the most prominent of these was *veivogoni* (cross-parent/child) and *veiganeni* (opposite sex siblings) relationships. These relationships would normally require restraint and minimal communication. However, in many cases, the prescribed behaviour was ignored. Joking and conversation occurred freely and first names and familiar pronouns were employed. When Schmidt asked individuals why this was changing in Waitabu, they explained that these avoidance relationships were proving ‘inconvenient’ and ‘did not suit their communicative needs’ (1988, p. 80). However, elders disapproved of this conduct, one saying that God would punish them with speech defects (ibid, p. 81).

Here, Schmidt identifies that adherence to kinship relationships are governed by a fear of God. She also recognises a generational gap between elders and younger generations in their respect for *vanua* law.

Conversely, avoidance relationships that were once weakened by a member of the younger generation may be chosen to be strengthened if this will provide a more favourable condition for him or her. For example, if the individual is asked to perform something they do not wish to, the *veiwe'ani* protocols are once again replaced where they had broken down and used as an excuse not to carry out the task (Aporosa, personal communication, 20 March, 2009).

Despite these changes in *veiwekani*, the main goal for all in Boumā remains that of the desire for all to live together in harmony. It is through signs and symbols from the social and natural environment that the people of Boumā are informed as to the individual and collective success or failure of following *na sala va'avanua*: living life according to kinship protocols and 'caring and sharing'. These signs and symbols will be explained in the next section after the foundations for this explanation have been laid through an introduction to the physical dimension of the *vanua*.

The physical dimension of the vanua

This section will incorporate the social-cosmological dimensions of the *vanua* with the physical attributes of the *vanua*. The ways in which natural resources are incorporated into the *vanua* concept and how *vanua* is inscribed into the taskscape through livelihood activities will be discussed here. The analysis of the physical dimensions of the *vanua* in combination with the social dimensions will pave the way to a greater understanding of the reasons for choosing or accepting community-based ecotourism and other responses to it.

The following quote was made by an unnamed journalist and recorded by Ewins (1998):

To the Fijian, land is not something that will help them economically; land is everything. It's like God. Everything on that land matters...They pray to the land...They call [it] *vanua*; that stone, that animal, that insect; all these are part of [it]. When the Fijian talks of land [they're] not just talking about acreage, they're talking about everything on that land, which is very sacred to them (p. 153, cited in Halapua, 2003a, p. 83).

Pamela Godde (1998) describes the physical definition of 'the *vanua* as region or country as opposed to soil while Ravuvu (1983) divides the physical dimensions of the *vanua* into soil or land (*qele*) and bodies of water (*wai*). *Qele* and *wai* are elements of Tuwere's (2002) literal interpretations of the *vanua* which includes land and geographical areas as well as its people and social units (pp. 34-35) in contrast to his symbolic interpretations of the *vanua*. *Qele* and *wai* as physical dimensions of land may be further divided into four groups: gardening land (*qele ni tei tei*), the forest (*veikau*), founding ancestor's house mounds (*yavutu/yavu*), and fishing grounds (*qoli qoli*).

Fijians do not treat native land as a commodity that can be 'owned' in the capitalist sense of the word. This is illustrated in the expression '*na qau vanua*' – not my land but 'the land to which I belong, of which I am an integral part: the land that is part of me and feeds me' (Roth, 1953, pp. xxvii: See also Lasaqa, 1984, pp. 22). As Tuwere states, 'One does not own the land, the land owns him' (2002, p. 49). Land is something that, if alienated from a Fijian person, has far-reaching implications for their identity and well-being, his/her *Vanua*, and for the ancestors of that land. Each family unit (*vūvale*) of each clan (*mataqali*) must request land for their children from the chief (*liuliu ni yavusa / turaga ni yavusa*) of each village. The land allotted to each family in a *mataqali* is called their '*ana'ana* while a *mataqali*'s fishing area is a *qoliqoli*. The '*ana'ana* and the *qoliqoli* are not owned by the *mataqali*. Rather, their resources are at the disposal of the *mataqali* members for the primary purpose of feeding the family. This has implications for community-based ecotourism as a cash-based enterprise. Whereas resources were not valued in monetary units before, now they are⁴⁴. A sense

⁴⁴ This issue will be discussed in later chapters.

of place and identity is further strengthened by the totems, spirits and ancestors to which both the land and the people belong. The intimate relationship of people and land are further demonstrated in that many Fijians consider themselves nothing without their land while they may also liken a land without its people to 'a person without a soul' (Ravuvu, 1983, p. 76).

A practical knowledge of the environment and its changing nature is exemplified by the traditional seasonal calendar. This is based on the main farming activities and the sources of food available at different times of the year. The calendar is still widely used by all Fijians as the basis of people's resource use activities (Veitayaki, 2003, p. 4). However, this generic calendar is not geographically specific and so a localized version is needed in each case. For example, according to the Fijian traditional seasonal calendar, January is associated with the abundance of spinefoot and rabbit fish (*nuqa*), shellfish and bivalves (*kaikoso*) and trochus (*vivili*). This month is also when land crabs (*lairo*) spawn in the sea and breadfruit trees bear fruit (Bulafish, 2008). In Lavena, however, January is the month for the harvest of *nuqa levu*, breadfruit, green bananas, mangos and pineapples.

Fishing areas (*i qoliqoli*) include any body of water (*wai*) claimed by a *Vanua*, *yavusa*, or *mataqali* as their traditional fishing ground. A *tabu* (customary fishing ban in this case) may be placed on part of this area from time to time to allow the regeneration of fish stock for feasts (*magiti*) and rituals such as weddings and funerals. The 'ana'ana (or *kanakana*) is the tract of land or water respectfully requested of, and granted by the chief for the use of a *mataqali* (clan) for the purpose of feeding and economically supporting the family and the *Vanua*. A *mataqali* has no ownership of the land granted to them and cannot sell, lease or gift their land. However, they have full ownership of whatever grows on or in their land or lives in the water and they may sell these resources as they wish. If the 'ana'ana is used for gardening (as it most often is), it is referred to more specifically as *i teitei*. 'Ana'ana, in terms of water, is the subsistence fishing area. This is usually the area immediately adjacent to a village and includes

mangroves, mudflats, sandflats, lagoons and reefs (Vunisea, 2002, p. 7) while *i qoliqoli* refers to the total fishing area including that beyond the 'ana'ana.

Because the environment provides all that is needed for the survival of the Boumā people, they in turn must protect it. If they do not, they receive an indication that they must alter their treatment of the environment through signs and symbols from nature.

Verification of the truth: symbols in nature

This section will discuss the fundamental nature of symbols to *vanua* integrity in Boumā. The 'silent messages' that are given to the people of Boumā no longer only come from *vū* (their ancestral spirits), they also come from God since Vanua Boumā is 'governed' by God, the ancestors, and their worldly chiefs. Symbols from the environment originating in pre-Christian *vū* worship have been combined with Christianity to create what appears to be one of the strongest mechanisms of social control in Boumā – arguably more powerful than the present state of chiefly leadership. This social control comes from the ways in which the Boumā people look to symbols from their natural and social environment to verify knowledge.

A symbol represents something in a completely arbitrary relationship. The connection between signifier and signified depends entirely on the observer, or more specifically, what the observer was taught. Symbols, therefore, are subjective, dictated either by social convention or by habit. Symbols are ideas, and whenever we use one, we are only pointing to the idea behind that symbol (Hawkes, 1932). Every symbol has a phenomenological foundation of 'givenness': a being in the world that cannot be ontologically reduced (Heidegger, 1962). Therefore, the development practitioner or researcher must 'bracket' his or her preconceptions of the symbolic meaning that environmental elements and relationships hold for them in order to more clearly understand the meaning those symbols hold for their participants. In doing so, they will obtain a deeper understanding of their participants and the way they value their social and natural resource. Only when this has been achieved can the development

practitioner or researcher fully appreciate how development is impacting on those symbols and relationships.

It is the symbolism or ‘silent messages’ inherent in both *vū* (ancestral spirit) observance and Christianity that monitors whether or not the people are following ‘the straight path’ of the *vanua* (inferring *vanua* integrity/communality) or whether they are on the ‘crooked path’ and pursuing what is generally considered ‘selfish individualism’. Through symbols, God and *vū* have the ability to control the *Vanua* by reward or punishment. What is observed in the natural environment may be considered a gauge of *vanua* integrity or *sautu* revealing the inextricability of the elements of the *vanua* including the people, *lotu*, and the environment. Therefore, it is through these symbols that the people of Boumā determine the extent to which the ecotourism initiatives are contributing to the *sautu* of the *Vanua*.

It is largely through symbolism that the Boumā people have adapted their connections with their *Kalou vū* (ancestor god) to form their own localized form of Christianity. One such example of this blending of *vū* observance with Christianity is the continued reverence with which they treat *i cavuti* (totems), which are inherited from their *Kalou vū*.

In 1941, Capell and Lester reported that the introduction of Christianity meant that a declining number of Fijians were observant of the prohibitions and respect traditionally accorded their *i cavūti* (totems). However, there is still plenty of contemporary literature written about how modern day Fijians acknowledge and respect their totems, regardless of widespread Christianity (e.g. Veitayaki, 2002; Mosko, 2002). Because of the public observances of some of the totems in Boumā, it was clear to me that acknowledgement of totems are alive and well there. Totems perform the role of ensuring the adherence of the values of the *vanua* and environmental sustainability because they determine linkages between different *yavusa* and between the *yavusa* and the land. Consequently, they contribute to the integrity of the *Vanua*. Through the

symbolic nature of totems, the *Kalou vū* governs by rewarding and punishing the observance of *vanua* values and integrity, and the correct treatment of the environment.

Adherence to *vanua* values by loving one another, helping one another, and observing *tabu* is also rewarded by God and *vū* with *Vanua*-specific symbols from the natural environment: *Vanua*-specific because each *Vanua* has its uniquely recognisable signs. One such example of *Vanua*-specific symbols is totems. The following is a brief poem I wrote recounting my experience of the harvest of Naisaqai's totem fish in 2004:

Naisaqai fisherwomen
As the sun rose
Waist deep:
a glorious glowing, floating, flowing patchwork.

Shepherding branches of glossy leaves

Then come tin basins
one after another.
Then wheelbarrows
back from the sea.
Brimming
flashing
boiling over.

Small silvery fish.

The women
spent,
exuberant.

The 'silent message', the 'gift' was clear:
All is as it should be in Boumā.

The abundant harvest of Naisaqai's totem fish is a clear sign that all is well in the *Vanua*. A woman from Yavusa Naisaqai (Waitabu) described the reverence with which their totem fish⁴⁵ is treated:

When you go to catch the fish
you have to dress up nicely.
You can't just wear the dirty clothes
you wore to the plantation.
You have to respect it...

Totems can reinvigorate the sense of *vanua* integrity when their distribution is conducted strategically. Yavusa Naisaqai was very careful about the way their community members distributed their totem fish when I observed the totem ritual harvest in 2004. The *yavusa* ensured the *Vunisā* (Head Chief) received the first of the harvest, and then that all in the *Vanua* equitably receive their share. In the gathering and careful distribution of the fish, there was a palpable sense of love of, and respect for, community. From my perspective, in the current climate of uncertainty as to the integrity of the *Vanua*, the totem fish could not have come at a better time. It seemed just what was needed to reinvigorate a sense of unity between the *yavusa* and hope for the future of the *Vanua* as social coherence had begun to 'unravel'⁴⁶. Many from Naisaqai interpreted the abundance of their harvest in 2004 as directly related to the Marine Reserve project implying that the ecotourism initiative there was 'right' and 'just' and, therefore, they felt reassured that they were doing the right thing.

There are other *Vanua*-specific signs other than totems which were also referred to as 'silent truths', 'silent messages', or 'gifts' by some in Boumā and, in addition to symbolizing *sautu*, they were considered by elders, particularly, as the most profound evidence of the legitimacy of land boundaries of tribes and clans and leadership.

⁴⁵ Out of respect for Naisaqai and their totem fish, I will not record its name here.

⁴⁶ This will be explained in the following chapters.

Examples of other tribes' 'gifts' reported by the people of Boumā included the people of Beqa's firewalking and in Koro, the people could call '*Tui ni kasi, tui ni kasi vudi mada!*' and the turtles would float to the top of the sea.

Morgan (2007), writing about his longitudinal study of turtle harvesting in the Wainikeli District in Taveuni, reports that one of his Wainikeli participants claiming spiritual rights to turtles stated, "We do not go out to catch the turtle, it comes to us" (p. 62). Morgan notes that debates over resource management and economic development seldom include the spiritual significance of elements of the environment. This is despite much literature written about the Pacific which identifies the fundamental spiritual connection of people and place to economic relationships. For example Mauss (1990), recognising the relationship between spiritual elements and economy states,

all kinds of institutions are given expression at one and the same time—religious, juridical, and moral, which relate to both politics and the family; likewise economic ones...as if there were a constant exchange of spiritual matter, including things and men, between clans and individuals, distributed between social ranks, the sexes, and the generations (p. 14, cited in Morgan, 2007, p. 61).

I have already noted the work of indigenous ethnographers Ravuvu (1983) and Tuwere (2002) who reaffirm the importance of including a spiritual component in discussions and debates involving economic development and resource management.

All of Boumā as well as other Fijian tribes knew that Boumā's unique silent message of *sautu* was given in the form of a great black cloud over large *Vanua* gatherings followed by rain. A woman in Waitabu told me that Boumā came to receive rain as their special 'gift' because the original settlers of what is now Boumā came down from the interior bringing the rain with them. All tribes have their own stories of how they came to receive their 'gifts' and therefore, they can be identified in this way from other tribes. As one of Korovou's women relayed,

The blessing is
the dark clouds
gathering about the people
of Vanua Boumā.

Sometimes it is near
the middle of the function
just before they go
to the place
where they perform
their dance.

you will see
a black cloud gathering
and it will rain.

And then
towards the end
it will stop.

And when they leave
the rain will go with them.

An elder told me a contradictory story to this one. He believed that before the missionaries came (after the Lekutu people had come down from the Taveuni interior), these symbols did not reveal themselves when the people of Boumā gathered together. He claimed that it was God who brought the symbols to them.

Before the missionaries came
when all the people
gathered in the sunshine

and there was no cloud
and no rain
we know that still
we are not clean.

When we joined the churches
this still happened.
This is still happening today
So we know this blessing
is from God.

Many participants noted that this kind of symbolism also revealed itself in the way the tourism projects impacted on *Vanua* integrity.

After Tavoro Falls⁴⁷ was finished
everyone from Boumā came -
ministers and everyone
and the food had just been served
and it went so dark
and there was very heavy rain
and plates filled up with water.

This means everything is right.

The people went to perform.
Went in the rain.

⁴⁷ The Tavoro Falls ecotourism initiative managed by Mataqali Naituku (Korovou Village).

While there remains some controversy over who is the giver of the ‘gifts’ (the ancestors or God or both), all (with the exception of some youths) understand them to symbolise and guide *vanua* integrity and, therefore, social order.

However, the impact of tourism was not always positive and symbols manifest themselves in other ways. If the *Vanua* was conducting themselves along *na sala va’avanua* (the *vanua* way) in the manner in which they managed the tourism ventures, *sautu* would come to them. By contrast, if tourism was having a negative affect on Boumā and its people because it obstructed social and environmental well-being, misfortune would befall the *Vanua*. This was recognized by a woman in Lavena:

I have an idea about Boumā.
People say that Boumā people
are very good.
They have tourism
and this and that
but I think there must be
something wrong
because if everything was alright here
everything would go right.

At the time I talked to the woman, Lavena was experiencing a lot of inter-clan conflict over the management of the project. She said that, for her, signs also came from how well everyone was getting on in the *yavusa*. She did not have to look to environmental signs for this as she said, ‘the signs are all around us everyday. You only have to look and listen and they are there’.

The same participant indicated that there are generational disparities between how environmental signs are interpreted in Boumā. These were often manifested in generational differences. The participant also suggests that a lack of communication

between Boumā chiefs⁴⁸ has led to a lack of guidance with regard to the signs they receive from their environment.

If there are no rain clouds
the older people say
 ‘something is not right’
but the younger generation
take it lightly.
I don’t know
what people would do
if it didn’t rain
because all the chiefs
don’t have regular meetings
anymore
to talk about
these sorts of things.

It’s kind of getting toward
modernisation⁴⁹.

Symbols guiding social behaviour were also manifest in more general and mundane ways. Any individual act of wrongdoing is said to result in punishment from God or *vū* (depending on who I talked to):

If someone drops \$2 here
and then someone gives it back
the fruits and the fish will be abundant.

⁴⁸ Miscommunication between chiefs and in the communities in general will also be elaborated on in the following chapter and throughout the thesis.

⁴⁹ I found it interesting that those directly involved in the projects and therefore those who had the most contact with tourism consultants now frequently used words such as ‘modernization’ and ‘time management’ in my discussions with them. This seemed so out of place in *talanoa* in the village setting and it emphasized for me just how pervasive Western articulations of alternate worldviews are.

But if someone takes it,
punishment will be shown
in the fruits and the fish.

However, any wrong-doing is soon forgotten as long as the offender attends an *i soro* (reconciliation ritual)⁵⁰.

Conclusion and discussion

This chapter has provided a window into the *vanua* as a complex worldview and epistemology that weaves together the people, spirits and ancestors, all elements of nature, and the Gods of Boumā. The *vanua* also acts as a guiding set of principles for living life the right way. Living life *na sala va'avanua* or *na sala dodonu* is rewarded by *sautu*⁵¹. Caring and sharing with each other and living life for the good of the whole community rather than for the self is vital for *sautu* in Boumā. Community is rewarded by *vū* and God whereas individuality may be punished.

The *vanua* represents a sentient ecology (Anderson, 2000). From his studies of reindeer herders in the central Siberian Taimyr region, David Anderson describes the herders' relationship with their environment and other animals as operating with a sentient ecology. This intuitive relationship involves knowledge which Tim Ingold describes as

...not of a formal, authorised kind, transmissible in contexts outside those of its practical application. On the contrary, it is based in feeling, consisting in the skills, sensitivities and orientations that have developed through long experience of conducting one's life in a particular environment (2000, p. 25).

⁵⁰ This will be explained in the context of the ecotourism initiatives in Chapter Eight.

⁵¹ *Sautu* may be compared with the Kwara'ae *gwaumauri'anga* (or the 'good life') which *na sala dodonu* may be compared with the Kwara'ae *maui'a saga* ('living straight') (Gegeo, 2000).

The people of Boumā like the Evenki of the Siberian Taiyr see the environment as a ‘taskscape’ rather than a ‘landscape’. In other words, their world is not divided into humans and their environment. Rather animals, humans and other environmental features are all interrelated elements of our world. And, ‘[j]ust as the landscape is an array of related features, so – by analogy – the taskscape is an array of related activities’ (Ingold, 2000, p. 195). The taskscape then is a pattern of dwelling activities within the landscape and both taskscape and landscape are perpetually in process rather than in a static or otherwise immutable state (Ingold, 1993). Ingold’s taskscape is his answer to what he describes as the one of the ‘great mistakes of recent anthropology’ - that it has ignored the fact that human technical skills are embedded in sociality (Ingold, 2000, p. 195). In addition, that sociality is embedded in the landscape (which includes the widest interpretation of environment to a people e.g. one inclusive of the cosmological dimension in Boumā’s case). The phenomenologically-based methodologies that I have adopted for this research are compatible with the *vanua* and Ingold’s taskscape in that they all require an inter-relational, subjective, embodied and reflexive understanding of the world.

The *vanua* concept as the predominant Boumā worldview produces its own set of dwelling activities within the Boumā landscape. Just as Ingold’s taskscape implies, interpretations of life lived *va’avanua* (the *vanua* way) is in constant flux and moves with no pre-determined pattern within an equally dynamic landscape. This premise suggests then that the cultural project is one that can only be imagined as ‘in process’ and that there is no completed product reflecting Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) ‘invented tradition’ as defined in Chapter One. All along the way, however, by-products of this process may be seen as culturally-hybridised forms.

It is vital for us to understand the *vanua* as an indigenous epistemology, a sentient ecology and as a way of understanding the Boumā taskscape if we have any hope of comprehending the ways in which externally introduced development initiatives like community-based ecotourism will be locally interpreted, negotiated and enacted. An understanding of indigenous epistemologies may contribute to models of development

that empower rather than reinforce neo-colonial attitudes through the application of unsuitable Western models of development (Quanchi, 2004; Gegeo, 2000; Hereniko, 2001; Hau'ofa, 2000; Huffer & Qalo, 2004). For example, development discourse tends to promote the Western model of pursuing production goals which serves to satisfy individualistic desires rather than community needs – a model that may not be entirely appropriate for collective cultures such as Fiji. Conversely, understanding indigenous epistemologies while recognising these are not static and timeless assists us in deconstructing romanticised images of the idyllic and traditional subsistence lifestyles of collectivist societies (Hausler, 1994) and avoiding other erroneous assumptions of local realities, needs and wants.

The following chapter will continue the theme of the *vanua* as epistemology to discuss how Boumā had already started to adopt what they consider to be individualistic values from outside their tribe prior to the advent of community-based ecotourism. These will be explored in terms of life *va'avanua* as a 'moral economy' (Scott, 1976). The *vanua* concept as an example of a moral economy (Scott, 1976) is a starting point of cultural and social analysis in this thesis. Bearing in mind the dynamic nature of the taskscape, any 'starting point' is problematic. However, the points of analysis in this thesis may be viewed as a snapshot period from the beginning of my fieldwork period in 2004 to the end in 2006 but also including vantage points of other temporal dimensions as contributed by my research participants.

The chapter will discuss how *va'avanua* is changing along with this shift toward individualism and how chiefly leadership is key in determining the impact these changes will have on village life in the future. Chiefly leadership has had a dramatic effect on how people interpret and apply the *vanua* as they negotiate community-based ecotourism as a business. This will provide an opening for subsequent discussions on the establishment of Boumā National Heritage Park and its individual projects, and ecotourism as 'business' in Boumā.

Chapter Five

From communalism to individualism

Who of himself can build a good house? And who desires to see a town with nothing but small and bad houses in it? Whoever heard of a man who plants a garden by himself, and whose family has always plenty to eat? Do we Fijians not do things in companies? How could one man build his house and plant his garden and build his canoe and sail it alone? To do this we must cease to be Fijians (Buli Lakeba, September, 1875, cited in Tuwere, 2002, p. 70).

This chapter describes a move from communalism to individualism. Most people in Boumā embrace change brought about by development projects that promise to financially supplement subsistence livelihoods, and provide new skills and contact with tourists. However, sacrificing communalism for individualism in the pursuit of this goal is acceptable to few.

According to Tuwere (2002) and to the majority of the people I spoke to in Boumā, community and communal life as determined by the *vanua* 'is not an option or something that is offered as an alternative. Without it, one is cut off from the main source of life and meaning' (p. 70). Communalism, according to the *vanua*, is a life lived not for the self but for the good of the whole *Vanua*. The *vanua*, therefore, is the antithesis of individualism. This proves challenging when attempting to merge ecotourism (or any form of entrepreneurship typically characterised in part by individualism) and the *vanua* (based principally on communal values) to form business *va'avanua* as an indigenised cultural form as is the case with Vanua Boumā.

During the first half of my fieldwork period I was mistaken in believing that it was the community-based ecotourism initiatives that were to blame for the locally-perceived erosion of the communal values central to the *vanua* in Boumā. I later learned that the shift in village life from communality to individuality began a long time before the

ecotourism project was established. The Boumā National Heritage Park's four ecotourism initiatives will be introduced in Chapter Eight. By providing the information contained in this chapter prior to Chapter Seven, the reader can more fully comprehend the depth of information needed before a comprehensive analysis of local perceptions of such initiatives may be made. Secondly, contrary to my initial assumptions about the relationship between ecotourism and the *vanua* (that community-based ecotourism was primarily responsible for the decline of *vanua* values) the culmination of historical events prior to the advent of ecotourism more profoundly determined the future of the community and the initiatives than any impact ecotourism itself had on the *vanua*. Therefore, ecotourism is seen more as a lens emphasising pre-existing challenges to the *vanua*.

Many cultures speak nostalgically of the lost traditions and morals of their history. This lamentation for what was imagined as the 'moral past' is the basis for Tomlinson's (2004) *Perpetual Lament*. In this study, the people of Tavuki, Kadavu mourn their historical decline largely perpetuated, in their opinion, by over-consumption of kava whilst simultaneously drinking copious amounts of the intoxicating beverage. This is resonant of my experiences in Boumā. After embedding myself more firmly within the social environment, and gaining the trust of a number of participants, the themes from the *talanoa* I was privy to more frequently emerged as narratives of historical lament. This chapter reveals the content of this *talanoa*. Like Tomlinson, I argue that it is the intention performed through the physical gathering to *talanoa* of these stories of the decline of the *vanua*, coupled with the lamentation of this loss that holds the potential for political agency. *Talanoa* has many functions: a testing ground for ideas, a way to pass the time, a space for learning, and a possibility for a neutral space to exercise the tongue and the mind in the absence of restrictive *vanua* protocols. It is in the space of private *talanoa* where formal public role expectations are more relaxed that I was able to capture glimpses of people's deeper feelings about leadership, and the *vanua* among other emergent themes.

Key themes of this lamentation for the people of Boumā in *talanoa* were not so much kava consumption⁵², but that their chiefs had lost *mana* and were ineffective. They argued that it is the ineffectiveness of the chiefs that has facilitated the erosion of *vanua* values. The chiefs, they say, should have been more proactive in controlling the shift from communalism to individualism that has been most profoundly experienced since the early 1950s with the advent of copra production and in the 1960s with the human rights movement. As will be explained in this chapter, individual human rights, or simply ‘rights’ as is the common expression in Boumā, is described as a by-product of formal education, migration and the media . As a result of this perceived loss of control in terms of chiefly leadership, many locals say that new Boumā generations have suffered a loss of vital traditional knowledge and identity.

In the discussion below, I will explore the, admittedly, somewhat romantic suggestion that Boumā has enjoyed ‘subsistence affluence’ also known as a ‘moral economy’ up until approximately the last sixty years according to my participants. This moral economy describes an image of life lived *va’avanua*. Following that, I will present an historical and contemporary illustration of leadership in Boumā and how the people of Boumā perceive this as eroding the *vanua* and, therefore, subsistence affluence. This is intended as an introductory discussion of leadership which will be taken up again in later chapters as they directly relate to the distortion of community-based ecotourism management.

A moral economy

Villages in Fiji are the basis of all social groupings and activities and have been based on a ‘moral economy’ (Scott, 1976) characterized by ‘subsistence affluence’ (Bayliss-Smith & Feacham, 1977; Lam, 1982) and ‘moral capital’ (Chayanov, 1966; Watts, 1983, Scott, 1976) based on socio-cultural integrity and the common good rather than the abject poverty prevalent in many other developing countries (Fisk, 1970, p.1; Knapman 1987, p.1, cited in Veitayaki, 2002, p. 399). These concepts may also be

⁵² Although locals considered kava drinking problematic

described as pre-existing ‘indigenous development’ (Maiava & King, 2007), or ‘indigenous economy’ (Varese, 1996).

According to local Boumā elders, up until the last sixty years, the people of Boumā were relatively self-sufficient. While their self-sufficiency is questionable today, they still practice many of the intricate exchange arrangements that have supported their self-sufficiency in the past⁵³. The development policies of the 1950s and 1960s to encourage economic growth (Yari, 2004) led to copra production in Boumā. However, prior to the 1950s, money was seldom used for exchange and communal ownership of property was observed. This social kinship system has been the safety net that has enabled people to meet their needs in their harsh and uncertain surroundings (Veitayaki, 2003). While indigenous Fijians (including those in Boumā) used goods such as whales’ teeth (*tabua*), *kava* (*Piper methysticum/yaqona*); artefacts such as mats (*ibe*), pots (*uro*), carvings and food to obtain and return favours (Nayacakalou 1978, p. 102) in the past, not all of these are commonly exchanged today. Today, cash and services are the most common units of exchange in Boumā. Most of the other items in this list are reserved for ceremonial purposes (see Appendix 3: Lavena Ceremonies).

Sharing with relatives ensures that resources are efficiently used and that people look after each other in times of need. Hoarding, reported Narayan (1984), was neither practical nor necessary in Fiji because the basic requirements of indigenous Fijians were supplied through their kin-based networks (p.13). One such socio-cultural tool that has discouraged hoarding and has ensured that surpluses have been shared is that of ‘*ere’ere* (or *kerekere*). This ‘system of gaining things by begging for them from a member of one’s own group’ (Capell, 1991, p. 95) has been widely practiced in Boumā. While ‘*ere’ere* has been effective in preventing the accumulation of wealth (Nayacakalou 1978, p. 40), it has also been considered a major barrier to elements of entrepreneurship inherent in current examples of ecotourism development in Fiji (Williksen-Bakker, 2004).

⁵³ This will be explained later in the chapter.

Ca'aca'a va'oro

One of the most profound changes in the *vanua* in Boumā over the past two generations has been reported to be a move away from voluntary labour offered 'for the good of the whole *Vanua*' and toward individual gains (usually as cash rewards). There is a term called *solesole vaki* (or working together in clans) (Kingi & Kompas, 2005, p. 3) but this is more commonly known as *ca'aca'a va'a 'oro* in Boumā. This is an important element of the *vanua* because it implies the inclusion and support of the whole community from the weakest to the strongest and exemplifies 'subsistence affluence' in which 'strong support for the extended family or community is said to have contributed to alleviating extreme poverty' (Yari, 2004, p. 42). Many complained that no one helped others voluntarily anymore. If any help was requested, cash would normally be expected in return. As a friend in Waitabu laments, people are 'drawing away to do their own kind of work. Now people really look to money whereas before, people were in it for their community'. A Lavena mother of six explains:

Before,
in the time of my parents,
great-grandparents,
grandfathers,
helping our community was considered
'a habit for living'.
We would never have had to ask anybody to come and help.

If we saw someone building a house
or doing some work in their *teitei*,
we would just go and help.
Everybody would.

In other words, *ca'aca'a va'a 'oro* was no longer observed as a taken-for-granted part of being a member of a *Vanua* and living *vanua* values. A friend in Waitabu explains

ca'aca'a va'a 'oro and its aims to support the community as a whole including the weakest members.

In my mind
it was there to keep everyone together -
to get everyone to work as a whole community.
And it is a structure
within which we can get things done.
And it provides work for people
who can't work for their own families.

If people can afford to go on
without anyone else's support
that is OK.
But if people can't afford
to carry on their family matters
on their own
and we have a wedding
or some other kind of function
when all the other families
are giving things,
these 'hard case' families
will not be able to.
And everyone will be looking at them.

The stronger ones
can give the *kava* and whatever
but the weaker ones
won't be able to give anything.

But if we all work in a communal way -
if the weaker ones just bring one bunch of *dalo*
that's OK.

They should be happy
they have given something
for that occasion.

But people are drawing away
from this kind of lifestyle.
People expect more from everyone -
even the weaker ones.
You feel sorry for those weaker ones.
That's how I see it.

Each family is entitled to an area of land in the village complex. Here they may not only build their house, they may also plant *bele* (a leafy vegetable), *baigani* (eggplant), and *moli 'aro'aro* (lemon), or other fruits or vegetables usually grown in smaller quantities than found in the *teitei* (plantation). Our *bure* (traditional house) was built next to a pawpaw tree. Every now and then (if the children had not knocked it down with a long stick first), our 'host mother' (I will call her Mala) would present us with its ripe fruit saying the owner of the tree had taken it down for us to eat. Plates of food would always come to Jone (as I will refer to our host father) and Mara's house just as plates of food would also leave the house for other family members. As we sat on the cool lino in the living area of the house, reading or talking or playing cards by kerosene light, a child may deliver a plate of food in the dark, bending low and sitting down as soon as they entered the house. Speaking in a low, quiet voice she may say to Mara, 'My mother has some pork for you'. Unless they had had regular close encounters with us in the village, they would seldom look at us intent on fulfilling their duty. If they had often played with Kobo⁵⁴ (our son) we just might be rewarded with a shy smile.

⁵⁴ Kobo is a shortened Fijian version of Yakobo (Jacob, our son's name).

Then they would scurry off into the dark across the village back home where their parents would be waiting for them to eat, to bathe, to do their homework or to wash the dishes with their siblings.

Many of the people I spoke with lamented the fact that people did not help each other as they used to. In Jone and Mara's parents' day, people would often leave *tavioka* (cassava) or *dalo* (taro) at the door. When the occupants returned to their house, perhaps after working in the *teitei* (plantation), these gifts would be waiting for them – anonymously: a gesture of goodwill without wish or need for reciprocation. Today however, if no reciprocation came, as with any gift-giving, the initiator of this goodwill would likely cease gift-giving. In this way, those who were 'struggling' and had little surplus food to share may find that their support by the *Vanua* may dwindle. Therefore, the food that came to Jone and Mara's house must be reciprocated sometime in the future for it to be sustained.

Ceremonies and rituals are indicative of this change in voluntary labour/working for the good of the whole community and gifting. For example, the first fruits ceremony (*i sevu*) is one in which the *mataqali ni to'ato'a* (chief of the *to'ato'a*) should present a token of the first harvest crops to the *yavusa* chief (*turaga ni vanua*). According to Lavena's *turaga ni vanua*, this has not been seen for a long time. For the following participant, the wedding (*tevutevu*) clearly indicated that there had been a shift from *ca'aca'a va'oro* to a more individualistic cash-based value system:

If there was a *tevutevu*
everyone would pitch in
and give a hand
and not expect anything in return
You don't really need money
to do those kinds of things.
But now people are saying
if you don't have money
we can't do it.

A friend in Waitabu stated that, although Boumā is still very much a communalistic system, it is becoming an individualistic system at the same time: 'Now is a very interesting time. My main concern is what will happen in the future. People will sell each other! (*laughs*)'.

Caring and sharing

A mother of nine children in Lavena explains that a desire for cash has dramatically altered the relationship between family members and that only those with money will find support in their relatives.

Now if you have no money,
people in the community -
your relatives -
do not want to know you.

But if you have some money
and you pay somebody to help,
everyone will come to help you.

Say for example if we earned
maybe \$100 or \$200 a week.
People will know that we are earning money
and they will want to stay close to us.

If you have no money,
it doesn't matter
how closely you are related,
they will just stay apart from you.

When we built our house.

It was just me, the children,
and my husband.
The community did not come and help us.

So now,
when there is different community work
being done in another house,
we don't want to go and go help them
because nobody helped us
when we needed them.

There were four members of Boumā that I knew who were really 'struggling' and who I felt had been neglected as part of the changes in *vanua* values as they had almost entirely slipped through its 'safety net'. The following are accounts of two of those community members (I have changed their names to ensure their anonymity).

I first met Josefa through what I consider to be a 'devoutly Catholic' family in Lavena – that of Viti and Lina. After discussing changes in the *vanua* with them in their house one day, Viti walked with me to Josefa's house and introduced him as a perfect example of what should not be happening in Boumā today. One of Viti's boys had moved in with Josefa to help him as Josefa had been crippled as a result of chronic diabetes.

Josefa was sitting on the torn lino of his house. His legs were bowed before him and his feet were wrapped in old bandages. He smelled very bad, and it was only later that I learned that the smell was that of the dying flesh on his feet. When I told him that I wanted to contact Taveuni Rotary to find him a wheelchair, he wept. Here was a man who, once a proud father of four successful children living and working in professional careers in Suva, was enduring rats nibbling at his feet at night and the humiliation of so badly needing the help of a *palagi* (European). He wept and shuddered uncontrollably as he told how his children in Suva had not returned his cries for help for months. He

desperately needed money from them for food as he was no longer able to provide for himself and he also longed to go to Suva to live under their care.

I did manage to find a wheelchair for Josefa. Unfortunately, the only one I could find was not much good in the, often bumpy and soggy, village terrain. However, I was somewhat heartened to see that Viti and Lina's family made efforts to lift Josefa into the chair from time to time so that he could sit outside under a tree or to push him around the village for a change of scenery. I was disturbed and angered when I later found that there had been a spare wheelchair in the village the whole time. All that was needed was a simple repair job.

My friend and some time translator, Mala, also wanted me to meet Eli, a young man who had landed on his head on concrete at school at the age of nine and was left bedridden and incontinent with the intellectual capacity of a four year old. He was now in his mid-twenties. I cried when I met Eli. I cried for many reasons. I had been living next door to him for five months and I never knew he was there. He was literally left in the darkest recess of his house, hidden away from the rest of the community – from the rest of the world. I remember having to adjust my eyes to see him and when I did see him I was shocked by what I saw. His body was so thin and twisted. His muscles were atrophied and rigid. One of his big dark eyes was red and filled with pus. His mouth was twisted and he drooled constantly. But he was so lovable and fragile. And I could see that he was loved so much by his mother and brothers.

Eli's mother was uncomfortable in my presence there and when I asked them to open the window, she looked shocked. I learned from Mala that she kept him hidden away here because, culturally, disabled people are not accepted by the community. I also suspected that Eli would not be a 'good look' for the tourists walking through the village. Eli's mother and I talked at length about him, his needs and the *vanua* in Lavena. We all concluded that it should not be Eli and his family that should carry the shame; it should be the whole community. The local nurse had visited Eli a few times

but had merely peered inside, made her diagnoses and left without daring to approach him close enough for a proper examination.

With the profound generosity of Geoffrey Amos and his team at Taveuni Rotary, we found a hospital bed and sheets for Eli. We were also able to provide a trip in an ambulance for him to hospital for a much-needed general check-up and to treat his eye (which I understand had been left untreated for months).

The next day, I looked out of my *bure* door to see Lina, Eli's mother and her sons bathing Eli out in the bright sunlight in clear view of the whole village. Later that week I was met again by Eli who had been lifted outside and he smiled. His whole face smiled and my heart broke again. Occasionally, I helped bathe Eli outside. I wanted the whole village to see that to many *palagis*, Eli was not shameful. He even got to go to church the next Sunday. Unfortunately, these efforts were short-lived and his mother would say that she could not take him to church or outside because no one would help her carry him. When I learned that Eli had died in 2006, I felt more relieved than sad. At last he was free.

Village cooperatives

Village cooperatives provided evidence of collective whole community efforts for economic benefit and thus are based on the central communal value inherent in the *vanua* and the notion of a moral economy.

While there had been some efforts to produce a *yavusa*-owned and operated cooperative garden and store, these were all unsuccessful in the long term. Every time I mentioned the cooperatives, locals would lower their heads and chuckle. This was the case with Mala's husband, Petero. The following is Mala's translation for her husband:

(chuckling)

He says it's a big story.

He just says its failure was all about the money, eh?

The people who ran the business,
they used the money.

There have been three different attempts
to make a cooperative garden in Lavena
and every time it has failed
because the people who ran the business
put our money in their own pocket.

They just think of themselves, eh?

It was very difficult for me to understand why there were so many cases of the misappropriation of community funds in such a small place where everyone was related. Everyone seemed so nice and they regularly attended church. Mala translates for Petero who said that people in Boumā go to church but do not practice what they preach:

Yeah. That's a sickness in Lavena.

That's another big story eh? *(chuckling)*.

Yeah, people have been going to church
but nearly all the businesses
that have been set up
for the good of the community
have been ruined
by one or two individuals.

We had the *teitei*,
we had the cooperative store,
and now the same thing is happening with the ecotourism lodge.

We don't want to end up going down the same road again.

Petero suggested two ways to stop the lodge from being ruined in the same way.

He says the park project should be led
by someone who has got money already.
A big *teitei* ...

And the other solution
is that the whole community
has really got to change.
Everyone needs to start *really* praying.
Really praying.
Yeah. That can stop the lodge from being ruined.

Me: So when you say really praying...?

From here (*Mala puts her fist to her heart*).
Be true.

Mala and her husband provided the cooperatives as evidence of people moving from a communal *vanua*-based village lifestyle to a more individual lifestyle. They said that people would take the money they earned from the cooperative *teitei* to start their own businesses with some other families. These families (perhaps four or five of them) would join forces to run their own store and sell cash-cropped *dalo* and *yaqona*. Mala and her husband saw this as a betrayal of the *Vanua*. Of particular insult to them was that the more 'enterprising' members of the community were too busy to attend church or village meetings including communal village work (*ca'aca'a va'oro*). After talking to these families, it was clear that they have realised that in order to survive, they have had to make dramatic changes to the way they viewed village life and engage more strategically in the cash-based economy.

The moral economy in Boumā is becoming a thing of the past. The lives of Eli and Josefa remained untouched by the community-based ecotourism development in their village. The social structure in Boumā no longer provides a ‘safety net’ for all in the community. Individuals are now choosing to prioritise the needs of their own families over the needs of the *Vanua*, and those who really need help slip through the cracks. It was the job of the *turaga ni ‘oro* to make contact with government agencies including social services to help these individuals. However, possibly due to a lack knowledge, or confidence, the *turaga ni ‘oro* had not followed through with the application for financial assistance for a number of people in the village. The following section looks more closely at local leaders and their role in the erosion of the *vanua* and the moral economy.

Leadership

A decrease in the influence of the leaders of Boumā in ensuring adherence to the *vanua* leaves the *Vanua* exposed and vulnerable to forces that may divide the community and reduce its *mana* and possibilities for *sautu*.

Ca’aca’a va’a ‘oro can only work successfully where there is strong leadership and direction. In the past, if the *turaga ni ‘oro* called everyone to come to assist in a community project (as was part of his role), community-members would immediately drop whatever they were doing and come and help. Today, this is not the case. ‘Nowadays’ one woman said, ‘When he calls, nobody comes to help’. When I asked why, she told me, ‘because few have respect for the *turaga ni ‘oro*’. I later learned that the *turaga ni ‘oro* had lost respect because he had misappropriated funds from a community development project and did not lead the community by example. This was a common theme in my many *talanoa* sessions with individuals across Vanua Boumā. Other reasons for not responding to the *turaga ni ‘oro* for calls to *ca’aca’a va’a ‘oro* may be a result of a lack of respect for leadership, a political move for individual rights over communal law, or a combination of these. Whatever the reason, lack of respect for

leadership has a detrimental affect on the rallying of communal support for communal village projects including the community-based ecotourism projects⁵⁵.

Understanding how decisions are made in specific socio-cultural environments is critical to the success of community-based ecotourism. This also includes a closer attention to the micro-politics⁵⁶ of daily life in these locations. Local decision-making structures and processes are particularly critical because much community-based ecotourism management and planning relies on social values, and it has been argued that community-based ecotourism is less about the resources and more about the social structures and behaviours related to the resources (Jentoft, 1998). Therefore, the 'motives, ethics, interests, and cultural conceptions driving local stakeholders' must be understood (Muehlig-Hoffman, 2007, p. 31). As a result, researchers and development practitioners are becoming more interested in local social dynamics and perceptions of the development process (Veitayaki, 1998).

Strong leadership has been deemed critical in successful resource management (Veitayaki, 1998) since change affecting leadership can have a 'distorting effect' on development projects (Muehlig-Hofmann, 2007, p. 31). However, in many community management plans, it is assumed that a harmonious traditional community exists held together by a strong leadership structure (Mohan, 2001; Cooke & Kothari, 2001). This is not always the case. Muehlig-Hofmann (2007), writing about community-based management in a Fijian context explains:

Findings show that local traditional customs, for example, around the instalment of chiefs, are eroding and one result is that village leadership generally weakens. This local foundation, therefore, requires more

⁵⁵ This will be explained in this chapter.

⁵⁶ Blase (1991) provides a broad-based, working definition of micropolitics: the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations. In large part political actions result from perceived differences between individuals and groups, coupled with the motivation to use power to influence and to protect. Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political significance in a given situation. Furthermore, both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of the realm of micropolitics (p. 11).

careful attention – without it, implemented management measures may be impractical and unsustainable (p. 31).

In addition, participatory approaches to development often lack an analysis of indigenous governance systems. Perhaps the rejection of local governance systems is a symptom of a lack of awareness of the influence internal power relations have on limitations of participation and empowerment. For example, in her (1997) research into community-based tourism in Squamish, Reed argues that it is difficult for development agencies to mediate uneven power relations between stakeholders. Power relations, she argues, strongly determine the results of collaborative tourism planning and may even preclude collaborative action (cited in Telfer, 2000, p. 244).

In this section, I will present local perceptions of chiefly authority in Vanua Boumā. Chiefly authority has been declining over time since the customary instalment of chiefs ceased to be practised over sixty years ago. The research shows that as a result of the erosion of chiefly potency and respect in Boumā, the community has suffered a kind of anomie, and a loss of a sense of community, security and identity. I will explain that chiefly leadership has weakened in Boumā partly because of the local rejection of the traditional chiefly installation ceremony; a weakening in local knowledge and therefore, in the *vū* (or ancestral gods) and the *vanua*; and the introduction of ‘human rights’ in the 1970s coupled with formal education and other conduits of external values, skills and knowledge which have led new generations to challenge the knowledge of their chiefs.

All of these factors have lead to a breakdown in social order and values in the village, which in turn, has affected the management and decision-making processes and structures of the ecotourism initiatives in Boumā and their ability to create a successful business *va’avanua*.

The context of chiefly leadership in Fiji

The people of Boumā have reported that the Boumā chiefs had lost their strength of *lālā* or *mana* (a mystical chiefly power attributed to them by the *Kalou vū* and *vū*) (Derrick, 2001, p.73) and subsequently their power of governance over their people. This was noted in Schmidt's (1988) ethnolinguistic study of the village of Waitabu in Boumā and also by Tuwera (2002):

I often hear young men in the village saying, “*Ke ra vinaka walega na noda I liuliu*” (if only our leaders were good) referring to traditional leaders in general and implying that *mana* is slipping away from its source...Today, no action is taken, people merely grumble and speculate (p. 138).

Tuwera describes *tabu* and *mana* as mechanisms of ‘imposing discipline, social control and an understanding as well as an awareness of spirituality and its implications’ (Tuwera, 2002, p. 141). This section will describe how the people of Boumā feel about the *tabu* and *mana* or power, legitimacy and leadership of their chiefs and the way these perceptions of their chiefs affect the *vanua*.

A number of historical factors have influenced general perceptions of the chiefs’ declining *mana* in Fiji. This includes the growing strength of the church, the colonial establishment of the role of the *tūraga ni ‘oro* (government officer) in the villages, formal education and other modes of exposure to Western values, behaviours, skills, knowledge and commodities. As result of, and in conjunction with, these new attitudes and values, I will argue that public opinion is gathering strength as a powerful mechanism of local governance. While this transference of power has not been entirely positive in Boumā, it may have to suffice in the absence of accepted and respected chiefly authority.

Emile Durkheim’s use of French philosopher, Jean-Marie Guyau’s term ‘*anomie*’ in his influential book, *Le Suicide* (1897) describes *anomie* as a disintegration of standards or

values, or ‘normlessness’, and a feeling of alienation or purposelessness. He writes that anomie normally occurs in societies undergoing dramatic economic change. However, the change that occurs is at odds with what is actually achievable in an everyday mundane life.

Anomie is experienced in Boumā as the community feels a sense of loss of direction and fear for the future in the absence of trustworthy leadership and the rapid introduction of new information partly through the development process. This feeling of powerlessness felt by many Fijian communities in the absence of chiefly authority has been reported by Tomlinson (2004) and may be accompanied by the breakdown of community functioning. I have seen this anomie and disorientation in Boumā as it has become increasingly difficult to reach community consensus. This is represented in a statement made by a couple of participants in Lavena who remarked that there was little control in village and park meetings.

Now everybody wants to talk.

(laughing)

Talk too much when we meet.

This should not be interpreted to mean that every person present in village meetings feel they have the freedom to speak their mind in the absence of chiefly authority. *Veiwe’ani* protocols, gender issues, and historical micropolitical contexts continue to determine who voices their opinions in public settings. The point here is that rather than the chiefs controlling decision-making processes and endorsing or rejecting the outcome of these processes, there is a ‘too many cooks’ scenario largely constituted by voices of individuals with self-prescribed authority. This is a trend that has been reported across Fiji (Ravuvu, 1988; Vunisea, 2002; Toren, 2004) and has had a profound impact on the management of the ecotourism projects in Boumā as it has distorted the decision-making process.

In pre-colonial times, chiefs were elected and bestowed with *mana* from the *Kalou vū* based largely on merit but sometimes on patriarchal or matriarchal inheritance. During the 19th century, colonial authorities reconstructed traditional political systems which conflicted with traditional systems of authority (Feinberg & Watson-Gegeo, 1996). The main sources of conflict originated in the dominance of the church which claimed spiritual legitimacy over the *mana* held by chiefs⁵⁷ and the denouncement of the *bete ni vanua* (pagan priest).

The pre-missionary pagan priest (*bete ni vanua*) held a vital role in determining chiefly legitimacy and mediating conflict in Boumā. Since missionaries abolished this role, conflict mediation and legitimacy issues have been problematic. The following voices share individual interpretations of the historical and the present state of local governance beginning with the pre-colonial role of *bete ni vanua* or pagan priest. It is important to know, historically, how power has been transferred and organised in a specific location so that we are better able to appreciate how power and authority has to come to be locally interpreted and configured today.

Today, chiefs are determined by the *i vola ni kawa bula* (The Birth Register held by the Native Lands Commission in Suva) as enforced by the colonial government. Therefore, leadership is largely determined by patriarchal bloodline (Nayacakalou, 1975, p. 40). However, this was not always the case as pre-colonial chiefs were judged on merit rather than on bloodline. It was the *bete ni vanua* (or pagan priest) who held the role of determining chiefly legitimacy.

The pre-missionary role of the *bete ni vanua* (or pagan priest) was vital in intermediating between the *Vanua* and the ancestral gods and played a major role in maintaining social order. The *bete* was trusted in his ability to relay the messages of the ancestral gods to determine rightful resource allocation and the legitimacy of *Vanua* chiefs. In other words, he held a leading role in adjudication, social control and

⁵⁷ See Gustafsson's (1992) study of the Manus for parallels.

gauging *sautu* through ancestral symbols. However, the missionaries condemned the *bete* as ‘the devil’ and so this role was done away with.

Every tribe must have a *bete ni vanua*.

Not a Catholic priest.

I think he is the biggest medicine man.

He has the most ‘discernment’.

You can say,

‘I have pain here without falling from a tree’.

And he will say,

‘Oh, it is because of this,

so just do this’

and it is cured.

Also, if there is an argument

over who the legitimate chief is,

we can go to the *bete*.

He can say,

‘Oh no, you are not from the bloodline’

things like that.

That is the duty of the *bete ni vanua*.

If the missionaries had said,

Do your duty everyday

but it is my turn to offer sacrifice

no more cannabilism

everything would be fine.

But instead,

they completely condemned the priestly clan

and called them
'the priests of Satan'.

The village priest is the devil.

Oh, I hate that!

Despite this Vidawa elder's strength of conviction in the Christian faith, in his mind, the *bete* held a vital role in maintaining legitimate systems of governance. Now, in the absence of the *bete*, the people of Boumā have had to rely on symbols and 'silent messages' to legitimate land and leadership claims:

So
I have searched
for this silent message
with the help of my father
and with the help
of my descendents.
I can prove
by what my ancestors
have told me
what is true.
Not for other tribes
but for this tribe.

Much of what people referred to as symbols from God or *vū* as indicating that something is 'not right' in the *Vanua* involved the illegitimacy of Boumā chiefs. Again, it should be noted here that those who felt this way were not members of the *mataqali* headed by the chief at the time and so are likely to be biased by kinship loyalties. Nevertheless, these contributions did produce a fairly broad sense of uncertainty, mistrust, and fear for the future.

New generations of Boumā people are questioning the original symbols from *vū* (their ancestral pagan gods) that have now become an integral part of their belief in Christ as *lotu va'avanua*. Because *vū* and the divine right of the chiefs are inextricably linked, a lack of faith in the symbols of *vū* also means a lack of faith in chiefly leadership. All of these contribute to a breakdown in communication and decision-making in Boumā which, in turn, affect communication and decision-making in the ecotourism initiatives.

Before I explain how chiefly legitimacy is questioned in Vanua Boumā, it is important to explain the role of 'divine right' as a concept shared by both Fijian cosmology and Christianity. 'Divine right' inherent in Christianity is compatible with pre-missionary *lotu* and is now said to serve Fijian hierarchy (Ratuva, 2002; Halapua, 2003a). Indigenous Fijians have maintained the notion of divine right attributed to chiefs by *Kalou Vū* despite the denouncement of these many practices involving *vū* by the Church. In pre-missionary times, divine right came from the exceptional *mana* bestowed on the chief by the *Kalou vū* and lesser *vū*. The following example, provided by a Lekutu elder describes the live burial of slaves in the posts of the chief's house or *bo ni logi*, *bo ni lugu* and *bo ni suigu*. This illustrates the extent to which people would dedicate themselves to their chief in life or in death because of the strength of their conviction that the chief has special *mana* as 'divine right'.

To make the posts of the chief's house strong
they must be buried with a slave.

And if there is no slave
they must be buried with a volunteer.

The idea here is that he can hold the post
so the hurricane can't damage it.

So someone would want to volunteer
because it is good for the chief

And all of my tribe's descendents
from up and down would say,

Oh, they are a good warrior.

They are strong.

They gave their life because of this.

Today, the divine right of Fijian chiefs is believed to originate from both *Kalou Vū* and God. Therefore, to sin against your chief and your *Vanua*, is to sin against God and *vū*. Although this live burial of slaves or warriors was forbidden by the first missionaries, its sentiment remains today. For example, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's descendents in Lau fought over who would volunteer to lay with him when he was buried in 2004. The offers were rejected.

The notion of 'divine right' is strongly associated with land rights and has become a powerful tool in indigenous Fijian politics. Evidence of this may be found in what Ratuva (2002) calls the Fijian politico-religious dictum or protest chant "*noqu kalou noqu vanua*" (my god, my land) (see also Halapua, 2003a, p.108). However, chiefly legitimacy is frequently questioned in Vanua Boumā. Although the paramount chief and other higher chiefs are considered by many in Boumā to be bestowed with 'divine right', the same respect is not afforded their own Boumā chiefs.

The ambiguity of chiefly legitimacy

Leadership by patrilineal descent is, however, by no means an unambiguous method of determining rightful leadership. Uncertainty over who is the rightful chief occurs for a number of reasons.

When a *yavusa* grows too large, rather than subdividing, another group is added at the same level. It may be possible for a group with a burgeoning number to usurp the position of the village chief (Nayacakalou, 1975, p. 15). An alternative is for the new group to form a village of its own having achieved the 'structural optimum' while in the original village. A group may form their own village or settlement too, when village plantations are distributed in an area too wide to make it feasible to tend to them every

day from the parent village (ibid). In Boumā this has been the case in the formation of its seven settlements, as walking distance to plantations grew to be impractical.

Certainty over chiefly legitimacy is further confounded by the fact that rights of leadership can be manipulated to include what Nayacakalou (1975) calls 'local groups'. Local groups do not constitute patrilineal descent groups but include diverse descent groups combined. As such, *mataqali* may include local groups amongst groups of patrilineal descent. This is contra to the Native Lands Commission's assumption that these land-owning groups are purely from patrilineal descent (ibid, p. 21). Therefore, it is at the *mataqali* level that the most confusion arises as to who is the 'patrilineally' legitimate leader.

Chiefly legitimacy has been reported by Boumā locals to be the root of much socio-cultural erosion in Vanua Boumā and, therefore, the erosion of the values of the *vanua*, decreasing the likelihood of *sautu* in Boumā. Common local suggestions for re-establishing the *mana* of their chiefs and consequently their *Vanua* included either the installation of an alternative (that is, subjectively 'legitimate' chief) or the reinstallation of all the chiefs of Vanua Boumā.

Chiefly installation

The installation of a new chief is imbued in cosmology: the new chief is no longer himself after the installation ceremony. He becomes reborn as a chief and 'the embodiment of the ancestor-god' (Tuwere, 2002, p.51). The god enters the chief through the drinking of *yaqona* (kava). 'The new chief is supposed to bring peace and fertility to the land. Death is implied if this does not materialize' (ibid, p. 96). The *bete* plays an important role in the chiefly installation ceremony simply called *gunu* [drink]) in many *Vanua*, *yaqona va'atūraga*⁵⁸ (chiefly kava/the first cup) (Ravuvu, 1987), or in Boumā *va'aunu* (Schmidt, 1980). His prayers for the chief involve long life, agricultural fertility and blessing (*kalougata*), and peace and prosperity (*sautu*) to the

⁵⁸ In reference to the centrality of the *yaqona* as a sacrifice in the ceremony

land (Tuwere, 2002, p. 96). The concept of chiefs as fertility-Gods has parallels with the Biblical faith as in the Old Testament in which Hebrews referred to God as the fertility-God (see Genesis 32:30). Therefore, it is vital that the rightful chief is installed. If a mistake is made in the selection of chiefs, the *sautu* and fertility of the land is at risk.

A chief who is yet to be installed is described as *sa beri ni gunu* (yet to drink). 'It is only when a chief has already *gunu* (drunk) the *yaqona* of consecration that he receives full recognition of his title as being a chief of the *vanua*⁵⁹' (Tuwere, 2002, p. 55). The *Vunisā* (Head Chief) of Boumā has not drunk from the cup for over 50 years. Therefore, there is a lack of confidence in the present legitimacy of the Boumā chiefs. However, there is reluctance to issue another chiefly installation because if an illegitimate *Vunisā* drinks *yaqona* from the cup, they and all their subordinate chiefs in the *Vanua* are believed to die within 24 hours. This has been a pivotal issue in the future of development and *Vanua* integrity in Boumā because without this traditional installation ceremony many feel that there will never be *sautu* in Boumā.

Over here
we still do not have a 'real' chief
Our chief just took over.
Just like that.
We would have a real chief
if we had a ceremony
where he had to drink from the cup.

I think everybody
would listen to the chief
after that.
Everybody would listen.
That's the main thing.

⁵⁹ Intended in this thesis as *Vanua*.

The whole of Boumā.

Let's start from the whole of Boumā.

Then they have to wake up

Other *Vanua* in Fiji.

Still nobody has drunk from the cup.

Everybody's the chief now

(*laughter*)

Doubt over the authority of the chief of Waitabu was pervasive during Schmidt's research in Boumā in the 1980s: '[t]he fact that this installation ritual was not performed appears to indicate that his claim to the chiefly title is not cemented or absolutely recognized (1988, p.160). However, Boumā is not an isolated case. In 1973, Roth reported there had also been a failure to conduct this ceremony in other parts of Fiji. The Lavena villager cited above also noted that Boumā is not the only *Vanua* facing questionable leadership and suggests that Boumā could lead the rest of Fiji by 'waking them up' and encouraging them to install rightful leaders there too.

The following couple believed that the fact that the chief had not *gunu* also had negative implications for the ecotourism projects in Boumā. If the chief and his lesser chiefs have not proven themselves legitimate, there will remain issues of trust, respect and *sautu* as aforementioned.

That our chief has not *gunu*

is the whole problem...

That is a problem

for the whole of Boumā.

This is what is affecting

the whole project.

While wandering around one of the villages one day, I came across a couple of young women I knew. They were sitting on the grass under some coconut trees with their babies. After discussing a wide range of topics, we came to the question of chiefly legitimacy and *va'aunu*. The interview revealed that (at least with them), I had finally become trustworthy of *talanoa* (storytelling/gossip/chatting) involving secret information. Note, however, that there was some cautionary joking involved to ensure their anonymity.

You know the chief

He should take the cup.

Not him.

It should be (... 's) father.

The two young women look at each other and talk in Fijian and then laugh raucously. Then quietly half-whisper:

Teresia, you be sure you hide this tape!

In little comical voice, they take turns (half) joking...

You take your little key and you lock it away!

You make sure no one creeps in and unlocks it!

Me: So (... 's) father should be the *tūraga*?

Yes.

That's because (... 's) father
is taking the chief's position.

As it is, his family
won't find a happy life.

The discussion was also revealing in that it implied divine right. If the wrong person was installed as chief the result would be a life of unhappiness for him and his family. I asked the women if the present chief ‘drank from the cup’, would it make people respect him more? They both answered, ‘No’. They said that even the chiefs’ children did not listen to them so how would a reinstatement ceremony make any difference? I asked them who the *yavusa* would be most likely to select as the next chief⁶⁰:

Well, I think they will put (...) next.

But they won’t have a happy life
if they keep putting the wrong person
in the wrong position

The wrong person at the wrong time

(laughter)

Ooh someone is coming!

Combining old and new systems of leadership

Muelig-Hofmann (2007) claims, ‘problems persist where countries try to combine both old colonial and old traditional systems into something modern’ (p. 33; see also Churney, 1998). This has certainly been the case on a national level in terms of the number of coups that have broken out since independence in 1970s-1980s. These coups surrounded a dual administrative structure: one based on inherited authority (The *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* or Great Council of Chiefs) and a parliamentary government system.

‘Communal capitalism’ became a catchphrase during the time of the 1987 coup and it was argued that attempts at blending traditionalism with modernity led to corrupt

⁶⁰ This interview with the two young women is an example of an opportunity to ‘talk straight’ away from public eyes and ears in private *talanoa*.

practices at the chiefly level (Ratuva, 2002, p. 7). Halapua (2003a) gives his interpretation of the standing of chiefs during this period:

The political crisis in 1987 was a violent 're-capture' by the ruling class of lost state power. The consequent crisis for indigenous Fijians specifically involved the *tūraga* who consumed the *bilo* of *yaqona* in the name and care of the people and yet set themselves against the traditional understanding of the very nature of *vanua* and the loyalty of most people of Fiji (p. 103).

Most rural village chiefs, however, remain untouched by much of the politics of the nation. A friend told me that in 1987 she planned a visit to Suva. When her ferry docked, she was surprised to be met by military with guns. She had no idea there was a coup.

However, even at the village level, community members are drawn between the two systems of governance: a traditional system of governance lead by the *liuliu ni yavusa* or *tūraga ni yavusa* (lead chief of the village) and democratic government role lead by the *tūraga ni 'oro* (village headman) (Vunisea, 2002). Although the *tūraga ni 'oro* does not carry any form of traditional authority, it has been argued that the his role has been partly responsible for the decreased authority of the chiefs. However, due to the characteristics of the *tūraga ni 'oro* chosen for the villages in Boumā, and the nature of the role itself, through my observations, this role appears to have had little impact on the authority of the *tūraga* (pl) in Boumā.

While, on the whole, chiefs are still considered the guardians of the land, resources and people, and are greatly respected for their knowledge, leadership qualities, and strength of character, chiefs appear to be losing their potency:

...this traditional respect appears to be declining, its relevance for daily decision-making, [including community-based development

questioned]...and the chief's roles and positions are increasingly of a ritualistic nature (Muehlig-Hofmann, 2007, p. 35; see also Ravuvu, 1988, Fienberg & Watson-Gegeo, 1996; Vunisea, 2002).

Lal (2003, cited in Muehlig-Hofmann, 2007, p. 35) goes so far as to claim that the overarching dominance of paramount chiefs on Fiji has ended.

With the introduction of development projects in Fiji, the people have turned their attention to the trappings of modernity and they now desire more material wealth. This is not surprising, however, considering the rapidly-growing financial pressures of ceremonial and other reciprocal and obligatory expectations and expensive necessities including school fees and bus fare to school, plantations, to visit relatives and to attend to kin obligations.

Many village communities like Boumā have become involved in development based on modern democratic systems of governance. Consequently, village communities are facing the same problems as has been experienced at the national level: trying to work between two very different systems of decision-making and governance.

Vunisea (2002) brings our attention to another dramatic change in the way those with decision-making powers are controlling the resources. Many chiefs are now governing their people and resources whilst residing away from their communities. Depending on the time they spend away from home and the influences of their temporary residence, chiefs may develop different ideas about how resources should be used, developed, or managed. This was the case for one of the chiefs in Boumā who had spent a number of years away from the village in Suva. Some villagers had complained that he was 'out of touch' with the people and the activities in the village and had developed Western ideas that were incompatible with village life. This had impacted on decisions made regarding the management of the ecotourism project as his vision for the project conflicted with that of the majority in his *yavusa*.

The Boumā chiefs have been described as uneducated and naïve by those in the community who desire to ‘move forward’ by means of introduced Western concepts of progress and development: individualism, capitalism, competition, and democracy (see also Feinberg & Watson-Gegeo, 1996). One of the major grievances of the people toward their *tūrāga ni vanuas* (*yavusa* chiefs), was that they were not open enough to the knowledge and suggestions of their people. A father of four in Lavena explains:

Today people do not listen so much
to the *tūrāga ni vanua*
Because the *tūrāga ni vanua*
doesn't want to listen to the community.

Often the suggestions of the commoners were based on a higher education and worldliness than that of the chief. The impact that local interpretations of ‘human rights’ and exposure to external knowledge and values has on respect for chiefly leadership will be discussed later in this chapter. As has been explained already, community leadership is a vital element in community-based development as it has the potential to enhance, impede, or otherwise distort the development process. In one of the villages, chiefly leadership was lacking rather than influential in the development process.

The lack of respect paid to the decisions of the *tūrāga ni vanua* has a flow-on affect to his lesser chiefs such as the *tūrāga ni ‘oro*.

Turaga ni ‘oro

In much Fijian literature interested in local social structure and leadership, it has been noted that the colonial establishment of the role of *tūrāga ni ‘oro* has contributed to the decline in chiefly *mana*. However, the role of *tūrāga ni ‘oro* is a vital role in the success or failure of development initiatives involving external interests.

Recognising that the abolition of Fiji Affairs was leading to problems with law and order, Governor Sir Grant, a former Chief Justice of Fiji, decided to reintroduce customary law. As part of this move, in 1984, the Cole Review re-instituted the *tikina* (district) and village councils and appointed the *tūrāga ni ‘oro* (village headman). This was the foundation of the district and provincial administrative system in use today (Ralogaivau, 2006). Since this time it has been argued that the *tūrāga ni ‘oro* has contributed to the decline in the *mana* of the chief since much of authority and responsibility was directed from the chief to the role of the *tūrāga ni ‘oro* (Bogiva, A., personal communication, July 2003).

The *tūrāga ni ‘oro* acts as the government link to the chief. The general role of the *tūrāga ni ‘oro* is to encourage development by liaising with traditional leaders involved in projects (Bogiva, A., personal communication, July 2003; see also Vunisea, 2002, p. 7).

The chief is for the whole village.

The *tūrāga ni ‘oro* is for the government.

The *tūrāga ni ‘oro* takes new developments
from the government to the village.

He will take this information to the chief
and the chief will announce it to the whole village.

Anything you do in the village,
the *tūrāga ni ‘oro* should know first.

And the *tūrāga ni ‘oro* takes this to the chief.

And they connect to the *tūrāga ni vanua*
and explain to them what they should know.

They should know everything that should happen in the village.

Like if they want to do a fundraising or a workshop.

The *tūrāga ni ‘oro* must ensure the ‘oro (village) is fully informed of government matters for the primary purpose of village development. They are an elected village

leader who no longer enjoys statutory power as his ancestors did (Ravuvu, 1995, p. 114). This role is still present in each of the four *yavusa* in Vanua Boumā. The *tūraga ni 'oro* and selected chiefs may attend the *ti'ina* council (district council) and some of these will then go on to sit in the *yasana* (provincial) council which is chaired by the *Roko* and his deputies. In Boumā, however, this role was more often observed to be taken by the *mata* (similar to a mayor), the *matanivanua* (the chief's spokesman), or another *tūraga ni mataqali* (mataqali chief) of each village.

Each *'oro* member elects a *tūraga ni 'oro* who remains in power for a set period until such time as a new *tūraga ni 'oro* is elected. However, the *tūraga ni 'oro* in one of the villages at the time of research was elected by the *tūraga ni vanua*. This was bemoaned by one of the people I spoke with:

It was never brought up in public
for the community to decide.
I don't know why he got chosen
by the *tūraga ni vanua* this time.
But because of his position,
no one can argue against him.
Even if they don't like it.

The appointment of the *tūraga ni 'oro* to 'make decisions regarding health, transport and other government-related activities established another source of authority besides the chief' (Schmidt, 1988, p. 160). Consequently, the establishment of the role of *tūraga ni 'oro* meant the partial decline of the power and authority of the village chiefs.

The role of *tūraga ni 'oro* is perhaps the most influential leadership role in terms of community-based ecotourism as he is vital in making links between the village and government departments and development organisations. However, in Boumā, the role of *tūraga ni 'oro* is a little desired role. There is no prestige in it, few benefits and a great deal of unfamiliar and unwelcome stress accompanies it. Nayacakalou (1975)

more widely identified this role as an unattractive one in the early 1970s in his study of leadership in Kadavu: 'Its responsibilities were cumbersome; the position carried little or no prestige; and the remuneration was small (only \$12 a year payable in two six-monthly instalments in arrears or the labour of the village on four to ten days a year' (p. 87). Today, the *turaga ni 'oro* is still a low paid position. The local Agricultural Officer told me that in his village, because the *turaga ni 'oro* is paid so little, this is supplemented by monthly voluntary work on his *teitei* by other *yavusa* members. He continues to explain how this little desired role is filled:

It is like, 'OK, I nominate Dan'.

'Oh, I'm sorry. Don't force me to be *tūraga ni koro*.'

'OK, I nominate...'

'Oh no, please.'

And then maybe that is the last resort.

And not many would want the job

because it is a lot of hard work for no pay.

Consequently, in Vanua Boumā, those whose personalities simply did not suit the role (quiet and shy and, occasionally, with a less than honest past) were often elected because no other individual wanted the position. Unfortunately, although it is not seen to be a prestigious role and it is a role that can be quite demanding, it is also an extremely important role for a community needing to forge strong relationships with external agencies for health, economic, environmental, agricultural, social and other development. I was astounded to find that the *tūraga ni 'oro* (pl) was almost a non-entity in at least one of the villages. No one appeared to have the confidence or skills to conduct their responsibilities and I seldom saw them involved in discussions on park matters.

The most telling examples of the inadequacy of the *tūraga ni 'oro*, however, were in matters in which individuals were in desperate need of assistance from the Social

Welfare Department based on the mainland. The needs of these individuals were ignored, possibly because the *tūrāga ni 'oro* did not know where to start the process of obtaining support.

One example was of one of the chief's wives who became bedridden and incontinent and required a hospital bed and incontinence aids so that her sister could take better care of her. Sadly, despite her need for care, few other family members came to her assistance and the full weight of the responsibility was left to her sister to wash, change, lift and feed her. The *tūrāga ni 'oro* never applied for any form of assistance from the government. I found this truly surprising and saddening. To me this story really illustrates a number of things: the incompetency of the *tūrāga ni 'oro*; the decline in the *vanua* (caring for one another); a kind of Catholic hypocrisy; and a dwindling respect for the chief. Sadly, this was by no means an isolated case where government assistance was desperately needed but denied largely through the lack of knowledge, motivation, confidence or education of the *tūrāga ni 'oro*.

Another chiefly role in the *yavusa* and that which is fundamental in terms of social order and the maintenance of *vanua* protocols and ensuring people are adhering to 'the straight path' is the *matanivanua*. As the *matanivanua* is the 'mouthpiece of the chief', he must be respected if the chief's wishes are to be fulfilled by his people. With all these responsibilities, the *matanivanua* is crucial in ensuring community integrity, without which community-based ecotourism is meaningless.

Matanivanua

The *matanivanua* is the chief in the *yavusa* whose primary responsibility is to ensure the word of the chief filters through to all *Vanua* members and to ensure everyone is following *na sala va'avanua*. One of the main responsibilities of the *matanivanua* is to guide the people in village protocol. The *matanivanua* has also been described to me as the village 'policeman'. In his examination of the *vanua*, Tuwere (2002) suggests three mechanisms that maintain the *vanua*: the *matanivanua*; the notion of *mana* (power) of

the *vanua*; and finally the mutual actors of *vakanomodi* (silence) and *vakarogorogo* or *veirogorogoci* (listening).

Tuwere describes the *matanivanua* as the herald or the ‘eye’ or ‘face’ of the land and a mediator and orator. He is the one who has the power and knowledge to relate people to their god, and their chief and their chief to their people: ‘He speaks and listens, represents, reconciles, mends broken relationships, negotiates, introduces, announces and so on’ (2002, p.72). Due to the diversity and weight of his responsibilities he must know the *vanua* inside out. The *matanivanua* is supposed to support his people to ‘lie straight’ (*davu donu*) and living according to the *vanua* (peacefully and respectfully with God, ancestors and nature) as opposed to ‘lying crooked’ (*davo cala*) dishonestly and deceitfully. ‘Laying straight’ and living *va’avanua* will lead to *sautu*. ‘Laying crooked’ on the other hand will lead to symbols of a crooked relationship: ‘natural disasters, poor harvest, poor sea catch, disease and the like...’ (ibid, p. 130). As Huffer and Qalo (2004) note, these metaphors are ‘extremely relevant to the idea of governance’ and are ‘highly evocative and easy to understand. They also reinforce the idea that Fijian society understands what is necessary for its well-being and does not depend on ‘lesson givers’ from the outside’ (p. 96).

However, the *matanivanua* (plural) in Boumā do not appear to be fulfilling the role of ensuring their people ‘lie straight’ and follow *na sala dodonu* (the straight path)/*na sala va’avanua* (the *vanua* path). A couple from one of the villages in Boumā explains how because the *tūruga ni vanua* is perceived as having less power, the *matanivanua* is perceived as ‘toothless’ in their village.

Here
the chief
and the *matanivanua*
should clarify the village protocol
that is not clear to their people.

If one woman wears short pants,
The *matanivanua* should say
 Hey! Don't wear that!
He should be strong on that.

 If some people are shouting
 in the village,
 You should hear the 'sshh' sound
 From the *matanivanua*.

But he never does that.
He doesn't do that.

Because the chief has
less power,
the *matanivanua*
also has
less power
as the chief's spokesman.

 He can speak
 Yes, he can.
 But I don't know
 what is wrong
 with his mouth.

Maybe it can't open

(impish chuckle... and then...peels of laughter)

So if people can't hear him

people won't listen eh?

(Uncontrollable giggling)

And he can't talk
because he looks back
at his sons and daughters
and finds that they do not follow
his example
and behave the right way
in the village.

So that shuts his mouth
so that he can't talk.
He must deal with his own children first
and then he can talk.

A good friend and her husband shared their thoughts with me on leadership in one of the villages. They explained that before the husband's mother was born, only the chief gave the orders. He would talk only to the *matanivanua* (chief's spokesman) who would, in turn, pass his order on to his people. The husband said that when this was the tradition, everyone would listen to the chief and obey him through the *matanivanua*. There was no argument. No discussion. The chief's word was final. If the *matanivanua* called a meeting, everyone would come. Now things were not the same. The *matanivanua* was old and some young people simply ignore him. Some may even be so bold as to answer back. The couple above make strong references to 'leading by example' as the key to strengthening the perception of leadership in Boumā.

Others suggest that leading by example is not enough: A traditional installation ceremony is the only way the *Vanua* can be set 'back on track'. Others claim that any

chief chosen above their own *mataqali* will be less accepted regardless, implying the persistence of historical kinship rifts.

The people
are just staying
in their own *to'ato'a*
and pointing to the other
to'ato'a.

Accusing that one.
Accusing this one.

They never get on together.

Individual rights

Cultural change and the ways in which externally assisted projects (such as community-based ecotourism) are accepted are dictated by cosmology, church and chiefs. However, this trinitarian form of local governance may be threatened by perceptions of individual or human 'rights' generated by formal education, the media and other external agents of change. The individualistic underpinnings of 'human rights' discourse (Howard, 1995; Ignatieff, 2001, 2001a) have been considered by the Boumā people as one of the most profound challenges to the *vanua* and local governance, and therefore, social, environmental and economic sustainability in Boumā today.

A common complaint from the local community during my period of research was that the younger generation did not take the values and rules of the *vanua*, their elders and their chiefly leaders seriously anymore. Many in Boumā suggested that this was due to the Western notion of 'human rights' introduced to the people of Boumā through formal education and Independence in the 1970s. Those who spoke about 'rights' usually referred to the 'laws' of the *vanua*: for example, the 'right' of chiefly title or people not

having the ‘right’ to sell land. However, they also talked about ‘human’ rights almost in the same breath as ‘education’ (i.e. formal education). There are three major influences towards individualistic thinking and the rights of the individual within the Boumā communities: formal education, migration and media. All of these have already had a major impact on the ways in which the Boumā communities are motivated toward particular developmental goals.

Many lament the fact that a large section of the younger generations are losing their connection to their *vanua* (land and culture) and their ancestors. One Korovou teacher describes the Boumā children as having ‘lost their way’. Many have said that it is the responsibility of the chiefs to re-orientate the children and their parents and to guide them to revitalise the importance of the *vanua* and to their identity and the *sautu* of their communities. Others have said that this can only be achieved with the collective effort of parents, church and the chiefs.

Individuals have already manipulated their seemingly rigid kinship system to express individual agency within social stratification in terms of loosening the seemingly unyielding protocols of *veiwekani* (Schmidt, 1988). Of particular interest to this chapter, however, is that Schmidt saw a decline in the speech style of chiefly respect in Boumā. She recognized that the power of the Waitabu chief has declined since post-colonialism and notes that although the social category of chief remains, the function of the chief has changed (including the way in which the chief and the villagers interact) (1988, p. 148). Schmidt suggests that the cause of this sociolinguistic change is linked with broader social change such as media and urban drift, and most significantly, education. These have all had an impact on the ways in which the emerging generations view their chiefly leaders, village protocols and the *vanua*. This also has an impact on the values individuals are placing on community-based development projects and individual entrepreneurial pursuits.

The youth emphasised that under weak leadership, individual ‘rights’ were more easily exercised. It appears that the request from the Boumā commoners to their leader is for

them to ‘lead by example’. If the Boumā *tūragas* led by example, perhaps there would be a greater sense of security through guidance in the *Vanua*. Particularly the elders in the community desired that the *tūraga* showed the people of Boumā the value of the *vanua*, and instilled a greater sense of belonging to each individual of the *Vanua* through *vanua* values of communality. There was also a sense that through leading by example, the *tūraga* had the capacity to strengthen the integrity of the *Vanua* by clarifying village protocol and through strongly regulating them. However, for others, in the absence of a traditional installation ceremony, this would only go so far in supporting the *Vanua* since a lack of faith in the present legitimacy of Boumā chiefs would always impede community development.

Conclusion and discussion

This chapter has emphasised that Boumā already has a pre-existing indigenous development model based on the *vanua*. This has been referred to as a ‘moral economy’ and one which relies on the group members’ capacity for ‘caring and sharing’ and working together for the good of the whole. An example of this still practiced in 2006 has been described as *ca’aca’a va’oro* (community work including village cooperatives). This model was purported by locals to have worked well in sustaining the social and economic needs of its members in the past. However, this chapter has provided examples in which community members lament (through *talanoa*) what they considered to be its erosion.

Lotu va’a vanua (Christianity in the *vanua* way) is place-specific. The beliefs of each *yavusa* in Vanua Boumā are unlike those of any other *yavusa* or *Vanua* as are their daily actions. The ways in which people relate to each other are tightly governed by this blend of Christianity and ancestor observance. The role of the *Vanua* chiefs is very much a part of *lotu va’a vanua* as chiefs are bestowed with ‘divine right’. The people of Vanua Boumā then, are thrice-governed by fear of God, of their *Kalou vū* and respective minor *vū*, and by their chiefs. However, the degree of fear and respect for this trinity and, therefore, strength of governance depends mainly on the emphasis

parents, elders, and *Vanua* leaders have placed on educating their children about their heritage. Only through specific knowledge of ancestors and local history can the children of Vanua Boumā develop a sense of belonging and an understanding of the centrality of its values and protocols to their identity as a member of the *Vanua*. Without this locally-specific knowledge, there may be little respect for ancestors or *Vanua* leadership and, many participants argue, little chance of restoring a moral economy vital in providing social security and food security for its members: a moral economy that rests on principles of communality.

The following is a prayer common in traditional ceremonies today:

May the way of the *vanua* be firm
May the custom of kinship be stable
May the chiefly station be truly supreme
May the light of civilisation be enhanced
And the church flourish
Mana e-i-dina or Be it done!
May it truly be!

(Tuwere, 2002, p. 63)

The prayer indicates that the *Vanua* (tribe) is supported by the power inherent in the *vanua* concept, chiefly leadership, a desire for ‘civilisation’ or development, and the Church. However, can all these be maintained together in Boumā? How do people interpret modernity or development in Boumā? And can this interpretation of development be successfully added to the mix?

The reader will note that there are individual and generational disparities between what people want for the future of Boumā. Different individuals place a greater or lesser emphasis on each of the elements supporting the well-being of Vanua Boumā: the *vanua*, chiefly leadership, the church, and development. Some of the hopes and dreams involve maintaining a strong grip on local traditions and values while, for others,

development means needing to ‘move forward’ and to leave what are considered the most fundamental elements of the *vanua* behind. The future, then, is uncertain for the *vanua* in Boumā. If the people of Boumā are to maintain and nurture what some consider tenuous, though core, values - communality versus individuality (working for the good of the community and thinking less of the self) - strong local governance is needed to ensure their revitalization and maintenance. However, if each new generation of Boumā people is not informed about their links to the land, the sense of disconnection from the place and the people will influence decisions made regarding external influences such as community-based ecotourism and how these will impact on Boumā life, networks of relationships and environmental guardianship. Therefore, it will impact on the realisation of ecotourism as business *va’avanua*.

In terms of a wider theoretical context this chapter contributes to my emphasis on Boumā as a taskscape in which practices, skills and knowledge are one part of an ongoing and historic process of cultural creation largely generated by way of innovation and amalgamation. This is the dynamic nature of Boumā’s taskscape. The people of Boumā did not suddenly wake up one morning and realise that they had created what has etically been described as a ‘moral economy’ and that they all felt they were ‘affluent in their subsistence’. It is unlikely too that there was ever a time that their leaders were revered and followed by all unquestioningly. Individualistic notions may well have been acted out in some manner by some tribe members before the 1950s copra production and the cash economy that was introduced as a consequence, and, therefore, long before the 1960s human rights movement, tourism, formal education, mass media and other external influences. Significant cultural changes such as a shift from communalism to individualism seldom happen overnight and I suspect that these notions have been coevolving for some time. However, many of my participants felt that it was the events of the mid 1900s that had the most significant impact on what has been described by academics as moral economy. Many participants also argued that conflict created at the nexus of individualistic and communalistic expressions may have been mitigated through more effective leadership.

In addition, through the lens of community-based ecotourism, for example, the clash of these two approaches as well as their syntheses has been brought to the surface and into the public arena. The more personal and nuanced interpretations of this coming together have been shared through informal *talanoa*. Informal *talanoa* involving intimate interpretations of the synthesis or clashes caused by the communalistic and the individualistic products of community-based ecotourism and other agents of change has also been encouraged by the research process.

It is both the syntheses and the conflicts caused by the interface of the communalism of the moral economy and the individualism brought by modern Western ideologies such as democratic processes and entrepreneurship via community-based ecotourism that is of interest to this thesis. The following chapter briefly introduces Vanua Boumā's links with the cash economy prior to ecotourism development and the reasons for requesting assistance to establish a national park. It will also explore reasons why the Boumā people sought out the possibility of amalgamating a more or less traditional village lifestyle based on a moral economy with a development initiative based on the market economy.

Chapter Six

The desire for community-based ecotourism

This chapter will look more closely at why people are making choices that involve the amalgamation of a moral economy based on the *vanua* with the market economy. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, reasons for this include a declining respect for chiefly leadership, and a shift toward a cash economy and individualisation of human rights. The chapter will discuss other reasons including the attraction of new entrepreneurial opportunities, failing efforts to maintain a subsistence economy, and the new demands of a market economy.

I will also explore the extent to which ecotourism development is needed in Boumā to supplement current livelihood activities. NZAID expressed the purpose for ecotourism development in Boumā as primarily conservation-based (TRC, 2003). However, it was later recognized as providing a form of poverty-alleviation (Ragogo, 2002, para. 16). This raised a question for me. I wanted to know how there could be poverty on one of the lushest parts of an island that is described (admittedly, most often in tourist literature) as the ‘Garden Island’ of Fiji. As has been mentioned, even my participants described their natural environment as ‘abundant’ saying that ‘food is everywhere here’, and ‘you can never be hungry in Boumā’. In addition to an abundance of food, despite the *vanua*’s locally reported historical decline, this community was rich in social support compared to mine back home in New Zealand. I felt that poverty had been misinterpreted in Boumā and I still do. However, there remained a need and a desire for economic development.

While the main impetus for Vanua Boumā’s desire for community-based ecotourism initiatives is that it is an alternative to logging, other development opportunities or projects promising to supplement livelihoods were considered prior to ecotourism. There was clearly a desire to supplement Boumā’s present form of subsistence economy. The reason for this need was made apparent to me approximately five months after I had arrived in the field. At this time, I grew cognisant of who were the

stronger and weaker members of each *yavusa* and that no longer was every activity done for the good of the whole. There was a growing need to support the weaker members of the community who were no longer supported by an earlier form of moral economy.

‘Weak’ was a term introduced in the previous chapter. Participants who used this term said that they used the term ‘weak’ to denote those families who could not adequately feed themselves or financially support their children’s education. The word ‘weak’ may also refer to a lack of physical or mental capacity including disability or illness.

The kinds of obstacles the Boumā communities have faced in terms of maintaining a subsistence-based moral economy has been outlined in order to explain locals’ needs and desires to join the market economy not only in terms of ecotourism but in other forms. Some of these pre-existing impediments to the *vanua* are also carried over into their more recent links with the market economy. The general local view is that due to weak leadership and its impact on the *vanua*, both the sustainability of subsistence livelihoods and the ability to successfully function in the market economy is, and may continue to be, compromised.

This chapter will serve as an platform from which to introduce the establishment of community-based ecotourism in Boumā as an attempt to create a business *va’avanua* as a hybrid of Western-based entrepreneurship and the Boumā’s moral economy based on the *vanua* and a form of ‘indigenous entrepreneurship’ (Dana & Anderson, 2007; Hindle & Landsdowne, 2007).

The section that follows will explain other issues that have generated Vanua Boumā’s desire to join the market economy and the attempts to meet this need prior to, and in conjunction with, ecotourism development.

Livelihoods in a cash economy

The amount of money a family needs to survive comfortably in Boumā would be minimal were it not for the cost of education, transport, and an emerging cultural shift in preferences for store-bought items. Food items such as tinned fish, cooking oil, shop-bought salt, processed sugar, flour, rice, eggs, and *2-Minute* noodles are commonly bought at the village *situa* (store). Vegetables not grown locally may be purchased too, such as onions⁶¹. Other shop items commonly purchased with cash include batteries, *kava*, body soap and washing soap, shampoo, boxed cigarettes, *suki/tovako*⁶², matches, and sweets. Kerosene, meat, bread and newspapers, carrots, Chinese and English cabbage, milk, butter and other items may be purchased from the ‘transport’⁶³. Another truck occasionally visits Boumā carrying second-hand clothing. This draws large, enthusiastic crowds and locals come away with armfuls of clothing.

In Taveuni in 2004, one secondary school student cost \$550 per year to fund. This included school fees, board, books, and uniforms. One primary school student may cost a family around \$200 to fund. Although family sizes are decreasing in Boumā, it is not uncommon for some families to have upward of eight children as contraception is not openly accepted by all families due to the belief in a fairly orthodox form of ‘Fijian’ Christianity in Boumā.

The items used as ceremonial gifts have changed dramatically over the past half century. Traditionally, it was customary to offer gifts of local produce e.g. *masi* (tapa), *yaqona* (kava), and *ibe* (mats) for ceremonies such as *tevutevu* (weddings) and *so mate* (funerals). While *kava* and *ibe* are still commonly used in ceremonies, gifts are now more commonly store-bought items such as double beds, cupboards, plates, and other household items (See Appendix 3: Ceremonies in Lavena) (see also Kooijman, 1977, p. 154). In *tevutevu*, the groom is expected to bring family members from wherever they are to the ceremony. This could be from the next village, another island or even another

⁶¹ These may easily be grown in Bouma but most locals choose not to grow them.

⁶² Fijian tobacco. This is rolled up in newspaper and smoked by men and women of all ages.

⁶³ The local Ute that arrives twice a week with supplies from a shop in Matei.

country. Gift-giving can be quite competitive, with one family trying to ‘outgift’ the other. Therefore, ceremonies in which gift-giving is central (such as *tevutevus* [weddings]) can be very stressful for families today, particularly for those struggling financially to support their immediate families. The following is a quote from Timoci Kolodisi, a diocesan priest from the archdiocese of Suva:

In short, marriage today is becoming an expensive exercise. For some young people of today, the cost involved in marriage ceremonies has forced them to take the easy way out. They are opting for a government-licensed marriage, and later in marriage life they seek out the blessings of the parents, the Church, and the *[V]anua* (2007, Family and Marriage).

Ca’aca’a va’oro (and other means of working for the good of the whole as dictated by *vanua* values) and entry into the market economy are not mutually exclusive. When the copra market collapsed in the late 1950s, Vanua Boumā found they could earn more by selling *dalo* to ‘middlemen’ or agents who would then sell to the mainland markets. Many Boumā farmers now grow cash-crops of *yaqona* although these are failing in many areas of Taveuni due to the prevalence of ‘*kava* dieback’ (John Cox, personal communication, November 8, 2004). In 1979 and 1980, the market for *dalo* and *yaqona* grew in strength. Since then, there have been a number of factors which have caused fluctuations in these markets. With these fluctuations there has been a growing need to ‘move with the tide’ to accommodate a cash economy.

While some in the community refute this, others claim there are plenty of opportunities for people to make money for their own families in Boumā. The following young mother of two suggests that making money is not difficult in Waitabu:

We bake *roti* and sell it in the village.
We catch fish and sell them.
If someone doesn’t want to catch fish one day

they will buy it from someone else.

One kilo of fish can cost \$3.

We can sell '*uita* [octopus]
for \$10 each to the local hotels.

It is very expensive because
it can be hard to find these days.

Many families prepare *voivoi* (pandanus) or make *ibe* (mats) from it to sell to other *Vanua* members or those in other *Vanua* on the island. Others plant, harvest, dry and pound *yaqona* to sell to other community members.

One woman in Lavena sews dresses and shirts to supplement the income she makes from her work as a receptionist at Lavena Lodge and from running the village store with her husband (who is also the local agent for *yaqona* and *dalo*). Some people make *va'alolo*, a sweet dessert made from sweet pounded *tavio'a* (cassava), caramelised sugar and coconut milk. The hard labour involved in producing it makes it a popular fundraising treat. Many locals sell *su'i*⁶⁴, cigarettes or sweets from their houses and are on call 24-hours a day: often I would hear soft taps and whispers at my Lavena host's window very early in the morning requesting her merchandise. Cash is also used to pay for home video viewings: two families in Lavena and at least two that I knew of in Korovou paid for generated power to run a video player (among other appliances and lighting) so that locals could attend video viewings at 10 cents each.

The people of the Naba settlement of Lavena are well-known for their wild pig-hunting skills. Tourists used to purchase boars' teeth from the Naba locals on their way past the settlement on the Lavena Coastal Walk. In 2004, despite discouragement from TRC⁶⁵ consultants who considered this environmentally unsound, a Waitabu woman told me that some locals collect *trochus* shells and sell them to an agent in Lavena who then

⁶⁴ Fijian tobacco (or *tavako*).

⁶⁵ Tourism Resource Consultants - Boumā National Heritage Park's New Zealand-based management consultants.

sells them on to a contact in Suva. Although Waitabu people do not sell *beche de mer* (sea cucumbers) anymore because they do not want to damage the marine ecosystem surrounding the Waitabu marine reserve, one Waitabu villager told me that other villagers in Boumā still sell them to agents. A few local women travel to Taveuni's commercial centres of Matei and Naqara to clean and wait in tourist resorts. Groups of local men occasionally secure contract work for resorts and other commercial sites as builders on Taveuni or other places in Fiji. Some locals run their own taxi services and some earn cash as teachers at Korovou Primary School.

However, as has been noted, by far the majority of local livelihoods are made through cash-cropping *dalo* and *yaqona* and selling to the mainland through a 'middle-man' or agent. A number of locals say that the people of Boumā have the potential to make a very comfortable livelihood this way. One woman in Waitabu estimates how much could be earned in a normal urban working day.

Imagine if we have to go to work
for somebody else
for eight hours a day,
we could earn about thirty dollars a day.
If we worked those hours on our plantations
with our *dalo*,
we can get about \$100 to \$150 a day
for a day's work
depending on the prices of the *dalo* at the time.
That's 36 and a half thousand dollars a year
for someone willing to work every day. ⁶⁶

Those who seek work additional to that required by their own *teitei* can earn money by working for other successful farmers who do not have enough family members to help

⁶⁶ This statement must be put into context as it is unlikely that most villagers would have enough land, or nutrients in their soil to be able to produce consistently at this level.

them or who are seeking to expand their plantation. A Waitabu elder told me that this kind of arrangement has only been practiced in the last twenty years.

Others in Boumā, however, complained that there was not much point in expanding their cash crops because of limited access to the market. One woman from Qali (a settlement of Lavena) stated that the reason ecotourism was attractive to them as a potential money-earner was because of the difficulty of selling their produce. This, she attributed to a lack of agents and a maximum amount the agents will collect each time:

We have *yaqona* and *dalo*

but that there is no market for it.

One ton is the most the middleman will take for *dalo*
each time he goes to the market [once a week].

They sell the *dalo* in Labasa.

At the moment there is no market
for *yaqona* for anyone in Boumā.

This is a big problem.

When I asked why someone else would not also offer to be an agent for Boumā, she told me, ‘This should happen, but everyone sits and waits for someone else to do it’. However, the lack of agents and demand for produce was refuted by others in Boumā including the Agricultural Officer stationed in Waiyevo. The Agricultural Officer said that the problem was not a lack of agents but poor communication and an inconsistency of supply (see Footnote 63).

As has been explained in the previous chapters, the natural environment is interwoven into the lifeworlds of each individual living in Boumā. The loss of land and resources means a loss of identity, well-being, livelihood, security and empowerment. Therefore, any breakdown in environmental wellbeing affects the *vanua*, *sautu*, ‘subsistence affluence’ and therefore, livelihoods in Boumā. As well as the problem of ‘kava dieback’, another agricultural challenge includes the acidity in the soil or its denitrification detrimentally affecting *dalo* production. Because of the problem with

the soil quality in Boumā, local farmers were heavily affected by the fact that the level of demand dictated the accepted minimum size of the *dalo*.

Government departments, such as the district Agriculture Office recognised a need to offer free support and advice to farmers. Subsistence farmers are facing new challenges with an increased cost of living but also with the inability to sustain a subsistence livelihood because of environmental conditions. Farmers themselves are also recognising the need to make major and rapid adjustments if they are to provide for their families. A number of families in Boumā have actively approached the Tutu Agricultural College in Taveuni to receive training in farm and time management.

Apart from kava dieback and denutrition of the soil there are a number of other environmental issues that affect subsistence and small-scale commercial enterprises in Boumā. However, overpopulation has been given by locals as one reason for low fish numbers. Another is harmful fishing practices. This includes the use of inappropriate fishing equipment such as small gauge fishing nets and undersized hooks, coral trampling,⁶⁷ and poisons such as *duva*⁶⁸.

I experienced coral ‘trampling’ firsthand. I had been asking various women for months if they would take me out fishing with them. They always said, ‘no’ that ‘it was too dangerous’. I later suspected that it was more because they did not want me to see how they were fishing and reef gleaning. Eventually, (probably after they grew tired of me constantly asking), I was allowed to accompany a group of six women to look for shellfish. Everyone wore some form of footwear (most commonly, jandals), snorkels and a mask. The technique was to walk on the coral with our faces in the water searching for shellfish.

Spear fishing is a relatively new form of fishing technology in Boumā which is spoken of sometimes in a disapproving tone and at others in a mischievous tone depending on

⁶⁷ Walking on the coral in shallow water or at low tide and therefore, compromising the health of the reef.

⁶⁸ *Duva* (*Derris trifoliata* and *Derris malaccensis*) is a plant that stupefies fish when crushed. Seeds from the vutu plant (*Barringtonia asiatica*) (Veitayaki, 1995, p. 128), abundant around the Boumā coastline may also be used for this purpose.

who you talk to and whether or not they do it. Spear fishing in conjunction with the acquisition of other equipment such as masks, and snorkels has meant a higher fishing catch than ever before contributing to the decline in fish stocks.

I was told that some people chose to fish with small hooks and small gauge nets because focusing on catching smaller fish was easier and more productive than trying to catch bigger fish. *Kuita* (octopus) is becoming rarer. It is possible to tell the size of the octopus by its home but because they are so hard to find, people tend to take home even the smallest octopus, breaking its home with their rod in the process.

Now we have masks and materials to go under water.
That has given us the courage
to take out almost everything
that has gone into its home.
And it destroys the house as well.

The old people would just get a stick and
poke-poke and it comes out.
But with the spear, you kill it in the hole
and find a way to take it out.

Again, it is hard to think of tomorrow, I was told, when you are hungry today.

Rivers are a major source of subsistence fishing in Boumā. However, these food sources are becoming threatened by the use of weed killers. A mother of five in Korovou expresses her anger at the Agricultural Officers who have been promoting these weed killers to farmers to improve their productivity with little regard to the health of the water sources below plantations where the weed killer is used:

We can catch all kinds of things in the river.
A couple of kinds of shells,

prawns, eels, and *bali*⁶⁹

Also *i'a dro'a* ⁷⁰–

a kind of shiny fish.

There were plenty of fish before

but not now – no.

That's what I keep on telling them.

It's the spray that they have been using
around the rivers.

Weedkiller.

There are lots of kinds
at the hardware stores.

I have seen Paraquat, Rambo⁷¹ ...

Every time this guy from 'Agriculture'⁷² comes

I keep telling him,

You are not telling the people the right thing.

You are not telling them the truth.

You are encouraging the people
to get the weed killers
to spray their plantations.

It goes into the river
and then goes into the soil
and damages the reefs also.

We need to get the right workshop
to the communities.

⁶⁹ A type of fish also known as *vo*.

⁷⁰ Jungle perch.

⁷¹ Brands of weed killer commonly sold on Taveuni.

⁷² The Agricultural Officer stationed at the District Office in Waiyevo.

It is not only impacts on water sources that have been detrimentally affecting livelihoods in Boumā. Due to deforestation for the establishment of *teitei*⁷³, there are a number of cases of serious soil erosion. This also has a flow-on effect on the coral health as silt flowing down from highland plantations into the sea smothers and destroys coral reefs further reducing fish stocks and affecting the health of other marine life in the area.

As has been noted, Boumā's soil is generally of low quality affecting the production of basic food items such as *dalo* (taro) and *tavioka* (cassava). This is likely to be due to a number of factors including erosion creating nutrient leeching and population pressure leading to limited crop rotation. Families have to approach the chief to request additional tracts of land with each new generation. Since land is limited, population pressure means that soil becomes 'stressed' by overuse, and is not allowed to 'rest' through regular crop rotation. New land is sourced higher and higher up the mountain behind the Boumā villages and settlements. The soil there is said to be of the lowest quality.

Environmental impacts such as these affect the choices people have made regarding *vanua* values. Environmental degradation has influenced choices to move toward a more individualistic lifestyle characterised by a cash-based economy. The way the Boumā people commonly describe these as harmful environmental practices that work against the *vanua* is resonant of Tomlinson's (2004) 'perpetual lament' discussed in the previous chapter. However, if a family needs feeding, particularly in the absence of consistent family support, the need may transcend moral obligation to the *vanua*.

Those who were cynical of Vanua Boumā's ability to be productive and self-sustaining (most of whom were locals) gave the following reasons in addition to those already discussed in this chapter.

⁷³ Plantations.

Time and productivity

As has been noted in Chapter Three, the perception of time for most Boumā people was very different to my own. While for me, productivity requires an element of urgency which is future-focused, this was seldom so for my participants. Ravuvu explains that a general indigenous Fijian attitude is that priorities lie with the events of today and contentment in the present: the future will take care of itself. Someone who worries about the future is said to be *ocaoca* (anxious/annoyed) (Capell, 1968, p. 157). Accumulation of surplus is pointless. This attitude is conveyed in the following expressions: “[*m*]aroroya me qai kena na qele’ (to keep it only to feed the earth) or [*m*]aroroya me qai kena na baca” (to keep it only to feed the worms)’ (Ravuvu, 1983, p. 107). Ravuvu explains that this attitude functions to reduce frustration, stress, and conflict between kin and others and suggests that an overly ambitious nature, particularly one that means the individual spends less time enjoying the fruits of their labour with others is considered ‘morally unacceptable’ (ibid) as it is antithetical to the *vanua*.

While some researchers do value the inclusion of local perceptions of time such as Laverack’s (2003) methodology for building community capabilities in Fiji, Workman (1993) suggests that

many researchers view differences in language, customs, perceptions of time, values for non-economic development and resistance to change as problems to be over-come. This is short-sighted. Cultural differences, especially differences in world views, can provide the impetus to create more useful research for development efforts and also increase our knowledge about the world (p. 24).

Ingold argues that non-industrialised people still ‘retain a large measure of control over the rhythms of their working lives’. For these people he says,

time is intrinsic to the array of specific tasks that make up the pattern of a quotidian activity of a community...[and that]...the formal logic of

capitalist production undermines this task-orientation by establishing an absolute division, in principle, between the domains of work and social life' (2000, p. 323).

Some indigenous Fijians' perceptions of time are now being challenged with the introduction of programmes developed to enhance productivity and encourage entry into the market economy. This can have a profound impact on the *vanua* at village level. In Lavena village, for example, some families are managing to maintain a life almost separate from the rest of the community. They limit or avoid 'ere'ere and *ca'aca'a va'a 'oro* for a more individualistic, self-determined life. These families may be regarded as more 'successful' in a Western sense of the term but to many in Vanua Boumā, individual pursuits of any kind are perceived as immoral and, to some, may be abhorrent (see also Nabobo-Baba, 2007, 2007a). Therefore, these *vūvales*⁷⁴ may be criticised by other members of the community (see also Tomlinson, 2004). This was the case with one notable family who, after attending a series of courses on time management and business management (among others) at the Tutu Agricultural College⁷⁵, successfully juggled four sources of income to support their own *vūvale*. Their 'success' was met by a mixture of admiration and criticism from their *yavusa*. Comments to me were never made with specific reference to the family. These were made as general statements although I knew very well who they were talking about. Here is one example of the kinds of comments I heard in *talanoa*:

If you live in a village you have to live *va'a vanua*

Otherwise, don't live in a village.

Live somewhere else.

The majority of comments I heard in Lavena indirectly criticising families like these involved the comment that they seldom attended village meetings, and park and village clean-up days. Others praised them for their productivity and their ability to provide for

⁷⁴ Household unit.

⁷⁵ Located in Waiyevo, Taveuni.

their family comparing them to the ‘lazy’ ones in the *yavusa* who did little but ‘drink their children’s education away’ referring to the over-consumption of *yagona* in the *yavusa*⁷⁶.

A number of community members told me about a government-run programme that was implemented to improve productivity across Fiji. The programme sounded very good, although somewhat regimented. However, the community could not adjust their lifestyle to match the programme and after one year, it was rejected. A Waitabu woman describes the programme and why she thought it failed:

We used to wake up at 5 o’clock in the morning
and prepare breakfast
and by 8 o’clock
every man in the village
was supposed to be out in the plantation.

And we were divided up into four groups:
All the stronger groups
mixed with the weaker ones
so we could help one another.

If there was a funeral or a wedding
everything would be provided
as a community.

I said we wouldn’t be able to do it
unless they [the government] kept coming back
and reviewing the program.
People are used to their own lifestyle
and their own timing.

⁷⁶ This will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

We did this for about a year
and although the majority liked the idea
The stronger ones really couldn't work
with the weaker ones
and said it was a waste of time.
And the weaker ones
were really breaking the program
because they kept drinking grog after 10 o'clock.
So the program didn't work.

It was really a good program.
I miss it.
I saw it as a way we could
build our own home,
we could build our own church.
We could do just about anything
we wanted to do.

The whole community
could have benefited from this program.
We would have been able to support ourselves.

But they [Boumā people] only live for today
and tomorrow they find it difficult
to plan too far ahead into the future.
It didn't work
because they couldn't adjust their timing.

I suspect that it was more than time management, forward planning, and *kava* abuse that caused the program to fail. The program sounded so regimented that it also

contradicted many in Boumā's call for 'individual human rights' that had emerged largely through formal education in the 1970s as discussed in the previous chapter.

Kava and productivity

I came to know of a number of families in the village that were described as 'struggling' (financially). Many of these families were struggling because of *kava* abuse. This was a problem that was openly recognised in the community. Even those who had a weakness for regular late night *grog* (*kava*) sessions joked about it while acknowledging that it was a serious problem. The Agricultural Officer was well aware of this problem as was the local police officer and the district nurse. The Agricultural Officer described *kava* as a major issue in terms of the ability for community members to support themselves:

Those that drink *grog* every night -
they may start drinking at nine or ten
and they realise they have to go to work on the *teitei* tomorrow.

But those people
don't just drink *grog* till ten or eleven.
They can go on to the morning.
And in the morning,
they say,
 If I don't work today – no problem.
 If I don't work tomorrow – no problem.

This attitude is affecting their ability
to achieve what they need,
not just what they want.
For example,
the education of their children.

Unfortunately, due to over-consumption of kava, a number of children were no longer able to attend school because the parents could not pay for their education. One woman attributed the need to pull children out of school solely to *kava* abuse. Her husband described the *kava* abuse as a 'habit' that needed to be broken. The new demands of a cash economy in Boumā (as explained in the first part of this chapter), require a change of behaviour. Unfortunately, many in Boumā have not yet caught up with these changes.

In the past,
they didn't have to pay for their food.
They didn't have to pay for anything.
They grew everything they needed.
But then when they couldn't pay
for school fees and other new things
they got a shock.

Some say some people use *kava* as a way of managing the new stresses brought by the demands of a cash economy. One participant said that the inability to cope with the new demands has caused locals to 'sit down and give up'. This would invariably include drinking *kava* day and night rather than going to the *teitei* and working harder to confront the root cause of the stress. However, it is not only the financial demands of the cash economy that created this stress, it is also the erosion of the moral economy (involving the social structure and the social 'safety net') that heightens fears for the future of the *Vanua*. The uncertainty and fear that was felt in the face of an altered *vanua* did not originate from the ecotourism projects as many of these concerns reflected the changes occurring before the establishment of the ecotourism initiatives.

Kava abuse perpetuates the stress caused by the erosion of social structure and it is said that kava that is largely to blame for its erosion. The district nurse reported three cases of malnutrition in Lavena alone in 2004 and I was shocked to learn that the infant of a woman I had interviewed had died as a result when I had left the field for a week to

attend a conference in Melbourne. As previously noted, despite some environmental issues stated above, this was difficult to accept in a place where food supply for the family (if not for the market) was generally plentiful. Many Boumā locals referred to their environment (if not their social environment) as paradise because there was always food around: *bele* (a type of edible hibiscus), *tivoli* (wild yams), and *niu* (coconut) all grew wild and if one couldn't catch a fish, *lairo* (land crabs) and *ura* (prawns) were plentiful. It was a young woman and her friend who were the first to tell me that it was kava that was to blame: 'It is because the mother is too lazy to cook them food. The mother is lazy because she drinks a lot at night. Young children get left alone everywhere. Not in the house – just everywhere'.

Tomlinson (2004) also reported that Tavuki residents consider kava-drinking as 'one of the signs of the fall from an age of power' (p. 659) and suggests this as a source of loss of productivity. This culminated in a 'Unity Workshop' in Kadavu which suggested regulations for the consumption of kava, particularly 'purposeless' drinking as distinguished from 'traditional' use. This could be the programme one of the Waitabu participants described earlier that encouraged time management and greater productivity.

In one of Lavena's settlements, Qali, the *turaga ni 'oro* with the support of this small community had declared the settlement 'dry' meaning they would not drink kava except for genuine ceremonial purposes. While this did not stop members travelling to other villages to drink kava, the nurse at Qali stated that this seldom occurred and that as a result, the children were healthier and happier as a result. A number of villages across Fiji have also made this move in response to the negative affect of over-consumption of kava (Fijilive, 2008; Fiji Times Online, 2008).

The gunusede

One effort to combine the cash-based economy with the *vanua* is the *gunusede* or village dances as a popular method of fundraising in all the villages in Boumā. *Gunusede* literally means ‘drink cents/money’. A stereo system and speakers are set up in the village, usually in the space where village meetings are held. Sometimes poles are erected to hold temporary corrugated roofs specifically for the purpose. These may be decorated with branches and flowers. *Gunusedes* are very loud and some elders have complained that they cannot sleep until it is shut down at around midnight. When one attends a *gunusede*, they are invited to pay some money to nominate one or more attendees to drink a cup of kava from the large *tanoa* (communal bowl) in the centre of the dance floor. Nominations are written in a book and between dance tracks, the ‘caller’ will read out who is next expected to drink. Refusal to drink (as in any kava ceremony) is considered extremely ungracious. Prizes of *sikoni* (large scones or cakes) and other food items are given to those who have contributed the most money to the cause. Only cross-cousins can pay for each other to drink as the nominations are governed by *veiwe’ani*.

Tourists are occasionally encouraged to attend the dances. However, when young women were sometimes confronted by young men ‘drunk’⁷⁷ on kava or homebrew, some communities had second thoughts about their open invitation policy. Due to a number of cases of intoxication and assault, with the invitation of local leaders, the police shut down all *gunusedes* in Vanua Boumā for a few months in 2004.

Gunusedes have been criticised by a number of community members as just another temporary fix for a long-term problem. Those opponents of *gunusedes* suggest that community groups tend to rely on these rather than on any other long-term and generative solution to funding projects. One Lavena community member describes his *yavusa* as ‘a bit lost’ referring to the short-sighted way they use *gunusedes* to solve their long-term financial problems:

⁷⁷ This was a local term referring to those intoxicated by kava.

They do not look to see
what is coming around the corner next year.
My plan for next year is likely to be
very different from this year.
I've got to see what's coming up with my kids.
This year, I have to budget
and I've got to work to my budget.
But these people,
when there is something wrong,
they just make a *gunusede*.
This is not a good way.

But now, people are starting to think.
So, you see there are not many people
going to *gunusede* these days.
That is because we are starting to think
that the *gunusede* is a joke.

Like if there is a problem – make a *gunusede*!
No, if you have had a problem last year.
You have got to work for it this year.
People don't want to work for anything.
But you've got to work hard for money.

Another issue with the *gunusede* is the temptation to be seen as a good and generous community member by spending all one's hard-earned cash in a night. One example of this was a local tour guide who was unable to support his own family as he had sacrificed most of his plantation to work in the ecotourism project. The same individual had been accused of stealing from others' plantations and had had to pull his children out of school as he had not been able to maintain the school fee payments. Any income

he did earn from the project would be spent at *gunusedes*. This may be interpreted as an indirect form of *i soro* or atonement to the community as his father had been arrested for incest. Therefore, for this individual at least, the *gunusede* did not function solely as a cash-generating activity; it was also an opportunity for atonement.

The example of atonement of a byproduct of *gunusedes* illustrates Christina Toren's claim that communities derive much more value from *gunusedes* than fundraising. In *Drinking Cash: The Purification of Money through Ceremonial Exchange in Fiji* (1989), Toren described the antithetical nature of cash and the *vanua* by comparing the 'giving' with 'payment'. However, Toren argues that this dichotomous view does not account for empirical reality as she says it 'ignores the practical organisation of contemporary village life and denies historical change' (pp. 142-143). The *gunusede*, she says, blurs the line between gift and commodity as it is used in such a way that strengthens social ties and is carried out in compliance with *veiwe'ani* protocols. The way *gunusedes* are conducted purifies the amorality symbolised by cash in Fijian villages.

While *gunusedes* may be one way of mixing cash with the *vanua*⁷⁸, it was not considered a long-term sustainable solution. *Ca'aca'a va'a 'oro* in terms of community gardens had also failed due to misappropriation of community funds. A government-based policy intended to increase productivity and, therefore, sustainability also failed possibly as a result of incompatible notions of time and a matter of too much too soon. There were certainly some significant environmental issues threatening the moral economy as well as some social ones such as lack of chiefly respect leading to the loss of control of community-wide kava abuse, and a subsequent lack of motivation to productively support the *Vanua*. As has been noted, a small number of individuals in the community, largely with the support of training at the Tutu Agricultural College, appeared to be doing well but at the cost of isolating themselves from the *Vanua*. The

⁷⁸ See Christina Toren's (1989) *Drinking Cash: The Purification of Money through Ceremonial Exchange in Fiji* for a more detailed analysis of how money is purified of any potentially threatening associations with the market economy and the acceptable manner in which cash has been incorporated into a life *va'avanua*.

general consensus was ‘if you live in the village, you live *va’avanua*. If not, you should leave’.

Conclusion and discussion

The last two chapters have provided a rather grim view of the *Vanua*’s efforts to determine their own future *va’avanua* (the *vanua* way). Efforts to rally the *mataqalis* to establish and sustain community-based enterprises have failed in the past. With the additional challenges discussed in this chapter, what hope is there for the development of ecotourism *va’avanua* in Vanua Boumā: particularly one established largely on Western epistemologies and ontologies?

While I, too, found that through most of my fieldwork period, my impression was that the future did not look bright for Boumā (partly due to what at one time I considered lax attitudes to time and productivity) my attitude changed on reflection some time after returning home. It was on returning to New Zealand that I began to better understand that Boumā’s own ‘glocalisation⁷⁹’ or ‘indigenisation’ of entrepreneurship in their management of the ecotourism projects was more likely to be sustainable (see Chapter Ten). I also appreciated the function in Boumā’s hope.

Courville and Piper (2004) argue that hope is functional and a necessary active ingredient in any social-change process.

While hope cannot be transferred directly from person to person, ideas can. Ideas play a critical role in the process of social change. Ideas can be transferred between people, while the hope within individuals can be strengthened through sensing hope in others. This process is most effective between individuals and becomes more diffuse as relationships become less direct, through groups, organizations, and institutions. The

⁷⁹ This is a term coined by Professor Roland Robertson (1992) to describe how local actors ‘customise’ global pressures through selection and modification. In this way they creatively engage at the nexus between the local and the global.

vision that combines ideas for the better and hope that these ideas can be realized is a necessary ingredient in social-change processes... (p. 58).

I found hope in Boumā in two ways. Whether pure nostalgia or not, hope was found in the constant reference to the glory days of the subsistence affluence of a moral economy fixed firmly on the *vanua*. The medium of *talanoa* in which this nostalgia was expressed openly also produced the potential for political action. These earlier and ‘better’ days were remembered fondly as a time when food was anonymously left at doorsteps and everyone always came running when the *turaga ni ‘oro* called the community to work. The second was found in the sheer tenacity of the Boumā *mataqalis* in the face of, often, overwhelming odds to continue to support the goal of sustainable community-based ecotourism.

Up to and including this chapter, this thesis has provided some information vital for development practitioners prior to establishing any form of community-based development in a rural community. It has shown that there may be some complex, historico-political and values-based reasons why communities may wish to establish development projects. For Boumā, the needs and desires for community-based ecotourism can be explained by a number of inter-related factors. One central factor has been explained as a breakdown in a *vanua*-based moral economy. This has contributed to a growing dependency on a cash economy alongside other factors including over-population, limited arable land, soil denutrition and erosion, kava dieback, overconsumption of kava, overfishing, and reef damage. Other factors include a need to cover the rising costs of education, ceremonial obligations, and transport, and a growing dependency on shop-bought items. Leadership was also a factor. The *vanua* is the basis of any activity or skill in Boumā’s taskscape and is ‘the glue that binds’ the *Vanua* (tribe). However, in order to maintain the integrity of the *Vanua*, strong leadership and guidance is needed. Since local leaders and other respected members of the community have been reported as weak in their efforts to ensure that their people respect the principles of the *vanua*, any economic activity that takes place in the village

may also be compromised. This includes Boumā's activities as part of a moral economy or a market economy.

It also must be noted that the Boumā worldview is different from that of Western-based development practitioners. This has been explained earlier through a detailed description of the *vanua*, and in this chapter, the concepts of time and productivity have been presented as perceived in a different way by the people of Boumā. The perception of time and productivity reflect the central tenets of the *vanua* concept. According to *vanua* values, attitudes towards time and productivity should be adjusted toward the maintenance of harmony of the whole social group. If these are considered obstacles to be overcome by development consultants, only then may they become obstacles. However, if we consider how attitudes toward time and productivity are treated despite the introduction of Western based approaches to community-based development, we may find more meaningful and sustainable amalgamations of different ways of knowing and doing. This notion of what local communities do 'in spite of' development' will be discussed at length in Chapter Ten as 'indigenous development' and 'indigenous entrepreneurship'.

If community-based ecotourism is to be meaningful and empowering, those facilitating the process must be fully cognisant of the motivations for the decision to undertake such an initiative. Also necessary, is the historical origins of the ongoing decision-making processes and difficulties faced. Understanding where the local communities have come from to get to the point whereby they have made the decision to develop a community-based ecotourism initiative may suggest the future course of the *Vanua* and, therefore, that of their ecotourism initiatives. Development practitioners must also understand that the direction in which a sector of Vanua Boumā are heading (toward individualistic capitalist-based entrepreneurship) consists of elements that contrast sharply with those of the *vanua*. Therefore, there must be an appreciation of the constant flux of negotiation operating between that of communality-based *vanua* and individuality-based entrepreneurship within the *Vanua*. There must also be an awareness of *how* these negotiations are played out locally.

The next chapter moves from why Boumā chose to establish community-based ecotourism on their land to discuss the levels of participation and control they had over the process of establishing a national heritage park *va'avanua* (the *vanua* way). Chapter Seven will begin to explain the aforementioned negotiations that take place at the meso level (that is, between external agents of development and individuals and groups at the local level) (Arce & Long, 2000)⁸⁰ and cultural hybridity as a product of these negotiations.

⁸⁰ See also Olivier de Sardan's 'entangled social logic' (2004). This will be explained in detail in Chapter Ten.

Chapter Seven

The establishment of Boumā National Heritage Park

Community-based ecotourism places particular emphasis on participation in the pursuit of sustainability and empowerment (Stronza, 2001) and is generally described in the following terms: ‘small scale, locally-owned developments, community participation, and cultural and environmental sustainability’ (Brohman, 1996, p. 65). As has been noted in Chapter One, Tourism Resource Consultants (TRC) (Boumā’s management consultants from 1997-2003) stated that their projects were intended to be managed within a participatory framework with a focus not only on conservation but also on poverty-alleviation (TRC, 2008). Hall (1994) and Sofield (2003) emphasise that issues of power and institutional obstacles determine the extent to which local communities are able to participate in community-based tourism projects, particularly in terms of decision-making. The expanding literature on the field of community-based management has shown that participation is a highly complex and problematic issue (e.g. Vunisea, 2002; Veitayaki, 1998a; Timothy, 2002; Belsky, 1999; Sofield, 2003; Scheyvens, 2002; Read, 2002). This chapter will start to illustrate the complexities and challenges of participation that Vanua Boumā has faced since the involvement of Fiji Forestry in 1990 and Boumā’s sustained tenacity to take control of the Boumā National Heritage Park and develop it *va’avanua* (the *vanua* or Fijian way)⁸¹. This chapter will also help to build discussions surrounding local agency and the negotiations that take place at the ‘meso’ level (i.e. between external agents of development and individuals and groups at the local level) (Arce & Long, 2000)⁸² and the reasons for the Boumā tribe’s moves to hybridise the cultural values, structures and processes with those introduced through community-based ecotourism development.

⁸¹ This should not be interpreted as ‘traditional’ in the sense that it is static and unchanging over time.

⁸² See also Olivier de Sardan’s ‘entangled social logic’ (2004).

Cultural hybridity as agency at the meso level

Arce (2003) suggests that anthropologists should look at the way people and policies relate to one another if we are to answer questions about how ‘social reality is constituted in development processes’ (p. 846). The space where this occurs may be referred to as the meso level or ‘middle ground’ where power and resources are both afforded to a community and contested from the wider social context. In Arce’s words, the meso level is

where interfaces between administrative policies and people’s courses of action take place, and...a location where different agents encounter one another, giving rise to interfaces between different conceptual idioms represented within a semi-autonomous field of action. These actions result in the emergence of mutagenic properties⁸³, and within them we can analyse how people see themselves in the world according to the knowledge they can draw on (2003, p. 847).

Anthropologists interested in development traditionally focused on the micro level, attending almost exclusively to local communities. More recently, however, they have recognised a gap in development research and, thus, have turned their attention to the macro level, attending almost exclusively to development and funding agencies. The meso level, however, has received less attention. It is the negotiations that occur at this level resulting in cultural syncretism or hybridity through the selection, rejection, trialling and amalgamation of new knowledge, skills and value that is of interest here. It is this level that will be explored in more depth in subsequent chapters.

Arce and Long’s (2000) ‘localised modernities’ is useful as a theoretical starting point here as it works at the meso level and is a response to the ‘need for a reflexive anthropology of modernity and development’ which actively contributes to development research and practice (p. 3). ‘Localised modernities’ explore the multiple

⁸³ As ‘cultural hybridity’

ways in which local communities respond to development processes and draws on notions of cultural change as hybridity. Arce and Long (2000) describe 'localised modernities' as

a reworking of modernity values and practices [that] takes place through the ways in which various social actors and groups process and act upon their experiences, thus reconstituting or transforming existing 'localised' situations, cultural boundaries and knowledge. This often results in the opposition or negation (not always directly) of the culture and knowledge of the expert or intervenor in favour of well-tried local ways and understandings, and through the appropriation of and re-interpretation of modern idioms, technologies and organising practices. Hence, it becomes necessary to analyse the differentiated and uneven social patchwork that interconnects local with various modernising scenarios' (ibid, p. 6).

Arce and Long's (2000) 'localised modernities' sit in opposition to the cultural evolutionary perspectives of development studies' 'grand narratives' as they attend to the notion of cultural hybridisation⁸⁴.

Others who have explored this concept include Elias' 'fusion' (1994); Werbner's 'cultural hybridity' (1997, 2001); Strathern's 'partial connections' (1991); Haraway's 'cyborgs' (1991); and Arce and Long's 'counter-tendencies' and 'mutants of modernities' (2000, 2000a, 2000b). All of these theorists have in common the notion that changes occurring at the local level do not happen in a predictable and linear manner. Rather, change is highly contextual, dynamic and unpredictable.

The recognition of cultural hybridity works against some anthropologists' and developers' approaches to cultures which ignore a prior pre-colonial existence and which illustrate 'an unreflective plenitude in which tradition is hegemonic and simply

⁸⁴ Other terms used for hybridity include reinterpretation and syncretism.

reproduced' (Ewing, 1997, p. 20). Hobsbawm and Ranger's 'invented traditions' is integral to this notion of emergent modernities. Hence, the notion of cultural hybridity brings to light the dynamic and 'porous' nature of culture and counters the treatment of communities as homogeneous, passive, and harmonious. Werbner (2001) makes a pertinent point here in arguing that the generative nature of culture depends on the interpretation of an individual or a group:

For some, multiculturalism, cultural borrowings and mixings, constitute an attack on their felt subjectivity. In a world in which local people feel their culture to be under threat from globalizing Western cultural forces or from incoming stranger migrants, interruptive hybridity may be experienced...as threatening a prior social order and morality (p. 150).

A closer look at cultural hybridity and limits to local agency reveal how and why the people of Boumā had made the decisions they did. Decisions may be manifest in countless nuanced ways and may include degrees of (and actions based on) rejection, acceptance, trial and error, misinformation, naivety, coercion, tactical manoeuvre, and others.

For example, the extent to which Boumā has embraced external values, knowledge and skills may depend on the extent to which local leaders embrace Western knowledge (Purcell & Onjoro, 2002) (e.g. that of Western business practices and democratic decision-making). The next paragraphs discuss theories that build on notions of cultural hybridity as products of local agency working at the meso level. I found these theories useful, too, in exploring the diverse ways in which groups and individuals of Vanua Boumā negotiated cultural change generated by the development process.

Comaroff and Comaroff's (1993) 'multiple modernities' and Arce and Long's (2000) 'countertendencies' contribute to an understanding of the hybrid nature of culture and how culture responds to the many diverse and multidirectional systems of 'modernity'

(see also Appadurai, 1990, 1996). The exploration of ‘multiple modernities’ (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1993, p. xi) is the pursuit of an interest in how

...ideas and practices of modernity are, themselves, appropriated and embedded in locally-situated practices, thus accelerating the fragmentation and dispersal of modernity into constantly proliferating modernities (Arce & Long, 2000a, p. 1).

These ‘multiple modernities’ generate ‘countertendencies’ revealing ‘so-called distorted or divergent’ patterns of development, and re-assembling what is often naively designated as ‘tradition’ (ibid)⁸⁵. Werbner (2001) and Bakhtin’s (1981, 1984) ‘intentional hybrids’ as well as Galjart’s (1981) ‘counter-development’ (in which development is recreated as more locally relevant) contribute to the notion of countertendencies.

This thesis has been specifically interested in how the people of Boumā initially negotiate culture and value changes and challenges brought by the systems and processes of community-based ecotourism development. Then, when development agencies change and withdraw from the projects, how the Boumā communities make decisions largely independently of external development agents⁸⁶ and base their decision-making more firmly on their own dynamic value system (the *vanua*). This chapter will start to show how Boumā’s counter-development was emerging as business *va’avanua*.

Countertendencies have been useful in this thesis because they helped me to understand how the people of Boumā make sense of new situations, global processes, people, and objects (Arce & Long, 2000). Of most interest to this thesis has been the contestation of values inherent in the concept of countertendencies as the basis of negotiation between the stakeholders of community-based ecotourism development.

⁸⁵ See also ‘invented tradition’.

⁸⁶ National Trust started auditing and providing some support for the Boumā National Heritage Park in 2004.

More research is needed that reveals intentional local hybridisations of modernity and more specifically a hybrid values model as will be discussed in Chapter Ten in terms of indigenous entrepreneurship. Currently, participatory appraisals have seldom revealed more than dichotomous assumptions. This is supported by Quanchi (2004) who states that, ‘hybridity and multiple adaptations are more instructive than simplistic dichotomies’ and points to ‘the struggle between imposed/imported and internal/local authority’ which occurs at kin/clan, village/community levels, and the national level:

In the first and second levels of kin/clan and village/community relationships, people apply solutions at a practical local level by relying on indigenous wisdom and local systems of organising knowledge. This is summed up by the move to valorise “grassroots” development. At this level there is potential for conflict when centralising influences (including officialdom, bureaucracy, ethnic rivalry, and plain wrong-headedness) take power away from local people and deny local ways of thinking through problems. Dissent occurs as local opportunities and adaptations are overlooked or marginalised (ibid, p. 9).

Through more reflexive and inter-subjective social analyses of local communities and the ways in which they negotiate new knowledge, values and practices, development researchers can better understand the products and processes of the relationships at the meso level. This is not only useful in negotiating relationships between the local community and development agents but also between the researcher and the researched; the Boumā-based parent and the child returning to the village carrying with him/her new values and skills; the local and the tourist; the local working directly with the development project; and the local living and functioning semi-independently of the project.

While the work of Arce and Long and Comaroff and Comaroff are valuable in drawing our attention to the meso level, we need to go further yet to explore what is happening outside public spaces at the micro level when confronted with forces of change

emanating from the macro and meso levels. What is missing here is an attention to social and political networks that inform us about agency and potential agency of individuals within a community. It is Olivier de Sardan's 'entangled social logic' (2005) that I feel best addresses both the micro and meso levels and the political networks that run within and between them.

Olivier de Sardan's (2005) 'entangled social logic' draws on Heidegger's phenomenology and is

...centred on the analysis of the embeddedness of social logic [and] studies the relationship between both universes [the micro and meso levels], or rather between the concrete segments of both, through empirical enquiry, particularly around their points of intersection (pp. 11-12).

Entangled social logic is an attempt to include heterogeneous actors, resources and goals in development research. This approach employs a dynamic approach to anthropology which 'is field-enquiry-oriented, makes judicious use of case studies, and takes an understandable interest in conflicts, negotiations, discords, and misunderstandings' (ibid, p. 13).

Entangled social logic may also be referred to as 'methodological interactionism' (as opposed to ideological interactionism). While ideological interactionism has a tendency to focus on interaction as the object of study, methodological interactionism is more interested in the interaction 'as a useful analyser of phenomena of broader import, examined on a variety of scales' (ibid, p. 12). This approach fulfils Latour's (1993) request for anthropologies that attend to 'networks' as well as attention to the meso level.

Olivier de Sardan (2005) argues that further differences between entangled social logic and ideological interactionism is that it is

more social and less generative, more polyvalent and less obsessive, more cautious and less pretentious. It takes into account interaction in general (social, political, economic, symbolic) between actors in a given field vying for stakes (for example, related to the development process), as opposed to the grammatical and formal aspects of the definition of such-and-such a kind of interaction or such-and-such a situation existing between co-actors. On the other hand, power struggles and phenomena of inequality are not ignored; quite the contrary. The emphasis is placed on ‘grass roots’ actors and the room for manoeuvre available to them and that limit the elbow room at their disposal (pp. 52-53).

This thesis is particularly interested in these networks and how much ‘room to manoeuvre’ these networks allow individual actors, as this chapter will start to illustrate. However, to do so, Boumā’s National Heritage Park must first be situated within the relevant community-based ecotourism literature.

Community-based ecotourism and the Boumā National Heritage Park

As development scholars became dissatisfied with development paradigms that exclude local agency, so too did those involved in tourism, anthropology and other social sciences. As a result, many tourism analysts rejected ‘mass’ or ‘mainstream’ tourism to advocate alternative forms of tourism which they felt better dealt with local participation (Telfer, 2000). Alternative tourisms emphasise ‘small scale, locally-owned developments, community participation, and cultural and environmental sustainability’ (Brohman, 1996, p. 65). The example of alternative tourism which places particular emphasis on community participation in the pursuit of sustainability and empowerment is that of community-based tourism (Stronza, 2001) or in this case community-based ecotourism. Community-based ecotourism sometimes overlaps with ‘sustainable tourism’, ‘responsible tourism’ and ‘ecotourism’, and has been included in the rhetoric of many international charters and institutions. Many community-based

ecotourism initiatives have developed as a consequence of (or in conjunction with) national parks and reserves.

National parks were based on Western notions of human-environment relationships which have often been imposed on indigenous peoples (Johnston, 2000). This may be perceived as another form of cultural imperialism. Western initiatives, local private enterprise, or government agencies still tend to 'divide and conquer' the landscape rather than work in a time-tested and mutual way compatible with the lifestyles of local communities living within the landscape (Loomis, 2000; Johnston, 2000). These Western perspectives may undermine more appropriate indigenous systems of knowledge, and may lead to the homogenisation of culture and antagonism towards the environment and towards the community (Britton & Clarke, 1987, p. 35). In order to mitigate or avoid the negative impacts of national park planning and management, many ecotourism and conservation specialists advocate community-owned and operated ecotourism enterprises as the best way for indigenous values to be made central to decision making (Johnston, 2000; Pathak & Kothari, 2003). Community-based ecotourism development attempts to accommodate indigenous perspectives, thereby creating more sustainable models of tourism development.

In terms of protected area settings, community-based ecotourism is one possible opportunity to support local livelihoods through participatory approaches while actively working toward conservation initiatives. The logic behind this approach is that if people's livelihoods are secure, they will be less likely to harm the environment (Scheyvens, 2002, p. 85). Learning more about difference in knowledge and perceptions of the environment is essential in the planning and implementation of community-based ecotourism in protected areas such as national parks.

Reflecting on community, place and power is important in the examination of tourism development, particularly in terms of community-based tourism development (Murphy, 1985, Haywood, 1988; Brohman, 1996) as well as residents' perceptions of tourism (Pearce, Moscardo & Ross, 1996). There is a growing body of literature on

collaborative management and community involvement (English & Lee, 2003) as many researchers now realise that indigenous communities are not just affected by tourism but are reactive to it (Long & Wall, 1995; Wall, 1995 cited in Telfer, 2000, p. 243). Murphy's (1985) *Tourism: A Community Approach* has been particularly powerful in generating much scholarship supporting the suggestion that without the involvement of local communities in decision-making, tourism development could not be sustainable (Bianchi, 2003, p. 15).

Hall (1994) and Sofield (1993) emphasise that issues of power and institutional obstacles determine the extent to which local communities are able to participate in community-based tourism projects, particularly in terms of decision-making. The expanding literature on the field of community-based management has shown that participation is a highly complex and problematic issue.

It has been argued that there is little evidence of successful ecotourism projects in the Pacific (Scheyvens & Purdie, 1999, p. 221) and community-based ecotourism is specifically singled out for its high rate of failure (Heher, 2003). Klein (2002) states, 'Ecotourism ventures have traditionally had a high risk of failure. Even under the best conditions of good markets, good accessibility, and good business support, the failure rate for small businesses is around 80%' (cited in Bauld, 2005, p. 48). The director of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), Martha Honey, notes,

Around the world there are thousands of community based ecotourism projects, but many of these projects are not sustainable and the failure rate is high. Given the great hopes that communities have in ecotourism, it is imperative to find better tools for creating successful models for community and indigenous ecotourism projects (2008, para. 20).

This thesis aims to contribute to scholarship interested in analysing the reasons for community-based ecotourism failure in indigenous communities. One reason may be

that present participatory approaches to development are not appropriately applied in indigenous contexts.

Boumā National Heritage Park has been heralded as one of Fiji's first and most successful ecotourism businesses. In November 2002, it took first prize for the Protected Areas and National Park category in the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow awards. The Fiji Visitors' Bureau marketing director Jo Tuamoto said the success of Boumā Park was an inspiration for all Fijians riding the nation's ecotourism boom: "It proves that it is possible to earn a sustainable income by preserving the natural environment and local culture" (cited in Tikotani, 2007, para.17). New Zealand Agency for International Development's (NZAID) Pacific Strategy 2007-2015 states:

Almost 10 years ago Taveuni Island in Fiji was under threat from logging. New Zealand supported the people of Taveuni to establish the Boumā National Park and an eco-tourism venture. Today, tourist dollars and not cash from logging operations provide the people of Boumā with their livelihoods (NZ AID, 2007, p. 24).

The park is heralded as a major tourism resource and is being used to brand the whole tourism industry in Fiji as 'eco-friendly' (Crosby, 2002). This has created spin-offs for other ecotourism projects in Fiji including the Koroyanitu National Heritage Park.

However, the succeeding discussion will illustrate that from the establishment of the Park in 1990, things have not been as they seem on the surface. This chapter will provide a base on which it will be demonstrated that the development process can not be simplistically measured as a 'success' as it has been by the British Airways Award and by Fijian and international media. It will further emphasise the importance of looking more deeply at what is going on at the micropolitical level to learn how everyone is getting along and how people are really living with ecotourism development.

Contrary to information released to the international community, the planning and management of the park has been surrounded by some confusion, misinformation, and mismanagement. This has left many locals disappointed and frustrated from their investment of emotional and physical energy in the project. Many argue that this energy has been wasted with little to show for it. Many have also been left with a feeling of intense distrust for external management. I believe that the events of the establishment of the Park generated the seed of mistrust that led to an even greater desire to create a model of development based on local values, needs and wants as business *va'avanua*.

The reader will note that the participants' contributions in this chapter are sometimes contradictory. These contradictions not only highlight individual opinion but also different levels of involvement in the development process, a lack of community cohesiveness and communication, and the, initial, top-down approach to the management of the park. Despite the challenges and disappointments described in this chapter and in Chapter Eight, the Boumā communities continue to maintain hope for a locally appropriate form of community-based ecotourism that will provide them with financial and environmental sustainability anchored in social harmony.

Crosby (2002) claims that overseas development agencies have been guilty of working against the *vanua* concept in Fiji and the Pacific. This has contributed to the acceleration of the dissolution of the community:

The proceeds and benefits of the land have not been shared evenly, the physical environment has not been managed sustainably, and there has been a breakdown of the pathways of communication between members of the community. This has become increasingly embarrassing for overseas governments (p. 368).

Many of the elements Crosby mentions here will be highlighted in this chapter. I do not attribute these negative outcomes to external agencies involved in the ecotourism

initiative in Boumā⁸⁷ specifically as I feel that local relationships are largely out of the control of any external agents: as has been explained, the community were facing many challenges to the *vanua* long before the establishment of The Boumā National Heritage Park in 1990. However, a greater awareness of Boumā's leadership and micro-politics may have gone some way to averting some of the frustrations, disappointments, and conflicts that became intensified under the new pressures introduced by the ecotourism projects.

While the *vanua* concept is intended as a worldview supporting a whole *Vanua*, it must be recognised that through traditional hierarchy, historical power struggles are inherent. This is further exacerbated by separate and controversial delineations of *mataqali* land ownership.

This chapter will start to illustrate the need to look more deeply into the historical micro-politics and social and environmental values of a community in order to more accurately evaluate the relative success or failure of a development project. It will also provide a largely historical account of the establishment of the park and will illustrate local perceptions of the intersections of community-based ecotourism and the *vanua* and some of the challenges of establishing the projects as business *va'avanua*. The last part of the chapter, while still an historical account of the establishment of the Park, will emphasise perhaps one of the greatest political and socio-structural impacts on Vanua Boumā: the diversification and division of the Park (and therefore, the *Vanua* to a great extent) into separate projects.

The history of the Park

The establishment of the Park stems from local responses to logging as a potential source of income. Approximately 50% of Taveuni lies within logging concessions (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). In 1973, the UNDP-funded "Tourism Development Programme for Fiji" proposed that the forests of Taveuni be protected for tourism and

⁸⁷ NLTB, Fiji Forestry, Fijj, Pine, NZAID (NZODA), and TRC.

nature conservation, with recreation development centred on the Tavoro Falls. Fiji Forestry conducted a survey on Boumā's forest in 1984 and recognised the vulnerability of its ecosystem. It was decided that a plan was needed to protect the forest, particularly from the threat of logging (Seroma, 1995). However, nothing was done about this until after 1988.

The Tui Cakau or paramount chief heads the Cakaudrove Province which includes Taveuni. In 1988, Sir Penaia Ganilau was the paramount chief. After the 1987 coups, he and his cousin at the Provincial Office in Taveuni asked the people of Boumā if they would be interested in being involved in a Korean-based forestry scheme. The Boumā people reported that they understood the scheme would harvest the forest for toothpick production. Crosby (2002) reports that the people of Boumā, feeling bullied by the paramount chief and concerned about the sustainability of their forests, chose to pursue an economic alternative for their forests: ecotourism.

Mataqali leaders successfully applied to the Fijian government and bilateral aid agencies for assistance establishing Boumā as a Forest Park after NZAID (then the New Zealand Overseas Development Agency [NZODA]) and Fiji Forestry suggested ecotourism as more economically and environmentally sustainable compared to the alternative of logging. Crosby (2002) reports the momentum for this decision was partly attributed to a local awareness of the *vanua*-based Waikatakata archaeological project on Fiji's Coral Coast.

Some of the participants in this study stated that the park was largely initiated by one community member who predicted that logging would lead to Boumā's socio-cultural and environmental demise. This individual was said to be successful in convincing village leaders in Vanua Boumā that tourism was a more sustainable alternative. As a result, the Boumā Forest Park (now known as the Boumā National Heritage Park) was established in 1990 with the backing of the Forestry Department, the New Zealand Government and the Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB). A member of Mataqali

Matakuro in Lavena claimed it was his father who was the individual primarily responsible for convincing community members to ban logging in Boumā:

When my dad...
he's died...
but when he was in the first meeting,
the chief wanted him
to cut down the trees
for the Tui Cakau [Provincial Chief].

But the Boumā chiefs –
they had a meeting with the Tui Cakau
to stop the cutting of the trees
for the Taiwanese⁸⁸ company.

So they went down to Somosomo
and our *turaga ni vanua*⁸⁹ was telling them
that we wanted to keep our trees:

We have our place
and if you cut down the trees
our children will not have trees.

And others in Boumā said,

But if we cut our trees we will get a lot of money.

My dad said,

Please
would you let them keep their money?
We will keep our trees.

⁸⁸ According to NZAID, it was a Korean forestry scheme

⁸⁹ The chief of the speaker's *yavusa*.

My father managed to convince them to keep the trees.
But the people of Boumā didn't know what to do
so the New Zealand company [NZAID]⁹⁰
came in to help them develop ecotourism.

This narrative demonstrates the speaker's pride in his father's foresight in that he considered what would happen to his community should the forest be cut down. It also showed his audacity to speak up before the Tui Cakau to plead for the forest to remain intact on behalf of many of his people. As has been explained, 'talking straight' is a difficult thing to do, particularly before a Provincial Chief. This must also have been particularly difficult to do when the *Vanua* was not wholly supportive of the survival of the forest when they had been promised more immediate and certain economic returns than any other option at the time.

McLisky (1992) reports a different story. He reports that it was Mataqali Naituku who initially requested that the people should accept foreign requests for logging concessions rather than the Tui Cakau. He also claims that it was the Forestry Department that encouraged Boumā locals to accept ecotourism as an alternative to commercial logging. After the 1987 coups, the Boumā community were pressured to log hardwood timber for toothpick production for overseas markets. Mataqali Naituku's requests for logging concessions, he says, were rejected after the Department of Forestry explained their concerns about the ecosystem at Boumā and the value of ecotourism to the villages. McLisky argues that the Forestry Department's proposal for ecotourism as an alternative to logging resulted in a small group of villagers approaching Fiji Forestry to request assistance in establishing ecotourism in the area.

Whoever it was that initiated the push for ecotourism as an alternative to logging, there appears to be some agreement as to what happened after this point. In 1988, after Korovou villagers approached NLTB (the government department responsible for the management of native lands) to request assistance in establishing a forest park on their

⁹⁰ Words in [] are the author's insertions for the purpose of greater clarification.

land, a development plan was drawn up for the Boumā National Heritage Park including the Tavoro Falls Recreation Area, with technical assistance from Fiji Forestry. In 1989 the NLTB drew up a plan with the local communities with the following development objectives in mind: conservation, recreation, and local employment (Seroma, 1995; Crosby, 2002).

In 1989, the NLTB and the Department of Forestry requested assistance from NZAID for support in facility development and training (Malani, 2002). The aim of NZAID was to

...pilot the means by which communities could conserve and protect their natural resources and cultural heritage within Boumā National Heritage Park and achieve sustainable livelihoods... [and]...to produce lasting improvements in living conditions of present and future generations of men, women and children, especially the poor (Watson, 2000, p. 5).

The Fiji Tourism Forum is held annually by the Ministry of Tourism as an event for industry members to address tourism issues and plan for them. The Forum also saw ecotourism as a form of poverty-alleviation, particularly for rural Fijians. In his response to the Boumā National Heritage Park's British Airways Award, Fiji Tourism Forum chairman Martin Darveniza told an industry meeting that ecotourism had the potential to help more than just the people directly involved in the industry: "It can spread its economic benefits throughout Fiji, help arrest the rural-urban drift, alleviate poverty, especially in rural areas, and raise the living standard for all" (cited in Ragogo, 2002, para. 16).

Therefore, while local motivations for ecotourism were largely as a reaction to a potentially environmentally disastrous development alternative (forestry), as well as economic returns, others framed their own motivations for developing ecotourism. These motivations included 'poverty-reduction', 'conservation', and 'recreation': all

introduced concepts which, at the time, held little meaning or value for Boumā locals. This highlights the differences between local and Western values that came to be negotiated in the process of establishing and managing community-based ecotourism in Boumā. This chapter will include descriptions of the various management bodies that have been involved in the management of the Boumā National Heritage Park's projects since 1990 and will lay the groundwork for a discussion of conflicting approaches to 'development' in Boumā.

Participation

It is necessary here to outline how local communities have viewed past management activity so that a clearer optic of the history of the establishment and development of ecotourism initiatives in the park can be obtained. These accounts will contribute to my argument that things are not wholly as they have been publicised and that the picture of success driven by the national and international media, government departments and external development agencies conceals inconsistencies with this image that exist for the local communities. How local communities perceive their level of participation and empowerment through these initiatives will be illustrated in greater detail in subsequent chapters. As the National Trust had only just started managing the projects when I arrived in 2004, I cannot comment on local perceptions of their management. I can, however, provide local perceptions of the three organisations that were responsible for managing the projects prior to the involvement of the National Trust.

Criticisms of the participatory approach to development include a concern that development agencies are conducting the approach to suit their own agendas, and in so doing, contribute to the maintenance of existing power relationships. To some then, participation has been read as yet more post-development rhetoric, lacking in substance. This maintenance of existing power relationship is the first of three 'tyrannies' of participation sustained by Cooke and Kothari's (2001) *Participation: The New Tyranny?* Cooke and Kothari's criticisms of participation resonates in the work of Jane

Turnbull's *South Pacific Agendas in the Quest to Protect Natural Areas* (2003) in which she claims that the intergovernmental South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) uses its connections and its power to constantly regenerate work for itself and ensure its own survival regardless of the inequitable relationships it perpetuates. SPREP has been responsible for setting up seventeen community conservation areas in the Pacific and Turnbull describes these community conservation areas as a 'conduit for external involvement' (p. 12). These community conservation areas include Boumā National Heritage Park.

Another tyranny noted by Kothari and Cooke (2001) is that the participatory approach is, oftentimes, overwhelmingly and unquestionably accepted and lacking in any dialogue concerning alternatives. Therefore, the power remains in the hands of outsiders despite rhetoric touting the participatory approach as the antidote to traditional theories on which development has been framed (e.g. modernisation and neo-Marxist dependency). Christens and Speers (2006) argue that the use of the term 'participatory' serves to justify and add credibility to externally made decisions rather than genuinely supporting local communities in leading the development process. In this way, 'participation' acts very much like the words 'green' or 'sustainable' or 'eco' and, therefore, should be treated with equal cynicism.

Brett (2003) argues that because of the scale and hierarchical nature of development agencies, they are forced to only implement weak forms of participation. These forms of participation merely involve a degree of consultation with local communities and the need to inform them of the decisions they have made. Agencies may argue that weaker forms of consultation is better than no consultation at all while also recognising that weak participation may also 'incur high transaction costs, raise excessive expectations, substitute inappropriate local for technical knowledge, and allow local elites to capture development resources' (World Bank, 1992, p. 4 cited in Brett, 2003, p. 6).

The following section will illustrate how the involvement of NLTB, Fiji Forestry and Fiji Pine was locally perceived to provide only weak forms of consultation and could be described as participatory in rhetoric only. When Tourism Resource Consultants (TRC) later replaced Fiji Pine, control was largely placed back into the hands of the Boumā people again.

NLTB, Fiji Forestry and Fiji Pine

Fiji Forestry started managing the project from 1990 after the NLTB and the Minister of Fijian Affairs came to Boumā to look for suitable sites for forest reserves. This was an opportunity for the Boumā community to state their needs and wants. In May the same year, the NLTB and the Forestry Department presented NZAID with the plans for phase 1 of the proposed Boumā National Heritage Park (The Tavoro Amenity and Recreation Area). This resulted in NZAID agreeing to fund phase one and two of the Park project (see Table 1). A groundbreaking ceremony was held on November 11, 1990 and the Boumā National Heritage Park was officially established.

The Forest Park was originally planned based on the following phases:

Table 1. Project phases for ecotourism development of Boumā Forest Park⁹¹

Phase	Attraction type	Area (ha)	Tribe/village	Proposed establishment date
1	Forest-based, waterfalls, natural attractions	535	Korovou	1991
2	Coastal-based, coastal walk, marine attractions, trekking	645	Lavena	1992
3	Forest- & culture-based, cultural sites, lodges etc.	423	Vidawa Waitabu	1993
4	Forest-based, inland hiking, bird watching	603	Lavena, Vidawa, Korovou & Waitabu	1994

(Seroma, 1995)

⁹¹ Currently 'Boumā National Heritage Park'

While Table 1 shows the planned phases of development, the *actual* dates of establishment of the various projects are indicated in Table 2 as of 2006⁹².

Table 2: Actual dates of establishment as of 2004

Attraction type	<i>Mataqali</i> (clan/landowners)/Village	Actual establishment date
Boumā National Heritage Park	All	November 11, 1990
Tavoro Falls	Naituku/Korovou	April 1991
Lavena Backpacker Lodge and Coastal Walk	Qali & Matakuro/Lavena	May 1993
Waitabu Marine Reserve	Waisoki, Vunivesi & Veiniu/Waitabu	1998 (<i>tabu</i> placed); March 2001 (first visitors)
Vidawa Forest Hike	Lekutu/Vidawa	September 2004
Waitabu Campground	Waisoki, Vunivesi & Veiniu/Waitabu	2007

On 21 August, 1990 the Vakavanua Agreement was signed by Mataqali Naituku (owners of the Tavoro Falls land). This agreement is a commitment to protect the forest and its resources in perpetuity. Although largely a verbal commitment between the NLTB and Naituku, the Vakavanua Agreement is considered legally binding under Fijian culture and is effective for 99 years (Seroma, 1995). Although they are lacking in any formal legal backing, these kinds of agreements are gaining popularity across the Pacific Islands:

Whereas it can be argued that vakavanua (“traditional” or “in the way of the land”) arrangements are customary and possibly in accord with the ordinances when made between Fijians, such arrangements between Fijian landowners and non-Fijians are not legal. But they have become increasingly common (Ward, 1999, p. 83).

⁹² This data was accumulated during the fieldwork period of this study and was ongoing after returning to New Zealand.

McLisky (1992) states that this agreement has had a profound effect on the Naituku tribe's commitment to sustainable tourism at Tavoro Falls while Seroma reports that it has had a positive knock-on effect for the whole *Vanua*:

This type of agreement can be a precedent in Fiji for the voluntary establishment of a protected area on customary land with the landowners receiving development assistance to create village-based income earning opportunities (Seroma, 1995, para. 54).

The Vakavanua Agreement could be considered the basis on which future development had the potential to be carried out *va'avanua*.

After much disagreement including debates over the location of the visitors' centre at Tavoro, the Tavoro Falls Amenity and Recreation Area was officially made commercial in April 1991. In the first six months, the park generated US\$8000 for the local community from its 500 visitors per month. Fifty percent of this was fed back into the park while the other 50 percent went into school resources and housing (Buckley, 2003, p. 61).

McLisky (1992) states that the assistance of NZAID was sought because, at the time, the Fijian Government was struggling with the new concepts of 'eco' and 'nature' tourism and how to apply policy to these areas. Boumā was provided with a New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC) officer for one month for training and establishment of the park which was to be based on the pre-existing Colo-i-Suva Forest Park model⁹³ (McLisky, 1992, pp. 116-117). Therefore, development was borrowed from a pre-existing template of conservation management based on a different park and community miles away on the mainland. It was also built on Western concepts of 'eco' and 'nature' rather than working from local perceptions of the environment and the values they accorded their place within it.

⁹³ Colo-i-Suva is currently undergoing its own micro-political challenges and may not be currently considered the ideal model for a community-based ecotourism project.

In some respects, the early days of the park did not leave a good impression on the people of Boumā. Boumā locals alleged that Fiji Forestry misappropriated money intended for the projects and stole machinery. Fiji Pine replaced Fiji Forestry as project managers in 1994 and managed the projects until 1997. However, Fiji Pine's management appeared to provide no better solution, as they too allegedly mismanaged funds intended for the development of the project. When Fiji Pine replaced Fiji Forestry in 1994, they were reported to have imported labour rather than drawing from Boumā's strong pool of carpentry skills and continued Fiji Forestry's legacy of excluding the local community from the consultation process.

In so doing, despite the rhetoric of 'community-based development', Vanua Boumā was allowed little control over the project from the outset.

The following participant was critical of the way the Fiji government and particularly, Fiji Forestry, dominated the initial planning process:

When the Fiji government came in
there was no discussion.
They just came in
and did what they wanted to do
and told us what to do
and they never came to help.
There was a big problem.

In addition to a lack of consultation between Fiji Forestry and the Boumā community, a previous Lavena *turaga n i'oro*⁹⁴ described his feelings of devastation, claiming that Fiji Forestry stole tens of thousands of dollars of resources from the project:

The money from New Zealand
was for timber, equipment and machinery.
When the project was finished

⁹⁴ Village headman/ government officer

the Forestry Department took all these
and made money from them.
They took a generator, an electric saw
and some leftover money.

I was the *turaga ni 'oro* at the time
and the Forestry department,
they ran off with about \$40,000.
That one [*referring to a person familiar to both of us*]
he was from the Forestry,
he was taking a lot of money.

Nothing happened from that.
We were never compensated for our loss.
Three months of working
gathering all those rocks
and bringing them all together.
I felt really sorry for the community.

Despite investing a great deal of emotional and physical energy into the project, the community were seldom consulted nor were they allowed much input into the decision-making of the projects. The local community felt deceived. This was the start of a growing distrust toward Fiji government involvement in the project.

The following is a conversation I had with a member of *mataqali* Naituku (Tavoro Falls project) in 2004. This participant also maintains that the Boumā projects were detrimentally affected by Fiji government departments:

They started upgrading the Tavoro Falls in 1989
and the Tavoro project officially opened in 1990.

It was new to the local people,
this kind of business.
And it wasn't going on well until,
until I think they changed
from Fiji Forestry to Fiji Pine.

At first Fiji Pine was good.
Then after they had been going for a while,
it was like it was going back
to the way the Forestry started:
Like when they came and they took things from us.

They told us,
 this is to be done this way
 and you should do this,
 and you should do it this way and ...

You know,
like that.

They never stayed here in the village.
They just came and went.
And each time they came back
they would have a new idea
and they would go back
and then come back again
with another new idea for us.
And that's I think
what makes it hard for the villagers.

When they come here to help us, they should say,
 We think you should do things like this.

And

It is up to you.
If you agree then you do it.

And

If you don't agree.
then don't do it.

The same participant suggested that the people of Boumā had been too malleable. Hospitality is a key characteristic of what it is to be Fijian. Fijian customs (*itovo*) or manners (*varau*) entail hospitality and the welcoming of others (Carrier, 1992). This is no different to the way the Boumā people value this concept. While hospitality is what makes the Fijian culture so compatible with customer care, the participant above suggests that perhaps it needs to be tempered at management/land ownership level so as to avoid being dominated and disempowered by external development agents.

Maybe people here are too kind
even to [the cooperative officer]⁹⁵

To the *palagis* [tourists]
being hospitable is good
but to these people...

We have had a long history
with the Fijian government
and its involvement in our project
from 1992 – 2002
and what we see is what we see
and that is all people see.

⁹⁵ The cooperative officer suspected of misappropriating funds from the project was later found to be innocent.

The management is not good
and the people from the outside
come and say to the management
You do this.
That is not good for the people of Lavena.

It is understandable from this account that the people of Boumā have become very wary of government departments and ‘outsiders’ in general who have been involved in park and resource management. They felt that first Fiji Forestry and then Fiji Pine had taken advantage of them and had disempowered them by imposing a predetermined form of development rather than allowing locals to determine their own course of development.

New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID)⁹⁶ and TRC

A number of participants reported that NZAID heard about the problems Boumā was having with Fiji Pine and took measures to fund the projects directly through their own appointed Management Services Consultants (MSCs) (TRC).

There was some suspicion, too, when NZAID first moved in to help manage the project. Although NZAID drew on the ‘expertise’ of some Fijians to help manage the project, these Fijians were not from Boumā. Locals were concerned that the knowledge of those consultants was not site or culture-specific:

A Fijian lady used to come - [*name*]
with a New Zealander.
The Fijian lady was from [*a different island*]
and we [*the local Boumā people*]
thought they were imposing ideas

⁹⁶ Formerly NZODA.

not specific to Lavena on us.

What we know
and our education –
we must go from there.

If we had done that,
things would be very different.
But we didn't.
Instead,
we did what they told us to do.

Clearly, it is not enough to provide a local community with a representative from the same ethnic group. Each *Vanua* and each *mataqali* within that *Vanua* has its own sets of knowledge and skills based on their specific environment and histories. Any imposition of knowledge and skills from outside this specific social and ecological environment is likely to create a degree of conflict. This will be also discussed in terms of university educated locals later in this chapter.

In the poetic narrative above, the participant refers not to their cultural characteristics (e.g. *madua* or respect) but to their education to explain why they did not reject the culturally and environmentally incompatible input from the NZAID representative. Many in the Boumā community blamed much of what they considered to be passive responses or bad choices in response to ecotourism development on a low level of education: particularly the low education level of the majority of those directly involved in project management. However, as will be explained later, education gleaned outside the Boumā taskscape will not do.

Despite initial apprehension at the possibility of yet more disappointment, the style of assistance received by NZAID came to be seen as a welcome change from that of Fiji

Pine and Fiji Forestry. A former Lavena manager expresses himself about NZAID years after their initial contact in a way common to the majority of my participants:

When the government of New Zealand came in
we liked the way
we all talked about
how we can do things
and I liked that.

The Boumā community were clearly unhappy with the way Fiji Forestry and then Fiji Pine were managing the projects. When NZAID learned of the problems locals were having with Fiji Pine, they worked to directly fund and otherwise support the projects via their Management Services Consultants (MSCs), Tourism Resource Consultants (TRC). In 1997, Roger Cornforth of TRC conducted a review for the New Zealand government. The review indicated that community participation and ownership were weak. As a result of the review, in October 1997, the Wellington-based TRC took on the role of managing the NZAID Fiji Ecotourism Programme.

In early 1997, all projects were halted due to lack of momentum and other problems. TRC needed a local community member on the ground to communicate and administer funding between New Zealand and Vanua Boumā. One *Vanua* member considered trustworthy and reliable was recommended to act as project advisor and community facilitator. However, he later proved to be an unsuccessful representative due to his lack of availability as he held another role in the community that required him to travel. Consequently, he was replaced by another Boumā resident. Regular swapping of roles has become commonplace in Vanua Boumā. This is often the result of suspicions of favouritism toward kin members and personal agendas when placed in positions of perceived power. Regular staff turnover, particularly of management, has often caused communication problems and delays in the project. This has been exacerbated by knowledge and skills lost as these are seldom transferred to new employees even though sharing (including knowledge sharing) is central to the *vanua* (Nabobo-Baba,

2007, 2007a, 2008; Otsuka, 2006)⁹⁷. The question of knowledge sharing will be taken up again in Chapter Nine.

TRC's 1997 *Inception Report* revealed that offers were still coming in from foreign interests for timber purchases from Boumā at that time. Even if locals agreed to these contracts, however, the NLTB would also have to agree and this was considered very unlikely (TRC, 1997, p.15). The report also noted that the Tavoro Falls and the Lavena project were both matters of concern regarding the distribution of benefits. TRC particularly noted problems related to the exclusion of women from the projects; poor organisational structure; uneven ownership of the projects; and the distribution of funds to Lavena's new lodge (TRC, 1997). Therefore, in 1997, TRC recognised there were social structural challenges which were affecting the projects. However, the source and extent of these challenges was not clear, and no solutions were offered.

In mid-2000, the coup put a halt to most of the Programme's activities and tourism numbers reduced dramatically until the International Travel Advisory relaxed their warnings. Regular periods of political unrest in Fiji such as this in combination with the fickle nature of tourism, highlights the danger of Vanua Boumā depending too heavily on the projects to support their livelihoods.

The *Inception Report* also revealed that the sale of shells and coral from the Lavena Visitors Centre was sending the wrong message regarding 'ecotourism' and so this was discouraged. In addition, it reported that herbicides were being used for trackside control. In 2006, this was still the case. One chemical commonly used near waterways was 1080 (commonly used in New Zealand to eradicate possum populations).⁹⁸ This issue was mentioned in Chapter Six.

In early 1998, the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was formed. This was intended to advise NZAID and to coordinate Fijian Government department contributions. PAC

⁹⁷ This will be explained in more detail in Chapter Eight.

⁹⁸ A friend in Vidawa complained that her child had exhibited a rash all over her body after bathing in a waterway near an area regularly sprayed with pesticides and weed-killers at Tavoro Falls.

currently includes the Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB), The Fijian Affairs Board (FAB), the Ministry of Tourism, and the National Trust of Fiji, Forestry and Fisheries (Dan Schmitt, personal communication, February 20, 2008; see also Ministry of Tourism, 2004).

Dan Schmitt, the local Peace Corps representative became a friend during our time in Boumā. His role was to facilitate business skills development in Waitabu. For this reason, he had been granted access to a PAC meeting of the park in 2006. Dan reported that PAC had no possible way of knowing what was going on in Boumā. Although PAC meetings were held annually, information was not flowing to PAC from the park managers. He recounted one meeting held at the Korovou School in which items on the agenda were covered meticulously but nothing was moved to an action item. Therefore, no final decisions were made. National Trust needed to know what to do with their budget allocations but received no guidance from the PAC meeting. In Schmitt's opinion, the PAC/Boumā National Heritage Park relationship was 'disintegrating' (ibid).

In June 2003, TRC's Management Services Contract (MSC) ended and all project responsibilities were handed back to the community and the Boumā National Heritage Park Committee (BNHPC). An *Exit Strategy* (2003) was formulated by the TRC review team: Roger Cornforth, an environmental specialist from the Development Cooperation Division of MFAT, Wellington; Ms Emele Duituturaga, Community Development Specialist and local consultant; and Mr Manoa Malani of the Ministry of Tourism. The team concluded that Boumā was ready to transition to self-sustainability and made the following conclusions and recommendations:

While the park has not been afforded any legal status of protection, the Vakavanua Agreement is working and local authorities are supporting the park's initiatives: 'The level of understanding by village communities of the link between conservation, sustainable development generally and the sustaining of income generated by

ecotourism in particular seem high'. The projects are 'operating without NZODA [NZOID] consultant input, although most are still fragile, particularly in respect of enterprise management, maintenance, and replacement of infrastructure'. The broader community are reaping the benefits of the projects (TRC, 2003, p. 3).

It should be noted that at this crucial period there is no mention of social stability and strong local governance, vital to endorsing the transfer of overall management back to Vanua Boumā.

The Lavena project board members interpreted the completion of TRC's contract as self-extraction. Some suggested that TRC 'pulled out' because, in many ways, they were working in opposition to the Fiji government. They said this was because Fiji's government departments required all funding, consultation, and auditing to come directly to Fiji through them. This assumption was backed by an NZOID official I spoke to in 2005. The board members also recognised that TRC felt it was time the projects were self-sufficient and that they been preparing Boumā for this event for some time as stipulated in TRC's June 2003 *Exit Strategy*.

They pulled out
because they had many reasons, eh?
They had a clash with the government.

The Fijian government said
TRC should give the money
to them and that they
would find a way to help us
in our own projects.

And another thing,
New Zealand said we should know

how to run our own business now
and stand up and do it on our own.

Yeah. So after TRC pulled out
the Ministry of Tourism,
they had a clash against us.

The Ministry of Tourism
thought that the New Zealand government
was supposed to give the funds to them.
And then the Ministry of Tourism,
was going to work with us.

But TRC didn't want that, maybe.
And that's why this year [2004],
the management of the park
was given to the National Trust.
They would distribute money
from the New Zealand government
to the Boumā project.

It was important to understand how the local park managers interpreted the completion of TRC's management contract with Boumā. It was as if the community perceived TRC and the New Zealand government as one and the same. The Boumā community appeared to endow TRC with more power than they actually had. Although park management had formed a fairly accurate picture of why TRC had completed their contract and how the National Trust of Fiji had come to replace them as park managers, there always appeared to be some uncertainty and lack of information about matters concerning PAC and foreign interests in the park. All members of Vanua Boumā as landowners (particularly the ecotourism managers) should have no doubt as to who are

deciding, what they are doing, and the reasons for their actions concerning their people, land and livelihoods. This was seldom the case.

Even after TRC had pulled out after six years of service, many of those locals not directly involved in the projects had no idea who or what TRC or NZAID were. While those directly involved in the management of the projects (chiefs, project managers, receptionists, committee and boards) were directly contacted, trained, consulted and informed, there was almost no contact with the rest of the owners (the *Vanua*). As had been noted, TRC's 1997 *Inception Report* made clear that they were aware of problems with organisational structure and uneven ownership of the projects. Regardless, apart from TRC's commission of Trudy Jones' (1998) PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal), a study involving community consultation that enquired into 'some of the issues facing the communities involved in the project' (p. 4), there was little widespread community consultation.

However, she concedes that although PRA is useful in helping to identify a range of issues that may constrain or facilitate local development and empowerment, it also has its limitations. In situations where development practitioners arrive in local communities with a specific development agenda, PRA is less interested in cultural change *per se* as it is in how local communities respond in the process of embedding Western knowledge into local economies. Therefore, cultural change is not explored for its own sake. As a result, PRA '...tends to homogenize and gloss over conflicts' (Bar-On & Prinsen, 1999). Jones (1998) also acknowledges the propensity for PRA literature to ignore pre-existing intra-communal conflict. Instead, it more commonly assumes consensus (Murphy, 1990).

It is important that PRA addresses the pre-existing micropolitical climate as, when introducing something like community-based ecotourism, 'the challenge is to formulate a functional hybridisation of traditional and commercial structures or practices to facilitate sustainable community-based tourism in the area' (Jones, 1998, p. 5). It is by attempting this fusion of traditional and entrepreneurial that gives potential to bringing

'quiet' conflict to the surface. While Jones (1998) accepts that conflict is not always necessarily negative, conflict resolution is likely to take a great deal longer than the four weeks it took her to conduct her PRA exercise in Boumā.

While most of the communities were aware of the presence or the interest of TRC and NZAID in the projects, others involved in the day to day management of the projects had fairly strong feelings about TRC and NZAID. The majority of these were very positive about their support. One of the project managers was particularly supportive of these organisations:

When the New Zealand government came
things were much better.
David [Bamford from TRC] and I
had a really good time discussing,
eating together
working together
and the other one, Ross [Corbett, TRC].

I said to everyone
This is what we really need.
This is what we really want.
To work together and
talk together.
Not like Fiji Pine.

TRC's consultation style appeared to be more inclusive and participatory than that of Fiji Forestry and Fiji Pine. This contributed to a feeling of greater community autonomy over the management of resources and the future development of the Boumā community and their projects. However, the Boumā community have provided mixed reports about foreign aid and consultation. Despite the negative legacy left by Fiji Forestry and Fiji Pine, there were some families in the community during this time who

continued to support the idea of local management over the involvement of a foreign agency such as TRC.

The demand for local ‘expertise’

Interestingly, some were adamant that, if a local management group was appointed, a ‘city-educated’ Fijian should not be selected. There were concerns that someone who had been indoctrinated into an urban-based academic lifestyle would be too ‘out of touch’ with village life (life *va’avanua* as it is uniquely lived in the Boumā environmental context). One project manager even stated that their city-educated son would not be a good candidate because he had lived away from the village for too long and would make efforts to implement ideas that were inappropriate for Boumā. It was not only acceptable but desirable to this participant that organisations such as NZAID and TRC take up that role and work closely with the Boumā people, ensuring that locals have the final word on all elements of the planning and management process. In other words, there was a demand for local expertise politically mediated by external (read neutral) consultants. This is resonant of Ingold’s ‘taskscape’ in which skills and knowledge emerge from direct interaction with the environment in which one dwells. It may be that this participant felt that the ongoing and multiple shifts of attitudes, values, and perceptions of Boumā life and those the son had acquired, and by which he had become embedded in his new life in a city-based university, would mean that any new skills he had to share would have little value in Boumā’s taskscape. At the same time, it was recognised that there were internal conflicts that were providing barriers to the development of the community-based ecotourism initiatives. For many, a degree of external and neutral mediation could provide at least a short-term solution to this problem as long as external consultation did not lead the decision-making process.

Of particular concern to many Boumā people was that the Western element of time did not fit local perceptions and treatments of time. One project manager recognised that for the development of the projects to be sustainable, they must be done slowly and with sensitivity to the local community and the environment. The manager feared that

‘educated’ people – in her words, those who had graduated from university - were more likely to push the community too far and too fast. It is exactly this kind of hurried, top-down approach, she said, that would prove disastrous for Boumā:

It won’t work for educated people
to come in like that.
You have to slowly implement these ideas
and work it out with them.

They have to be there with them to see them do it.
It’s just like what NZAID is trying to do.
To try to get this project sustainable
and then slowly trying to pull it up.

Any Fijian coming in from the city
with their own images of how it should be coming in
will not work.

Some people have been negative about TRC
but I tell them

If it wasn’t for TRC
we wouldn’t get anywhere.

It appears that, at that time, some in the community were only interested in foreign consultants if they saw that they came with funding.

The people wanted to have
local consultants
because they
were not seeing the funds from New Zealand.

This was because NZAID
wasn't really satisfied
with who to give their funds to.
That was one thing
and then there was the coup.

It took about two years
for the local people to accept TRC.

Another participant was particularly positive about the inclusive, bottom-up style of consultation they received from TRC.

I think TRC are the best we have seen.
They are totally different
from Fiji Pine and Fiji Forestry.
Because the thing is we like foreign people.

When they come and have a meeting,
like even when Ross and Dave [both TRC consultants] came,
we have a meeting together,
then we'll share things together
and then after that we have mataqali meeting.

When we have a mataqali meeting,
TRC explain everything they think
will make things better.

But the thing is for us, Dave said

If you have a good idea to improve the project
then you take it to the *mataqali*
and if they disapprove,

you come back with it.
You don't do it if they disagree.
Even though it is a good idea.
Then you make other plans.

And it has been working well.
I know because I have been in management
and it has really been working well.
And they said,
Don't do anything.
Even if it is a good idea.
Don't do it if they disagree.

Despite the fact that TRC consisted of foreign-based and highly educated consultants, one of the project managers found them to be more than satisfactory in their management style, and preferred them over their city-educated son. Perhaps a part of what they liked about *'aivalagi* (foreign) consultants was based on the fact that NZAID/TRC were the only foreign consultants they knew and that they compared favourably to NLTB, Fiji Forestry and Fiji Pine. It appeared that it was the bottom-up approach these organisations offered that was a 'breath of fresh air' to the Boumā community. Although TRC concentrated on consulting with those directly involved in the running of the projects (with the exception of a PRA in 1990) (Jones, 1990), it appeared that TRC's advice to the communities which stated that good community-based management necessitated full and regular consultation with *mataqalis* was what had most impressed the Boumā communities.

The New Zealand government funded the projects through all of these phases. It was intended that the labour be provided locally while the 'expertise' would be provided by PAC (the Project Advisory Committee). However, as has been explained, in the early days of park development, and particularly before the New Zealand's more hands-on involvement, labour and materials were not always sourced locally.

The National Trust

The National Trust of Fiji is a statutory organisation under the administration of the Department of Culture and Heritage. Established in 1970, and governed by the National Trust of Fiji Act (1970) and the National Trust Amendment Act (1998), the National Trust of Fiji was created to protect Fiji's cultural and natural heritage (Department of Culture & Heritage, n.d., para. 3 & 4). It currently administers six national parks⁹⁹ including Boumā National Heritage Park.

The National Trust's first audit of Boumā National Heritage Park was at the end of my residential fieldwork period in November, 2004. Avoiding some government departments due to the negative impact they had on Boumā in the early days of establishing Boumā as a national park, TRC and NZAID approached the National Trust as funding administrators and for future assistance with the project. In 2004, one Boumā local suggested why The National Trust was selected for this role:

They were probably chosen
because they were already running
similar kinds of projects in Fiji.

It's not like a tourism thing.
It is more like a conservation area.
They will work for this year
and for next year
and then stop.

Despite this projection, in 2006 The National Trust of Fiji was still managing the project. In 2004, NZAID agreed to assist financially for another three years with PAC taking the consultancy role. However, this was agreed on the proviso that the release of funds was subject to satisfactory proposals and proper reporting on the management of

⁹⁹ The parks are Koroyanitu National Park, Sigatoka Sandunes National Park, Colo-i-Suva Forest Reserve, Bouma National Park, Nausori Highlands, and Lovoni Trail.

finance as this had been a concern in the past. It was agreed at this time that the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB) would take the lead role in the project (Ministry of Tourism, 2004).

In its 2004 meeting, PAC drafted a work plan for the first six months of 2004. The following section of the work plan describes the program's purpose:

The program is designed to address critical needs of the communities so that they are empowered to manage the project resulting in a “win-win” situation [tourism, environment and culture are all sustainable] where they are able to protect their environment and at the same time achieve sustainable livelihood (Ministry of Tourism, 2004, para. 3).

While this is an admirable goal, Turnbull (2003) warns that development agents and government ministries set local communities up with unrealistic expectations of what is achievable (p. 13; see also Heher, 2003, p. 26; Lew, Yu, Zhang & Ap, 2002, p. 116). When things do not materialise as promised, communities are left feeling disappointed and distrusting of those offering such ideals.

Conclusion and discussion

This chapter has addressed a number of issues central to this thesis. It has laid the foundation for an analysis of cultural hybridity at the micro and meso level and the power struggles, levels of participation and ‘room to manoeuvre’ these networks allow individuals (de Sardan, 2005). In this chapter, this has been explored through levels of participation in the early years of the establishment of the park. While community-based ecotourism literature advocates high levels of participation, this was not originally the case for Boumā. In the early days of the National Park establishment, NLTB, Fiji Forestry, and Fiji Pine, provided more of a top-down approach to development. This approach denied meaningful local participation during the establishment stage of park development. It also denied the Boumā community the

potential to create their own localised or indigenised forms of development in a way that held lasting meaning and value for their unique taskscape (incorporating historic and politically situated cultural, environmental, social and economic values, skills and knowledge).

The early days of national park establishment could have deterred Vanua Boumā from continuing with ecotourism development. Some benefits were realised and this sustained their efforts for further development as well as inspired other villages to start their own community-based ecotourism initiatives. However, the top-down approaches of NLTB, Fiji Forestry, and Fiji Pine combined with pre-existing and project-related conflicts and the resulting social structural erosion, strengthened local resolution to continue these projects *va'avanua* (based on *vanua* values).

This chapter provided a 'meso' level view of what happened at the point of contact (or influence) between development agents and their policies and the Boumā community. Olivier de Sardan's 'entangled social logic' and notions of 'cultural hybridity' have been introduced here as useful theoretical concepts. These concepts draw our attention more closely to the more complex political manoeuvres that may be read at the meso level. These involve choices, actions, limitations to agency and the negotiations between individuals and groups that occur at this nexus. This thesis is interested in what occurs at this meso level from the perspective of those situated at the micro level.

The next chapter emphasises networks and agency at a more micro level by illustrating how the division of the park was instrumental in creating conflict and social structural erosion. The majority of those I spoke with suggested that the *vanua* (as concept) and the *Vanua* (as tribe) were jeopardised as a result of these divisions.

Chapter Eight

Diversification and division

This chapter fulfils two roles: it provides some detail for the reader about each of the community-based ecotourism initiatives within the Boumā National Heritage Park. It also discusses the division of the *Vanua* into four semi-autonomous commercial enterprises.

Crosby (2002) suggests that the *vanua* concept was at the heart of local requests for assistance with ecotourism development: ‘They wanted a prosperity that also included social and spiritual harmony’ (p. 373). Somewhat ironically, however, Crosby argues that the NLTB had learned from the divisiveness of the Waikatakata¹⁰⁰ project and so had insisted that the four villages each work together on their own ecotourism projects so as to avoid conflict. As can be seen from Tables 1 and 2 in the previous chapter, Vanua Boumā was divided into separate commercial enterprises by landowning units.

Conversely, the participants I asked insisted it was not the NLTB but TRC that was responsible for the decision to divide the *Vanua* into separate commercial enterprises. However, as has been stated, many community members did not distinguish between NZAID and TRC. Therefore, they may have been referring to NZAID. Regular meetings between park managers across the Boumā projects were established to encourage the synergy of the projects as a *Vanua* project. All ecotourism initiatives were managed under the collective umbrella of the Boumā Park Management Committee representative of the whole *Vanua*.

From an interview with Alivereti Bogiva (Fijian Affairs Board), McLisky (1992) writes:

¹⁰⁰ According to Crosby (2002), the first *vanua*-based archaeology development in Fiji

The idea of community development seems to be the overriding and intrinsic principle out of which the three guiding principles for Boumā (preservation, employment and provision) have been developed. Before the Boumā project, each village was literally a separate entity with only a minimal amount of interaction. Today, environmental tourism centred on Tavoro Falls has helped strengthen the relationship between the four *Yavusa* (p. 120).

However, instead of strengthening the ties between the four *yavusas*, my research reveals that the division created a competitive wedge between them. While initial regular park management meetings were arranged to maintain transparency and communication between the projects, these became sporadic and poorly-managed. Often, I observed that the meetings were either started much later than had been planned or cancelled altogether. Local villagers have suggested that park managers had not been forthcoming in communicating information about their individual projects to other park managers which has led to an unhealthy competition and a divisive impact on the *Vanua*. Many have reported that this resulted in widespread sentiments of jealousy, resentment and mistrust between kinship groups:

We don't want each project to separate the Vanua.
When it started, it was made to bring the Vanua together -
to bring the people of all the four villages together.
That was the main reason for starting the project.
But different people in different villages
have different ideas.
People no longer sharing information
between projects.
They are not communicating very well anymore.
People are not so happy with how things are going.

Despite this rather negative impression of the fate of each project and the *Vanua* as a whole, the interpretation of the Waitabu participant illustrates the potential the

ecotourism initiatives could have for drawing the *Vanua* together again for the first time in a long time. Certainly, *talanoa* in all the villages indicated ongoing efforts to revive and maintain linkages between each *yavusa* in the *Vanua*.

Ironically, one of the benefits stated by some locals from the ecotourism projects was that the community was brought together again for the first time in a long time for a shared goal. From an interview with Alivereti Bogiva (formerly Fiji Forestry and NLTB) in 1992, McLisky states:

The idea of community development seems to be the overriding and intrinsic principle out of which the three guiding principles for Boumā (preservation, employment and provision) have developed. Before the Boumā project each village was literally a separate entity with only a minimal amount of interaction. Today, environmental tourism centred on Tavoro Falls has helped strengthen the relationships between the four *yavusa* (1992, p. 120).

A former project manager from Waitabu maintains Bogiva's description of the separateness of the community prior to ecotourism development. She describes her perception of how ecotourism has created an enhanced sense of 'community' in Waitabu (note that with its first tourists in 2001, Waitabu is a new project relative to the others in Boumā National Heritage Park):

Even though we have only started,
I have seen it has brought
the whole community together.
We never used to work like that
for as far back as I can remember.

But just lately,
we have all come to work together.

And I realise,
this helps to make the project run.

Because if only twenty people
work really hard on it,
and the other tend to sit back,
it doesn't work.

So that is one of the greatest benefits
I have seen.

To prevent confusion, it should be noted here that for the majority in the *Vanua*, the impression that the ecotourism initiatives brought the communities together was an initial one. Unfortunately, the more positive perspective was held by only a few members of the community. Others felt that the projects generated a greater force that was pulling the community apart rather than pulling it together. In the more established villages (e.g. Lavena and Korovou), after some time, this feeling faded due to the competitive nature encouraged by the division and diversification of the projects. More recently, the ecotourism initiatives have been largely contributed to, and controlled by, only a small section of the community. This section has involved those directly engaged in the day to day running of the projects (the managers, board/committee members, receptionists, guides) who were often affiliated with the more influential *to'ato'a* (e.g. Valelevu) or *mataqali*. This is not the makings of a successful community-based business built on community-based development principles of participation and empowerment.

The following section introduces the individual projects and a précis of the history of their development.

Tavoro Falls Amenity Area

The Tavoro Falls project, managed by *mataqali* Naituku since the early 1960s, was the first project to be developed by a Boumā *mataqali*. Naituku land covers 535ha of the park and the Naituku ‘owned’ Tavoro Falls includes 544ha of phase one of the Boumā Park development. The falls are situated about one kilometre from the village of Korovou which means visitors can come and go with little contact with locals.

The Naituku people are one of two *mataqali* residing in Korovou (Nakorovou) village. *Mataqali* Naituku has been showing visitors to the lowest of the three waterfalls on their land since the late 1950s. Locals say this was originally a meeting place for Taveuni people and their friends and a place for men to find wives. Visitors would originally present gifts to enjoy the falls. The falls have become a popular commercial wedding site for those staying in Taveuni’s luxury resorts. Consequently, it was Tavoro Falls that inspired other *mataqali* in Boumā to establish their own ecotourism projects. It has been stated that the Tavoro Falls Amenity Area has had a broader influence as the pilot project for indigenous nature-based tourism development across Fiji (Seroma, 1995).

One Korovou teacher reported that the initial funding from NZAID¹⁰¹ for the Tavoro Falls project was misused and that NZAID retracted their agreement for ongoing funding as a result. From my understanding of NZAID funding, the amount and the retraction of the offer to fund was inaccurate but his story, recounted below, is very telling nonetheless. It was clear that Boumā locals were not well informed about the funding and consultation process. This is likely to be the fault of Boumā channels of communication rather than that of NZAID. The teacher reported that Tavoro Falls was promised \$2m from NZAID each year for four years. However, due to mismanagement, funding was retracted after the first year:

I think it was through lack of education

¹⁰¹ Formerly NZODA.

and understanding on their [Mataqali Naituku] part.

And maybe because these people
were not used to seeing
this amount of money
so it was misused.

And like other developing countries -
if I give something to a country,
I would have to have to look
at how that money
or whatever I give
is used.

When they gave us
the \$2 million dollars
it was put in a bank account
accessible by a parish priest from this village.
He did all the negotiations.

So it was agreed that the \$2 million per year
would continue for four years.

But in the first year
the money was misused
so they decided
to give the remaining eight million
to another country that really needed it.

The \$2 million in the first year
was supposed to be spent
on the Tavoro Falls walk.

But I think most of it went into the pockets of ah, ...

like I was saying...
it was misused.

NZAID found the source of the spending
hard to find
because there were no receipts.

So it's a pity
because for that \$8 million
I think there would be a lot of
very good opportunities for us.

The education would be better,
The living standard would be higher.

Last year we had a conversation
with the current manager.
He was saying
that he could take yaqona
to the Vanua
as a presentation for i soro
[reconciliation for misusing the funds from NZAID].

I gave him an idea.
I said,

Instead of that, why don't you just contribute to the school?

In Boumā,
we have four villages
and seven settlements
which are all connected

most strongly by the school.

In the school,
we have all the children
from all the different villages
and all the settlements.

The *Vanua* is in here.
That's what I told him.

But due to his level of education,
he tends to not to take
what I am saying seriously.

I was saying,
If you presented *yaqona* like in the traditional way
you will have to go to all these villages.

Someone needed to apologise
because no one in the *Vanua*
got any benefit back
from all the hard work
they did for the project.

It was really a difficult job:
carrying all the white pebbles from down here
up to the second waterfall.

It was very tough.

Here is a perfect example of local misinformation. From my other sources, NZAID did not promise \$8 million dollars for the Tavoro Project over a four year period. According to a 1990 Ministry of Foreign Affairs ODA Memorandum, a total of NZ\$69,740 was set aside for the development of Tavoro Falls Reserve and Amenity Area (cited in McLisky 1992, p. 116). However, I do not doubt that there was mismanagement of NZAID funding as part of the running of the Tavoro Project as this has happened in at least two of the other projects that I am aware of. It has not been difficult to misuse NZAID funds as even in 2006, receipts were seldom used and so transparency was low in all the projects.

The Korovou teacher illustrates a number of other points. He shows the hard physical labour the community put into the Tavoro Falls project to get it established. The mismanagement of funds was alleged to have taken place many years ago (around 1990) and yet feelings are still very raw today. Mataqali Naituku was still awaiting an apology from the misappropriation of the NZAID funds in 2004. Another important point made by the teacher was the centrality of the school. The school, more than the church and the Boumā National Heritage Park Vanua-based project, was the hub of the whole community. Only in school sporting and cultural events were the whole community drawn together as one. On no other occasion were the community compelled to come together as one ‘whole and indivisible’ *Vanua* – least of all, perhaps, for the ecotourism projects.

When I revisited Boumā in 2006, I was told that there were still no plans for *mataqali* Vidawa (the other *mataqali* in Korovou) to set up their own ecotourism initiative. The reason for this was that they had seen how ecotourism had created conflict across the *Vanua* including their own *yavusa*. Some members of *mataqali* Vidawa deny realising any benefits from ecotourism from *mataqali* Naituku despite belonging to the same *yavusa* and living side-by-side in the same village.

Lavena Coastal Walk and Backpackers Lodge

Lavena Park covers ten acres and was established as a Park in 1993 and administered by the Forestry Department, the NLTB and the New Zealand government (Waqaisavou, 1999; Cabaniuk, 1996). In Lavena Village (*Yavusa* Lavena), there are 76 households: 55 of these are in the village and the rest make up its settlements.

The Lavena ecotourism project started as a commercial coastal walk in June, 1994. According to one Lavena participant, the decision that Lavena would have a coastal walk and then a lodge originated in Korovou. Those in Korovou came to recognize that a project owned and operated by a whole *yavusa*, rather than by one *mataqali* (as was the case in Korovou) would have been better. The same participant stated that they *only* agreed to the project on the basis that it would be run by the whole *yavusa* rather than one *mataqali*.

In the early 1990s, a small foreign-based kayaking company was established in collaboration with Lavena Village. Since that time the company has moved on. The potential for a permanent, community-based kayaking business would be realised in 2001.

Tourism accommodations were discussed for Waitabu, Boumā and Lavena villages (Lees, 1989, cited in McLisky, 1992). There was opposition to this due to concern that close and sustained contact with tourists would threaten the traditional cultural environment. McLisky notes, 'For the time being the daily presence of *keipalagi* (foreigners) is disturbance enough' (1992, p.115). In June, 1994, however, only two years after McLisky's statement, Lavena Lodge was opened commercially to tourists. A past Lavena park manager explains why they chose to diversify the products offered in Boumā and Lavena by establishing a backpackers lodge at Lavena.

The following participant tells of some of the complications and problems that arise in planning a project like this one in Lavena where two *mataqalis* and external consultants

are involved. A representative from Fiji Pine insisted that the one lodge be situated between Lavena and the Lavena settlement of Pea. This site proved unfavorable for the tourists because it was too far from the Lavena Coastal Walk.

The first lodge was a two-storey building
built right here.

And then we thought
it was too near to the village.
So there would be no privacy for us.

So Fiji Pine came in
and they thought that the best place
would be about one and a half
to two kilometres down the road.

They brought people from Viti Levu
to build the lodge.
We can build houses ourselves.
If they had given all the materials
to the people of Lavena.
We would have done it for free.

The lodge looked so bad
when it was finished.

This house is for the copra
not for the *kavalagi* [tourists],
I used to joke.

Before Fiji Pine had finished
we felt the lodge was too far from the services.

We were right because
when the tourists came
they were told
to walk back down here
toward the village for two kilometres
to the start of the Lavena Coastal Walk.

But the tourists wanted
to stay here,
in the village.
And they hated having
to go back to the lodge
after the walk.

When they got back to the lodge
they would have walked
a total of 6 kilometres
because the coastal walk is 4 km.

That lodge was three *bures*
with a big open house
with a kitchen
But the people,
they hated it
because it was not fully finished.

Fiji Pine took it down
When they, too,
realized it was in the wrong place.

I thought the building materials were for Lavena

but they took them all away with them.

The people felt very sad.

Because the same thing had happened again.

Just like with Fiji Forestry,

They stole from us.

It was very hard for us

to trust people after that.

This story contrasted with another I was told. This involved the local park manager at the time making the decision to build the *bure* too far from the village and services without the full consultation of the rest of the local community. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Lavena lodge has been moved a total of three times due to differences in opinion as to its most appropriate position. This has not only been at a huge financial cost but also physical and emotional energy and ultimately the motivation for the Lavena project to continue at all.

It was at this time that the same Fiji Pine representative was alleged to indicate an interest in laying concrete around the Wainibula Falls at the end of the Lavena Coastal Walk for ease of access for tourists. While this decision was not supported by the rest of the community at this time, there were still murmurings in 2006 that this proposal may still be met.

Today, in addition to the Lavena Coastal Walk and the backpackers lodge, Lavena's attractions include swimming, snorkelling, and kayaking. The coastal day walk takes around three hours return at a leisurely pace, though most visitors tend to spend the whole day enjoying the coastal forests and beaches along the way as well as a spectacular waterfall with naturally formed waterslides at the end in Wainibau. Visitors pass by Naba and Wainibau settlements along the way. The Lodge also sells locally produced mats (*loga*), *bati*, and *masi* (tapa). First aid items, postcards, *sulu*, and t-shirts made in Suva are also sold at Lavena Lodge.

Waitabu Marine Reserve and Campground

It was important to the Boumā National Heritage Park Board (BNHP) that all the projects in the park did not compete with one another. Consequently, Waitabu, the last of the projects to be initiated, could not offer any of the same products as had already been offered by the rest of the *Vanua*. As Waitabu Village is situated on an attractive white sandy beach, they felt that a marine protected area (MPA) would be the best alternative. It is not clear where idea for the MPA originated.

It took some convincing for Helen Sykes (marine biologist and director of Resort Support, a marine consultancy service based in Fiji) to endorse the MPA in Waitabu as having commercial ecotourism potential as it had been so badly trampled and over-fished. A Waitabu park manager explains:

The plan to have a marine park here,
was actually the same
as the whole concept of Boumā.

When people come into Boumā
they will be able to see all kinds of things.
They don't just come into Boumā
and see everything the same.

We were the last ones to be developed.
And it was lucky I was in that meeting
to decide what products Waitabu would offer.

They said,

There is nothing of unique interest in Waitabu.
There are plenty of things out there,
but they look similar,

they said.

So I said

Why don't we try
and see what is there
in the ocean?

And they agreed with it.

They said we could try.

So that idea was brought back

to the village community.

They have to make the decision.

I can't make the decision

for the whole community.

And during the village meeting

they decided to preserve part of the *qoliqoli*

one kilometre inland.

That was how the decision was made

and after that we brought in TRC and Helen [Sykes - Resort Support].

And when Helen came here she said,

No, there's nothing else to be seen in this place.

And we had to try to persuade her.

We had to ask her three times.

Please just write the report

and say there is something to be seen in here.

And after the third time she said,

Yes. OK.

She said 'no' before

because it was completely dead.

So now coral is coming up.
Coral takes ages to grow
but now you see that
fish life has increased
and other marine animals are there.

You see the marine reserve
is much cleaner there
than on the outside.
That is because the marine life
has all come back to the area.

Because the population has increased,
the fish are getting larger in number
and larger in size outside the MPA.

That was how the decision was made
to start an MPA
to benefit us in two very big ways:
ecotourism and bigger fish stocks.

There was no coral harvesting
but we did a little bit of coral planting.
We originally discussed bringing in
some marine life from other places –
especially the clams.
But when we saw it coming up slowly
we would rather leave it like that.
We could bring anything from outside
and then it may cause problems in the area.

So we would rather see that place
come up naturally and slowly.

According to marine biologists
it will take about ten years
for the coral to grow back.

Consequently, a *tabu* [in this case a fishing/access ban] was placed on the marine reserve area in 1998. This was based on the traditional conservation method involving *i qoliqoli* (familial rights to fishing grounds). These areas would be set aside for a definite period (normally 100 nights preceding important functions, for example, the *vuluvulu* for funerals whereby participants wash their hands, legs and tools. The increased fish stocks resulting from the ban would ensure plenty of *coi* (variety of foods) for the *magiti* (feast). This example shows the level of motivation of Yavusa Waitabu to establish an ecotourism initiative in their village.

In 2001, only three years after the *tabu* was placed, the first tourists paid to visit. In 2004, the Waitabu Park manager at the time was concentrating on training local youths in reef monitoring. She hoped other youths in the other villages and settlements in Boumā would also develop an interest in training as reef checkers and guides.

We have the one marine biologist,
Helen Sykes,
to do the marine research
with the help of our local guides.

We just did the reef check training here this year [2004].
And we've got a few boys trained for that [and three females]
and now they are getting ... [one of the manager's sons]
as the coordinator for the reef check.

At the moment
we have about five people
directly involved in running the attraction:
This includes two guides
and one is going to be the trainer guide
who will train others to do the reef check.

And, hopefully, they will train other people
from other villages also.

They did train others from the other villages in Boumā and Korovou started seriously considered developing an MPA. However, as some Korovou members informed me, as soon as the fish stocks rose, the MPA would be used for ceremonial purposes and they would have to start all over again.

Visitors come to Waitabu primarily to snorkel in the MPA. Visitors are requested to book at least 24 hours in advance so that the village is prepared for their arrival and an appropriate time for snorkelling is selected to match the tide. Most visitors booked through their accommodation outlet on Taveuni or from elsewhere in Fiji in advance as requested. However, some arrived unannounced leaving the project manager to decide whether or not they could be accommodated.

In 2006, visitors could pay for snorkelling equipment, a *bilibili* (Fijian raft) ride, trained local guides, and morning or afternoon tea. In 2006, the campground and the Waitabu Visitors' Office had just been completed and the village was looking forward to having paying visitors stay in their own tents near the beach.

Vidawa Rainforest Hike and Birdwatching

The people of *mataqali* Lekutu are also the founding *yavusa* of *Vanua* Boumā and are known as the ‘true bushmen of Taveuni’. Hence, if anyone can impart the richest history and knowledge of the *Vanua*, their elders can. The forest is abundant with birdlife and host to a number of notable archaeological sites. Visitors can choose between a full and half day hike through *mataqali* Lekutu forest (*yavusa* Vidawa). The walk includes interpretation of local culture and history from Vidawa guides, an old hill fort, archaeological remains, bird watching, finishing with a swim at Tavoro Falls. Local guides talk about the history of the land and its flora and fauna as the visitors walk. They stop frequently to observe elements of the environment, to demonstrate the variety of local uses for different flora (such as how to set bird traps), or to rest, eat and tell stories. In 2006, a plan was in place for an overnight stay in a forest *bure*. Staying in the *bure* would mean that visitors could hike up at night and listen to the birds settling for the night, eat, sleep and ‘talanoa’ (tell stories) over kava in a traditional *bure* (sleeping house), and then wake up early for morning bird calls.

A Vidawa elder discusses the beginning of the project:

The project started six years ago [1998]
with the agreement of the chiefs
of all the four villages.

They decided which project
would be for each village.
They decided that this village
would offer hiking.

And then Vidawa Village
and *mataqali* Naituku (Korovou Village)
agreed to work together

to make the hike up the track.

Our *mataqali* [Lekutu]
needed the help of *mataqali* Naituku
because the hike would go through their land.
Because Naituku land
is somewhere up there on that side [pointing]
where the tourists would walk on the hike,
we agreed that we should give some money to them.
So from one guest,
\$5 would go to them
for the use of their land.

At the beginning,
it was going well:

Naituku were supposed to
clear the track.
And their women were suppose to
provide the afternoon tea for the guests.
This village was going to make the lunch
And some of their boys would guide the walk.

But later on it slacked down:

Some of Naituku
weren't doing the job well
and they were giving the morning tea duty
back to this village.

Even though they don't

do anything for this project,
we are still giving them money.
And they are kind of slack now.
They didn't come to clear the track
or anything this time.

We just don't know
what is going to happen from now.
But our manager this time
is trying to turn them around.

Now it is just the people from Vidawa
who are working on the track,
and this hiking project.

In 2004, *Mataqali* Lekutu (Vidawa Village) refused to give \$5 per person to *Mataqali* Naituku because they had not been fulfilling their promises to assist in project development. This disagreement has created friction between the landowning clan and has impeded future plans for ecotourism development in the area.

We would like to extend the project
and build some *bures*
for those who want to come
and experience village life.
And *mataqali* Naituku,
they were supposed to build the *bures*
to help their clan
instead of relying on us
and they still haven't done it.

I heard they have been trying to do that now

but we will see.

If they start doing that

we will start giving them the \$5.

This is an example of how separate *mataqali* within a *Vanua* are working in competition with one another when the local aim of the park was to strengthen the *Vanua* rather than to divide it. Separate land ownership complicates this aim. When I returned to Boumā in 2006, access to Naituku land was still an issue and there was a rumour that a Naituku member was contesting some of Lekutu's traditional land ownership where the new tourist *bure* had been positioned. Visitors now have to pay FJ\$8 to the Tavoro Falls visitors centre for access to Naituku land. Recently, there has been some question as to whether *mataqali* Letuku will be allowed continue their access to Naituku land at all.

The conflict over land usage with Mataqali Naituku has not improved. If anything, it had worsened with threats of denied access to Mataqali Lekutu on Naituku land in 2006.

Conclusion and discussion

Chapter Four identified the qualities inherent in the *vanua* concept as a complex set of core cultural values and as the basis of Vanua Boumā's moral economy. It described the *Vanua* as whole and indivisible and that the *vanua* as a concept contributed to the maintenance of the solidarity of the *Vanua* as a tribe. Chapter Five suggested some of the power and social structural obstacles inherent in pre-existing efforts to establish community-based development initiatives in Boumā. Chapter Five also started to illustrate how social structure had begun deteriorating prior to the establishment of the Boumā National Heritage Park in 1990. Chapter Seven illustrated that, at least in the early stages of establishment, additional challenges were added in the process of establishing community-based ecotourism. These additional challenges originated from

outside Boumā. One introduced notion was that the *Vanua* should be divided into individual *yavusa*-based (and in the case of Korovou Village, *mataqali*) projects.

There did appear to be a slow organic shift toward division of the *Vanua* prior to ecotourism development. However, the negative social consequences realised with the advent of ecotourism, and the more structured divisions it brought with it, sparked a new-found interest in resolidifying the *Vanua* as one and indivisible once again. This emphasises a point I made in Chapter Five: ecotourism was not the primary cause of the erosion the *vanua*; rather ecotourism was a lens through which the erosion of the *vanua* was emphasised. A stark example of this revitalised interest in the social cohesion of the *Vanua* was in the 2006 plan to create a tourist walkway between all four projects as a practical and metaphorical way of reconnecting the four *yavusas* of Boumā as one *Vanua* once again. Within this method of *vanua* revitalisation as improved *Vanua* unification then can be found a strong example of cultural hybridisation: community-based ecotourism as business *va'avanua* (the amalgamation of entrepreneurial values with *vanua* values)¹⁰². Clearly here culture is not tradition merely reproduced (Ewing, 2007). This is one example of re-evaluating and consolidating core cultural values which, in turn, emerges as a novel facet of modernity in the face of change.

Despite the confusion, frustrations, and disappointment of the early years of establishing community-based ecotourism caused by misappropriation of funds and materials and loss of control of the development process, the Boumā communities have demonstrated the strength of their hope for these development initiatives to succeed. Examples of their tenacity, even in the early years, have been presented in this chapter: the persistence to establish an MPA in Waitabu despite opposition from a local marine biologist and continuing plans to build a lodge in Lavena after two unsuccessful attempts.

De Sardan's (2005) 'entangled social logic' proposes a closer analysis of what is happening at the macro and micro level and the networks that allow or restrict agency. This chapter has presented micro level challenges in Boumā that have hindered

¹⁰² Business *va'avanua* will be discussed at length in Chapter Ten.

ecotourism development. These include historical conflicts over land use, trust between kin groups, and project ownership. There was also evidence of a lack of *yavusa* contributions to individual projects (I suspect this was due to differences in how individuals valued each project). More micro level challenges faced by the Boumā communities will be presented in Chapter Nine as will the meso level negotiations over discrepancies between Vanua Boumā's goals and the aims of community-based ecotourism as it is defined in the West. This will illustrate more clearly which characteristics of community-based ecotourism (as prescribed by the West) are appropriate and meaningful and which require rejection or hybridisation with current local values and understandings. Chapter Ten will provide a more hopeful examples emanating at the micro and meso levels. These will be presented as more examples of cultural hybridity as business *va'avanua* such as the walkway mentioned above.

Chapter Nine

Benefits Contested

*When we look at tourism like this,
we have to look at the negative side
and the positive side, eh?*

(Teacher from Korovou School, 2004)

This chapter will reveal how locals perceive the successes or failures of each ecotourism project in Boumā. This is a perspective that only the people of Boumā can provide. I will start by presenting the aims of community-based ecotourism as provided by NZAID and TRC and what was actually happening at the local level. In other words, the aims of ecotourism as presented in the West will be scrutinised in terms of Vanua Boumā's reality. Also illustrated in this chapter is the extent to which the earlier break-downs in social structure combined with the stresses and challenges associated with incompatible elements of community-based ecotourism had led to a growing sense of anomie¹⁰³. The 2006 fieldwork revealed that this anomie in turn sparked an urgent need to re-evaluate the future direction of ecotourism development in Boumā in a way that more appropriately addressed the values and desires of the majority of the Boumā people. However, determining the needs and desires of the Boumā 'community' will be presented as a complex matter.

¹⁰³ Using an organic analogy, Durkheim describes social anomie in the following excerpt by stating what it is not:

The state of *anomie* is impossible whenever interdependent organs are sufficiently in contact and sufficiently extensive. If they are close to each other, they are readily aware, in every situation, of the need which they have of one-another, and consequently they have an active and permanent feeling of mutual dependence (cited in Giddens, 1972, p. 184 [excerpt from *The Division of Labor in Society*]).

Community-based ecotourism development in the Boumā National Heritage Park

International media releases including mention of the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award won in 2002¹⁰⁴ mask the true impacts of ecotourism at a local level. The socio-cultural characteristics of Boumā have been treated as secondary to the health of the environment and the local economy in this externally-driven measure of the success of this initiative. However, as has been explained through the concepts of embeddedness and the dwelling perspective, people and place cannot be treated independently of one another.

Proponents of ecotourism tout numerous benefits. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2008), for example, lists some as including direct financial benefits for conservation or for locals, and local empowerment. They define responsible travel as "... travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" (cited in TIES, 2008, Definitions and Principles section).

Ecotourism is a rapidly emerging area of tourism practice and study involving a highly interdisciplinary approach to its subject matter. It involves a developing body of theory in respect of both content and definition. There are a variety of definitions of ecotourism. The following is a definition of ecotourism I have formulated that combines key themes from relevant ecotourism literature: Fennel (2001), Higham (2001), and The International Ecotourism Society (TIES):^{105, 106, 107}.

Ecotourism is responsible and sustainable nature-based tourism specific to unique environments, and is guided by the following ten principles. These should be considered ideal endeavours:

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter Seven.

¹⁰⁵ Fennell, D.A. (2001). Ecotourism: A content analysis of definitions. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 4(5), 403-421.

¹⁰⁶ Higham, J.E.S (2001). *Ecotourism in New Zealand: Profiling visitors to New Zealand ecotourism operations*. Dunedin, New Zealand: Department of Tourism, Otago University, New Zealand.

¹⁰⁷ The International Ecotourism Society. *What is ecotourism? Definition and ecotourism principles*. Retrieved 26 May, 2006, from <http://www.ecotourism.org/index2.php?what-is-ecotourism>

1. Provides opportunities for experiential environmental and socio-cultural learning
2. Fosters respect for natural history and cultural heritage
3. Promotes ethical behaviour toward local communities and environments
4. Minimises detrimental environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts
5. Promotes sustainable environmental, socio-cultural and economic development
6. Provides equitably distributed benefits for local communities
7. Supports local community empowerment through genuine and full participation
8. Provides direct financial benefits for conservation
9. Fosters sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental and social climate
10. Supports international human rights and labour agreements through just tourism practices.

A critical element separating ecotourism from mainstream tourism is the categorisation of clients seeking an ecotourism experience. Ecotourists, although far from homogeneous, generally pursue tourist experiences outside mainstream tourism. They tend to seek active, interactive and adventure activities in the outdoors such as wilderness areas, parks and protected areas. Ecotourists also tend to seek education through experience, with a growing number of ecotourists wishing to contribute to the conservation aims of ecotourism initiatives.

However, the goals of ecotourism in ecotourism literature do not necessarily reflect the aims and goals of external and local management in the development of ecotourism in Boumā specifically. The aims and goals developed externally did not match those of the Boumā people either. How these did not match is the focus of this chapter.

In 2003, the TRC review teams published a report with the following aim, goals and objectives for the Boumā ecotourism initiatives. Their aim was stated as the '[p]rotection of natural and cultural resources by the people of...Vanua Boumā through the development of ecotourism' while their goals and objectives were listed as follows:

Goals

- The conservation, protection and enhancement of the area's natural and cultural heritage.
- The development and maintenance of first class recreation and tourism assets for the enjoyment and benefit of locals and overseas visitors alike, and the benefit of Fiji's international tourism image.
- The creation of local employment and income opportunities for women and men of local communities.

Objectives

- To facilitate capacity building within project communities to sustain activities especially: ecotourism management, enterprise management, natural resource conservation, cultural protection, and community self-development.
- To facilitate and strengthen linkages to local, provincial and national organisations, institutions and enterprises necessary to sustain the community projects in the medium to long term (TRC, 2003, pp. 3 - 4).

These goals and objectives all prioritise economic and environmental sustainability over the values of the *vanua* (largely based on community solidarity) as the dominant worldview and epistemology in Boumā. Indeed, there is no mention of the *vanua* at all. While cultural protection is noted in the first objective, it is not clear whether this is intended to mean 'material' culture or culture in a more abstract sense. There is no recognition that the *Vanua* (tribe) is geographically (and to some extent) politically divided between *yavusas* and *mataqalis* and how the projects will address this. Neither is there mention of ensuring equitable benefit of the projects to all community members. Furthermore, it does not include the need for full participation. Finally, there is no consideration here for a local definition of 'ecotourism'.

Part of my general enquiry included asking people what they understood about the term 'ecotourism'. I had thought that since the term had been used since the early 1980s with the involvement of Fiji Forestry, everyone in Boumā would be fairly familiar with

the English word through *saravanua* (its Fijian equivalent) and its goals. However, it soon became clear that this was not the case. Even most of those directly involved in the management of the park and its projects as well as the teachers at the local school were not clear about the term ‘ecotourism’ and many asked if I could explain it to them.

The former manager of the Waitabu Marine Reserve tells of when they had just started the project. People involved in ecotourism from all over the Pacific went to Lavena for a workshop.

One of the professors
brought up this ‘ecotourism’
and they debated about that.

One of the participants said to that professor
I don’t think that it’s fair
that you ask that question
to these people
because they don’t really know
what ecotourism is.

To us, ecotourism is something
that brings back what is lost in your culture.
Ecotourism
is culture and tradition and business
come together.
This is how I see ecotourism.

I can’t remember who the professor was
but I felt sorry for him
because everyone was right against him.

I found this definition of ecotourism interesting because the majority of ecotourism specialists in industrialised nations would say that its primary goal is to preserve an element of the environment. However, the *vanua* renders people and environment inseparable. Perhaps this is why she chose the word ‘culture’ rather than ‘environmental sustainability’ in her understanding of ecotourism. Because she placed a strong emphasis on the interaction between ecotourism and environment in many of our conversations, I conclude that, for her, ‘culture’ encompasses ‘environment’.

Even though tourists have been coming to Boumā since the 1950s to visit the Tavoro Falls, tourism is still considered new to the Boumā people. The same participant told me that some people in Boumā oppose the ecotourism initiatives. Like many people in Boumā, she referred to ‘time’ as being something that the people of Boumā were concerned about. The thought of ecotourism bringing changes in their traditional approach to ‘time’¹⁰⁸ created a great deal of stress for many people. Another source of concern was the way tourists were going to dress and behave if they visited the villages. While the resorts have been approached to ask them to forewarn tourists of village protocol, some visitors do not stay in these accommodations and come directly to Boumā. A female staff-member of the Waitabu project explains:

Tourism is something
that is new to these people
and they don’t really know where they are going.

They don’t have a dream
for the future of the project.
That’s how we know when they talk
they are not really encouraging.
That’s how I see it.
Tourism is something new to the community.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter Three.

As noted earlier, ‘ecotourism’ is a word with myriad contested definitions. It is problematic enough in English. When I attempted to provide a broad definition of the term for a friend in Lavena, he told me that the people of Boumā could not really relate to the concept. Therefore, he decided that the Boumā people needed their own definition of ecotourism: one they could immediately relate to, and strive to meet in their own projects. During a grog¹⁰⁹ session one night, he and some other male friends devised a ‘Boumā’ definition for ecotourism. Their definition incorporated the following concepts:

1. *Tovu* (family relationships)
2. *Vakarau* (culture unique to Fiji and Boumā e.g. site specific kava ceremony)
3. *Valavala* (process and rules and how to prepare the particular cultural activity. Rules unique to a place)

In addition, he stated, the following institutions must work together. All three must be preserved in local ecotourism initiatives.

1. *Lotu* (church)
2. *Vanua*
3. *Matanitu* (government)

(Amania Waqalevu, personal communication, 16 December, 2004).

Through *talanoa*, community members came some way to developing a locally meaningful expression of an introduced concept. There had been many conversations generated by externally-based consultants about ecotourism and its relationship to ecological sustainability. Despite this, the definition of these three Lavena men, like the Waitabu project manager, is solidly connected to the social and cultural elements of ecotourism and the maintenance of social harmony. Without a locally meaningful interpretation of introduced terms and processes like ecotourism, what hope do local

¹⁰⁹ Kava gathering.

communities have of fully participating in the decision-making of these development initiatives?

Certainly, benefits stated by Boumā individuals and groups have included an improved health of the environment and evidence of cultural revitalisation in some areas, plus new opportunities for income and capacity building. However, because people are central to the *vanua* and because the Boumā communities have continuously emphasised the importance of community throughout the development process, this chapter will focus on these aspects. In other words, this chapter will show that all other goals must be balanced with the central goal of the local community: community building. Specifically, this chapter will explore how the various benefits have been realised for the local communities and how these have affected the communality understood through the *vanua*.

The material that follows in this chapter is largely divided into two sections: locally-perceived non-financial benefits and financial benefits. In each of these sections some perceived benefits will be presented and then contested.

Non-financial impacts

Community-building

In Chapter Eight, some participants felt that one of the benefits brought by the projects was that they helped draw the community together for a shared purpose for the first time in a long time. However, this chapter will reveal that after the enthusiasm of the early years of establishment, the community eroded instead as a consequence of ecotourism development.

Recent articles on social capital (Putnam, 1993; Ritchey-Vance, 1996; Wilson, 1997) use social capital and community building almost synonymously. A number of authors also stress the importance of this approach for community based tourism:

By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital tools and training that enhance individual productivity "social capital" refers to features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital (Putnam, 1993, cited in Kersten, 1997, Community-based Ecotourism section).

However, community building appears to have been too great a challenge for Boumā's various development consultants. Many within Boumā reported that ecotourism in Boumā was merely an additional catalyst in a progression of pre-existing catalysts which has caused the erosion of the *vanua* as previously discussed. Chapter Eight noted that some saw the potential in the projects for bringing the *yavusas* together for the first time in a long time. However, it was also noted that there were many challenges to overcome before this potential could be realised. In the meantime, it appeared that Boumā's social structure was eroding faster than it was being strengthened.

For example, in 2005, I learned from New Zealand that the *turaga ni 'oro* of Waitabu had been murdered by a member of one of the Waitabu settlements. The *turaga ni 'oro* was the husband of a young woman I had befriended and father of two small children. The murder was the result of a string of incidents originating in a situation whereby a group of men from a Waitabu settlement were caught poaching in the Waitabu MPA (a no-fishing area). It was reported by some Waitabu community members that the settlement did not feel they were benefiting from the ecotourism initiative and did not fully appreciate its purpose. Some members of the settlement saw the marine reserve merely as an opportunity to catch fish in greater numbers. The police were called following the alleged poaching and the men were charged. When the *turaga ni 'oro* visited the settlement to discuss the matter, he was not greeted warmly. On his return to Waitabu, he stopped at a bus shelter. It was there that he was hit over the head with a rock by one of the men and was killed. By 2006, this incident had been somewhat

smoothed over with the combined efforts of the leaders of the Waitabu village community and the settlement in question.

In 2006, I was, perhaps naively, shocked to hear through private *talanoa* that some Lavena community members were so unhappy with the internal conflicts caused by the ecotourism initiative that they were threatening to burn down Lavena Lodge and do away with the jealousy, animosity and distrust resulting from the running of the business in one fell swoop. Other Lavena village members were threatening to establish their own *bures* that would compete directly with the Lodge. One such disgruntled community member stated that he felt the Lodge was going to fail anyway and that he wanted to prove to everyone that he could do a better job.

The failure of many participatory approaches may be partly attributed to the propensity for Western developers to generalise and apply the same rule to all (Harrison, 1996, p. 79). Schuurman (1993) argues, for example, that ‘...[development] policy is...formulated by those who pretend to know the building blocks or ‘genes’ of the structure as well as the final outcome’ (pp. 26-27). He suggests these biological metaphors expose an evolutionary and reductionist view of the developing process in Third World countries and are devoid of reality. Boumā is certainly not a homogeneous ‘community’ and the establishment of the four projects may be interpreted as a cursory attempt at recognising that Boumā was not one cohesive community. However, had its internal conflicts and hopes for the future been confronted before the establishment of the Park, this may have enhanced participation, communality, sustainability, and empowerment (community building/development/social capital). A number of writers have featured throughout this thesis who have warned of the misconception of community solidarity and the impact this misconception can have on full participation in development projects (e.g. Beeton, 1998; Groenfeldt, 2003; Sofield, 2003; Bar-On & Prinsen, 1999).

Wertheim (1965) and Guijt & Shah’s (1999) ‘myth of community’, Benedict Anderson’s (1991) ‘imagined communities’, and Hobsbawm and Ranger’s ‘invented

tradition' (Hobsbawm, 1983) denied the homogeneity of social groups. It is for this reason that anthropologists and other social scientists are sceptical of 'participation': it implies homogeneity, ignoring divisions of class, gender, age, views and interests. Bennet (1998) states that

anthropologists are drawn into participation even as they protest its means and ends...Still, to do so is to facilitate development, and such facilitation may seem to violate the anthropologist's credo of self-determination of local populations' (p. 2, cited in Grillo & Stirrat, 1997, p. 10).

Anthropologists understand that the term 'community' is highly subjective, dynamic, site-specific and political. It is a very tricky creature which is difficult to analyse at any one point in time because it keeps moving and changing with the social and environmental climate (Strathern, 1991). Hence, the fleeting nature of participatory research in which the facilitator 'drops in' to the community and then 'drops out' again shortly after is limited in value from an anthropological perspective. This was typical of all of the management consultants involved with the Boumā National Heritage Park project. Locals reported that the longest any consultant has stayed at any time has been two weeks.

Beeton (1998) emphasizes the diversity of the use of the term 'community', noting that indigenous communities should be treated as more complex, particularly in the face of Western hegemony. She describes the elements of indigenous communities as

...revolve[ing] around emotional rather than physical aspects such as the sense of belonging, heritage, sense of place and social organization. It is easy to overlook these more intangible areas when considering a tourism development (which includes guided tours and activities not just resorts) as they are not easily quantifiable. However, to have a sustainable

tourism industry that is around for many years to come these aspects of community must be carefully considered (p. 35).

While Beeton alludes to the complexity, diversity and uniqueness of each individual community and the individual struggles of those within them, Groenfeldt (2003) suggests that community-driven and participatory development not only accommodate worldviews, but also lifeworlds:

Society is never a totally ‘integrated entity’ since there is always a degree of opposition to power structures within it (Wertheim, 1965, p. 26)...The dynamic processes of change can never be understood if the opposing values within society are not taken into full account (ibid, p. 32).

If what Wertheim says is true (and I suggest it is) then we need to take a radically different approach to ‘community’-based tourism development. That is, one that includes closer attention to individual perceptions of the politics and dynamics of their social environment in a more genuine effort to encourage community building. Arce and Long (2000a) argue that ‘only by understanding how different actors go about their various tasks and livelihoods concerns, can we avoid the homogeneous picture painted of “community solidarity” (p. 19). Certainly closer attention to indigenous values and epistemologies would have revealed that maintaining the integrity of the *Vanua* was paramount in Boumā and that the division of the projects into separate units would have been antithetical to the *vanua*.

‘Not from here’: The myth of the Boumā ‘community’

A common insult in Boumā is, ‘You are not from here’. Many joked that some locals were unskilled in some way or another because they were from ‘the Solomons’ or some other far away place. Sometimes this was made in jest in the presence of the recipient of the joke. I only occasionally encountered jokes like this made with any malice. To be from somewhere else has serious implications. Land is everything in Fijian culture.

If you are not ‘of this land’ you may not have rights to any land. Without land, you are said to have nothing, belong to nothing and no one: in essence, a non-entity. Sometimes those who were considered ‘not from here’ were excluded from ecotourism project decision-making, employment, training and other benefits from the park.

As recounted in Chapter Three, I grew quite close to Mala, a woman who lived near our *bure*. Mala really wanted me to come and meet some people in Naba (one of Lavena’s settlements). I of course, agreed, leaving Jacob with Matt in the village and heading off on the Lavena Coastal Walk trail for the half hour walk. The village was small: only about ten houses. It was set very near the beach and was surrounded by trees. A few very healthy pigs and chickens with their babies roamed around freely. As is customary, we waited just outside the village boundary for someone to receive us.

We were invited into the home of a woman I will call Maria. After explaining why we were there, slowly more and more people gathered and sat in a large circle on the *ibe* (mat). I was surprised at how many teenagers and young adults were there. As we talked, a toddler slept at the back of the small house behind a semi-transparent curtain oblivious to the gathering. After introductions, light chat and a lunch of *tivoli* (wild yams) and *dalo* (taro) leaves in coconut milk, I asked the group if they would attend workshops related to the Lavena Project. Mala translated for me:

They have never once been asked
if they would like to attend a workshop
and so they have never been to one before.

Later, I ask if the ecotourism project provided basic needs (e.g. basic health, basic education, food, healthy housing). One of the benefits of the park was the part provision of funding for water pipes in the villages. Maria and her family told me that this was what her family needed most from the park. They wanted to ask the park to help them but they said they never had the courage to go and ask. When I asked why it was so difficult for them to ask, Mala told me:

Teresia, they are saying
they are not from here.
That is something that is stopping them
from asking things from the park.
They think that the ecotourism
is only for the people of Lavena village.
That is what is going on.
It is very bad.

I found similar cases in Qali and Vidawa. I met a man in Vidawa who had lost his leg from diabetes. He wanted nothing more than to talk to people from different countries. He felt that he would make a valuable contribution to the project through *talanoa* with the tourists about local customs and history before or after their forest hike. I agreed. However, he felt that because he was disabled, the community saw him as of little value to the community or to the project and so his request was never addressed in village meetings. The same man introduced me to a man I will call Abaramu.

Abaramu had married an adopted daughter of a Vidawa family. Under these circumstances, the family was not considered full members of the *yavusa*. They were living in the house of the wife's cousin's brother who had recently divorced. He had moved out to his '*ana'ana* (the clan's plantation land) where he had built a hut while the husband, wife and small children took residence in his house. Abaramu was initially reluctant to contribute to the research because he said he was 'not from here' and so felt he had nothing of value to offer.

I cannot say everything about this village
because I am not originally from here.
I have been here three years.
This is my wife.
She is from here.

We are very poor people
struggling to support our family.
That is why I can't say too much
about what they do here in the village.

Some people think we should not be part of the community.
If I want to say something straight
they say to me,

Don't talk. You are not from here.

Fijian people in the village are like that.
One time I had to rebuild my *bure*
because it was falling down.
Nobody would help me in the village.

This house is too small for our family now.
We are planning to put the new house this side (pointing).
We have already *kerekere* to the chief
to build the house this side
and then this house will go back to the owner.

But the people will not help us when we build the house,
only my brother in law and the chief.
So just because the chief supports me,
doesn't mean the community supports me.

He can only talk to his family.
He can't order the rest of the community
to help the ones like us who are struggling.
He can't talk like that.
Some respect the chief,
and some do not.

I am looking for money to buy building supplies.

I am struggling for a house.

I am looking toward the park for a job
because I am thinking about my family.

I am looking for money,
but no one will help me
because I am not even from Boumā.

Abaramu and Maria and their families are representative of many families in Boumā that felt they could never participate in the ecotourism projects because of their ‘alien’ status. For Abaramu and his wife, despite living, working and contributing to all facets of village life, felt that they would never be accepted as full members of the community as long as the chief was not respected by the *yavusa*. For the families of Naba, a new chief with a more inclusive approach to his *yavusa* would be needed if they were to be included in the ecotourism project.

In 2006, after being fully involved all of the Boumā projects since the beginning and standing as Boumā Project Manager for years, the Waitabu project manager was involuntarily stood down. Some community members felt that she had too many of her own family running the project. The manager and others would argue that few others had been as committed to the project as her own family. Another reason the manager was stood down was that for years some community members had complained that she was ‘not from here’. The manager was from Ovalau but came to Boumā because her husband had family members in the area. One outsider speculated that some members of the community were not only averse to the fact that she was not a direct descendant of Vanua Boumā but also because of the amount of power held by a woman. The manager had put her heart and soul into the project and had sacrificed a great deal. She told me that she had been ‘worrying a lot’ over the last few years about the community and the project. She died suddenly during my last visit to Boumā in 2006 from a burst ulcer: a condition often caused by extreme stress.

Opportunities for new knowledge and skills

This section will further illustrate that Boumā is not a harmonious and homogeneous community. One of the benefits of the community-based ecotourism projects was considered both locally and externally (by proponents of ecotourism) as capacity building. This was not always equitably distributed throughout the community and knowledge and skills were not always shared.

Some of those directly involved in the projects were very pleased with the new knowledge and skills they had gleaned as a result of training workshops covering topics such as small business training and First Aid. The managers and other staff have had some opportunities to attend workshops. One woman in Waitabu who had been directly involved in the in the park project told me that she had recently attended a management training course. There had also been a tour guide training run by Dive Taveuni¹¹⁰; an environmental awareness course held in Waitabu in 2004 for the park managers, the boards, and the committees; a receptionist/guest contact skills course provided by National Trust for the receptionists; and a couple of courses for small business training arranged by TRC in 1999.

The small business training was provided only for the four managers who were sent to Viti Levu for the course. However, at the time of the interview the course had run five years previously and new managers had been employed. The knowledge learned at this course was not passed on to the new managers. This was a common theme during my time in Boumā and one that I found confusing. If one of the core principles of the *vanua* is sharing for the good of the whole, this certainly did not extend to modern business knowledge.

I asked Aporosa (2008), author of *Yaqona and Education in Fiji: A Clash of Cultures?*, how he would explain this reluctance to share knowledge:

¹¹⁰ A local dive company.

from a *vakavanua* perspective ...

[*talanoa*] is an excellent and vital system for information sharing and traditional continuation,

until it involves non traditional systems,

of which modern productivity systems are a classic.

Your example of ecotourism hits the nail on the head...

if this example had been about planting yams,

it would have been discussed and especially in rural areas.

This is the type of daily discussion that is routine at the *tanoa*¹¹¹.

But there is a huge line drawn in the sand between traditional and modern systems.

The Waitabu project manager was concerned that no one had thought to develop 'train the trainer' workshops to encourage knowledge transfer more broadly throughout the *Vanua*. Without this, she said, 'It is a waste of time and a waste of money'.

In addition to only training those directly employed in the projects, a common call was for whole community training (or '*Vanua* training'). The only courses open to the whole *Vanua*, that I was aware of was an environmental awareness workshop provided by the Fijian Affairs Board and held in Korovou in 2003 and the Operation Dive into Earth Day project. A Tavoro Falls staff member shared some thoughts on this:

I think we need training
to help the community to understand-
I mean everybody to understand
how to run a project.

Sometimes
when I asked someone from Lavena
if they want some training for something

¹¹¹ The *yaqona* bowl.

they will say,

I don't want to know anything about the project.

This is because they are not happy.

If you ask everyone in Lavena,

they will say that.

And the thing is the manager,

or the top people –

they understand what is going on with the project

so they should find a way among themselves

to make sure everyone else understands as well.

She was right. Many people in Lavena did not want to know about the project in 2004-2006. They were not happy with the project as a whole: they did not understand where the profits had gone and what there was to show for all their hard labour and sacrifice. The managers had not succeeded in bridging the knowledge gap between the management and the rest of the community. This was largely due to the fact that many of the management were also confused about the running of the business. There was a clear need for ongoing training for all. This lack of training and poor communication between managers and staff created a variety of negative responses from the *yavusa*: largely confusion, jealousy and mistrust which jeopardised community solidarity.

Another problem with the training is that it was done retrospectively rather than proactively. The Waitabu project manager was concerned that they started the Waitabu Marine Reserve project without a business plan and trained staff. Before ecotourism development in Boumā, many people did not understand what a tourist was and why they wanted to visit Boumā. There are exceptions, such as the former Waitabu marine park manager who had been educated in the School of Hospitality and had worked in a variety of hotels in Suva for twenty years before settling in Boumā:

It's clear to me.

But the people here
wouldn't have a single clue
what tourists want
and what they would like to see,
why they would like to go on holiday.
Because we don't do it.
That's why we have to train people about this
from different aspects of the project.

A long-standing receptionist at Lavena Lodge stated that she had received little training since the establishment of the Lodge twelve years ago.

When this all started
there was no training for the villages.

Only this May [2004]
there was training for the guides.
The manager, the *mata* [mayor],
and a representative from NLTB [non-local]
went for management training.
The rest –
no, no other training.

I have not done book keeping, or
administration training before.
I taught myself.
The representative from NLTB didn't help us.
It was very difficult.
All the three of us receptionists
just helped each other with this work.

People like those from TRC,
What did they do in Lavena?
Mostly they trained the last manager.
They were more interested in management training
and tour guide training than anything else.
And a few were taken to Suva to train them there.
Why? I don't know.

Now there are lots of boys in the village.
So it's good to train more of them
for guiding and for book keeping too.

Other training we need is first aid.
The last time I was trained for first aid
was five years ago in Waitabu.
But you are supposed to be trained every year.

I did attend a hospitality course in Waiyevo, though.
It was a good course
and it helped us a lot with the guests
and how to approach them
and greet them
because other cultures can be very difficult.

A member of the Vidawa project also suggested that it was training that was most needed if the projects were to have any chance of success.

We have only had some people to train us
but we need people from Suva
who know how to do business
to train us properly.

At the moment we just do it
and see what happens.
Because if we don't do it,
no one else will.

If someone educated comes,
we will hand it over to them.
So far, just some people have come to tell us what to do
but some of it fits and some of it doesn't fit.
What fits with the hiking trip we keep,
and other things, we just leave it.
So I think we want more people to train us.
I think the Peace Corps people will help us a lot.

I am still unsure of how this Vidawa project member distinguished between what did 'fit' and what did not 'fit' with life in Vidawa. I do know that Matt (my husband's) assistance with guide training (he is a New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association [NZOIA] trained guide) was received very gratefully and he always had very good attendance in his workshops. When the Peace Corps representative made himself available to them, however, he was not treated in quite the same way. I suspect this may have been either a personality issue or a time issue. We had slowly introduced ourselves to the community and it was only near the end of our stay that Matt had offered the training. However, they decided what did and did not fit and how they would deal with this which indicates local agency through resistance and acceptance of new ideas. This is how indigenous development is formulated.

Financial Benefits

Perhaps the most desirable and anticipated benefits from the ecotourism initiatives were the financial benefits seen by each *vūvale*, *mataqali* and their *yavusa*.

While the residents of Waitabu, for example, were initially fascinated by tourists, one Waitabu woman said that the first thing they think about now when they see a tourist is how much money they can bring to the community. In addition, the project manager said that the community tended to make unrealistic assumptions about the financial benefits of the project.

The people in Waitabu,
they think that the more people there are,
the more money there will be from the project.

But that is not the case.
There is usually just enough money for the project,
and just enough
to pay for the people who work on that day.

But most people don't really see
what is going on in the project.
They think
that the more people that come each time,
the more I get paid.
But a lot of the time
I don't get paid.
In the backs of their minds
they think that I make a lot of money.
They think I can ask the tourists for this
and ask them for that.
But that is not the case.

These misconceptions about money have contributed to feelings of mistrust, jealousy and resentment: not only toward park managers, but also to others working directly with the ecotourism initiatives.

Table 3: Some examples of financial benefits received by household/individuals in Waitabu

Activity/Role	Examples of amount received
Project manager	\$50 per month
Board/committee members	\$10 per month
Bilibili rafting guides	\$5 per trip
Musicians	\$5 per trip
Savusavu ¹¹² makers	\$3 per trip

As can be seen in Table 3, in Waitabu, families had made money from cooking, entertaining, and guiding for the project but, in general, minimal profits had been made for the benefit of the community as a whole from the project in 2006. The small community share of profits had contributed to a handful of scholarships and the construction of the new Waitabu project office. While some were patient and hopeful, others were growing disinterested. Those most motivated were perhaps the young men and women who were learning new skills such as reef checking and guiding. These individuals see, first hand, the benefits of the marine reserve as the fish stocks continue to increase and the coral grows back. They are also motivated by the enthusiasm of the tourists they guide.

There were mixed responses to the question of whether people were happy about the financial benefits they were seeing from the ecotourism projects. Some were satisfied (mostly *Mataqali* Naituku from the more successful and established Tavoro Falls project) while others remained hopeful but currently unsatisfied. Others dismissed the projects altogether as a waste of effort or as damaging to the cohesiveness to the community and *vanua*. Many only saw a small sector of the community benefiting directly from the projects. In the next sections, I will explain how financial benefits are distributed throughout the *Vanua* from 2004-2006 and how this is evaluated by the local communities.

¹¹² Floral wreaths

Direct individual/family income

Money from the projects goes to those who work directly with the tourists or contribute to the tourist experience. Those who may benefit directly include the following individuals/families:

- Project Managers
- Board/Committee members
- Married women (with families) who cook for tourists
- Guides
- Receptionists
- Handicraft and food (e.g. *va'alolo*¹¹³) vendors

Those who are involved in the management of the projects are paid a regular wage. For example, project managers are awarded \$50 per month while board/committee members are paid \$10 per month.

Perhaps the most common income earning opportunities offered to families from park activities, however, is cooking. The women in Lavena, for example, were paid \$7 for cooking breakfast for one person and \$10 for lunch or dinner. Although, currently, it is only married women who may earn money from cooking food for tourists in Lavena, in 2006 there were plans to train young unmarried women to make morning or afternoon tea for the kayak trips. The women would receive \$5 for each plate of tea (e.g. *sikoni* [scones] or *panikake* [pikelets]). As such there is a greater likelihood for unmarried women to make money because there are so few of them in the village.

As has been explained, there is also an opportunity for women to sell their own handicrafts to tourists. *Sulus* and t-shirts sold to tourists in Boumā from the each of the projects generate extra revenue. However, in 2006, the t-shirts advertising each project

¹¹³ *Va'aalolo* is a sweet dessert made from caramelised coconut milk wrapped in taro leaves. These are usually sold at large gatherings such as sports or school events. *Va'alolo* is also one example of a fundraising food and food sold directly to tourists.

were printed in Suva and there was no indication that these would be printed in Taveuni due to a lack of capital, and local printing skills and resources. According to the Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB), Tavoro Falls received revenues of F\$2540 from the sale of *sulu*, *masi* and t-shirts between February and November 1991 (cited in McLisky, 1992, p.119). However, between 2004 and 2006, these items were seldom seen for sale. On the one occasion when there was plenty of *masi* for sale at the Tavoro Visitors Center, I was told by the receptionist that these had come from an artist in Savusavu.

In Waitabu, as is also the case with Lavena and Vidawa, everyone in the village works on a rotation basis in an effort to fairly share the benefits of the ecotourism projects. The women take turns to cook morning or afternoon tea (*gunu ti*) for the tourists and to make the *savusavu* (floral wreathes), while the men take turns to paddle the *bilibili* (rafts). Guides (men and women) also work on a more limited rotation bases to guide snorkelling tourists around the marine protected area. The manager, guides, and ‘band boys’ who play for the tourists are more or less fixed roles in the project.

My husband paddles a canoe,
but most of the time
he is one of the band boys.
Everyone has a turn
to do something for the marine park.
For *bilibili* rafting
we get \$5;
\$3 for flowers;
and \$3 for making the tea.

A woman in Waitabu was positive about the contributions she saw coming to the people in her village.

With this project
people are able to pay

for little bits of household stuff
with money they earn from the project.

People have earned something
out of what they have sacrificed
from years back.

They have earned a little bit of money
to benefit everyone in the family
down to the smallest child.

Some felt that these ‘little bits’ were inadequate compensation considering the emotional and physical energy and the risk to kinship relationships and, therefore, to the *vanua*. One family said that they may receive \$20 every three months for their contribution to cooking meals for the park lodge guests as there were about sixty families in the village who had to wait their turn on a rotation basis to cook meals. In July and August, at the height of the tourist season, there is a greater chance for each family to have their turn to cook, while, during the shoulder tourist period, many will not get a chance at all. Consequently, they did not feel that their family received much in the way of direct financial benefit from the ecotourism project in their village.

Another family estimated that, on average, every family in Lavena would receive about \$12 per month as a direct result of ecotourism project activity. And another said they would earn around \$15 per month. These estimates pale in comparison to the proposed income that some could earn from agricultural production as earlier suggested.

***Yavusa* contributions**

It is the *yavusa* (or in the Tavoro Falls case, the *mataqali*) that decides how to spend the income from the projects. Typically, community targets include community facilities such as sports fields, additional housing, church renovations, scholarships or

reinvestment in the project. The following sections show how each of the *yavusa* distribute their profits.

Case Study: Lavena Coastal Walk and Backpackers Lodge

A Lavena couple directly involved in park management told me that the park divides its profits in the following way:

20% High school scholarship fund (all high school students have their fees paid)

10% Church (*lotu*)

5% *Vunisā* (chief of Boumā in Korovou) (This is also referred to as giving to the *Vanua*)

10% Park maintenance

10% *Koro* fund (*turaga ni 'oro* expenses, grasscutter)

(They could not account for the remaining 45%)

A member of the park committee, however, explains the distribution as follows:

40% High school scholarships

30% Reserves

10% *Turaga ni yavusa*

5% *Vunisa*(*Vanua*)

15% *Koro* fund

These are only two of a variety of local accounts of how the Lavena park project income is to be distributed throughout the community. Consequently, there is clearly a lack of understanding as to the distribution of park funds. However it is distributed, I was told that everyone in Lavena had initially agreed on how the funds should be distributed in village meetings.

Another proposed benefit of the ecotourism initiatives was that a percentage of the profits from the projects would go to scholarships for the children. Education is of paramount importance to the people of Boumā. Whenever I asked what they most wanted money for, many community members stated it was for education. For some,

the other benefits they saw coming from the park did not justify its existence if they did not see money coming to them for the education of their children.

The issue of scholarships was a 'bone of contention' in Lavena during my time there. In 2004, after being promised money for their children for twelve years, the people of Lavena finally saw this happen. However, when the money came to them, a mother of nine was disappointed with the amount she received.

This year, we were given some money for education
for the first time in twelve years.
It was for the second term of school.
Our family got \$81.

We have nine children,
and five in school.
The money is only for secondary school children
but we have one child in secondary school.

We spend \$547 every year
for secondary school for that child
so \$81 is very little for all the work
we have put into the park
over those twelve years.

Another Lavena mother also complained that the primary students are excluded from the scholarship:

The Lodge¹¹⁴ has been here for twelve years
and this is the first time the school children
have had any fees paid to them

¹¹⁴ Lavena Lodge

but only a little and not for primary school students.

We have three children

They are all in primary school

We need \$200 for education every year.

One family said that approximately \$200 came from the Lavena project to the whole community (village/*yavusa*) each month. This money was largely spent on cleaning the village and included money for the *benzin* (fuel) for the grass cutters. Many people stated that funding for the park for the beautification of their village area was the only real benefit they saw from the park. It was clear that this was considered a very welcome benefit, however. One of the main village concerns from 2004-2006 was the renovation of the church. \$3000 was to go from park funds to the church committee to repair the church. The remaining cost of repairing the church would also be supported by the village (at \$110 per family).

At the time of research, another major concern for the village was the installation of flush toilets (*vale ni po*). Ten were paid for by the park in 2005. The park would pay one third, the village would raise another third and the government would pay the last third. However, in 2004 there were still some urgent requirements that had not been met by the park. There were not enough flush toilets to cater for the whole village and new water pipes and taps were also desperately needed. The community had also been asking for a new community hall for years and plans for this kept being pushed further and further back. A woman in Lavena describes the frustration felt by the village:

The money from the park

is not giving us these basic needs.

The park has been here for twelve years:

a long time.

People in Lavena do not feel so happy

about what is coming from the park.

It is not enough.
It is going very slowly
so it makes the people feel very bad, eh?

The population in Lavena has climbed rapidly over the last decade. In 1950, there were only seven houses in Lavena. In 2006, there were about seventy houses. Population growth and the seasonal nature of tourism were reported as two reasons why the Lavena community has not benefited as much as they feel they should have.

People get money
for petrol and school fees
but there is not enough for everybody.
There are about 67 families in Lavena.
And the money usually comes too late for our needs.
The tourists only really come in June and July.

Lavena was known in Boumā as the community with the most social problems; with the least respect for the *vanua*; with the most internal conflict resulting from the project (and other factors); and as the community least satisfied with the project. This made Lavena a particularly fascinating place to live for the majority of the fieldwork period.

Case study: Tavoro Falls and Amenity Centre

In 1995, Seroma reported that the Tavoro Falls income was divided as follows: 50% went to general park management, maintenance and wages; 47% to the *mataqali* and 3% to the whole *Vanua* (via the *Vunisā*) (See also McLisky, 1992). McLisky (1992) states, 'The money received by Mataqali Naituku is used to fund community development. For example, a new school and craft centre are being built in Korovou Village with the funds from Tavoro Falls' (p. 119). He also asserts that 'each new phase of development will advance the income earning potential opportunities for each of the other *mataqali*' (ibid). However, McLisky does not suggest how this might happen. By 2006, members of the Mataqali Vidawa (the only other *mataqali* in

Korovou not involved in the Tavoro Falls Project) reported that they had not benefited from Mataqali Naituku's Tavoro Falls ecotourism project.

While Lavena distributes a percentage of their profits to the *Vanua* (through the *Vunisā*/Head chief of Vanua Boumā), *mataqali* Naituku does not. I developed a sense that this was not widely known, as in 1992, McLisky reported that they did present a percentage of their profits to the *Vunisā*. If this was more widely known, I am sure there would be more *talanoa* regarding the uneven distribution of the benefits of ecotourism in Boumā.

When I asked a member of Mataqali Naituku involved in the running of the project how they divided their profits across the *Vanua* they replied that their priority was to expand and diversify the business to include accommodation for tourists. For this reason, they did not have any surplus funds to contribute to the *Vanua*. It appeared that Tavoro Falls had started making some clear distinctions between 'business *va'avanua*' and 'business'¹¹⁵.

A member of Mataqali Vidawa describes the strained relationship between the two *mataqali* in Korovou Village:

The Tavoro Falls land
belongs to that *mataqali* [Mataqali Naituku]
So people over here,
they just talk behind their back.
Like there is gossiping.
Naituku don't know what is being talked about.
The Vidawa clan come up with ideas,
but they don't go to the Naituku clan.
They would like things to change,

¹¹⁵ Chapter Ten will define local interpretations of 'business *va'avanua*' and how this has been distinguished from 'business'.

but they can't say anything.

I asked him if his clan saw any benefits from the Tavoro Falls project:

I don't think so.

Me: So no money goes to the community hall or the church?

No, no, no.

Not from what I know.

So I was telling my [Naituku relative]

Why not instead of just serving the people in your clan -

why don't you support the whole village:

their children and their education?

When I returned to Boumā in 2006, I asked a member of Mataqali Vidawa if their clan had any plans to develop their own ecotourism initiative. They told me that they had no plans to do so because they had seen the internal conflicts generated from the other initiatives and did not want the same for their own clan.

Case study: Vidawa Forest Walk

Since the Vidawa project was established in September 2004, the community has been able to raise enough money to make some improvements to the village. This has included contributions to the construction of family houses and the meeting house. However, due to the small size and immaturity of the Vidawa project, the community has not yet made regular enough and sizable enough profits to enable them to distribute their funds amongst their *yavusa*. However, an elder from the management team explains that they have a plan for this. Note that the *Vanua* in this case refers to the *yavusa* rather than all the *yavusa* in Boumā.

Our plan is
first of all this year
if we saved \$1000,
10% of that money should go to the church
because we believe in God
and God owns the forest! (*chuckle*).

OK, say, \$100 goes to the church
and then \$900 is left.
From that \$900,
another 10% goes to the *Vanua*
because the chief, you know,
has got some expenses too
for looking after us.

And then what's left,
you divide that into two.
50% goes to the community
and 50% for keeping up the business.
And this 50% goes to the education
or this goes to the parent,
its up to them, eh?
and then we have 50% for the project.

We have all agreed to that
We hope this will happen after one year -
especially for education or for the hall,
(things like that)
so the visitors will say,
 Oh it's good, eh.
 The business is good.

Right now those guides
and those who cook the food
understand the good in the project.

While the math is inaccurate (an example of the low level of formal education in Boumā), the reader should have some idea of where the funding is intended to go after running the business for another year.

Ten percent of the profits are given to the Vidawa chief due to expenses incurred when the chief has to attend *Vanua* (tribe) and possibly *ti'ina* (district) meetings. This ten percent also covers contributions to the *Vanua* when requested. However, it is the responsibility of the chiefs to report back to the community about what they have spent and how they have spent it.

Like when they go to a meeting,
all the chiefs of Boumā must go.
And there will be some expenses
and if something happens like
if all the villages have \$50
or \$100 for Vanua Boumā, eh?
If we contribute this 10%,
he doesn't have to take it from his pocket, eh?

And then the Vidawa chief and his two helpers have meetings
So every meeting they tell us how they have use the money:

You gave us \$100,
we used \$10 now
and we have \$90 left.
We used the money for this and this...

Unfortunately, out of the \$60 per head the village received per tourist, they only saw \$20 of this as \$40 of this was given to the resorts as a contribution toward transporting the tourists to the walk. Once the remaining \$20 had been distributed amongst the cooks and the guides, there was never much left to reinvest or to spread throughout the community.

The tourists could be paying the resorts

more than they are telling us.

We don't know.

It would be easy to find out

and we should do it

but we just don't do it.

Early on, due to the relative geographical isolation of Boumā from the tourist centre, the community were led to believe that one of the priorities for park development was investment into the transportation of guests from the resorts to Boumā. This has been a source of much frustration for Vidawa and Waitabu as, unless specific transport is arranged, their villages are not common stopping points for tourists visiting this area of the island.

We have been planning to get our own transport for here.

It is in the Charter [PAC]

but we don't know when it will come.

The plan for this was since the project started.

Vidawa suffers a raft of problems in attempting to fully-establish their project including transport; leakage; lack of business knowledge and capital; and a small pool of potential staff to draw from. There were only nine *vūvale* in Vidawa in 2007. As has been explained, the few young men there had to spend most of their time away from their village on their plantations leaving few suitable people left in the village to guide tourists when the need arose.

Dependency on the projects

According to Turnbull (2003), TRC and the National Trust have reported that the Boumā community has become dependent on donors (p. 13). A number of community members agreed. One woman from Korovou said that although the money they receive from the Tovororo Project is not enough to live on, some Naituku families work less on their plantations relying more and more on the project income and credit system available to them. She was concerned that this behaviour would increase the risk of the community jeopardising their subsistence-based safety net.

It shouldn't happen.

But it is happening.

For example, if someone dies in the community,
they know the *mataqali* will give them some money for the funeral.

Or maybe they know
that when their child reaches form six level,
they can sit back and relax
because they know it will be paid for
by the scholarship anyway.

But just that part of it,
because it will make us lazy
and we will stop making our own money.

I know that the ecotourism is only supposed to be for basic needs
and everything else should be supplied by ourselves.

But some people think that ecotourism can supply much more.

In one of the projects, one of the staff members could make a good income for his family during high tourist season. It was very clear to the rest of the community when he was making a lot of money because (as was the case for many in the community) he was always seen donating all his money at the *gunusedes* (fundraising dances) (see

Chapter Six). This individual had a young family to support but he had let his farm go until he no longer had any crops left. This was an example of what the woman in Korovou was talking about:

They work on the tourism
and let their farms go
and when something happens with tourism
they have got nothing to fall back on.
Nothing.

The project staff member was often charged with stealing from the farms of others when the tourist numbers were low. People would wonder how else he could possibly support himself during the low season when he had no *teitei* (plantation). His family, with arguably the greatest potential to be the most affluent in the village, was referred to as ‘one of the weaker ones’.

One of the Tavoro Falls project members said that it was no longer necessary to receive funding for the projects as they could stand on their own two feet now:

Because I think we have done this
for many years now,
and I think we can run our own business
in Vanua Boumā.
We know what to do
to help to improve the four projects in Boumā .

I don't think we need
financial assistance
from outside anymore now either.

This may well be the case for the well-established Tavoro Falls project but it is certainly not the case for the other smaller, newer projects such as Vidawa and Waitabu. These two projects are still in their infancy and are struggling to make any profit at all. It depends on who you speak to in Lavena, but a strong feeling from many is that the project is no longer worth the ruptures and conflicts it created in the community.

In 2004 a Waitabu woman stated:

The marine park has been a very good source of income.

Before we used to cut copra and sell it
and now it's *dalo* and *kava*.

The marine park has been helping a lot.

There is less pressure to sell the *kava*...

This may signal dependency on a very fragile ecotourism project or it may be a signal of ecotourism helping to diversify livelihood options, making communities more resilient in the face of change.

Intentional deviance

Assumptions about communities and indigeness are still often heard in development discourse. For example, Croal and Darou (2002) state, '[W]ithin most indigenous societies, one of the defining characteristics of the cultures is a high degree of participation in all community decisions' (p. 104). This statement demonstrates that it is not only 'community' that requires deconstruction. Terms such as 'participation' also necessitate further elaboration. It appears that Croal and Darou (2002) like many other proponents of participatory development propose a universal understanding of 'participation'. The content of this study led me to believe that, unlike the literature, distinctions needed to be made between 'public support' and 'participation'. For example, many in Boumā supported the ecotourism initiatives but did not participate in them. Some supported the initiatives publicly through the need to maintain allegiances

to kin. Private *talanoa*, however, sometimes revealed the antithesis to their public representations. The challenge confronting development practitioners and researchers is that of determining if support or participation is publicly manifested through cultural coercion or individual choice unlimited by social structures of power.

The *vanua* concept implies that the deconstruction of abstract terms such as ‘participation’ inevitably links to the deconstruction of ‘community’. In this thesis, some ‘community’-members considered Western styles of participation in decision-making useful and empowering while many more did not.

Boumā’s efforts to create their own indigenous forms of development may be described as the product of ‘intentional deviance’. Intentional deviance is a term first used in 1985 by James Scott in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* involving peasant resistance. For Scott, intentional deviance involves quotidian forms of resistance which works to change the *status quo* under conditions of limited agency and constrained choices. Scott notes that those who emphasise hegemony fail to notice the ‘hidden transcripts’ or subtle moments of resistance (1990, cited in Ortner, 2006, p. 52) emphasising the need to deconstruct the Boumā ‘community’.

Scott’s work led to a burgeoning literature on the topic. One of those writers who picked up on his work was Cathy Cohen. In *Deviance as Resistance: A New Research Agenda for the Study of Black Politics*, (2004), she writes:

The cumulative impact of [deviant] choices might be the creation of spaces or counter publics, where not only oppositional ideas and discourse happen, but lived opposition, or at least autonomy, is chosen daily. Through the repetition of deviant practices by multiple individuals, new identities, communities, and politics might emerge where seemingly deviant, unconnected behavior can be transformed into conscious acts of resistance that serve as the basis for a mobilized politics of deviance (p. 27).

As has been explained, continuous attempts to ensure the successes of the project and a string of failures have been exhausting and disheartening for the people of Boumā, particularly in some of the longer-running projects. Many felt that their voices have not been heard. The feelings of frustration and disempowerment may have been the source of the manifestation of behaviour including *talanoa* involving threats to burn down Lavena Lodge and to intentionally undermine the projects by setting up businesses in direct competition with them, as well as the murder of the Waitabu *turaga ni 'oro*. While these are extreme examples of intentional deviance, everyday efforts to redefine 'life projects' (Blaser, 2004) in a way that holds most meaning for those in Boumā can also be achieved through often subtle yet powerful expressions of intentional deviance. All of these actions have sent a very strong message across the *Vanua* that the ecotourism initiatives are not benefiting the whole tribe.

In Chapter Five I suggested that those who research community-based resource management (community-based ecotourism included) have largely ignored traditional authority and community leadership as key factors in the success of related projects. Deviant or resistant acts within (what on the surface appear to be) harmonious traditional hierarchical structures in the Pacific (Muehlig-Hofmann, 2007) is vital if we are to determine whether these acts of resistance have an impact on traditional power relations and on the future of community-based ecotourism projects. I have noted that there is no evidence of conflict management in Boumā's development reports. However, this is not surprising considering conflict in Boumā is not expressed publicly. This section will present then, how it is expressed.

As has been explained, the *vanua* is ultimately a set of cultural devices and structures which serve to maintain the integrity and harmony of the community. Therefore, due to the nature of the *vanua*, the question of intentional deviancy must be explored here in relation to individualism and communalism. It is important, then, to develop a picture of how Boumā communities perceive the community-based ecotourism projects as relatively empowering or disempowering and how these are seen along an

individualistic/communalistic spectrum. In this way, local agency as intentional deviancy can be made more transparent.

I must note here that an anthropologist's understanding of intentional deviancy is not limited to direct and voiced explanation in *talanoa*. Repetitive and prolonged observation of individual and group behaviour in the village setting revealed that corporeal presence or absence in a particular setting can clearly indicate the level of support for the projects. This was also made very clear to the rest of the community. Within the transparency of non-action is a political strategy intended to clearly indicate dissatisfaction with the *status quo* without confrontation (deemed culturally unacceptable). For example, intentional deviance may be expressed in Boumā by regular and obvious absences from ecotourism meetings.

As the *vanua* concept is embodied in working together as a community for the whole of the community, some may interpret local choices not to be present for *ca'aca'a na park* (community work on the park) and *bose na park* (park meetings) as forms of intentional deviance from cultural norms (Cohen, 2004) given limited agency and constrained choices. Levels of participation in regular park meetings and community-based park working working days act as gauges of satisfaction with the management of the projects, project benefits and chiefly leadership. Again, this is an outlet where these expressions of dissatisfaction may not be articulated directly in public contexts.

In the previous chapter, some participants felt that one of the benefits brought by the projects was that they helped draw the community together for a shared purpose for the first time in a long time. One of those occasions was in the heady 'honeymoon' years when everyone got together to build the first Lavena lodge. There was no expectation of payment on that occasion. Everyone was excited about the prospect of a prosperous ecotourism project in their village and they wanted to help to develop it. However, this enthusiasm soon waned, according to one Lavena community member:

The villagers,

they did that [contributed labour for the park] for so many years,
the result of that -
nothing.

If they were asked to contribute their labour
to another Lavena ecotourism project,
many would think to themselves

Oh, I'm just going waste my time going to work on that.
And so they wouldn't turn up.

It is important that all village members attend the *bose va'oro* (village meetings) in order to both contribute to, and to understand, park project matters for it to be a truly 'community' run project. However, village attendance in *bose va'oro* fluctuated depending on the social climate of the village at that time:

At first
if everything is settled from every side
we can have 120-150 villagers at the meeting
but now
when there is an upset from somewhere
there is 40, 50, sometimes 70.

One male participant in Lavena was concerned with the lack of respect the community had for the village chiefs. When they call community members to help with the ecotourism projects or the meetings, the community members should come unquestioningly. He felt this was a clear indication of how people had less respect for their chiefs:

If the *turaga ni 'oro* calls,
Tomorrow you will be here,
cleaning up the coastal track!

You should come.

But bad people do not come
to attend the park work
early in the morning.

So the *turaga ni vanua*
and all the *yavusa* chiefs called a village meeting recently.
And the two clans divided into five people in the village
to make it easier for to them
to announce this to the *Vanua* [in this sense, the *Yavusa*].
And when they did
they said there was something wrong here.

The *turaga ni vanua* told the chiefs:

You go there.
You go to these people
and you ask them from me, eh?
And then come back and tell me.
Not many people go and attend to village work.
Why is that, eh?
Next month, we want many people
to go and work in the village.

Attendance at village park meetings and in park maintenance work (*ca'aca'a na park*) did not only indicate dissatisfaction with local leaders; according to most I spoke with, low attendance also provided a clear indication of the levels of satisfaction the community had with the ecotourism projects. This may include dissatisfaction with the way their managers ran the projects; lack of communication between the projects and the local community; lack of financial or other benefits or a lack of participatory potential they had in the projects.

Case study: The Lavena Coastal Walk and Backpackers Lodge

Lavena used to have to pay for each compound to be mowed by community members, but now this comes out of park funds as long as everyone contributes to ‘community clean-up days’. Lavena regularly has clean-up days whereby the whole village works together to improve the village. This is done on a rotation basis with the first Tuesday in the month dedicated to the *bose va‘oro* (the village meeting); the second Tuesday is for general community work; the third week is for park maintenance; and the fourth week is for general community work again.

Park maintenance may include cutting grass, clearing rubbish, and repairing tracks, laying gravel and maintaining the backpacker lodge. Everyone in the village is expected to attend all of these community events. However, any bad feeling about the park, its management, or chiefly leadership is often said to be reflected in poor attendance on park clean-up days as well as other community events. Consequently, attendance at *bose va‘oro* and community clean up days involving the park were very visual social gauges of the community’s level of satisfaction of the projects.

The following participant blamed the poor leadership of the *turaga ni ‘oro* on the poor attendance because it is he who is responsible for calling the people to attend park work meetings:

Not everyone comes to the community clean-up day.

Some people just stay in their houses.

It’s the leadership.

They don’t like who is leading –

the *turaga ni koro*, the *turaga ni vanua*.

Maybe the leader did something bad to the community when they were in a previous position of leadership

And when they become leaders

the people don't like them

So that's why people don't come to the community clean-up days.

The *turaga ni 'oro* at the time had stolen community funds. Although he had offered a sacrifice of *waqa* (kava root) in an *i soro* (reconciliation ceremony), *talanoa* suggested that there was still a residual lack of respect for the individual. This lack of respect was shown in this particular case by a lack of response for his calls for community action. One participant stated that there was only good participation in community work when they could see themselves directly benefiting from that work, for example the installation of flush toilets.

Case study: Tavoro Falls

Community clean up days in Korovou includes the whole village. Since *mataqali* Naituku is the only land-owning kin group for the project, only Naituku is required to work on the Tavoro Project once a month. One participant claimed that because there is a general sense of satisfaction about the benefits from the Tavoro project, attendance to these park maintenance meetings is good. Most of the ongoing Tavoro Falls project maintenance, however, is done by one Naituku member who is paid to regularly cut the grass on either side of the track and clear any debris.

Case study: Waitabu Marine Reserve

In Waitabu, because of a lower population and poor attendance from the village and its settlements, the project manager recognised that the community work was taking longer to complete and was a greater burden to families. Those villagers who did contribute to community days sacrificed the work they did at home to sustain their families. Consequently, villagers in Waitabu were paid to work overtime to complete community work when necessary. The manager often conveyed her sadness at the way people were tending to work more for themselves than for their community as a whole as this meant the community were less likely to be able to achieve their goal of economic and

environmental sustainability through the Waitabu project. She felt that the *yavusa* was moving away from *va'avanua* and closer toward working for the self.

They say
they have their own family matters to attend to.
But it is community work.
So they have to go and do it.

If there is community work
like the tourist *bure* for the marine reserve
and some people have to stay
an extra day or two
to finish up the work,
we have to pay the workers \$10 each day
to try and finish it.
Otherwise, we would never get it done.

These are the kinds of things
that are happening now.

It is kind of sad
to see these old traditional ways dying out
just because people didn't make an effort
to help each other out.

Another reason for poor responses to calls for community contributions to park activities may be due to new focuses on more individual activities that have a more direct benefit on the family. Education is expensive and this may be why people spend less time contributing to the wider community and more time focusing on contributing toward their children's educational future through more individualistic endeavours. While many complain that this is not *va'avanua*, I suspect that more will come to see

the benefits these individual families are realising for themselves. This may mean that more families in Boumā will start looking toward more individualist entrepreneurial activities that take their time away from communal endeavours such as the ecotourism projects.

From 2002-2003, The Waitabu project manager reported that the Waitabu village community was either doing everything themselves and the settlements were holding back or everyone was reluctant to do anything at all. An example of this was the need to build a *bure* for Dan Schmitt, the Peace Corps Officer. When the offer of a Peace Corps Volunteer was made to the community, the manager felt that an alternative perspective and specialised skills absent from those living in Waitabu and its settlements (such as internet web-design), would be invaluable to the development of the project. One of the requirements for taking on a Peace Corps volunteer was that there should be safe and comfortable housing available. Consequently, the community made plans to build a *bure* which was required by the Peace Corps to be completed prior to his arrival.

However, the *bure* construction, which should have taken about a month, took six months and was incomplete when Dan arrived. He lived in the manager's house for a few months and then moved into the still unfinished *bure*. I suspect that there were multiple reasons for the delay in helping build the *bure*: a lack of benefits seen by the communities from the project; a lack of appreciation of the potential assistance the Peace Corps representative could offer; and a growing expectation for monetary reward. As has been discussed in Chapter Four, no longer was *ca'aca'a va'a vanua* (community work) done for free and for the good of the whole community.

Conclusion and discussion

This chapter has provided a greater insight into what happens at the nexus where the advice and actions of external agents of development and the knowledge and values of local communities are negotiated. It also provides a link to discuss in further detail how

the Boumā people perceived the business operations of the ecotourism initiatives as either complementary to, or working against, the *vanua*. If the people of Boumā are to appreciate the benefits associated with their ecotourism initiatives as a complete community, they must first understand the goals and objectives of community-based ecotourism development and then develop their own definition based on their own localised needs and realities. The ecotourism definition offered by Lavena locals in this chapter as well as the collective responses from most of the participants I spoke to indicated that the people and their cultural values should sit at the heart of not only a local definition of ecotourism but also at the way in which ecotourism is carried out – not economics.

However, the definition, aims, goals and objectives of community-based ecotourism in Boumā were largely externally constructed. While some local managers may have been involved in the development of these aims and goals, there was an alarming lack of general, local understanding of ecotourism and the desired outcomes of ecotourism as prescribed by TRC and NZAID or anyone else. As has been explained, few in Boumā had any reasonable understanding of how ecotourism was defined by TRC, the Fiji government, or the international community. If all the park managers had access to TRC's (2003) aims, for example, they were certainly not communicated to the rest of the community. However, even if the definition and aims were shared with the general community, they would mean little until reconfigured in a way that was locally meaningful and useful.

While the majority of those in Boumā have nothing with which to compare their own community-based ecotourism experiences, the international community may measure these perceptions against their understanding of how community-based ecotourism should benefit indigenous communities. The individuals of Vanua Boumā saw both positives and negatives generated by the ecotourism initiatives. This illustrates the myth of 'community' (Wertheim, 1965; Guijt & Shah, 1999) as not all the members of Vanua Boumā supported ecotourism development (bearing in mind few understood its possibilities and limitations) and not all were given access to its benefits. Some of the

benefits offered as possibilities, to at least some of the Boumā communities, were often outweighed by the ways in which community integrity was deemed to be threatened by those benefits. The main objections to the projects were the socially divisive and exclusionary nature of much of the management and decision-making of the projects, as well as the resulting misconceptions and confusions.

Reactions to the management of the projects also varied greatly between individuals in the Boumā ‘communities’. Some individuals and families in Boumā displayed their feeling of discontentment with the projects and the ways in which they were affected by them through what has been described in this chapter as ‘intentional deviance’. The manner in which this intentional deviance is played out can sometimes set the protagonist on a paradoxical tight-rope between what is acceptable to the *vanua* and what is not. That is, for example, by physically withdrawing from an ecotourism project activity, he/she is practicing the non-direct and, therefore, non-threatening behaviour of someone who takes care to behave *va’aturaga* (culturally appropriately) while temporarily withdrawing from communal activities (deemed antithetical to the *vanua*).

Most commonly, intentional deviance was played out as private *talanoa*. *Talanoa* is a space in which indigenous epistemology is rethought and renewed. Here in small group discussions, people could discuss how they interpret and value what is going on around them. Thus, *talanoa* facilitates the rethinking of Boumā culture. David Gegeo also reports the value the Kwara’ae place on ‘critical discussion’ or ‘enlightened dialogue’ (*talingisilana ala’anga*) as social contexts for negotiating culture and indigenous epistemologies (2000). Other more extreme and rare forms of intentional deviance, on the other hand, were in diametric opposition to the laws of the *vanua* and *va’aturaga* (e.g. threats to burn down Lavena lodge and others to undermine the business, the murder of the Waitabu *turaga ni’oro*).

Turnbull (2003) states that community conservation is designed to ‘draw rural communities further into the cash economy’ and that the projects in Boumā are ‘overly optimistic’ (p. 13). She reports that Elisabeth Erasito from National Trust and Dave

Bamford from TRC both indicated that community conservation has created ‘unrealistic expectations of the communities involved’ (ibid). Perhaps, if the Boumā people did not have unrealistic assumptions about the benefits of the projects, they may not have been experiencing an erosion of social structure at quite the level that they were from 2004 to 2006 (see also Chapter Five)¹¹⁶.

While the projects have brought many benefits, historical conflicts between some kin groups have been magnified by community involvement in the Boumā ecotourism projects. Despite any perceived negative impacts on the *vanua*, it is possible for communities to create indigenous forms of entrepreneurship specific to the needs of a place and its people (Hindle & Landsdowne, 2007; Ingram, 1990; de Bruin, 2003; Dana & Anderson, 2007; Curry, 2003). The local definition of ‘ecotourism’ and the tenacity of the *mataqalis* are testament to this possibility and demonstrate hope for the future success for the ecotourism initiatives. The creation of a model of indigenous entrepreneurship and development that is meaningful to Boumā should increase the likelihood that the benefits of ecotourism, as locally defined, will be realised.

¹¹⁶ Bearing in mind that many claimed to have been experiencing the erosion of their social structure and values many years prior to ecotourism development.

Chapter Ten

Back to Business *Va'avanua*

*And we don't believe each other
in this 'business' system,
It is not the Fijian way
It is not va'avanua*

*This is the business
and this is the Fijian style.
Some people think
they can't go together
and others think they can.
That is the problem now.*

(Committee member of the Lavena project)

This chapter is the culmination of all that has been discussed in this thesis with additional emphasis on cultural hybridity, indigenous development and indigenous entrepreneurship. Boumā has responded to ecotourism development at the micro and meso levels in a number of ways and this chapter, in particular, will emphasise the plural and hybrid nature of these responses.

The advent of community-based ecotourism has meant that the people of Boumā have struggled to negotiate and contest external values brought by entrepreneurship: individualism, growth, competition, and democratic decision-making. In addition, relatively little profit has been realized by community members since the inception of the ecotourism projects. Vanua Boumā has based their pre-existing indigenous development models on *vanua* values. Rather than investing financially, the Boumā tribe has always placed primacy on investing in social integrity thus providing them with economic and social security. However, in this thesis, I have explained how the

characteristics inherent in entrepreneurship have presented some threats to social networks.

My initial reaction to local perceptions of how these ecotourism initiatives have affected the *vanua* was that they were ‘failing’. However, after almost twenty years of persevering with managing the Park since its official opening in 1990, the people of Boumā did not see it this way. Rather, through time, trial and error, they have been gradually creating their own meaningful and empowering hybrid forms of indigenous development or indigenous entrepreneurship based on the core values of the *vanua*.

They call this ‘business *va’avanua*’ or business the *vanua* way. This is an exciting prospect, as closer attention to what indigenous communities are doing despite ecotourism development being largely based on ‘how capitalist-based development should be,’^{117, 118} may provide deeper insights into why many community-based ecotourism projects have been considered ‘failed’ by ecotourism scholars and critics.

The chapter is entitled ‘Back to Business *Va’avanua*’ because some of my participants informed me that they felt the manner in which they had conducted the management of the projects in the early stages was more in line with what they considered to be ‘business *va’avanua*’ whereas, at the time of the research (2004-2006), they reported that the projects were run largely ‘business style’. Like *sautu*, I interpret business *va’avanua* to be an ideal that may never be fully realised. Rather, the objective for *sautu* and business *va’avanua* is to make every effort to attempt to achieve that ideal. There was a general sense in Lavena Village that the conflict and division that was resulting in this style of business management could no longer be tolerated. At the same time, while they may not have been experiencing the same sense of urgency, the other three villages in Vanua Boumā were also struggling to find locally appropriate expressions of development. Consequently, during the research period there was a

¹¹⁷ See Susan Maiava’s (2005) immanent development as ‘what people are doing anyway’ or despite development.

¹¹⁸ See Gibson-Graham’s (1996) ‘alternative economies’.

great deal of *talanoa* involving ways in which the communities could go ‘back to business *va’avanua*’.

This chapter will explore the background, structure and processes that have inspired the desire to return to business *va’avanua* as well as the challenges involved. First, I will explain how the people of Boumā define ‘business *va’avanua*’. Next, I provide a discussion of the literature surrounding ‘affordances’ (recognising value in ways of doing and knowing), indigenous development, and indigenous entrepreneurship. Finally, I will address the difference between Western-based entrepreneurship or ‘business’ and the *vanua* as it is described in the relevant literature.

Two positive examples of business *va’avanua* as responses to the conflicting Eurocentric business models and *va’avanua* will be provided: an element of Fiji’s cooperative bylaws deemed antithetical to the *vanua* in Boumā and, thus, rejected by Yavusa Lavena; and the inclusion of ‘*ere’ere*’ into some of Boumā’s cash-based ecotourism enterprises. The following sections will focus on the challenges facing the community as they go ‘back to business *va’avanua*’. A discussion of how lines of communication have broken down between the Park the community as well as throughout the community will precede a description of the management structure of the Park. The management structure will provide a clearer illustration of decision-making for the final section. I have dedicated the most substantial discussion to this final section: decision-making *va’avanua* in the management of the projects. This is because business *va’avanua* was most commonly defined by my participants as making decisions about the business in the ‘traditional’ way.

This chapter does not provide solutions to the problems confronting the people of Boumā as presented in previous chapters. The reality is that the Boumā people are still struggling with the construction of development models that they feel they can truly own. However, this chapter will present some glimmers of success amongst perhaps even greater challenges. Regardless, for most, hope in Boumā still remains strong for community-based ecotourism as business *va’avanua*.

Business va'avanua

Lavena moved from initially running its projects '*va'avanua*' to running them 'business' style in around 1999. This appears to be marked by the replacement of the community selection of park staff by formal interviewing including a requirement that the applicant produce a letter of application. However, in 2004, the village was disillusioned with the way the projects were being run and were in the process of returning to business *va'avanua*. A husband and wife in Lavena describe business *va'avanua* and how it related to the Lavena project in 2005. (I will refer to the wife as Letia and the husband as Maciu):

Letia: *Va'avanua* is just our native way of doing things.

The business *va'avanua* style

started from the beginning in Lavena

in 1993, when this project started.

The business style is coming on from 1999 I think.

Before

with business *va'avanua* style

it was like this:

If, for example, ...

Maciu: Before, if some tourists came here for the first time

they would have to

present the chief with a *waka* [whole kava root]

and then you could go into the village.

That is business *va'avanua*.

But now it is cheaper.

Tourists just came by car,

pay their fees and go again.

It is done ‘business style’.

So you can see that business *va’avanua* is different from the way we do things now.

Ecotourism *va’avanua* style involves everyone in the *Vanua*:
Before we had a workshop down at Boumā¹¹⁹ the whole of Boumā had a workshop. Not just the managers. This is business *va’avanua*:

Letia: I can explain it in another way:

Business *va’avanua*, too, is like this: if there are some problems going on, the *turaga ni vanua* and everybody will be there to solve the problem.

The *turaga ni vanua* will come over and advise the one who is causing problems that they are doing the wrong thing. They are gonna advise him: give him some sweet words... (*chuckle*).

If that one doesn’t want to follow what they are told to do, there’ll be one more chance.

¹¹⁹ Korovōu Village.

Maciu: But not in this kind of business today, eh?

Today, people don't listen to the *turaga ni vanua*.

Va'avanua is when the chiefs communicate with the people everyday.

Letia: Today, we do it business style.

Maciu: But that is not our way,

our *va'avanua*.

Letia: So, it started off *va'avanua* and then it went to business.

And now we are moving back

towards *va'avanua* and business together:

business *va'avanua*.

Business *va'avanua*, then, involves respect for the village leader in guiding the community to adhering to the laws of the *vanua*. This includes working for the good of the community rather than working for the self. It also includes ensuring those who come to Boumā also respect the *vanua*. However, as the couple explains, the community tried to run the business in both business and business *va'avanua* styles concurrently. This did not work as the elements of both management styles often conflicted.

Britton (1996) states when the Third World uses tourism as a means of development, 'it becomes entrenched in a global system over which it has no control' (cited in Turnbull, 2003, p. 13). While it may be true that Third World communities do not have control over the whole global system, they do have agency. The people of Boumā have expressed their agency in a number of ways which has contributed to business *va'avanua*. In 2006 however, many of the Boumā people felt they were reaching a crisis point and were losing control. They were feeling an escalation of discontentment and conflict within the community and had to reassess their decision to run the business in a way that best complemented their values. Consequently, in 2006, Lavena, (and to a

lesser extent two other villages in Vanua Boumā) was in a new and somewhat urgent phase of creating ways to reject some of the characteristics of businesses as they understood them to be managed in the West to refocus on what would best benefit their own people.

TRC had made efforts to address the previously top-down approach to development in Boumā by focusing on handing control of the projects back to the Boumā people. The challenge for Boumā was to adapt to this new ownership of their projects. This thesis has identified a need for greater attention to the ways in which people lead their own processes of development. This includes closer attention to the ways in which local communities pick and choose which external values, skills and knowledge they wish to adapt to their own, and which they denounce as harmful or meaningless.

Affordances and capital

This notion of picking and choosing may be illustrated through notions of affordances or capital. Ingold's dwelling perspective draws on Gibson's 'direct perception' (1979) and Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' (1977), both of which emphasise everyday bodily practical knowledge of the environment and 'embeddedness' through the recognition of the *affordances* (Gibson) or *capital* (Bourdieu) an environment offers. Affordances may be thought of as 'use values'. Organisms (including people) move through their world perceiving other organisms and non-organisms while assessing the value of them: 'Can I eat it? Will it keep me warm? Is it dangerous?' Perception, therefore, is a mode of action rather than a prerequisite for action.

For Reed (1988, p. 113), the existence of an affordance does not necessarily mean the realisation of it. (E.g. it took a long time for humans to work out that a stick could make a good digging tool). So the job is not only to work out what affordances something offers but also what kind of information and processes are needed to direct the observer to the affordances. Reed distinguishes between physical reality and social reality, and animate and inanimate. The animate and the social, he argues, are not

physically real, but ecologically real (which he claims is more important), and the affordances of these ecological realities have been used in different ways by different cultures (ibid, p. 113).

Both Gibson's (1979) 'ecological psychology' and Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' (1977) both of which 'set out to re-embed perception and cognition within the practical contexts of people's ongoing engagement with their environments in the ordinary course of life' (Ingold 2000, p. 167) and to dissolve Cartesian dualities that separated humans and their environment. Bourdieu's 'habitus' is a practice-based (inferring movement and action) environment of *dispositions* (Maton, 2003). Habitus also incorporates a cognitive 'sense of place' in a person's lived (embodied) environment' (Hillier & Rooksby 2002, p. 5). Bourdieu's habitus also involves the realization of capital which is very similar to Gibson and Reed's 'affordances'. Bourdieu describes capital as 'the resources which actors take to the field' including status, power, personal contacts and formal and informal forms of knowledge. He identifies three types of capital: economic, social and cultural. Social capital is 'the resources and power which people obtain through their social networks and connections' and cultural capital 'refers to knowledge and skills which actors acquire either through formally examined or through less formal means of education...often relates to prestige and status and includes articulateness, persuasiveness, aesthetic preferences and cultural awareness' (Hillier & Rooksby, 2002, p. 8; see also Lin, 2001). It is only through practical engagement with the environment that these three types of capital can be both recognized and realized.

The important point here is that the social and physical elements that make up a social group's taskscape offer a wide diversity of affordances or capital to the different individuals within that taskscape. An element in one taskscape will differ in its 'use value', affordance, or capital from culture to culture and from individual to individual. It is crucial to understand what affordances people derive from their environment as well as the information and processes need to recognize those affordances if we are to understand human-environment relationships and the ways in which cultural change is

negotiated under the conditions of the terms of the pre-existing human-environment relationship (acknowledging that the environment includes its social, cosmological and the physical elements). This thesis has provided illustrations of the way the *vanua* as a human-environment relationship has been used by the people of Boumā to evaluate the use-values or affordances the people find in different aspects presented to them in community-based ecotourism. This chapter focuses on the manner in which these negotiations or evaluations are made and the outcome. The outcome has been expressed by a growing number of social scientists interested in development with indigenous communities as ‘indigenous development’.

Indigenous development

Schönhuth (2002) refers to studies of development that are created and used at the local level as ‘studying down’ (p. 154). The following section traces literature that has pursued this line of thought with particular reference to Maiava and King’s (2007) ‘indigenous development’.

Maiava¹²⁰ and King (2007) draw on Cowen and Shenton’s (1995, 1996) ‘immanent development’ on which to base their argument for indigenous development. Cowen and Shenton (1995) find the ‘intentional’ development that displaced the natural organic and cyclical nature of progress, harmful to local communities. Today, development is described as both an action and as a goal of action (1995, p. 28). This goal of action is undertaken by those who consider themselves ‘developed’ and is what Cowen and Shenton identify as ‘the doctrine of trusteeship’, condemning trusteeship as Eurocentric and unsuccessful in theory and practice (pp. 28 & 29).

Arguing that current development is interventionist, Maiava and King (2007) propose that the spontaneous development described in Cowen and Shenton’s (1995) ‘immanent development’ is useful when reworked as ‘spontaneous endogenous development’ that aims to ‘ameliorate (or manipulate or take advantage of) the effects of Westernisation’

¹²⁰ (see also Maiava, 2001, 2002).

(Maiava, 2002, p. 5). This is what they refer to as ‘indigenous development’. Indigenous development, like interventionist development, is intentional, and may be both opportunist and ameliorative in its actions. However, unlike interventionist development, it is not governed by external trustees and its goals differ:

Instead of being governed by economic growth, it is motivated by the “moral” or “cultural economy”, both socially and environmentally. Its origin is from within the indigenous culture, motivated by that culture and directed by cultural criteria’ (Maiava & King, 2007, p. 85)¹²¹.

In Boumā’s case, to a varying degree over time, its economic growth has been governed and directed by the *vanua* as its moral or cultural economy. Indigenous development may be described as

...what people are doing in spite of capitalism...or before capitalism...[I]n most cases indigenous development is a negotiated response to capitalism and its consequences (that is both intentional intervention and its unconscious immanent outworking) (Maiava & King, 2007, p. 86).

Indigenous development is described as a people-led approach which is beyond a people-centred¹²² approach (Long, 1992, 1992a, 1992b; Maiava, 2001). For the development practitioner, this requires a trust in indigenous communities’ ways of doing things (Friere, 1972). In other words, a trust that they know best what works in the complexities of their own taskscape. Maiava (2001) states, “If you are not being led by local people, you’re not doing it right” (p. 2). Gegeo (1998, 2001) employs the term ‘indigenous organic’ (Gegeo, 1998, 2001) as a form of development which may be found in the informal economy whereby ‘...locals satisfy what the state has been

¹²¹ Schönhuth (2002) refers to studies of development that are created and used at the local level as ‘studying down’ (p. 154).

¹²² ‘People-centered development seeks to return control over resources to ...people and their communities to be used in meeting their own needs. This creates incentives for the responsible stewardship of resources that is essential to sustainability’ (Korten, 1990).

unsuccessful in providing them with' (Llosa, 1989 cited in Corbridge, 1995, p. 289). Esteva and Prakash (1998, p. 288) describe this people-led process as involving the 'creating or recreating [of] autonomous spaces'. In this way, lessons are learned from the people rather than expecting the people to learn from a 'superior' Western knowledge.

However, local knowledge and development may not be obvious to the sensibilities of external agents. Maiava and King (2007) explain that, like immanent development, indigenous development is 'hidden and marginalised, a perspective that is aided by the eurocentricity of Western economic development' (p. 87; see also Mehmet, 1995). This hidden and marginalised characteristic of indigenous development is resonant of Moscovici's (1984) Social Representation Theory which reveals that how local communities negotiate development processes may not be genuinely expressed in public forums such as PRA (participatory rural appraisal). Social Representations Theory is closely related to issues of Western concepts of democracy and consensus, and development organisations' general lack of interest in local governance in participatory development (see Muehlig-Hofmann, 2007).

The application of democracy and consensus, for example, may render development practitioners blind to the complex socio-political undercurrents that exist beneath public representations of support or rejection of development projects. The analyses of indigenous development, therefore, may require the unique skills of anthropologists and others willing and able to afford ongoing, longitudinal and process-based research (Stronza, 2001) into what is not publicly presented to all development practitioners in participatory development such as community-based ecotourism development. In the case of Boumā, *talanoa* was shown to be a useful and culturally appropriate method which had the potential to unveil nuanced and hidden micropolitical undercurrents that ran beneath public representations of needs and desires.

One example of indigenous development is Blaser, Feit, and McRae's (2005) 'life projects'. Mario Blaser explains that 'indigenous communities do not just resist development, and do not just react to state and market; they also sustain 'life projects':

... [E]mbedded in local histories; they encompass visions of the world and the future that are distinct from those embodied by projects promoted by state and markets. Life projects diverge from development in their attention to the uniqueness of people's experiences of place and self and their rejection of visions that claim to be universal. Thus, life projects are premised on densely and uniquely woven 'threads' of landscape, memories, expectations and desires (p. 26).

An example of indigenous development and one that contributes to Boumā's life projects is indigenous entrepreneurship as business *va'avanua*.

Indigenous entrepreneurship

Boumā culture, as for all Pacific Island cultures, is the product of generations of migration and hybridisation in the face of constant change. Therefore, the need to negotiate introduced change is not new. The hybridisation of the *vanua* and business may also be referred to as 'indigenous entrepreneurship' (Dana & Anderson, 2007; Hindle & Landsdowne, 2007). Despite Boumā's history of cultural change, it is highly contentious within the Boumā community as to whether a hybridised form of business based on *vanua* values can or should be possible.

There is almost no agreement as to the definition of entrepreneurship (Rao, 2004) and many definitions are vague. For example, Drucker (1985) virtually leaves it up to interpretation by defining an entrepreneur as 'an opportunity seeker' (pp. 21-22). Webster's Dictionary, however, provides us with a more defined interpretation, describing entrepreneurship as 'new, creative, profit-oriented, visionary economic organizations that exist in uncertain environments and that carry some risks' (cited in

Rao, 2004, p. 47). I prefer Moore and de Bruin's (2003) definition: 'running a business' (p. 43) for its simplicity and, therefore, room for localised innovation.

However it is defined, most models of entrepreneurship have been developed following a Eurocentric model (e.g. McClelland, 1961; Hoselitz, 1963; Hagen, 1962). For example, McClelland (1961) lists some of the psychological factors which contribute to successful entrepreneurship in different cultures. These cultural characteristics are representative of those found in the West and include achieved rather than ascribed status; anti-traditionalism; the belief that all citizens are born equal; and self-orientation rather than collectivism.

Many of those who write about Fijians' potential to succeed in business are overwhelmingly pessimistic. For example, Dennis Oliver's (1983) *Trickling Up* suggested that low levels of productivity in Fiji were attributed to the following: cultural lag¹²³; distribution of rewards; traditional work patterns and tenure; dependency mentality; inadequate infrastructure; low levels of education, skills and technology; powerlessness over export market prices; too hot/too wet and/or poor health. A number of commentators note that indigenous Fijians are conspicuous in their poor levels of involvement in successful entrepreneurial endeavours (Fairburn, 1988, p. 4; Ingram, 1990). Their comparisons with the entrepreneurial success of Indo-Fijians have contributed to inter-racial tension and the call for affirmative action in order to balance out Indo-Fijian opportunity with that of indigenous Fijians (Ratuva, 2002; Rao, 2004; Williksen-Bakker, 2002).

Entrepreneurship and indigenous Pacific values are often presented as dichotomous and incompatible. For example, a lack of involvement by indigenous Fijians in entrepreneurial development has been related to 'the continued existence of value systems that are rooted in traditional cultures' including the lack of social mobility inherent in hierarchical social structures (Ingram, 1990, p. 58). In addition, Hailey (1985) states that the Fijian individual's submissiveness to society 'may well have been

¹²³ I interpret this to mean slowness to develop technology.

at the expense of individual entrepreneurial activity' (p. 296). Williksen-Bakker (2002) reports that indigenous Fijians themselves refer to business and *va'avau* as radically different - one belonging to the rural past and one to the contemporary urban environment:

To succeed in business has up till today been publicly advertised by the leaders as the challenge for more or less any adult urban Fijian and, at the same time, it has been warned against as a threat to basic values in the culture. These values have for long been arranged in orderly and opposed categories: On the one hand, there is a life in *veikerekerei*, 'giving', on the other hand, there is a life in *mamaroroi*, 'saving'. One may speak of 'Fijian life' as opposed to 'European life', or a life as a *taukei* (indigenous person) as opposed to a life 'with money'. Thomas aptly uses the expression 'alternate paths' (Thomas 1997, p. 220, cited in Williksen-Bakker, 2002, p. 78).

Williksen-Bakker (2002) also recognises that although entrepreneurship and the *vanua* may be very different in their economic and value systems, 'in practical terms...it remains hard to keep them apart' (p. 81). Schaper (1999) identifies cultural differences between aboriginals and non-aboriginals in their approach to entrepreneurship. However, he identifies a need for a hybrid values model to replace the predominant, yet flawed model of acculturation.

If we are to move beyond dichotomous assumptions surrounding the question of Boumā's participation in entrepreneurship to start looking at the complex negotiations occurring between entrepreneurship and indigenous cultural values, we must first accept the existence of an already well-established indigenous development model or moral economy (Scott, 1976) based on social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990). As has been explained in chapters Four and Five, Boumā's moral economy is centred on *vanua* values. Williksen-Bakker (2002) argues that business and the moral economy on which indigenous communities are based are not mutually exclusive. Stefano Varese

(1996) also draws together the notion of the moral economy with indigenous entrepreneurship: 'Indigenous economy is a moral economy, founded mainly on the logic of reciprocity and on the right to subsistence, and secondarily on the necessity of exchange in the capitalist market' (p. 126).

In the past, Boumā's social structure, systems of governance, and economic systems of reciprocity and obligation have provided a relatively sustainable environment of economic and social security. However, the Fiji government is eager for indigenous Fijians to keep up with the global economy. As has been explained in Chapter Eight, this has introduced new financial pressures and has raised basic living costs including the cost of basic education. Vanua Boumā's moral economy may need to continue to adapt to these external pressures if it is to regain and maintain environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability.

A paradigm of indigenous entrepreneurship

Since the mid 1980s, there has been a growing body of research recognising the possibility and value of indigenous entrepreneurship based on moral economy. One of the first was a book edited by John Hailey in 1986 entitled *Indigenous Business Development in the Pacific*. Since then, interest in indigenous entrepreneurship has culminated in a collection of works embodied in *The International Handbook of Research on Indigenous Entrepreneurship* (2007), edited by Leo-Paul Dana and Robert Anderson, which now identifies indigenous entrepreneurship as an 'explicit globally relevant research paradigm' (Hindle & Lansdowne, 2007, p. 8). Hindle and Lansdowne (2007) suggest that indigenous entrepreneurship is one of the most likely solutions to dependency caused by international hand outs. The indigenous entrepreneurship paradigm is based on a 'theory of values' rather than on a Eurocentric economic 'values theory' and suggests that if we are to understand how indigenous peoples negotiate modernity we must understand the different values attributed to the world around them (e.g. the *vanua*).

In Anne de Bruin and Anne Dupuis' (2003) *Entrepreneurship: New Perspectives in a Global Age*, de Bruin argues that acculturation as a means to development is flawed because 'policies of assimilation and integration, and the need for indigenous groups to lose their identity is no longer a predominant view' (p. 17). Therefore, rather than continuing to accept theories of acculturation, the way that modernity is negotiated with the *vanua* may be described as a form of 'indigenization of modernity' (Sahlins 1999: x).

Gibson-Graham (2006) have written extensively on the need to establish alternative economies to counter a homogeneous capitalist economic model that negates social relationships in market transactions. Karl Polanyi's (1944, 1957) notion of the 'always-embedded economy' suggests that land, labor and money are 'fictitious economies' in that they are not bought and sold in the capitalist market. Rather these remain embedded in society. This embeddedness ensures economic and social sustainability. Different societies have differently constituted economies. Therefore, 'different forms of social embeddedness will give rise to different types of economies, both in Western market societies and in the low-income countries of the South' (Curry, 2003, pp. 40-410). With this in mind, any effort to encourage a prototype of what Gibson-Graham describe as a homogeneous capitalist economic model in all societies is not useful.

Examples of these alternative economies are provided by those interested in indigenous entrepreneurship in the Pacific and other parts of the world (e.g. Gegeo, 2000; Curry, 2003) and who have recognised that the entrepreneurial unit can be a group (Ingram, 1990; de Bruin, 2003). De Bruin (2003) describes indigenous entrepreneurship at the larger community level as 'tribal entrepreneurship' (p. 18).

So what does an indigenous Pacific form of tribal entrepreneurship look like? Those who endorse the paradigm suggest that it is possible to incorporate tribal values and ethics into the running of a business. De Bruin and Mataira (2003), for example, suggest that self-determination and community-control is the primary goal of tribal entrepreneurship (p. 173). Ingram (1990) notes that 'unlike the Western entrepreneur,

this informal sector entrepreneur may not view the maximisation of profit as the primary motivation of success' (ibid). She suggests, instead, that an indigenous Pacific form of entrepreneurship may be realised through the concept of 'subsistence entrepreneurship' in which economic activities are developed 'while maintaining a unique and preferred way of life' (p. 66).

Moore and de Bruin (2003) go some way to suggesting how local cultural values and ethics may be interwoven into indigenous entrepreneurship. They describe this as

...a collective vision for tribal prosperity, tribal tradition and customary lore, the collective understanding of living in harmony with the nature, the spiritual and the inner-self, which in turn ... dynamically being reshaped by other influences such as global capitalism and neo-tribalism (p. 44; see also Mataira, 2000).

They also suggest that cultural and religious influences such as Christian principles may be incorporated to influence the ethical perspective of entrepreneurial activity. However, those who have written about indigenous entrepreneurship have a tendency to accentuate the positive and create an almost romanticised and utopian image of how entrepreneurship and indigenous cultural values can be amalgamated. To their credit, de Bruin and Mataira (2003) emphasise that sound governance structures, culturally appropriate institutional frameworks and sound organisational structures are keys to successful tribal entrepreneurship. They also state that tribal entrepreneurship is built on trust and loyalty, much of which is predetermined by support mechanisms (de Bruin & Mataira, 2003, p. 179). However, one wonders how many communities may be described as blessed with sound governance, sound organisational structures and sound support mechanisms as well as culturally appropriate institutional frameworks.

The focus of the chapter now moves away from the theoretical framework to the ethnographic findings involving business *va'avanua* as a hybrid of entrepreneurship and the *vanua*. One stark example of the conflicting values of business and the *vanua* was

found in Fiji's cooperative bylaws. What follows is an example of Boumā's resistance to culturally inappropriate business development models

Expressions of rejection: cooperative bylaws

Some of the Boumā communities had made a number of attempts at establishing informal (unregistered) cooperatives as a communal way of financially supporting the community. One such example included efforts to establish cooperative gardens in Lavena. After two failed efforts (largely due to the mismanagement of cooperative funds), the village conceded defeat.

In 2004, the Lavena project board had been issued a cooperatives officer from the Cooperatives Office in Wainikeli, Taveuni. The agreement was that if they registered the business as a cooperative they would receive free annual audits. While they had not registered the business as a cooperative yet, the board was interested in modelling the business as such with the help of the cooperatives officer and presented this to Yavusa Lavena for consideration.

During this time, the village had not collectively agreed to all the compulsory bylaws required of them if they were to register as a cooperative. They were in the process of establishing a set of rules that would create more transparent lines of communication between the project managers, the project and the rest of the community. However, the rules for consultation as determined by the cooperatives system were not conducive to Lavena's socio-cultural environment. This is explained by one member of the Lavena project committee:

What is going on with the constitution,
the rules of that cooperative,
does not suit what is going on here.
So we are trying to remove
all those ones that we don't need.

We are trying to take some good ones from the village and put them together.

But the problem is the cooperative officer says, 'No'.

So we have that mix-up.

We are facing a lot of hard times with that.

One of the compulsory bylaws they wanted to have changed was that relating to land and resource ownership. The bylaw in question stated that only those over the age of eighteen could be registered as an 'owner'. However, the people of Lavena could not conceive that their children would be excluded as owners of the project under the terms of government cooperatives bylaws since all Boumā people belong to the land from birth. In 2006, considering the compulsory nature of this bylaw and the strength of local objection to it, it appeared they were still deadlocked. While Boumā had not yet found an appropriate hybrid values model in their effort to form a cooperative, a more successful example of a business *va'avanua* hybrid was the integration of the 'ere'ere' system into the running of their ecotourism businesses.

Hybridising business and the vanua: 'ere'ere

'Ere'ere or *kerekere* is one influential element of business *va'avanua*. As has been explained in Chapter Five, the socio-economic system in Boumā is partly built on 'ere'ere requests. Capell (1968) and Nayacakalou (1978) describe 'ere'ere as an integral part of *va'avanua* whereby a village member can ask for money, goods, or services without being expected to return it or repay at a later date. However, Rao (2004) describes 'ere'ere as 'incur[ring] indebtedness and...predicated on notions of reciprocity' (p. xix). In Boumā too, 'ere'ere requests for goods or services must never be denied as repetitively doing so may mean denial of their own requests and access to the kinship system that acts as a safety net to meet needs (Novaczek, Mitchell, & Veitayaki, 2005). In the same way, acts of kindness carry some expectation that they will be reciprocated in some way, some time in the future.

'*Ere'ere* means that surpluses are shared, thus preventing the accumulation of wealth (Nayacakalou, 1978). The basis of '*ere'ere* may be the practice of '*ana veicuruma'i*' in which Fijian ideals of sharing and caring including *veivu'ei* (offering assistance), *veinanumi* (consideration), *veilomani* (being loving and friendly) are practiced (Ravuvu, 1983, p. 82). '*Ana veicuruma'i* involves relying on others' land resources for what one requires while doing the same for others who do not have the same land resources. Although this was said to be practiced before the colonial division of kinship groups into *mataqalis*, *kana veicuruma'i* is still practiced to some degree in Boumā and contributes to collectivism¹²⁴ and, therefore, the *vanua* in Boumā.

However, today, '*ere'ere* has been reported to be the cause of small business failure in Fiji. Williksen-Bakker (2004) reports shops have closed down as a result of demanding family members. There is a difference in opinion as to the value of '*ere'ere* in Boumā today. Some feel that it is important to incorporate it into business and others felt it should remain in the village. Again, a Lavena villager directly involved in the project describes their village and the business as two separate entities. Even though the participant does not agree with '*ere'ere-ing*' from the business, he admits that he has had to approach the project managers for money himself:

That system is good for only the people in Lavena,
not really for the business of tourism.

It does not work because this '*ere'ere* from family to family business
might put a big pressure on the person who is working on the books.

They even '*ere'ere* to me:

Will you give some money for ...?

I'll owe you the money.

'Oh, you don't have to pay it back.

That is my gift to help you.'

If they want something,

¹²⁴ Collectivism occurs when 'the behaviour and habits of a society ... conform to group goals rather than focusing on individual achievements' (Rao, 2004, p. xxiii).

I just give it to them.

I've got a small farm there up at the hill.

We had a meeting with the park management
to buy spray.

We didn't have any money at that moment.

I myself got some money from the park.

But you can't do this in tourism.

No.

If you do,
something is going to go wrong.

When the Vidawa Forest Hike was established seven years ago, the treasurer was constantly bombarded with *'ere'eres* from the *yavusa*. These requests may be in the form of, “*Ere'ere*, I need some money for the bus to visit my mother in hospital” or “*Ere'ere*, I need some money for a new lantern.” As it was the cultural norm, the treasurer almost always complied until there were no funds left in the project kitty. He said that the project was doomed to failure.

Today, the Vidawa project has accommodated these traditional requests into the running of the business. The treasurer is under strict instructions not to simply give money away. However, the project managers have responded to *'ere'ere* by basing it on a reciprocal agreement in which the request must be repaid to the project in *dalo* tops. The *dalo* tops are planted and harvested for the project. In this way, the community has its request fulfilled while reinvesting in the project. In 2004, it appeared to be a successful compromise. This is a vivid example of how the Boumā people have successfully hybridised business economic investment with *vanua* values of investing in social cohesion.

A former project manager said that up until around 2002, Lavena used to accept 'ere'ere requests.

Like for the last few years,
when someone wanted some money,
they just took it out of the business.

However, the manager decided that this was too damaging for the business and put a stop to it. This does not mean that 'ere'ere requests were rejected outright. Like the Vidawa project, the manager tempered the 'ere'ere arrangement so that the business remained sustainable. He did this by asking that the supplicant wait until the end of the year to ensure the project had enough funds to match the request.

However, despite the good intentions of the manager to ensure the business remained sustainable, he met with such opposition from his *yavusa* that he was made to step down. The community said that he had acted autonomously and that he should have consulted with the community and with the rest of the board. This raises two important points: the business cannot be sustainable in Boumā if it does not meet the rules of the *vanua*; and a project manager position cannot be sustained if they do not defer to his/her *yavusa/mataqali*.

One of the other previous project managers said that two current project managers had the wrong attitude about running a business in a *Vanua* and that was why they were constantly 'butting heads' with their boards and their communities. They said that they had talked to these two managers about how they needed to make adjustments if they were going to succeed in leading their communities in the successful management of the projects. One of the issues they mentioned was that of 'ere'ere requests:

I told them the secret
and I told them:

'If you won't change,

problems will still be there.

Everything is up to you.

If the community said they need the money for this
and you think yourself,

 Its not right and it's not good -
even if you disagree,
you should listen to them and do it.

So if someone, comes to you:

Ere'ere, I need some money for...

Whatever!

You give it to them'.

We give an '*ere'ere* request once a year

And it will come back to us

in so many other ways.

And it works!

I have talked to these managers

And I have said to them:

'If you change,
things will change for the better.

But you have to change
from the inside.

Because even though you are a manager,
you should not be always right'.

I mean

if I put in an idea

to the committee -

like if I think the project should

donate \$50 for the church this month,

but the committee disagrees,
I leave it at that.
I won't take it to the *mataqali* meeting.
But if they agree,
then I take it to the *mataqali* meeting.

And if we take it to the *mataqali* meeting
and they think that, no,
we should give \$100
and we think \$50 –
we go with the \$100.

I can't go and tell them,
'No, we think we should only give \$50'.
Because there are only seven of us in the committee
and they are the whole *mataqali*,
and we are working for them.
That's what Ross and Dave [TRC] advised us to do.

Note here that TRC had encouraged the deferral of all decisions back to the project owners (the *mataqali*). Ross Corbett and Dave Bamford (TRC consultants) clearly understood that without open and frequent dialogue between the park managers and the rest of the community, participation in the fullest sense of the word would be impossible. Unfortunately, it appeared that open lines of communication between park and community had broken down in Boumā. This will be further discussed later in this chapter.

In 2006, the Lavena project (far more lucrative than that of the struggling Vidawa project), had a built-in (unwritten) allowance for genuine '*ere'ere* requests. Only some management and board members would admit to this as it was not transparent in the annual financial reports. However, the Lavena ecotourism project now translates

'ere'ere as 'loan' rather than 'gift'. Therefore, in these cases the recipient must present evidence that they have the capital to repay the loan prior to the arrangement. If they have no capital, they are refused a loan. In this way, Lavena has been able to marry business with *va'a vanua* in a way that meets the needs of both the business and the people.

However, not all decisions made regarding the future direction of the projects were made with the full participation of the Boumā communities. The following section discusses what the majority of the communities consider business *va'avanua*: park project decisions made the '*vanua* way'. Business *va'avanua* was often defined in opposition to business decisions made in the European parliamentary or democratic system.

Before I discuss the final decision-making process which takes place in village meetings, it is important to present what happens in the build-up to those meetings. This is because community participation involves a cyclical process whereby new knowledge is created and negotiated through informal *talanoa* at the household and individual level and that should be carried through regular formal kinship group meetings up to the village (park) meeting date. This section will present challenges involved in lines of communication up to the park meetings when many final decisions are made regarding the village ecotourism projects. More substantial issues continue to other meetings beyond the village (See Figures 10 & 11).

Challenges to business va'avanua: broken lines of communication (park-village dichotomy)

Vanua Boumā had not only been divided into separate projects but lines had also been drawn between the park management and the rest of the community. This had impeded business *va'avanua* for those who support it, and had also obstructed full participation in the ownership of the park.

The business management style of the park was emphasising divisions between sections of the community: sometimes kin groups but largely a growing gap between those working directly with the park and the rest of the community. Some of the projects and the villages in each *yavusa* were often referred to by both park staff and the rest of the community as two separate, and often conflicting, socio-cultural spheres. Some suggest they were so at odds that they should each be conducted according to their own set of socio-cultural and political rules and values. These fissures between the ecotourism projects and the communities were reflected in an interview with two other participants not involved as park staff:

The park and the village are working separately.

The management of the park:

the board, the manager,

when they want to do something,

they just do it themselves.

And the community

is surprised at what they have been doing.

So we tell them that we should know

what changes they are making.

The community should be advised first

before the park management

go ahead with their decisions.

If there was anything

I would like to see changed

about the park

so that it was better for the community –

that would be it.

And the management,
the board members,
they put themselves apart from the community.
They just want to run the business.
They just want to go on their own.

Communication between the park management and the rest of the community in Lavena was further exacerbated by the suggestion that not only was the board not reporting to the community but that the project manager was not consulting the board before proceeding with new decisions:

The management,
if they want to do something,
they just keep on doing it.

The board doesn't always
take their decision to the village first.
Even the park manager doesn't always
take their decision to the Board first.

See, right now we are trying to follow that system.
We are pushing it.
Over the last few years we have regretted
that this has not happened.

In the Tavoro project, the management realised that the project decisions could not be made independent of the rest of the community (or in this case their own land-owning *mataqali*). This was emphasised to them by TRC. However, a past park employee reported that after the park management became restructured, the project board decision-making dominated the decision-making power of the *mataqali*.

When I worked for the park
There was only the manager and the committee.
From them ideas and opinions are passed to the community
and it was very simple and easy
because we were told from TRC
that the decision is from the *mataqali*.

There are things that the manager alone decides.
For example, if we need this money to be available
so he can spend the money to pay for something small
for the office or for the track.
That's OK.

But they have to seek permission
from the *mataqali*
for the big things
because these things are for the *mataqali* to decide.

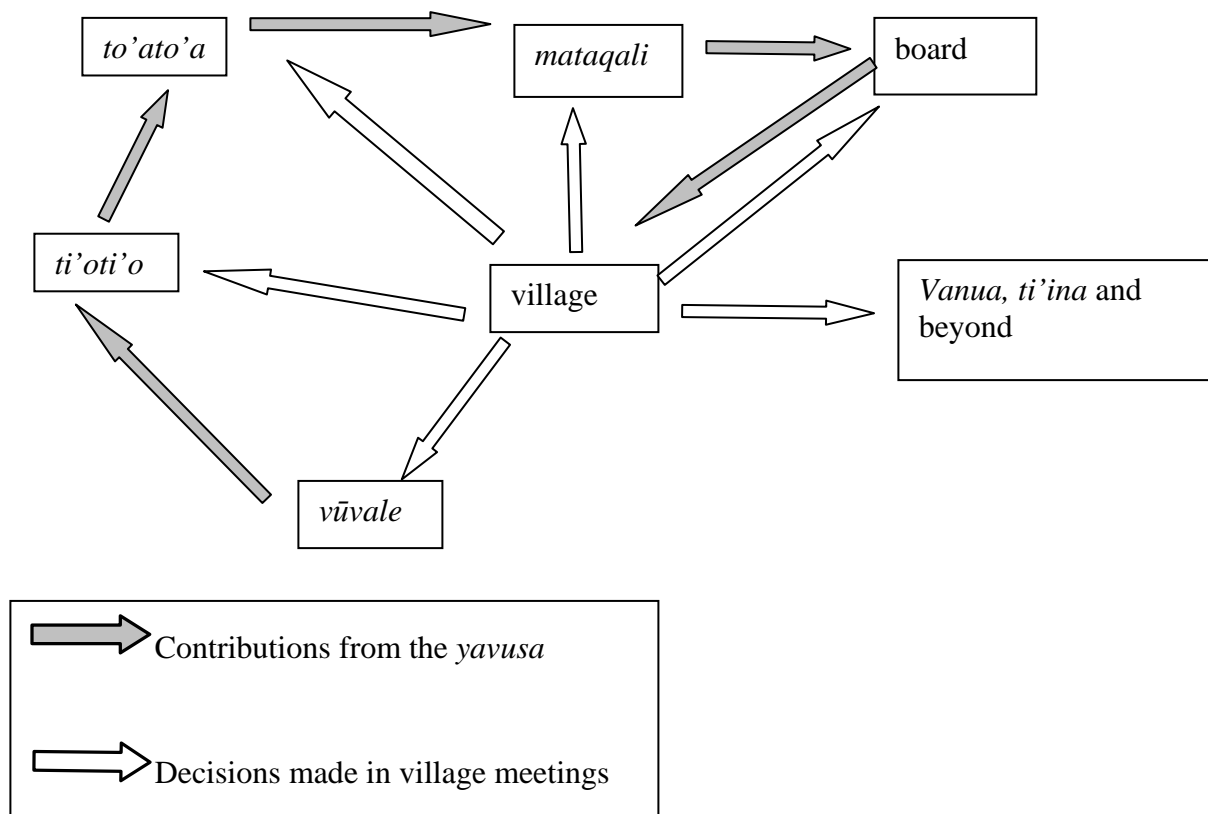
And now we have the staff and the manager and the board.
And so far we have three meetings
and it is a new change for us
and it is causing problems
because the board thinks that they run the business
and that they decide things.
And the community thinks they should be deciding things.

This *mataqali* Naituku member criticised the, then, current Lavena Park manager who had been disgraced by the Lavena community for his management style saying that he needed to listen to his community rather than working independently with little community consultation.

Communicating with the whole *yavusa va'avanua* involves conducting many meetings and takes a great deal of time. Ideas may flow backwards and forwards a number of times through *mataqali*, *to'ato'a*, *ti'oti'o*, and village meetings, until a decision is made. This can be disastrous for business, however, as decisions often need to be made quickly.

This was the point of difference between those who supported the idea of the projects run with the managers and the boards having greater autonomy in terms of decision-making (business) and those who supported them run as business *va'avanua* in which all decisions had to go through the 'traditional' structures and processes as seen below in Figure 10. Figure 10 shows the flows of communication back and forth from kin meeting to the village meeting and beyond.

Figure 10: Communication *va'avanua* (various meetings)



One example of resistance to business *va'anua* was that of a Naituku member who felt that her *mataqali* needed some external assistance (e.g. from the National Trust) to explain to the Korovou chiefs why a 'business' style of communication was the most effective for the successful running of the Tavoro Falls project:

The chiefly system has its own flow of information
to tell all the people.

There are different channels.

I think that is the main problem now.

I think we should do it through the business channels
and then clear it to the chief
that this is how business goes
so that they can understand it.

Because we are dealing with business,
we have to move toward business
so that people from the outside can see us.
To see the business is going
through the right channel.
Not through the community style
because this will make us get left behind
and no visitors will come.

The people from Suva [National Trust]
should come and help us
to make it clear to the chiefs
that this is business.
This is how it is going to work.

So the business style just now
is not fitting well with the traditional style.
We tried to make the business system
fit in with the traditional system -
it didn't work.

This is the business
and this is the Fijian style.
Some people think
they can't go together
and others think they can.
That is the problem now.

In Lavena, the breakdown in communication between park and village was also due to a lack of business management training for park management and for the community. The park management were unclear about the financial aspects of the business and, therefore, were unable to communicate this in a way that was reassuring for their *yavusa*. The following is a quote from a man working within the Lavena project. The quote shows that, though he is one of the members in most direct contact with the flow of funds through the project, even he did not understand where the park profits had gone.

We have been hearing the amount of money
coming from the park
and we don't know where they [the park managers] have used the money.
There is plenty of money.
When we have a meeting
they give us an amount for this year,
for the previous years,
and still we don't know where is the money going to.

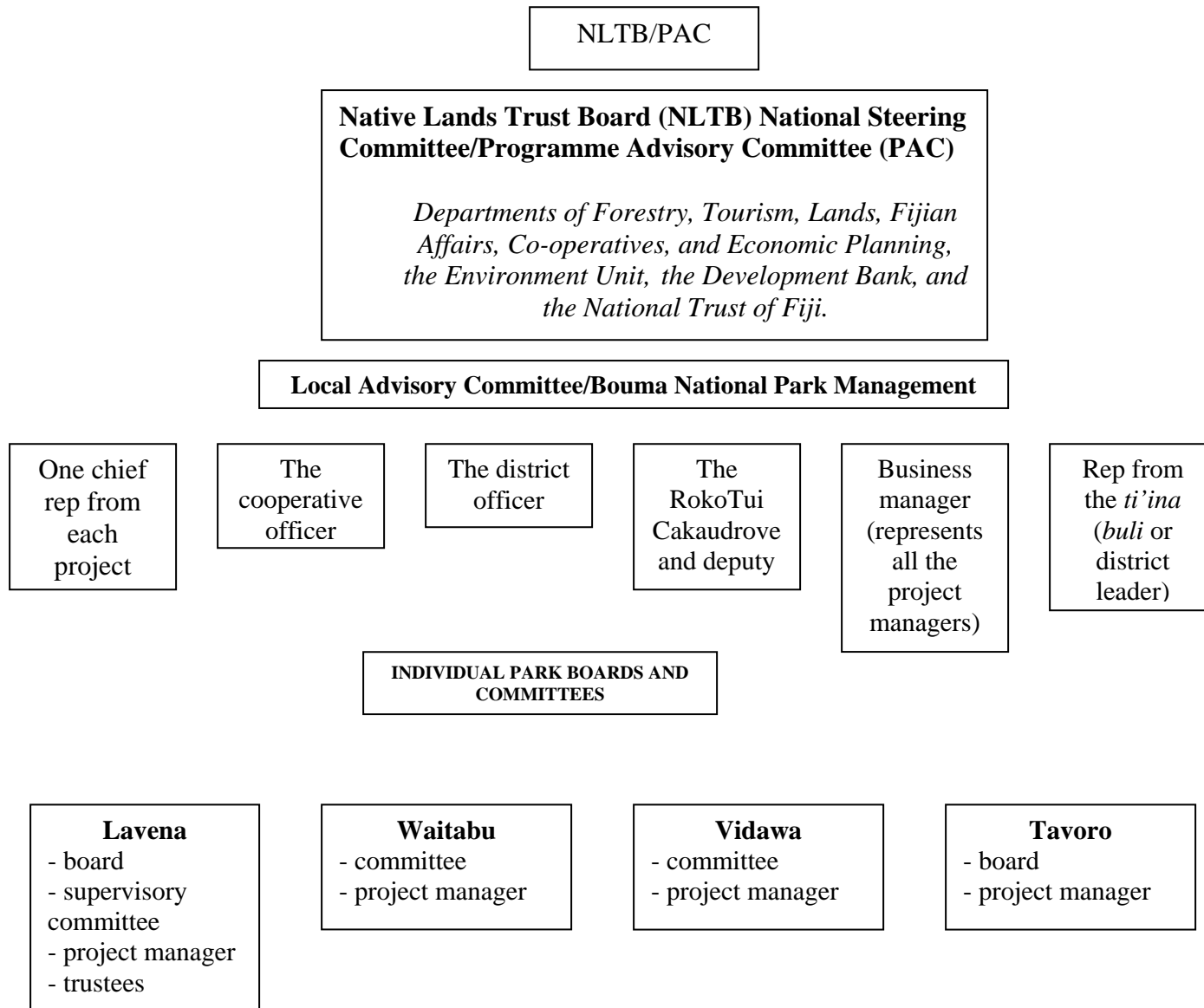
Because few of the community members and the park management have been trained in business management and due to a low level of formal education, there is often a sense of confusion, dissatisfaction and mistrust surrounding those involved directly with the management and staffing of the projects. This has drawn clear boundaries between the park and the village.

Figure 10 is considered to be the *vanua* way to make decisions regarding the projects (or business *va'avanua*). However, I will explain that these lines of communication are weakening as a result of poor leadership, autonomous park management and a lack of formal education. Consequently, full participation in decision-making pertaining to the management of the community-based ecotourism projects has been compromised. First, I will present the Boumā National Heritage Park management structure and lines of communication from the community upward to PAC (the National Steering Committee). This will provide a broad framework with which to discuss participatory processes and structures (including democratic and *va'avanua*) within each of the Boumā communities.

The Boumā National Heritage Park management structure

The Boumā National Heritage Park's management structure sets the scene for differences in European democratic and *va'avanua* styles of business decision-making in Boumā:

Figure 11: Boumā National Heritage Park management structure 2007



The top level of the diagram represents the Native Lands Trust Board's (NLTB) National Steering Committee or NLTB Preservation and Conservation Steering Committee otherwise known as the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC). Based in Suva, it was initiated in 1998 to monitor the progress of the project, to advise NZAID and to coordinate Fijian Government inputs. Its members had a special interest in the Fijian NZODA Ecotourism Programme (1997-2000) managed by Tourism Resource Consultants (TRC), Wellington. However, after the 2000 coup, the relationship between New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Fiji Government changed and, according to the NZODA Fiji Ecotourism Report 2000/2001 so, too, did that between the TRC, NLTB and PAC (TRC, 2001, p. 19). Consequently, PAC ceased to meet. In 2004, it appeared PAC was meeting again sporadically.

The second level, previously referred to as the Local Advisory/Steering Committee (LAC), was renamed the Boumā National Heritage Park Management Committee (BNHPMC) in 2003. The role of the BNHPMC is to direct, evaluate and control the management of the park. The Cooperative Officer (representative of the District Office) presents regular audits of project managers to the BNHPMC. The Roko Tui Cakaudrove (Chief Provincial Administrator) chairs the committee with the support of his deputy. The people of Boumā are represented by each *turaga ni mataqali* (each landowning chief of the project or their representative) and the park manager representing all the project managers. The BNHPMC reports both to PAC and to the Vanua Boumā Council. The Vanua Boumā Council is represented by the four *yavusa* leaders of Vanua Boumā (i.e. one from each of the four villages). The views of each of these leaders must be included before important decisions are made regarding the Boumā National Heritage Park.

The lowest stratum illustrates the general management structure of each of the four projects that make up the Boumā National Heritage Park. The following case study illustrates how the management structure is utilised at this level.

Case study: Lavena

The Lavena Coastal Walk and Backpacker Lodge is one of the more complex management structures due to the number of kinship groups involved in the project as well as the ambitious nature of the structure itself. Figure 10 is representative of the lines of communication from *vūvale* (households) through various kin meetings chaired by the chiefs of each of the kin groups through to the board who takes the information to the park meeting where decisions are made or passed onto LAC, and then PAC for requests and to make substantial changes in park projects. One of the primary functions of the board is to explore the needs of each family unit with respect to the ecotourism initiatives. The park board meets fortnightly and includes the chairman, treasurer, secretary and five representatives from each *ti'oti'o*. The management structure also includes a supervisory committee of three members, the park manager and representatives from each of the two *mataqali*.

The *ti'oti'o* decide when to hold their own meetings. The *ti'oti'o* representatives then pass on any matters from that meeting to the *to'ato'a* meeting and then to the *mataqali* meeting. The *mataqali* then report to the board which makes their report to the *yavusa* ('oro/village) meeting which is held monthly. This is where the chief (*turaga ni vanua*) sits. The park board will have their opportunity to talk to the rest of the *yavusa* along with other *soqosoqo* (groups) such as family, church, school, sports and women's and men's groups. Issues from the 'oro meeting (including park matters) will be taken to the *ti'ina* (district) meeting and then to the *yasana* (province) and on to the *Bose Levu Va'a Tūraga* (The Great Council of Chiefs) and *matanitū* (government) (see Fig. 10). The difference with communication of park matters is that, if necessary, they will go to the BNHPMC (LAC) and then to PAC in Suva. This line of communication is true of each project in Vanua Boumā.

The population has been expanding rapidly over the last sixty years. For example, according to village elders, the population in Lavena had increased from seven *vūvale* (households) in Lavena Village in the 1950s to over 70 including the village and its settlements in 2006. There are certainly considerable challenges associated with

running one business in a village of (in Lavena's case) this size. This is particularly challenging considering these 70-plus households are divided into two *mataqalis* which were reported to often compete with one another for power. Some participants stated that it was not the population growth and the subsequent number of people needing to come to a consensus that was making decision-making more challenging in Boumā. Conversely, it was the attitude of those in the community. Some reported that if people would make time to communicate both within and between family groups more efficiently, community population growth would not be an issue in ensuring that all community members have their say on project issues. Most at fault, many felt were the chiefs who were not communicating effectively with one another.

There were major challenges with communication and the contribution of ideas from park employees to the *ti'oti'o* upwards to the *yavusa* in Lavena. This was the source of a great deal of discontentment in the village. Irregular family meetings (*ti'o ti'o*, *to'ato'a*, and *mataqali*) meant families were not given the opportunity to voice their opinions, ideas or concerns in time for monthly *bose va'a'oro* (village meetings). Consequently, community-members were withheld the opportunities to be informed and to have their say on park project matters prior to village meetings when opinions were heard from each kin group and decisions were made. A member of *yavusa* Lavena explains:

When the board gets together
there is a representative from each family.
But the information
doesn't flow backwards and forwards from there.

This is because the *ti'oti'o*
does not sit together and talk.
They are supposed to meet once or twice a week.
Often.

But what is happening in the village
is that one *ti'oti'o* -
say after three or four months -
sit and talk about this and share this.
But that is not often enough.

This is one of the main problems
with the running of the park.

Once *ti'oti'o* and *to'ato'a* meetings were held, each individual family member is given the opportunity to ask questions and give opinions. The challenge is having the meeting in a timely manner. That is, when park/village decisions need to be made straight away. There existed the strong belief that the projects could be successful and could work in harmony with village life (in line with the *vanua*), if only it were for the strong leadership of the *Vanua* chiefs. If they had insisted on maintaining regular meetings for their kin groups, the flow of information would have been revitalised.

One reason for why the chiefs had become so uncooperative about holding regular meetings may be that they had had their 'noses put out of joint' by a growing trend toward ignoring traditional chains of communication and control that came with 'business' style project management:

It is up to the chiefs to sit together and talk
and make this happen.
They are sitting together
but I think the way the message
has been sent to them has been different -
The track - where the message is supposed to go.

The message that goes from this person
to this person

and over this one
and goes to this one.
And this one just wants to do what he wants
because they didn't come to him.
They just jumped over him.

That is the problem I think.
That is not the traditional way -
to jump over someone like that.
It should be through every channel.
This is not happening all the time now.

That the lines of communication have been compromised between park management and the individual *yavusa* was also blamed on the chiefs' inability to communicate effectively with each other:

The *turaga ni vanua*
they are not getting on with each other.
So the people in the village
they just stay where they are living
and just follow their own footsteps.

The inability of the chiefs to work together effectively is partly a product of the declining respect of chiefs in Boumā. I spoke with a man who married a Boumā-born wife. He had moved to Boumā from a different *Vanua*. He was appalled at the way the *turaga ni vanua* was treated: 'People should respect their chief. People cannot listen to their chiefs here'.

It was not only the flow of information throughout the Boumā communities but also the decision-making style within each of these meetings that proved problematic as the next section will illustrate.

Decision-making va'avanua and democratic decision-making in project meetings: “bring new food and you'll feel sick”

The concept of informal *talanoa* as gossip or chat was introduced earlier in this thesis in Chapter Three. Here, formal *talanoa* will be presented as decision-making *va'avanua*. In other words, formal *talanoa* is a process whereby all community members are said to be able to participate in the decision-making of the ecotourism initiatives.

As has been noted, business *va'avanua* was most commonly defined as making decisions about the business in the 'traditional' way. As Maciu and Letia mentioned earlier in this chapter, 'ecotourism *va'avanua* style involves everyone in the *Vanua*'; '*va'avanua* is when the chiefs communicate with the people everyday'. This section explores the challenges and the benefits of involving everyone in the planning and management of the community-based ecotourism projects.

Decision-Making *Va'avanua*

Decisions pertaining to the community-based ecotourism initiatives were said, by a number of Boumā community members, to have been initially carried out *va'avanua*. During the research period, however, village meetings (*bose va'oro*) were held *va'avanua* style (formal *talanoa*) while the park decisions were made in meetings involving democratic decision-making. As has been noted in Chapter Three, *talanoa* (formal and informal) is characterised by repetition, and its tendency for discussion to go around in circles. *Talanoa* takes time and provides

the opportunity for “slow thinkers” to be engaged in the discussions. While the philosophy of *talanoa* is centred on an open-style of deliberation, focusing on respect, tolerance, flexibility, openness and fairness, the role of ceremony and protocol are just as important as the process itself (Robinson & Robinson, 2005, p. 15).

In traditional settings, decision-making is made through formal *talanoa*. The whole community gathers with the *matanivanua* chairing discussions. Everyone has a chance to have their say. There are no time constraints nor is there an agenda so that meetings commonly last many hours. The *matanivanua* listens to all angles of local concerns and then passes this to the chief who will give his final word on the matters discussed. It was noted in Chapter Five by some participants that the chiefs were unable to control these meetings in such a way that made for an effective outcome. Invariably, meetings ‘*va’avanua* style’ would, indeed, necessitate a lot of talking backward and forward but some said that the chief was not strong enough to step in and make a decision when needed.

The following ‘*ai Lavena*¹²⁵ describes the *va’avanua* style of decision-making in Boumā (or formal *talanoa* style):

In the Fijian style – the *va’avanua* style

We Fijians just sit together.

Sit together and discuss.

Drink¹²⁶ together and discuss.

And we talk until we agree with each other.

If we make a mistake,

we all agree that there is something wrong.

If we miss something,

we sit again.

And it works really well.

And we respect each other.

We believe and we rely on each other

and the system.

¹²⁵ Person belonging to Lavena.

¹²⁶ *Yaqona*.

However, as some have informed me in Boumā, the topic of discussion would have to be something very important if an individual wanted to discuss a sensitive issue in formal *talanoa*, even with the assistance of an intermediary. Therefore, ‘talking straight’ in formal *talanoa* is not always easy to do.

The traditions and etiquette surrounding formal *talanoa* are passed down the generations and the speakers must honour their ancestors by their behavior in *talanoa*. However, because these lessons are passed down orally, chiefs and other speakers may treat the rules as fluid and may amend them as and when needed (ibid). Robinson and Robinson (2005) use the example of *hui* as the Maori equivalent of formal *talanoa*. *Hui*, they argue, may be considered a more democratic form of decision-making because it allows all to speak and to participate more fully

...in the absence of any “democratic” electoral or selection process...people have the opportunity to speak and to express their views. There is the opportunity for the most persuasive argument to prevail (p. 11).

For Robinson and Robinson (2005), the *hui* provides a context in which people can ‘contribute, to be selected, endorsed or confirmed by others as potential leaders’ and ‘a space for dialogue’ (ibid). At the conclusion of the *hui* there is a decision to act or not to act.

However, in *hui* as in *talanoa*, community members are constrained by hierarchical protocols. Not everyone in *hui* or *talanoa* are equally positioned to speak. Once an elder has spoken, younger members are constrained or reluctant to voice a position contra to that stated earlier by those of higher rank. Therefore, a more open forum does not necessitate a democratic process of decision-making. While *hui* and *talanoa* may be considered a consensually agreed-upon or understood mode of decision-making this does not necessarily lead to ‘majority rules’.

In formal *talanoa*, women are not allowed to speak. If they wish to convey a message to the meeting because they have some form of direct involvement in the *talanoa*, someone will speak on their behalf. This is not to say that women do not hold influence in *talanoa*. Robinson and Robinson (2005) describe women as the “‘motivating’ force behind the men’, and the ‘actual peacemakers’...’speaking forcefully in private and telling male family or village members what to do and say’ (p. 15). In cases where it is difficult for an individual to make a statement for fear of breaching *veiwe’ani* protocols, someone from their kinship group will speak on their behalf. Women in Boumā tend to make their opinions heard through paralanguage in response to the content of the meeting: giggling, rolling eyes, looks of disgruntlement and surprise. A friend once told me that she had plenty to say about the meeting to their husbands before and after the meeting and inferred that ‘there would be hell to pay’ if he did not convey her strong feelings about particular matters in the meeting on her behalf.

As has been argued, the chiefs are responsible for ensuring the maintenance of the *vanua*. According to locals, the chief will need to be worldly and educated or at least open to the wishes of his people, and the chief should lead by example (including his family). As has been stated in Chapter Five, some Boumā locals argued that the *turagas* should be the ones to make the final decisions, not the people as is largely the case in the democratic style of decision making¹²⁷. A common complaint in Fiji is quite the opposite: that the chiefs make decisions about development and others regardless of the wants and needs of their people. Even more concerning to Fijian commoners is that chiefs now make decisions based on what they feel will bring in the most money rather than ‘what is best for the people’.

Aporosa, relaying information from a kava session with friends from Cakaudrove, states,

Before the ‘money’ days
a chief’s strength was illustrated

¹²⁷ It is possible for the chief to overturn democratic decisions but this has never happened in Lavena.

through the number of people and warriors around him.

Today, it is money.

And the more money around the chief,

the less people

So that shows how strong chiefs are today

(personal communication, 15 November, 2008).

General discussions of the distribution of the benefits of development in participatory development literature warn us not to leave development in the hands of local ‘power brokers’ (Sillitoe, Dixon & Barr, 2005, p. 61; Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 262; Ribeiro, 2005). These are local elites who may control development initiatives resulting in uneven distribution of benefits to the rest of the community including the denial of access to resources and decision-making. This may have an element of truth in one project in Boumā. However, the majority of those I spoke to stated that many of the chiefs had to defer to the more ‘worldly’ members of the community and those with a higher level of formal education to assist them to make sound business/development decisions.

Traditional hierarchical structures in Boumā are attenuated by formal education, exposure to the ‘the outside world’ and a willingness to ‘lead by example’. As has been shown, these characteristics have dramatically altered patterns of consultation within the community. For example, those chiefs who have not shown these characteristics may be ignored or ‘skipped over’ in the process of following traditional lines of communication from *ti’oti’o* to the *yavusa* and beyond. Informal *talanoa* as public forum appeared to be gathering strength as a potential mode of political agency when community members did not agree with the *status quo*. This may include dissatisfaction with the decisions made by chiefs or lack of respect for them. As discussed in Chapter Nine, a culmination of informal *talanoa* as public forum may manifest itself in acts of intentional deviance intended as a way to resist decisions made

regarding the community-based ecotourism projects whilst avoiding face to face confrontation (deemed antithetical to the *vanua*)¹²⁸.

One of the major concerns for some of the people of Boumā is that while other village meetings are held *va'avanua*, the ecotourism projects are based on a European style of democratic decision-making introduced by the District Commissioner in the 1950s with the introduction of copra production (Roth, 1973). A man in his early fifties from Lavena explained how the new democratic style of decision-making was introduced to Boumā and gives his impression of the appropriateness of the system to Boumā:

The government officers
from the District Office
came in about 1978
and wanted to change the system.
That was when we started making a lot of copra here.

When they tried to change the system
it was very hard to understand
what their purpose was.

And this is a worse system, you know?
We are the ones that know everything about Lavena.
So when a new thing comes,
like a new system,
it is new to us -
new to our way of life.

And we try to make it work.
But when the result comes at the end,

¹²⁸ For more examples of the functions of *talanoa* (e.g. as adjudication, negotiation, mediation, political agency, epistemology, and role-playing) see the work of Donald Brenneis, Andrew Arno, and Matt Tomlinson, Sitiveni Halapua, Unaisi Nabobo-Baba as listed in the References.

these results are different
from what we achieve in the traditional way -
the *va'avanua* way.
And not different in a good way.

While not everyone in Boumā considers this style unsuitable, a negative view of the democratic approach to ecotourism project decision-making was the majority response from those I spoke with. Concern for democratic systems of decision-making in Boumā is indicative of nation-wide debate amongst indigenous Fijians as to whether adopting the modern principles of democracy means denying the *vanua*. The following section will begin with a general discussion of Fijian democracy before focusing more specifically on democracy in the management of Boumā National Heritage Park.

Democratic decision-making

There are many definitions of democracy. Here, I offer a micro-political definition of democracy for the purpose of this thesis. In other words, this definition borrows from broader definitions of democracy to address local politics rather than national politics. While Boumā has chosen to somewhat distance democratic decision making in development projects from traditional village affairs, this definition involves good governance (Gastil, 1980; World Bank, 1991; Druckman, 1992) with a focus on public interest and absence of corruption, freedom of opinion and speech, general and equal right to vote and guarantee of human rights to every individual person (Democracy Building, 2004).

Williams and Saskena's (1999) *Labour's Victory: Electoral Behaviour and Opinion in Fiji*, report that the majority of voters in the 1999 general elections (44%) were of the opinion that chiefs had no influence over their votes. This is in contrast to the 9% who, they report, stated that the chiefs did influence their votes. However, I remain somewhat sceptical of the depth and methodology of their research since many of those I have come to know in Boumā know or care little about national politics: their more

immediate concern is local politics. However, Jone Dakuvula (political commentator and researcher with the Fiji Citizens' Constitutional Forum) describes democracy as 'the modern principles of good governance to Fijian institutions such as the Provinces, the *Vanua*, the chiefly system and the Native Land Trust Board' (2000, para. 17.). He argues strongly that indigenous Fijians resident in the *Vanuas* have become protective of democracy to the point of exclusion: '...many indigenous Fijians in the *Vanuas* believe that the modern state also belongs to the Fijians, or to the "Vanua," and not to "others" (para. 4). He believes that

the endurance of the Fijian *Vanuas* and the system of chiefly leadership can only be strengthened through the development of a culture of respect for the rule of law and adoption of modern principles of leadership and accountability within the indigenous Fijian social world. We have to reinvent our traditions (ibid).

However, Halapua (2003a) writes that in the aftermath of the 1987 coup that indigenous Fijians saw democracy as a 'foreign flower': 'suitable perhaps in some contexts but inappropriate to the Fijian [cultural] landscape' (p. 123). One of my participants in this chapter will later refer to democracy as a 'foreign food' that will make one sick. Tuwere (2002) tempers the findings of Williams and Saskena (1999) and Dakuvula (2000) stating that democracy is viewed with some scepticism and suspicion (e.g. Ravuvu, 1991):

From past experience, the present battle for democracy is seen to be a ploy, mainly by Fiji-Indians to take over not only government and machinery but also and more importantly the economy with land as its major constituent. The fear may be misplaced and unfounded but it is real (p. 74).

Today, however, many of those who publicly condemn democracy as a Western import (e.g. Asesala Ravuvu) are considered by some indigenous and non-indigenous Fijians

as ‘ethnic Fijian supremacists’ (e.g. by Halapua, 2003a, p. 131). It appears that despite the early climate of scepticism of democracy, some indigenous Fijians have learned that ‘if you can’t beat it, claim it’ to the exclusion of others. However, in Boumā, and possibly in other more remote rural communities, this is not the case.

The concepts of the *vanua* and business and the *vanua* and democracy are interlinked under the banner of ‘tradition and modernity’. Reinventing traditions, therefore, implies negotiating between moral economy and market practice, traditional systems of hierarchical power and liberal democracy in order to create ‘their own cultural version of modernity’ (Sahlins 1999, p. xi). Dakavula (2000), on the other hand, does not offer any middle-ground as a solution to Fiji’s problems and argues that Fijians have to choose between liberal democracy and chiefly rule. He states that the ‘continuation of Liberal Democracy and its values is vital for the survival of the indigenous Fijian identity and the Vanua’ (para.18). The international community is threatening Fiji with international isolation and, consequently, lower standards of living. For this reason, according to Dakavula (2000), restoring fundamental democratic and human rights values in the Fijian national government system and in the Vanuas is imperative.

We must be sceptical that those in positions of political power in Fiji are not simply changing the rhetoric in favour of the values of the international community for global economic inclusion to the exclusion of the *vanua* and the voices of rural village communities (the *Vanuas*). We must also ask ourselves how Fijian identity and the *vanua* can survive if we are to choose liberal democracy over chiefly rule. Who then will lead rural village communities?

While the chief’s last word is final in *talanoa*, this is seldom the case in democratic style decision-making in park meetings. It has been said the chief has the power to overturn decisions made by democratic majority vote about the park. However, I was told that this has never happened in Lavena. As has been noted, one explanation offered by participants in Lavena about why decisions were seldom overturned by some of the chiefs in relation to park matters was that, relative to many of the board members,

the chief had little formal education and worldliness. Consequently, he relied heavily on those more educated and experienced in the community to advise him as to the right decision. This is not the case in the smaller projects such as Waitabu and Vidawa. In Waitabu, for example, the project manager frequently complained that decisions of the chiefs often threatened the sustainability of the Waitabu Marine Reserve and Campsite plans due to procrastination and the inability of the chiefs to agree on the smallest of matters.

A nineteen year old mother told me that it was good that the park meetings were managed in the European style because she said, 'It is good to learn from others'. Though when I asked which style she preferred she told me that she preferred the *talanoa* style because this way, she could learn more about what was going on in the village. The traditional (*talanoa*) way, she said, was a way to stop people from 'just doing whatever they want to do'. I interpreted this as the traditional way of encouraging 'working for the good of the whole', while the European way allowed kin groups and individuals to 'work for their own good'. This may be explained by democratic 'majority rules' voting in a community when one *mataqali* group is dominant in number. This may mean that decisions made about the park could favour one kinship group over another. As Schumpeter (1942) notes in his influential book, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, democracy does not represent the people, only the majority: 'The latter is a mosaic that the former completely fails to 'represent' (p. 272).

As stated earlier in this chapter, one participant describes democratic decision-making in park meetings in Boumā as 'foreign food':

I always tell them in the project meetings
that if we bring a new system in from outside,
we will still get stuck.
Because we have our own system,
living style, and way of respecting one another.

And so like with new food -
bring new food and you'll feel sick.

As the case study below will show, a major problem with the democratic style of decision-making is the relative lack of opportunity for clarification of information.

Case study: The Lavena AGM

The following Lavena participant describes the night of the park AGM in 2004. It was clear throughout the meeting that there was a constant sense of confusion from the community and park staff about the previous year's financial report. The board and the cooperative officer had to be flexible about the formal democratic meeting style, spending much of the AGM attempting to educate the community (and one another) on the financial workings of commercial enterprises. Later, regardless of these attempts to clarify the points of discussion, many admitted they had voted to accept the financial report, despite not understanding it. Due to a lack of knowledge, experience and training, the community could only vote (in the European style) with their hands to either accept the financial report or to have it reviewed:

I was telling them that that night, Teresia,
that's a system from the parliament.
You know, to raise our hands.

I myself, I really hate that system.
Even I lifted my hand up too
to make a 'motion' for this decision and that.
Even me myself, Teresia,
I put up my hand
but I did not understand it.

Ooh that's not Fijian!
If we continue like this there will problems

when the financial report
comes out at the end of each year.

The points made by both sides
were not made clear to all of us
in the parliamentary style.
So that's not really good for us in Lavena.

After the AGM
my family sat together
and my brother came in
and explained things more clearly to us
about what was going on in the project.

Everybody was shocked.
We had raised our hands
and we had all agreed
with the end of the year financial report for the project.
But what he explained was quite different
to what we had thought we had all just agreed to.

Because we are related to each other.
We know where to go and what we can do
so we just sit down together and talk
about whether we should go this way or that way.

In the Fijian way,
if nobody knows what is really going on
then we can talk about it first
without putting our hands up
to indicate if we agree or we disagree.

That system is really dangerous to continue with.
Particularly because few of us know much
about how businesses run.
So we agree with things we don't really understand.

So what I am saying, Teresia,
is that it is good we are all related.
Because when we sit together
and *talanoa*
and if we don't like an idea
we can discuss other options.
This is better than rising our hands
and wondering what we are raising our hands for.

That's what I am trying to add to the constitution.
Not to raise our hands in the parliamentary system.
I tell everybody,
'This European system we are using now.
This is from the people of England so many years ago.
This is not ours'.

As with the lines of communication between park and community, the average level of education of the New Zealand equivalent of form four across Vanua Boumā is compounding problems with the democratic style of decision-making. Few have any training at all in book-keeping or business. For this reason, *talanoa* in which discussions move backward and forward until each matter is made clear to all parties involved is beneficial in ensuring all know what they are voting for. While this more informal style was used to some extent in this particular AGM in an effort to clarify a number of points, it proved too late. Lacking in regular background information from the managers and the park, the community was too far behind to comprehend the

project's financial and legal matters to make any fully-informed decisions. Not everyone preferred the *talanoa* style of decision making. Some preferred the democratic style saying that the *talanoa* style wasted time.

Conclusion and discussion

This chapter has further explored local perceptions of the challenges faced as the people of Boumā negotiated the entrepreneurial values and expectations of ecotourism and their varied commitments to the *vanua*. This includes the forms of individual and collective agency that have been employed in an effort to move beyond sensations of confusion, disorientation, jealousy, and frustration produced by the employment of what may be deemed locally inappropriate values, structures and processes throughout the development initiatives.

My participants suggested that their projects had moved from management business *va'avanua* to 'business style' in around 1999 when formal interviewing replaced the community selection of park staff. They could provide no sound reason for this move, saying that this was the general expectation at the time. In 2006, many were making efforts to move back toward managing their businesses '*va'avanua*' to mitigate the weak participation, conflict, and confusion that had resulted from the previous business style approach to ecotourism management. Some of the communities had successfully started to create hybrid forms of entrepreneurship involving business and the *vanua*. One example of this is the integration of '*ere'ere*' into the ecotourism businesses. At the same time, communities were resisting business structures deemed inappropriate to the *vanua*, such as cooperative bylaws. This chapter has drawn from Gibson's 'affordances', Bourdieu's 'capital' as well as various theories of hybridisation to illustrate how the people of Boumā may be selecting, rejecting and syncretising the values of Western-based entrepreneurship with their own *vanua* values.

In order to make informed decisions about ecotourism initiatives in Boumā, there must be clear lines of communication from each *vūvale* to village meetings and beyond.

However, these lines of communication are flawed and obstruct individuals and groups from fully participating in the decision-making process, if at all. Democratic decision-making within village meetings met the needs of some, while the majority of those I spoke with strongly desired the move back to a more open, discursive and consensual ‘traditional’ meeting style involving *talanoa*. In the absence of strong leadership, however, it appeared that informal *talanoa* was supplementing or replacing any formalised decision-making process that does not allow individuals and kin groups to fully participate in ecotourism development decision-making. Informal *talanoa* may gather strength as acts of intentional deviance and as a political call for alternative action from the *status quo*.

If ecotourism in Boumā is to operate as a community-based enterprise, the community must collectively and explicitly decide how they intend to realise the relationship between business and life *va’avanua*. From their experiences with ecotourism up to 2006, the multiple and heterogeneous voices of my participants have illustrated the degree to which community-based ecotourism is locally evaluated. While members of the larger Boumā community made efforts to re-focus other community members on the communalistic characteristics of the *vanua*, others chose to move away from the *vanua* entirely, or to hybridise it with Western-based entrepreneurship.

Chapter Eleven

'In-conclusion'

This thesis has centred on the complexities of the *vanua* as an indigenous epistemology and shown it to be vital to the exploration of how community-based ecotourism is negotiated at the micro and meso levels of development. It has clearly shown that Boumā is not the resounding success that has been projected to the global community through the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award, and it has presented an argument for deeper micropolitical and meso explorations into how development impacts on indigenous rural communities.

The *vanua* is a complex concept in itself. It is made even more so by the different ways in which it has been transformed historically through shifts in local and broader power relationships, introduced knowledge, and environmental changes. This has resulted in diverse local perceptions of the value of the *vanua* and its application in a dynamic contemporary Boumā society.

Drawing largely on post-development and post-colonial scholarship arguing for closer attention to meso level political networks of agency (Long, 1994, 1997; Arce, 2003; Arce & Long, 2000; Olivier de Sardan, 2005), the thesis is based on theories of cultural hybridisation. It takes a step further however, by placing indigenous epistemologies at the centrepiece of the analysis of these networks. This research has also illustrated that phenomenologically informed intersubjectivity contributes to a view of the world as richer, subtler and more complex: not the simple-to-analyse and simple-to-report black and white; but the nuances and complexities of the shades of 'grey' deeply embedded in ethnographic representations. The sentient ecology of Tim Ingold's dwelling perspective (2000)¹²⁹ is a particularly valuable theoretical framework that enhanced my understanding of the ways in which the Boumā people experience their world in a

¹²⁹ See also earlier work that has informed his dwelling perspective (e.g. 1992, 1993, 1993a).

different way to others including Western development practitioners and researchers (myself included).

Attention to indigenous epistemologies works toward the rejection of the imposition or primacy of Western epistemologies in indigenous contexts and reveals competing local perspectives of development and development-related decision-making. Not only is this study an attempt *in itself* to decolonise indigenous knowledge and development, the thesis also *reflects* the agency of the people of Boumā in decolonising their own indigenous knowledge and development. For example, there is a fundamental need to base participatory forms of development on indigenous perceptions of ‘community’ and ‘participation’ rather than how the West experience and define these terms.

The vanua and the dwelling perspective

Chapters Two and Three drew on Ingold’s (2000) phenomenologically informed ‘dwelling perspective’ or ‘anthropology of dwelling’ to present Boumā’s ‘taskscape’ as one in which its human inhabitants understand themselves as embedded within their interconnected social, cosmological and physical landscape in a way that affords them a place-specific set of skills and knowledge for living. In Boumā’s taskscape, humans, gods, ancestors, and other plants and organisms are enmeshed. Over time, their movements and sensations within their taskscape have provided them with a nuanced understanding of their place in their world in relations to others. Their indigenous epistemologies and ontologies providing them with this understanding are constantly created and recreated. However, their remains, more or less and for a while at least, a core set of cultural values, theories and understandings that has been collectively articulated as the *vanua*. These are ideals that may never be fully attained and are constantly contested. The *vanua* has also been referred to in this thesis as the guiding principles or laws for living a life ‘on the straight path’ or ‘the Fijian way’.

A closer attention to the *vanua* revealed a number of conflicting ‘ways of knowing’ between Western values inherent in entrepreneurship and those of the Boumā people.

The epistemological and ontological conflicts between community-based ecotourism development processes and those of Boumā included differences in perceptions and values associated with time and productivity. However, the greatest incongruence was that of the goals of community-based ecotourism and those of the people of Boumā. The people of Boumā placed primacy on social sustainability and cohesion in all aspects of their lives. Conversely, from a Western perspective, the success of community-based ecotourism has been traditionally measured first and foremost by economic or environmental sustainability.

The people of Boumā read their social and physical environment for signs that they are adhering to or operating outside of the laws of the *vanua*. The way in which these signs are valued and interpreted is dependent primarily on strong and respected leadership. As long as the *vanua* remains influential in the lives of the Boumā people, it will be vital in understanding the past, present and future of life in Boumā and the ways in which its people negotiate development and other forces of cultural change.

A closer attention to the ways people develop knowledge about their world is critically important because not until we understand indigenous epistemologies can we also understand how people articulate development in their own terms and thus dehegemonise development (Gramsci, 1971, cited in Gegeo, 2000). *Talanoa* involving the negotiation of community-based development for example, is the process of truth creation and this truth becomes a ‘discursive framework on the basis of which they act’ (Gegeo, 2000, p. 85). In Boumā, this truth creation was based on the *vanua* with *sautu* always held before them as the ideal goal.

The myth of ‘community’

Aside from allegations of misappropriation of funds and a disempowering top-down approach in the ‘pre-TRC’ period of development in Boumā, a major disservice done by all development consultants and other external organizations involved was the treatment of the Boumā people as a homogeneous and harmonious community. This has been

noted as a common practice in community-based development (Muehlig-Hoffman, 2007). Such an approach lent scant (if any) attention to the historical and contemporary micropolitics noted in this thesis. The research for this thesis was conducted over a two-year period from 2004-2006. Therefore, the perceptions, opinions, behaviours, and skills of the Boumā people will be very different today. However, much of the content of this thesis goes some way to addressing the historical and political omissions of Boumā's development consultants by providing a clearer understanding of the socio-cultural and micro-political context during that time frame. This understanding may reveal potential implications for the future of Boumā's community-based ecotourism development projects and other development initiatives.

In this thesis, some *Vanua* members considered Western styles of participation in decision-making useful and empowering while many more did not. Additionally, some felt the projects were more or less successful while others considered them highly unsuccessful due to the contrasting goals of community-based ecotourism and living life *va'avanua*. Many participants felt pulled in two or more directions: drawn to a greater connection to global networks (economic and cultural) while wishing to revitalise or maintain the core cultural values of the *vanua*. This highlights the heterogeneous nature of responses to community-based ecotourism and advances the argument that social groups should not be treated as homogeneous and harmonious 'communities' in the development process.

While most in Boumā wanted the best of both worlds (life *va'avanua* and Western-based concepts of economic progress), others were skeptical of how this could be achieved. Hence the title of this chapter: 'In-conclusion'. This process of cultural hybridization will never reach its conclusion as the Boumā people will continue to develop new and novel ways of meeting the needs of their people as the environment, politics, economics and culture of Boumā continues to transform. Since culture is dynamic and elusive, all anthropologists can do is partially capture tiny, synchronic 'snap-shots' within the historical and exhaustive collage of the life of the Boumā people.

A phenomenological approach goes some way towards capturing these synchronic 'snap-shots' in some depth and to deconstructing Western-based categories such as 'community', and 'participation'. Due largely to its focus on intersubjectivities or Ingold's 'interagentivity' (2000) in which the environment and persons dwelling within it are in a constant state of 'coming into being', phenomenology is perhaps the most radical form of postmodern anti-essentialism and has been instrumental in the deconstruction of the homogeneous notion of 'community'. Deconstruction as a method to counter essentialist tendencies is the common element in post-modernism, post-development and phenomenological anthropologies because they all seek the dynamic 'fragmentary, heterogeneous and plural character of reality' (Callinicos, 1989, p. 2) in the face of 'modernity' which may be alternatively referred to as 'all encompassing'. Schuurman (1993) argues that the task of anthropologists is the 'dismantling of structures to find the actors within the structures' (p. 26) rendering the only valid unit of analysis individual actors.

While phenomenologists focus almost exclusively on the meanings and social construction of reality and the deconstruction of categories, some sociologists have argued that no truth can ever be found if all phenomena are perceived differently by each observer of those phenomena (Haralambos & Holborn, 1995, p. 824). However, simplifying analyses of phenomena purely because this process is less scientifically problematic does not necessarily produce more factual results. What phenomenology does is provide richer data that reflects individual perceptions of lived experience than any other mode of analysis. One such example is that of 'community'. Through the deconstruction of community and a greater attention to individual perceptions of their own political positioning, we can begin to provide more accurate representations of local communities and their struggles to negotiate local and external power structures, and knowledge and value systems.

Cultural hybridity is useful in exploring these negotiations because it contributes to post-development and post-colonial discourses and accommodates an approach that is

essential to indigenous entrepreneurship as stated in Chapter Ten: a ‘hybrid values’ approach.

Talanoa, intentional deviance, and cultural hybridity

In Chapter Ten, Olivier de Sardan’s (2005) entangled social logic was a useful point of departure from which to discuss the relationship of social networks to political agency afforded to individual actors in Boumā. It helped guide the thesis in exploring how Boumā groups and individuals accept or reject the *status quo* in terms of community-based ecotourism given the nature of their social networks as determined by the *vanua*.

Olivier de Sardan’s (2005) quotation regarding ‘room to manoeuvre’ in Chapter Ten refers to local agency - an important theme throughout this thesis. Limited agency has been presented as an inability to ‘talk straight’ due to *veiwe’ani*¹³⁰ relationships, ‘veiled’ speech, expectations of *va’aturaga*¹³¹ and other restrictions. This was particularly conspicuous in formal *talanoa* and to a much lesser extent in informal *talanoa*¹³² when individuals wished to voice opinions regarding the development projects and other matters.

A common theme throughout this thesis was that of weak leadership. My participants stated that weak leadership or weakened respect for leadership had led to a diminished regard for the *vanua*. This, in turn, had led to ruptures in decision-making networks and poor participation in community-based ecotourism initiatives and other community projects, as well as conflict and general social structural erosion. These circumstances culminated in a growing sense of anomie which had gathered strength toward the end of my fieldwork in 2006.

¹³⁰ Avoidance relationships.

¹³¹ Culturally appropriate behaviour.

¹³² For example in contexts where *veiwe’ani* relationships were presented.

Some of those directly involved in the management of some of the projects attempted to draw lines in the sand between park and community (describing the projects as run as ‘business’ and the village as run ‘*va’avanua*’). This had led some communities to what they described as a ‘crisis point’ in which people had been left feeling dissatisfied, frustrated, angry, jealous, displaced and disorientated. Scott’s (1985) ‘intentional deviance’ involves everyday forms of resistance to the *status quo* under conditions of limited agency and constrained choices. Examples of intentional deviance in Boumā included refusal to attend community park meetings and park working days despite the knowledge that attendance at these were compulsory community events. In the absence of strong leadership and project forums in which people are encouraged to ‘talk straight’, informal *talanoa* and intentional deviance may not only function as methods of gauging support for the park, they may also contribute to the active rejection of the *status quo* concerning what is happening in the village and in the park projects.

Perhaps it is through informal *talanoa* and other forms of intentional deviance that the people of Boumā have found de Sardan’s (2000) ‘room to manoeuvre’ at the micro and meso levels. To Gramsci, resistance is largely passive and unconscious and simply subaltern discontent rather than signifying any real sense of agency (1971). Gramsci’s position lies in stark contrast to that of Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) who argue that conscious resistance is the most indisputable form of resistance (cited in Kaplan & Kelly, 1994). Kaplan and Kelly (1994) clearly lay out the extremes in Gramsci’s argument which centre on consciousness: ‘the subaltern unaware of any general significance to his or her efforts to deflect oppression; and the organic intellectual who understands it all’ (p. 126). I argued in Chapter Three that through *talanoa*, in particular, the people of Boumā provide themselves with a safe social context in which to ‘conscientise’ to use Paulo Freire’s (1968) term in which individuals and groups raise their conscienceness. In the act of gathering and conscientizing through *talanoa*, individuals and groups are actively resisting the *status quo* and creating alliances in the process against disempowering structures and actions. Therefore, for me, resistance is agency. However, this quiet, private context of resistance is not an end in itself. The

hidden transcripts of Scott's (1990) intentional deviance, like *talanoa*, are sources of potential for more public and transformative expressions of agency and resistance.

Skelton (2007) points out the ways in which island communities have presented 'subtle ways of doing development differently and embedding these alternatives/tactics/weapons within pre-existing cultural practices' (p. 136). A combination of formal and informal *talanoa* as intentional deviance may have contributed to business *va'avanua* as an alternative expression of capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 1996), an example of Blaser et al's (2005) 'life projects', or indigenous development (Maiava & King, 2001) as indigenous entrepreneurship (Dana & Anderson, 2007; Hindle & Landsdowne, 2007), or Connell's 'alternative indigenous responses' (2007, p. 116). Community-based ecotourism as business *va'avanua* may continue to evolve in an effort to best meet the needs of the majority in the Boumā communities.

Indigenous entrepreneurship

Vanua Boumā had a notion of development prior to the introduction of copra production in the 1950s (based on Western rural development and the modernisation model of the time). Boumā's development model is based in the *vanua*. In this thesis it has been likened to Scott's (1976) 'moral economy' or Polanyi's (1944, 1957) 'embedded economy'. Fijian cultural characteristics such as *madua*, 'ere'ere, *veiwe'ani* and over-consumption of *kava*, have been well-documented as stifling modes of development based on Eurocentric models of entrepreneurship (Tomlinson, 2004; Williksen-Bakker, 2002, 2004). At the same time, some writers have reported that some indigenous Fijians find some cultural protocols based on the *vanua* stressful and far from ideal (Williksen-Bakker, 2002, 2004). Clearly for some, holding onto all aspects of the *vanua* at all costs is not the right path forward and, hence, the romanticism of maintaining cultural tradition at all costs is mythologized to some extent.

Indeed, holding onto the *vanua* may be elusive as the *vanua* is not a static set of values and precepts for living in Boumā. One could question from time to time, how the present form of the *vanua* many in Boumā are struggling to cling to can be defined. One could also argue, however, that while all the peripheral processes and structures surrounding the *vanua* may evolve, the core set of *vanua* values remain relatively intact and may be reinforced by the strength of *lotu va'avanua*¹³³: doing for the good of the whole/caring and sharing/others before self. Batibasaqa *et al* (1999) suggest that despite the modification of the term *vanua* through engagement with the global market economy and colonialism, the essence remains ingrained in the psyches of the indigenous Fijian population. They also argue that the *vanua* could be used to develop an 'an alternative set of values, based in the past but aware of the present, that can act as an effective counter to dominant ideologies of resource development and exploitation' (p. 106 cited in Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008, p. 502).

It was vital for all the people I spoke to in Boumā, despite differences in the way individuals perceived the Western capitalist-based development, that this set of values remained central to living life the Boumā way. If these core values remained intact, this meant that their sense of identity, belonging, and social cohesion would also be protected. For most, in terms of development, the only way to do this was to find a way to unite entrepreneurship and the *vanua* in a communal way.

Those researchers who advocate indigenous entrepreneurship and other forms of indigenous development would suggest that the *vanua* should not be treated as an impediment to poverty-alleviation but that it should be made complementary to the process in order to create more sustainable development initiatives. For example, recent recommendations for community-owned and run ecotourism enterprises have been presented as the best way for indigenous values to be made central to decision-making (Johnston 2000). However, decision-making in Boumā has been hampered by a number of factors including weak leadership, low levels of education and training, and a lack of communication between each *yavusa* and between each project and their

¹³³ An indigenised Fijian Christianity.

corresponding *mataqalis*. Where there is disintegration of systems of governance in a community, as is the case in Vanua Boumā, this is made all the more complex and problematic. Referring to external consultation in her (2007) article *Traditional Authority and Community Leadership: Key Factors in Community Based Marine Management and Conservation*, Muelig-Hofmann (see Chapter Five) argues that in the absence of close attention to traditional systems of leadership, development may be impractical and unsustainable. A lack of attention to village politics has contributed to externally initiated community-development failures in the Pacific Islands and may also be the source of some of Vanua Boumā's challenges.

According to the people of Boumā, an educated chief possessing chiefly *mana*¹³⁴ should listen to his people, and then, based on substantial knowledge and experience, guide his people forward while providing protection for the environment and peace and prosperity for his people. This must be done by leading by example¹³⁵. In addition, many stated the need for a reinstallation ceremony. Finally, ecotourism business training involving the whole community (including the chiefs) was suggested to help the people to make more informed decisions while assisting the chief to do the same when the time came to have the final word on matters relating to community-based ecotourism.

Hope

Recently, a collection of anthropologists and sociologists (e.g. Hirokazu Miyazaki, Vincent Crapanzano, Ghassan Hage) have recognised the need to break free from the teleological and often depressing discourses surrounding modernity. They have chosen to move forward by placing the positive theme of hope at the centre of studies of social transformations. Through the theme of hope, multiple possible futures are given

¹³⁴ Ilaitia Tuwere (2002) describes *mana* as the 'powerhouse' of *vanua* (p. 10). Therefore, *mana* refers to the power of the chief in this context.

¹³⁵ Tuwere (2002) describes this 'leading by example' as *sautaka*. When the *sau* or the 'chief executive' is not satisfied that the people are living *va'a vanua* (the *vanua* way) he *sautaka* the land, by taking action. The emphasis here is in the 'doing' rather than relying purely on the 'saying' to create change (p. 72).

substance in shifting everyday contexts and light is thrown on investigations of people's yearnings for possible futures and their capacity to engage in creating them.

Sometimes despite, and sometimes due to cultural hybridisation, in 2006, Vanua Boumā had succeeded in maintaining the essence of the *vanua*: a force of identity and belonging to a place and a people. This is not to say the Boumā people had been wholly successful in dealing with change. Indeed, the future of the communality and general *sautu* of village life in Boumā remained uncertain in 2006 as attempts to hybridise the *vanua* with ecotourism development had revealed some *maladaption* (Huffer & Qalo, 2004; Maiava, 2001) causing violence and other socially destructive behaviour. However, there is much hope expressed in the communities through their agency, for example through *talanoa* and other expressions of intentional deviance. The hope remains constant. It is the ideal collective goal of *sautu*.

While it is true that a number of Boumā locals have 'thrown up their hands' and given up on the projects altogether, there remains hope in Boumā that things will improve. Hope, for many, is expressed through the certainty that the projects will prosper through the amalgamation of the *vanua* and business. For many, the hope is that with a fuller understanding of business management, there will be greater transparency and better communication within the whole community with regard to ecotourism management practices. It is assumed that greater transparency and communication will dissolve much of the mistrust and conflict occurring within the community. However, greater transparency and communication can only be achieved if led by chiefs who are strong enough to oversee fair and equitable community-based staff selection; greater transparency in business practices; ongoing staff training; as well as much improved communication between park and community, and within and between kin groups. In summary, strong local leadership is desired by many as it is believed that village life *va'avanua* cannot exist in its absence. Consequently, nor can there be *sautu* for Boumā.

Me vakilau (*transformative processes*)¹³⁶

Time will tell if the thesis findings will have a transformative effect on Vanua Boumā, development agents, or Fijian government policies and processes in relation to community-based ecotourism in Boumā and Fiji. However, I have already observed some transformations in Lavena as a result of the research process. For many months, some families thought I was a development consultant and, until better informed, talked to us as though the purpose of the research was to save them from the negative impacts of the project or to save the projects. Admittedly I, too, was unsure from the beginning what value my being in Boumā would provide the community. That was until early in July 2004 when I interviewed a Lavena *ti'oti'o* in their home. I was joined in a large cross-legged circle by a group of about twenty men, women and children of all ages. The meeting started haltingly with many embarrassed about answering my questions or engaging in discussion (particularly with a tape recorder running) about *va'avanua* and the community-based ecotourism project in Lavena. However, after a couple of brave young men had spoken out (amidst titters and guffaws from their cousins), the floor opened up and more started speaking in an increasingly animated manner. After an hour and a half of loud cheerful chatter punctuated with occasional soft, hushed whispers and solemn expressions, the meeting ended.

After the meeting, several people approached me and told me how wonderful it was that I was here because they had been given the opportunity to 'talk straight' about what they thought of ecotourism and the effect it had on their lives. They also said that I had asked them difficult questions, the answers to which they had never really thought about before and that it was good to think about those things. British Columbian anthropologist Elvi Whittaker stated that 'anthropology is good to think with' just as 'culture is good to think' (cited in Butler, 2006). I believe this quote was particularly poignant in this instance. Responses like these seemed to increase as time went by and as we built greater rapport with community members. After a few months, it appeared that it did not really matter what I did with their information. I got the feeling that most

¹³⁶ This is a phrase borrowed from Unaisi Nabobo-Baba's Vanua Research Framework (2007).

found the experience cathartic: a release from some of the stresses and frustrations they had harboured over the years. At other times, I felt that people just wanted to meet the ‘*aipalagi*’¹³⁷ staying in Boumā, and to practice their English.

The research transformed me in many ways too. Not only did I grow academically from the experience, the greatest thing I took away from my research was that I learned to seek hope in others’ adversity. It took me some time to do this, but when I did, I learned the power of it. Hope had kept the communities going and provided the strength to continue to seek better ways of moving forward. These had typically placed the *vanua* and community solidarity foremost. While it appeared that pre-existing conflicts between individuals and communities were becoming aggravated by community-based ecotourism, hope remained.

Ilaita Bavia states, ‘Our problems need to be resolved from within; outsiders cannot resolve problems within a *vanua*’¹³⁸ for indigenous peoples’ (cited in Nabobo-Baba, 2006, p. 63). Rather than attempting to ‘solve’ Boumā’s problems, I hope that this research will offer Vanua Boumā with a ‘slice of life’ representing the ways they have historically dealt with community-based ecotourism. Perhaps those other Fijian or Pacific Island communities interested in setting up their own community-based ecotourism projects could also learn something from Vanua Boumā’s experiences. However, more importantly, this study may provide Vanua Boumā with a ‘captured context’ of their thoughts and negotiations (including those ‘unveiled’ in private *talanoa*). From this, they may think more clearly about their own experiences and better determine where to go from there: an interest expressed by the communities themselves.

Development practitioners must allow indigenous peoples the time to apply their own epistemologies and ontologies to unique forms of ‘place-specific’ development. A focus on ‘place-specific’ cultural characteristics including the ‘nature, legitimacy and

¹³⁷ Foreigners/Europeans.

¹³⁸ This is intended as *Vanua* (as written in this thesis) to infer ‘tribe’.

capacity of existing local institutions' (Helling, Serrano & Warren, 2005, p. iv) will provide more meaningful and empowering forms of participatory development. This includes the ways in which local communities understand their own locally articulated structures of physical, spiritual and cosmological power and governance. In this way, development practitioners will more deeply appreciate what is locally interpreted as appropriate, empowering and participatory. This, says Huffer and Qalo (2004), is vital if we are to avoid the 'maldevelopment' seen in the Pacific:

It is wasteful for international and regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral funding sources, nongovernmental organizations and national governments (and taxpayers) to spend millions of dollars trying to 'clean up' devastated societies after the fact, when common sense dictates allowing those societies the time and opportunity to articulate their own approaches to the world and its multitude of developments. Many will argue that this is a luxury for which the modern world does not allow time. But if we in the Pacific do not take time, we will continue to suffer from the 'maldevelopment' that is presently affecting the region, as highlighted in the many reports issued by UN agencies, Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and regional organizations (p. 98).

While the intention of NZAID and TRC was to base development on traditional ecological knowledge and culture, this fell short of their intended goals of full participation, poverty-alleviation and empowerment due to inadequate attention to micro-political and socio-cultural enquiry. Perhaps with a greater attention to lines of communication, historical conflict, and the ways in which decisions were being made and new knowledge constructed both within and external to village meetings, some of the negative impacts experienced by individuals and groups in Vanua Boumā could have been avoided. All this, while acknowledging that, as has been earlier noted by Bavia, not all these issues can be addressed by outsiders. It is ultimately up to the communities themselves to sort these out.

Up until this study, there has been scant interest in local perceptions of the positive or negative impacts of community-based ecotourism in Boumā. This should be an ongoing project. Anthropologists as mediators between the local community and other external agents of development (in other words, at the ‘meso’ level) may provide the most appropriate way to meet this need. Social anthropologists may have the interpretive sensibilities to explore beyond the surface of ‘quick fix’ participatory development approaches to recognise the greater complexities of local social structures, and the relationships of these structures with external social and knowledge structures. Anthropologists may also be best positioned to explore how these relationships are negotiated around a set of core cultural values (the *vanua*).

Access to nuanced micropolitical and human-environment relationships may be best made through a more experiential and phenomenologically informed approach to research. This may be particularly empowering to our research subjects when combined with indigenous epistemological research frameworks¹³⁹, as together these approaches prioritise local epistemologies and ontologies over that of the colonial West and deny the scientific objectivity with which development and anthropology have treated its subjects in the past. These combined approaches also help to deconstruct the harmonious notion of ‘community’. Anthropologists are also in a good position to translate at the meso level between language used at the local level and language used in broader social contexts. This includes terms such as ‘participation’, ‘ecotourism’, the *vanua*, and *sautu*.

Vakarogotaki lesu tale (*reporting back*)

My plan is to return to Boumā to present accessible summaries of the chapters of the thesis to the community. This will be done in accordance with *vanua* protocols. The *Vunisā* (chief of Boumā) will be presented with copies of the thesis summaries. Recognising that theirs is an oral culture, I will also request to present a summary of the thesis through formal *talanoa* for each of the communities and make myself available to

¹³⁹ E.g. Nabobo-Baba’s (2007) Vanua Research Framework.

the communities for a period of time so that individuals and small groups can informally *talanoa* about the research findings. I will, again, be guided through this process with a cultural advisor. However, this time, a new cultural advisor will be chosen for me from within Vanua Boumā.

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Glossary of Fijian terms

‘*A’ase* talk about a third party that is not true or at least not known to be true

‘*Ai’oso* bivalves

‘*Aipalagi* Boumā term for visitor/tourist/Europeans

‘*Aivalagi* visitor/tourist (Bauan dialect)

‘*Alougata* blessing

‘*Alou-vū* original ancestor spirit

‘*Ana veicuruma’i* caring and sharing

‘*Ana’ana* family land

Ai tovo/va’arau va’avanua va’a viti all the culturally accepted behaviors and standards of ethics prescribed by *va’avanua* (the way of *vanua*)

Baigani eggplant

Bali fish (*vo*)

Balolo sea worms

Bati warriors

Bele leafy vegetable

Benzin fuel

Bete/bete ni vanua pre-Christian priest

Bilibili raft

Bilo cup

Bo ni logi, bo ni lugu and bo ni suigu the posts of the chief’s house

Bose Levu Va’atūraga great council of chiefs

Bose va’a mataqali mataqali meeting

Bose va’oro village meeting

Bose na saravanua/par’ park meeting

Bose va’a ti’oti’o ti’oti’o meeting

Bose va’a to’ato’a to’ato’a meeting

Bure traditional Fijian house/meeting house

Ca’aca’a va’oro community/village work

Cegu mada invitation to rest

Note: This glossary somewhat exaggerates the use of the glottal stop in place of the dropped ‘k’ as is the case in Boumā dialect. Contemporary Boumā dialect is increasingly moving toward the retention of the ‘k’.

Dalo taro
Dauve sisters in law
Davo cala lying crooked/dishonest
Davu donu lie straight/honest/true
Drau ni moli lemon leaf used for tea
Duva plant used to stun fish
‘Ere’ere request
Gane opposite sex siblings
Ganunisala ni veiwe’ani the path of relations
Gasau bamboo
Gonedau fishermen clan
Grog kava
Gunu drink/to have drunk
Gunusede fundraising dance
Ibe pandanus mat
I cavuti totems
I’a dro’a shiny fish
I sevusevu introductory offering
I soro reconciliation ritual
I tatau farewell
I to’ato’a enlarged family unit; a sub-lineage of a *mataqali*
I tovo Fijian customs
I tu’utu’u reporting/analysis/writing
Lālā a mystical chiefly power attributed to chiefs by the *‘alou vū* and *vū*; see also *Mana*
Lali wooden drum
Lairo land crabs
Lewe ni vanua children/people of the land
Liuliu ni yavusa see also *turaga ni yavusa*/chief of the yavusa
Loloma love
Loga mat
Lotu church/religion

Lotu va'a vanua Christianity in the vanua way
Madua manners/show of respect/shyness
Magiti ceremonial food
Mamaroroi saving
Mana a mystical chiefly power attributed to chiefs by the 'alou vū and vū; see also *lālā*.
Masi tapa
Mata like a mayor
Mataisau craftsman/builder clan
Matanitū kingdom; government
Matanivanua spokesperson
Mataqali a primary division of the village; clan
Me va'ilau transformative processes
Moli 'aro'aro lemon
Na iva'arau ni bula va'avei we'ani life according to kinship
Na madua ni veiwe'ani the shame of kinship
Na sala va'avanua the vanua way
Na sala dodonu the straight path
Navunavuci conception
Niu coconut
Nuqa rabbit fish
Nuqa levu mature rabbit fish
'Oro village
Qele soil/land
Qele ni teitei (see *teitei*) gardening land
Qoliqoli fishing grounds
Pani'a'e pikelets
Ratu an honorific
Ro'o provincial chief
Saravanua tourism
Sasa coconut leaves
Sautu well-being/harmony/peace/prosperity

Sauturaga executive to the chief

Savusavu floral wreathes

Sevusevu ceremonial offering

Si'oni scones

Situa store

Solesole va'i working together

So mate funerals

Soqosoqo va'a marama women's group

Su'i cigarette/tobacco rolled in newspaper

Sulu cloth

Tabu sacred/forbidden

Tabua whale's tooth, used in ceremonial exchanges

Talanoa/veitalanoa dialogue

Talatala a church minister

Tanoa large wooden bowl for drinking kava

Tava'o tobacco

Tavale cross-cousins

Tavio'a cassava

Tau'ei indigenous person

Teitei plantation

Tevutevu wedding

Ti tea/afternoon or morning tea

Ti'ina district

Ti'oti'o family unit (one above *vuvale*)

To'ato'a family unit (one above *ti'oti'o*)

Tovu family relationships

Turaga chief (also *turaga ni ti'oti'o/to'a to'a/mataqali/yavusa*)

Tūraga ni 'oro government officer

'Udru'udru grumbling

'Uita octopus

Uma tamata social/human resources

'Uro pots

Va'aunu the chiefly first cup of kava; see also *yaqona va'atūraga*

Va'alolo a sweet dessert made from caramelised coconut milk wrapped in taro leaves.

Va'anomodi silence

Va'arau site-specific cultural practices

Va'arogorogo listening; see also *veirogorogoci*

Va'arogota'i lesu tale/taleva lesu reporting back

Va'aturaga in the chiefly manner/culturally appropriate or ideal manner

Va'ava'arau preparation

Va'avanua the Fijian way of life or doing things the 'vanua' way.

Va'a vinavina'a gifting/signs of appreciation

Va'avulica to teach a person something, to make him learn it

Valavala process and rules unique to a place

Vale ni 'uro kitchen

Vale ni po toilet

Vanua land, people and way of life; largest founding social unit

Varau manners

Veido'ai being respectful

Ve'i'ere'erei giving

Veiganeni opposite sex sibling relationships

Ve'au forest

Veilomani loving and friendly with each other

Veinanumi consideration

Veirogorogoci listening; see also *va'arogorogo*

Veive'ani social/primordial kinship

Veiva'abauti trust

Veiva'aisini a Yanuyan language hypocritical language (see Arno, 1980)

Veiva'aro'oro'ota'i listening

Veivogoni cross-parent/child relationship

Veivu'ei offering assistance

Veiwali a joking relationship

Viavia levu overbearing and self-important
Vivili trochus
Vola ni 'awa bula the Birth Register for indigenous Fijians
Voivoi pandanus
Vū ancestral spirits
Vugo opposite sex children in law
Vunisā Vanua leader
Vūvale household
Vunivalu warrior chief (literally: root of war)
Vuvale family
Wai water
Wa'a whole kava root
Yalo 'au'awa uncooperative and high-handed
Yaqona 'ava (piper methysticum); ceremonial drink in Fiji
Yaqona va'atūraga chiefly kava/the first cup; see also *va'aunu*
Yasana province
Yaubula natural/physical environment
Yavu house mound
Yavutu original settlements
Yavusa second largest social unit

Appendices

Appendix 1: Key questions for participants

1. How do you define your environment? What does your environment include?
2. Do you think it is important to protect the environment?
3. Do you think your village/Vanua Boumā has a responsibility to protect the environment? If so, what? If not, why not?
4. How do you feel about the ecotourism and conservation efforts initiated in your village/in Vanua Boumā?
5. Has ecotourism improved your quality of life? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. Has ecotourism improved the standard of living in your village/in Vanua Boumā? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. How do you feel about the way ecotourism was started in your village/in Vanua Boumā?
8. How do you feel about the way ecotourism was facilitated by outside consultants?
9. Do you think the consultants' styles, customs, knowledge and processes were appropriate for the customs and traditions of the village? If so, why? If not, why not?
10. Are there any Fijian traditions or customs practiced by Vanua Boumā that are included as part of the ecotourism projects? Are there any that are not included, and that perhaps should be? What are they and why/why should they not be included?
11. What do you think will be the future for ecotourism and conservation in your village? /Vanua Boumā?
12. What do you wish for your children and their children? Do these wishes include them staying/returning to Vanua Boumā customary lands? Why? /Why not?
13. Are traditions and customs changing in Vanua Boumā? If so, how? How do you feel about those changes? If not, why do you think they have not changed?
14. Do you feel that your village/Vanua Boumā has maintained control over the Vanua throughout ecotourism/conservation efforts? If so, how? If not, how do you feel about that?
15. Have attitudes about each other/other villages changed since the initiation of ecotourism/conservation in your village/in Vanua Boumā? If so, how?
16. Have attitudes about the environment changed since the initiation of ecotourism/conservation in your village/in Vanua Boumā? If so, how?
17. What do you like about ecotourism in your village/Vanua Boumā?
18. Is there anything you don't like about ecotourism in your village/Vanua Boumā?
19. Is there anything you would like to have happened differently since the initiation of ecotourism in your village/Vanua Boumā? If so, what?
20. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 2. Kin terms of reference and address

Appendix 3.1 KIN TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ADDRESS

relationship	reference	address
Fa.Fa	tubu-	kuku
Mo.Fa	tubu- / *tuka-	"
Mo/Fa.Mo	tubu-	nau
grandchild	vuo-	** vuo- / NAME
Father	tama-	tata
Mother	tina-	nana
Daughter/Son	luve-	** luve- / NAME
Mo.Bro	vugo- / *gōdēna-	mōmō / mudrau [2nd.dual]
Spouse's father	vugo-	mōmō / mudrau [2nd.dual]
Fa.Si	tina-	nana + NAME
Spouse's mother	vugo-	nei mudrau [2nd.dual]
Child's spouse	vugo-	** vugo- / mudrau [2nd.dual]
Sister's child	vugo-	** vugo- / mudrau [2nd.dual]
Opposite-sex sibling	gane-	** gane- / mudou [2nd.paucal]
Older same-sex sibling	tua'o-	** tua'o- / NAME
Younger same-sex sibling	taci-	** taci- / NAME
Parallel cousin	'arua-	'arua
Cross-cousin	tavale	tavale
Sisters-in-law	dauve	dauve
Spouse	wati-	** wati- / NAME

* These Boumān dialect terms are used only by

Source: Schmidt, 1988, p. 83.

Appendix 3. Lavena ceremonies

As told by the Lavena *turaga ni vanua*, December 1, 2004. Adapted from Schmidt's (1988) *Language in a Fijian Village* (pp. 146-147).

Ceremony	Description	Gifts
I sevusevu	Request for permission to enter village	yaqona
I sevu	Presentation of first harvest crops. The mataqali ni to'ato'a should present this to the chief but hasn't for a long time	token crops
I soro	Begging for forgiveness for wrong-doing: This used to be tabua but now with yaqona. Tabua should have been given with the expectation that it will given back. People were not returning the tabua and so the tradition is almost gone.	yaqona
I reguregu	To honour those who died during X's absence from the village. 10 years since tabua given for this ceremony in Lavena.	yaqona
Uliva'I	Thanks ceremony for feast etc.	used to be tabua but now yaqona
Va'atale	Farewell performed at the end of an important person's visit. This is usually performed by the Wesleyan church.	tabua or yaqona presented
 <i>Ceremonies to welcome an important guest</i>		
Cavui'ele'ele	Hoisting the anchor. Used to present a tabua but this ceremony is no longer performed because of the road built in 1980	
I qaloqalovi	Swimming to the boat	tabua
I va'asobu	Coming onto dry land	tabua
Uru ni 'uila	Lowering the flag	not performed in Lavena
I va'amamaca	Drying out possessions	Mats (ibe)
Cavudraudrau	Pulling leaves	oil/broom/yaqona/bush
I wase ni waqona	Food after yaqona	pig, dalo
Rova	Woman of high rank runs with tabua. Only sometimes performed with masi and voivoi	

Traditional ceremonies relating to marriage

I la'ola'ovi	To ask girl's parents for her hand in marriage.	tabua or yaqona.
I va'amamaca 'ei nai vola	Performed after church service.	tabua, mats, bark cloth, kerosene, buckets, mosquito nets
I tatauva'I	Girls parents ask that she be well cared for	tabua
Tevutevu	Traditional marriage ceremony.	mats, yaqona, double bed, cupboard, plates, household items

Traditional ceremonies relating to birth

Tunudra	Feast for mother's family and newborn child.	Feast (magiti). Lavena's turaga ni yavusa has never seen this in Lavena in his lifetime (he was in his early 70s at the time of research).
Va'abogiva	For both mother's and father's family. This is also the name of the small party given if someone dies.	yaqona, feast.
Va'alutu ni vicovico	To mark the dropping of the umbilical cord.	Feast.
'Au a mata ni gone	Bring child to mother's for the first time.	Clothing, kerosene, tabua. The child wears masi when they enter the mother's village for the first time.
I'oti ni ulu ni gone	First cutting of the child's hair.	party

Traditional ceremonies relating to death

So mate	Funeral service.	tabua, yaqona, mats, feast, bark cloth.
Atonitoni	Marking end of period in which it is forbidden to laugh or be joyous. 4 nights.	
Waqona ni 'asiviti	Last feast and yaqona in honour of the deceased. To signify that his life is finished.	magiti, yaqona