"PACIFIED" PERCEPTIONS:
MULTIPLE SUBJECTIVITIES AND
COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT PROJECTS
A CASE STUDY NAIKOROKORO VILLAGE
LEVUKA, OVALAU
FIJI ISLANDS

Seacology supporters and kindergarten students in front of the newly renovated community center at Naikorokoro Village, opening ceremonies July 2004.

FIJI, FAMILY, & FISH

In early July 2004, I traveled from Hawaii to Fiji to participate in celebrations commemorating the opening of an upgraded community center and new kindergarten classroom at Naikorokoro Village in Levuka on the island of Ovalau. Made possible by a coastal management partnership between village members of Naikorokoro and the Berkeley-based non-profit Seacology, this project had been at the heart of my research since I first learned of its existence in January of 2003. As a result I had spent much of
the previous year traveling from Suva to Levuka examining the development of these facilities and was excited to be taking part in the festivities.

On this particular trip to Naikorokoro along with the usual bread, kerosene, yaqona, (piper methysticum) and other requested items I would also travel with my aunty Claire and her two young grandchildren. My aunt, my grandmother’s sister, had been raised at Naikorokoro Village until the family moved to Suva when she was a teenager.1 This was to be her first visit in over 15 years.

Travel from Suva to Levuka and vice versa can be done via ferry service or air. As you can imagine flying is much quicker and much more expensive. For the most part, travel by air is for tourists, government officials, and those who require same day in and out service. Travel by Ferry is long, but is preferred by locals for two reasons. First it cost substantially less and second it allows you to carry substantially more stuff.2 As such we were traveling by ferry. Travel by ferry is a journey even for an experienced traveler like myself. The fact that I had company made it even more important to arrive at the Suva bus stand early to ensure we secured seats for the 3 hour bus ride to the Natovi jetty where we would catch the Patterson ferry to Ovalau.

This was one of the few trips that I had someone to talk to, and that it was with an aunt that I had come to know well from my stays in Fiji helped to pass the time quickly. Along the way the kids dozed off to sleep (the heat and bumpy dirt road are a perfect sleep cure for any child or insomniac) and my aunt and I caught each other up on the latest village gossip, things she heard from village members who had visited Suva and things that I heard and saw while in the village. Before I knew it we were getting off the bus and lining up to get on the ferry. On the ferry we met several other village members
who were traveling to Naikorokoro for the opening ceremonies including Chief Maravu who had not traveled by bus but instead had driven his vehicle to Natovi and then on to the ferry. The 45-minute ferry ride is always nice there is lots of space it’s breezy and cool and the view from the deck is amazing. My aunt reminisced about how much travel to and from Naikorokoro had changed and enjoyed her grandchildren’s excitement of being on a boat for the first time. As the pier on Ovalau came into sight we began quickly collecting the kids and our stuff hoping to be amongst the first to disembark and get a choice at seating on the bus headed for Levuka that would finally get us to Naikorokoro.

After everyone settled into his or her spot and the bus attendants managed stow away everyone’s stuff we were on are way. A couple of hours later the village came into sight and I rang the bell to notify the bus driver that we would be getting off. I didn’t notice the confusion in my aunt’s face until she leaned over and asked me, “is that the village?” Had I not memorized each bend in the road from previous trips, I too would not have recognized the place. The lights coming from the village were so bright it looked like Suva on a Friday night, even through the thick dust on the bus windows.

Our arrival was announced by a dozen or so excited children who had been sitting at the bus stop eagerly awaiting us. After a few informal hellos and short visits, I made my way to Bubu Sereana’s home to help prepare the chow mien, curry, and other dishes that would be served at the next day’s gathering. Over chopping vegetables with the other women, mostly mothers and their teenaged daughters, we talked about what had occurred in my absence over the last four months. Both sides were full of questions. They were interested in how Hawaii and Suva were; if I had brought with me a mobile
phone, t-shirts, alcohol (despite it being not allowed in the village); whether I had gotten married, and how my family was. My thoughts were on how work on the community center had progressed; whether the women had been able to weave as many mats as they had initially intended; how fishing practices had changed, and how the young children were.

The preparations for the next day stretched late into the evening. The women cooked, scraped coconut, wove voivoi, made salusalu, and cleaned, all the while watching over their children and making sure the men were properly fed. The men made the final renovations: painted, cleared the grounds, and discussed the upcoming events. I had arrived fairly late in the preparation process and village members had already constructed the temporary ceremony shed; collected dalo, chickens, pigs, cassava, crabs, coconuts, fish; and prepared the lovo. The air was full of excitement.

The following morning, our visitors from Seacology along with a group of high school students from the Grand Cayman Islands arrived by private jet. The guests were greeted by Chief Maravu, presented with salusalu, and taken aside to take part in a yaqona ceremony with the village headmen. The women were kept busy with last minute food and entertainment details. Once the yaqona finished the group moved into the community center that had been decorated with local foliage and mats woven over the last year. The guests were then treated to a Fijian meke and encouraged to join in. After a short blessing the food was served. The visitors were fed first, then the village headmen, followed by the rest of the village people, with the exception of the women that prepared the food, most of whom would eat after the visitors had departed and everyone had retreated to their homes.
There were no chairs, tables or designated eating areas set up, so villagers and Seacology visitors made themselves comfortable wherever possible, sitting in the grass on mats or on the community center stairs. It was the only opportunity that guests and residents had to mingle freely. As I walked around and listened in on different conversations, I noticed that no one was discussing the management project, and most were just commenting on how excellent the seafood was. Shortly after lunch (around 2:00 p.m.) the final photos were being taken and the village gathered to sing Isa Lei as the visitors loaded into their charted mini bus and headed for Bureta airfield. They would visit another Seacology project site in the Yasawa Islands the next day.5

That night at my cousin Sera’s home, we dined over fish. It was the first time, in all my visits, that Sera had sat down to eat with others, as she was usually busy cooking, cleaning, and looking after her children. We chatted about the day’s festivities and I asked where all the fish had come from. She answered without reservation, “just from the reef in front there,” as she pointed towards the sea. I then asked if the women had caught the fish with their nets as I had seen them do many times before. She shook her head and explained to me that most of the fish had been caught through the use of duva, a fish poison made from the roots of a local plant. She also explained that the use of duva is illegal as it kills indiscriminately without regards to species or size. In celebration of the partnership and to feed project supporters villagers had used illegal fishing practices within the newly formed no-take management reserve. As it turns out, while the use of duva has been deemed illegal by the government collection of fish for any village use, other than sale, is not prohibited by the no-take zone. This experience for me raised fundamental questions about the nature, scope, and effectiveness of community
management projects and necessitated the need for a deeper look into the development and administration of this particular project.

PROJECTS, PEOPLE & PERCEPTIONS

In 2005, Fiji pledged to designate 30 percent of its oceans and coastal waters as marine protected areas by the year 2020 (Nature Conservancy of Hawaii 2007, 5). Today community management projects (CMPs), reserves, no-take zones, sanctuaries, and like arrangements in coastal communities throughout the region are one the leading resource management mechanisms. Already home to more marine management projects than any other tropical region in the world, the Pacific is seeing an intensification of these arrangements (Johannes 2002a, 318). The government of Fiji has even formally adopted a CMP approach to fisheries management throughout the country (Aalbersberg, Tawake & Parras 2006, 147). This trend raises fundamental questions about the nature, scope, and validity of community management projects in the Pacific, and requires us to assess their value to Pacific lives. Case studies offer the opportunity for such assessments and allow us to examine the processes through which CMPs are initiated, incorporated into communities, and interacted with, as well as the way we view these interactions in terms of project success and effectiveness.

This paper will explore CMPs in the Pacific, and the motivational factors that have contributed to their continued endorsement by community members, environmentalists, and governments. Through a case study of the Seacology project at Naikorokoro I will evaluate how village members view and relate to this particular CMP. In consideration of literature that contends there is a need to understand power structures, the politics of representation, and multiple subjectivities in every CMP, I divided the
adult village population into three groups: women, men, and the chief and presented each
groups experiences and feelings about the Seacology project in separate sections.\textsuperscript{6} This
approach to my research and writing was employed in efforts to garner more open and
honest conversations between and amongst myself and other village members.\textsuperscript{7} It also
supports the fact that members of the same community are not homogenous and have
different levels of interest, influence, dependency, and willingness to invest for the
management of their resources. In each section I discuss village members “traditional”
roles in Fijian culture including their “traditional” interactions with the near-shore
resources being managed, and the changing nature of these roles due to modernization
and globalization. Particularly, I will explore what members of Naikorokoro sense are
the project’s benefits and successes, how it has affected their livelihoods, and why they
believe the project is important to them and their community.

I begin the paper with a substantial, but very relevant, amount of background
information on development and resource use practices in PICS, the main elements and
proliferation of CMPs in the Pacific, and the importance and use of near-shore fisheries
resources in Fiji. I then provide a brief description of Naikorokoro village, Seacology,
and the no-take reserve. It is my hope that viewing this CMP from multiple perspectives
and comparing these perspectives to each other, and to Seacology’s purposes will enable
us to consider multiple measures of success. In turn giving us some insight into what
motivates people to consider participation in CMPs and what is most important about
“development” to Pacific lives.

**DISCOURSES, DEVELOPMENT, & DISINTEGRATION**

What are the purposes of “development” and how and where do we begin to
assess its value to people’s lives? Economic laureate Amartya Sen, views development as a means of providing people with freedoms including access to education, health care, adequate housing, political and civil liberties, protective security, and the removal of certain un-freedoms such as poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, and systematic social deprivation (Sen 1999, 8). Neo-classical economic theory suggests that these freedoms occur naturally with economic growth most often measured by increases in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP). Where Western systems view wealth purely in terms of cash and the existence of material goods, Pacific societies have long valued skills, knowledge, and histories as forms of wealth, all of which contribute to the well being of their communities. In most parts of the Pacific there exists a large “traditional” sector accounting for nearly 50 percent of countries’ GDP, with 80-90 percent of land and resources held under customary tenure (Hooper 2000, 2). As such, cultural elements are entrenched in the legal structures, economic resource bases, and constitutions of Pacific Island Nations and play a much more significant role in national, economic, and political life than in most other regions of the world (2000).

The major flaw in neo-classical economic theory as it has been applied in the Pacific is its failure to account for people and the complex systems (i.e. communal lifestyles, traditional beliefs, motivations, roles, and management systems) that make the Pacific the Pacific. Despite this knowledge, development projects in the region indicate there is inadequate attention paid to cultural and social conditions. This has resulted in a disruption of current lifestyles, and projects that Avegalio says “suffer from a lack of cultural fit” (Avegalio 2002, 41). What we see are individualistic models that seek
economic growth above all else, and are understandably irrelevant to Pacific communal societies. Attempts to emulate development models based on neo-classical economic theory have led PICS to adopt and pursue (recommended by former colonial powers, the World Bank, and International Monetary Fund) growth strategies that are detrimental to both their natural and human resources. Throughout the Pacific these growth strategies have materialized in the form of un-regulated niche markets for private investors, the exploitation of natural resources, and super power military use (or non-use) of islands’ geostrategic positions.

To attract foreign investments PICS pursued export-oriented growth strategies (or flexible growth strategies) and became more competitive by lowering taxes, doing away with regulatory impediments, and removing protection and tariffs on imports (AusAid 1995). It was also recommended that PICS set private and public sector wages at levels “appropriate in the context of market forces” (Treadgold 1992, 38). Unfortunately the rates required to maintain international competitiveness are often at levels far below the cost of living in most PICS. In 1987, Fiji created Tax Free Zones (actual land areas set aside for tax free factories (TFF)) and garment factories emerged as the leading patrons of these programs. While they have achieved levels of growth, this growth is minimal. Since 1992 all private investments in Fiji have accounted for a mere five percent of the countries GDP (Prasad 2000, 167). Even more telling than the limited growth, such schemes have brought to Fiji a continuing association with authoritarian governments, poor working conditions, non-unionized workforces, low wages, and sexual harassment (Harrington 1994). Not surprisingly these garment factories are also amongst the most notable investors who have benefitted from the cheap labor offered in the islands.
(Lockwood 2004, 24). Ninety percent of those employed by the garment industry in Fiji are women, and because of this corporations get away with paying even lower wages and offering fewer sick days (Emberson-Bain 1996).

Another growth tactic, formally recommended to PICS was privatization of government operated enterprises (Emberson-Bain 1996a). The Fiji government embarked on a public enterprise reform programs selling off publicly supported services like electricity, water, aviation facilities, and telecommunications to private interests hoping to free up the countries resources for capital investment. Fiji’s size of government in comparison to their GDP is of great concern and it is estimated that their public service holdings and operations cost the country approximately $11FJD million a year (Prasad 2000). Those who oppose privatization say these reforms would mean the loss of jobs and higher costs for needed services, making it increasingly difficult for already struggling people to meet their daily needs. In fact, results showed that despite privatization, Fiji’s investment expenditures have remained weak (2000).12

Exploits of the Pacific’s rainforests, fisheries, gold, copper, and nickel resources have long been a subject of great concern both for the environment and the people these resources sustain. Promises by corporations to resource owners for wealth (automobiles, big fancy homes) and health (social services) in exchange for the extraction of their resources are misleading as these payments usually come in the form of small handouts of alcohol, food, gifts, and trips for leaders (Crocombe 2008, 11). Not only do such activities benefit very few, they also cause severe environmental degradation, reduce standards of living, and limit countries’ economic opportunities. Logging in the Solomon Islands prompted the following excerpt from Willie Tekotoha’s poem Loggers: “For
only a carton of beer, we gave away our lives our trees our soil our water our ecology. . .
Will we be rich? Two per cent is ours. Ninety-eight per cent is theirs” (Clarke 2000, 23). It is estimated that 50% all export revenue and 31% of all government revenue in the Solomon’s is from logging (Lockwood 2004, 22). That PICS have lost a substantial amount of their forests’ causing erosion, polluted water, and damaged reefs is of little consequence for populations who are desperate to participate in the global economy and commercial activities (Crocombe 2008, 11).

Mining has produced even scarier outcomes. Amongst the most notable mines in the region are Ok Tedi in Papua New Guinea (PNG) (copper, gold, silver), Panguna (Copper) in Bougainville, Vatukoula (gold or copper in Namosi) in Fiji, and Goro (nickel) in New Caledonia (Lockwood 2004, 22). Such open-cut mines have removed huge amounts of rock and soil for very little amounts of metal, created hundreds of thousands of tons of ore waste (dumped on land and in rivers) and have lead to the loss of vegetation and animals, as mined areas have become completely barren (Crocombe 2008, 10-11). Operations at Ok Tedi were dumping 80,000 tons of waste into rivers daily causing the 500 km river to see a rise in the river bed (5 meters since the mine opened in 1984), ruined gardens, floods, and destruction of fish in areas from the mine all the way down to the coast (Crocombe 2008, 11). Disputes between mining corporations and landowners’ over rights, revenues, and environmental grievances have resulted in numerous lawsuits that demand billions of dollars in repatriation for local populations. In places like PNG where 72% of the nations export earnings are from minerals, arguments to implement higher environmental standards have been met with resistance and claims that such standards would make mining uneconomical (Lockwood 2004, 22).
Compliance with environmental regulations for gold mining in Fiji has increased but damage to mangroves and the Tavua township area, along with the loss of fish in the Wainunu river from gaseous discharge (sulfur dioxide and arsenic) and tailing ponds (cyanide) has already been considerable (Asian Development Bank (ADB) 1999, 180).

In nearly all Pacific Island countries, efforts towards development have identified fisheries as one of the region’s most promising areas of growth. Since the implementation of the UN Law of the Sea in 1982, PICS have been endowed with major opportunities for increased foreign earnings through control of 30 percent of the world’s exclusive economic zones (EEZ) (Crocombe 2008, 328), making fisheries resources of tuna and other pelagic fish the Pacific’s greatest asset. In Fiji fisheries are the countries fourth largest export industry (ADB 1999, 173). Unfortunately a history of “wall of death” (driftnet fishing has since been size bans) fishing methods, exploitation from Japan, the United States, Korea and Taiwan, and the licensing of rights to foreign fleets have served to deplete this important resource as well as its economic value to Pacific Island Countries. The expenses involved in developing a commercial fishing industry has meant only a couple of countries (Fiji and the Solomon Islands) have been able extract (a portion) their own fisheries resources. This offers richer more industrialized countries the opportunity to purchase these valuable resources at a fraction of what they are worth. A majority of PICS have chosen to sell their rights to foreign interests. Of the 1,000,000 tons of tuna harvested from the Pacific (Western) each year, only seven percent is extracted by Pacific Island fishing vessels and PICS receive a measly five percent of its $1.6 billion catch value (Lockwood 2004, 23). Moreover, PICS have not the man nor monetary power to manage and keep non-licensed vessels from pilfering fish resources in
their EZZ, further contributing to their loss in benefits (Veitayaki 1995, 91).

PICS have long been important to super power militaries for security and waste purposes. Countries pay cash to use the islands geostrategic positions and to ensure the non-use by enemies what Crocombe calls “strategic denial” (Crocombe 2008, 329). US military control in the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands is the main source of revenue and Australia’s aid to many other Pacific Islands is based on their own security interests. France provides $363 million annually in rent to French Polynesia for its military bases and nuclear testing installations (Lockwood 2004, 20). Although the French ended nuclear testing on Mururoa in 1995, the environmental damage caused by the testing persists. The Pacific has also served as dumping grounds for medical and other hazardous waste from their more industrialized neighbors (Teaiwa et al. 2002, 44). These countries continue to offer payments for the storage and dumping of nuclear and other toxic waste in PICS territories. While PICS have thus far turned down such proposals, countries like Tonga have considered this damaging but lucrative source of income (Crocombe 2008, 336).

Criticism of PICS for their sluggish almost stagnant growth and the widening of economic disparities across the region have proven that development projects pursued over the last 50 years, which have focused solely on economic growth are ineffective (Treadgold 1992). Unemployment rates are extremely high, in some island countries (FSM) nearly 60%, and these rates will continue to increase as more and more youth flock to urban centers in search of wage work and modern lives (Abbott and Pollard 2004, 51). The inability for countries to provide employment opportunities has meant only one-fourth to one-third of those who complete school will find suitable employment
in the formal sector (2004, 54). Even more disturbing are reports in Fiji that over 70% of the working population earns less than the minimum wage of FJD$120 per week (Prasad 2000, 165). As a result in 2004 it was estimated that 34% of Fiji’s population lived in poverty (Narsey 2006, 72). Rural populations remain the most impoverished despite claims that they are a major focus of development efforts (2006, 1). Also troublesome about development projects that pursue economic growth above all else is their focus on urban centers and many Pacific Islanders have yet to see improved infrastructure or development in rural areas.

The experiences above exemplify that development efforts in PICS have served to disadvantage communities and instead benefit private investors, government officials, foreign interests, and local elite. This has translated into communities experiencing a break down of freedoms, an increase of un-freedoms, and limited improvement in quality of life. For the most part, development policies have taken on what Hooper calls “an air of prescriptive unreality” as they fail to recognize what motivates people or what they are actually doing in their daily lives (2000, 4). These economic realities alongside globalization and urbanization have also contributed to the growing rates of homelessness, crime, and other social ills being experienced in PICS. Economist Bernard Poirine suggests that classical economic theory is a “poor guide to policy decisions in the Pacific” and would lead the region in the “wrong direction” (1995, 51). Considering the examples above few could argue with Poirine’s sentiments.

**AID, ASSUMPTIONS & ABUSE**

Inevitably we have to ask why. Not why have these strategies failed but rather why have island governments insisted on pursuing the same strategies despite years of
unfavorable results? Truth be told while Pacific Island governments recognize the
dangers and limitations of development based solely on economic growth initiatives, they
are extremely cautious about pursuing other strategies for fear such action would affect
the region’s aid benefits. Knowledge of the aid donor/recipient relationship is critical to
understanding and evaluating development trends in the region. Each year Australia,
the United States, New Zealand, China, Japan and institutions like the World Bank, Asian
Development Bank (ADB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provide hundreds
of millions of dollars to the Pacific in aid and loans. In some island countries this money
represents a significant portion of their GDP (From the US $400 million to the Marshall
Islands, from Australia and New Zealand $40.3 million to Fiji, from France $880 million
to New Caledonia) and fully supports their political, social, and economic functioning
(Lockwood 2004, 17-19). Per person the Pacific receives more aid than any other region
in the world (Crocombe 2008, 357). The Pacific has become very dependent on this
external financing and as a result aid donor countries and loaning banks are able to exert
huge amounts of control over their activities.

Dependence for PICS has meant they have little choice in the types of activities
that are pursued in their quest for growth (Ogden 1987, 363). In order to retain aid
assistance, PICS must abide by donor recommendations, making recommendations a
required set of policies rather than neighborly advice (Slatter 1996, 21). Clearly these
recommendations more often than not support donor motives more than PICS and this is
evidenced by the fact that countries with higher incomes are receiving more aid than
those with lower incomes. In relation to this, those receiving the most aid (territories of
France, US and New Zealand) have the least amount of political autonomy (Crocombe
The US in 1999, in exchange for their military presence in Micronesia paid in excess of $800 per person annually to the FSM, Marshall Islands, and Palau. France added $200 million more per year to the aid it already gives to Tahiti for a total of $1900 million in 2007, in efforts to diminish the ever growing move in the islands for independence (2008, 354-355). In response to competition from China who has become a major donor throughout the Pacific (China funded many of the new sports facilities in Fiji), Australia and New Zealand, the regions leading aid donors, have both increased their aid to PICS to maintain their influence and power (Teaiwa et al. 2002, 7).

All this aid in all its forms is of course conditional. The condition: meeting donor requests. Sometimes these conditions require that aid money be spent on education, health, specific infrastructure projects, or training programs (2002). Donors have even mandated government reform (and have funded constitutional reform in Fiji), but recipients who fail to meet these conditions are rarely punished because the donor typically had their own political reasons for giving aid in the first place (Larmour 2005, 25). Aid that comes in the form of loans has as many if not more stipulations than grant aid, despite the fact that counties are required to pay this money back. As banks naturally their interests are in money rather than quality of life so much of their aid is tied to activities that promote free market principles, importation of luxury goods, reduction of government, replacement of customary tenures with free market tenures, all with little environmental regulations (Crocombe 2008, 351). These activities support those who already have money, widening the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Conditional aid is also troublesome because despite its “good” intentions it is inextricably linked to PICS sovereignty and their ability to decide for themselves their own development.
agendas and destinies (Teaiwa et al 2002, 4).

PICS however are not simply innocent recipients in the aid process and must be held accountable for their own failures which have denied the vast majority of islanders the benefits of development initiatives. Evidence suggests that aid money given to PICS is spent primarily in urban areas and significant amounts are siphoned off by officials, “traditional” leaders, individuals in privileged positions, and organization, who in their administration of aid funded projects, waste money on expensive advice, hiring ineffective foreign consultants, creating so-called networking opportunities, and participating in meetings that require lots of travel abroad (Crocombe 2008, 360). PICS corrupt government officials have also managed to manipulate aid money away from its intended beneficiaries funneling it towards scholarships, contracts, and jobs for their own personal gains (2008, 359). Teresia Teaiwa sums up the aid experience best, “aid undermines governments, exploits people and the environment, and makes PICS more attuned to donor’s interests than people’s lives (Teaiwa et al 2002, 45). Victoria Lockwood suggests that PICS dependent positions have made it difficult “to shape the terms by which they participate in the global economy” (Lockwood 2004, 4).

Other factors that have contributed to the slow growth rates and depleting living conditions currently being experienced in the region include political instability, uncertainty about property rights, the Asian economic crisis, and even the weather. Fiji in particular has experienced three coups since 1987. These political realities alone have created an environment that at best is seen by investors to be risky. After the 1987 coup Fiji saw a fall in their GDP of 12 percent, and a decline in real investment by 13 percent along with emigration by much of the country’s skilled workforce (Cole & Hughes 1988,
v). Within four days of the 1987 coup an estimated $45 million left Fiji (Crocombe 2008, 350). After the coup (from 1988-1991) the country saw some economic growth due to quick government response but this growth has not been sustained (AusAid 1995, 4-5). The fact that 83 percent of land in Fiji is owned by clans and held under customary tenure has also thwarted growth in Fiji. Landowners have complicated the lease process by consistently wanting to re-negotiate terms and time limits after contracts have already been signed (1995, xv). In 1998 due to a drought, sugar, Fiji’s largest cash crop and major income earner for rural populations, produced 40 percent less than expected. At the same time there was a 20 percent devaluation of the Fiji dollar in response to the Asian economic crisis (Prasad 2000, 161). It has also been argued that the PICS limited land based natural resources, small size, and long colonial histories have contributed to the negative development trends being experienced throughout the region.

Poet and Solomon Island native, Jully Makini, sums up the Pacific Islander development experience well in her poem appropriately entitled Development.  

DEVELOPMENT

Big word
Lotsa meanings
Staka dollar
Magnetic circle
Entices me
Urban drift
Empty villages
Customs forgotten
Loose living
Lost identity
Rat race
Dollar talks
Values change
Wantoks ignored
Every man for himself
I want to develop too!

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This poem highlights the pressures of development and the conflicts that exist between Pacific culture and current development outcomes. More importantly however it reveals that PICS desire development, despite its threats to their cultures, societies, and environments. Pacific Islanders have all been exposed to globalization’s opulence and as the above examples highlight, governments as well as people are understandably on board to receive any and all of its advantages, no matter the costs.

STANDARDS, SUSTAINABILITY & SURVIVAL

Development practices in the region have left much to be desired, and the realization that Pacific Islanders can have access to material goods, welfare, higher education, and security without neglecting their customs, environments, and health has fueled a search for alternatives. One such alternative, which has gained wide support, centers on the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development is based on concerns for the global environment, and the concept encompasses everything from resource conservation to poverty and how they are linked to human development practices. Proponents of sustainable development include environmentalists, international organizations, governments, academics, communities, and individuals. At some level, they have come to the understanding that development practices must change if diverse communities and resources are to exist in the future.

Unfortunately, sustainable development ideals are simply ideals as there is no clear definition of what it is or should do. For example as Overton writes: it “offer[s] little to inform practice beyond principle and platitudes” (Overton 1999, 1). The failure of sustainable development proponents and governments to clarify what sustainable
practices are or should look like has resulted in development that takes on the appropriate “sustainable” language but brings no change to development projects. A 1994 publication edited by Atu Emberson-Bain entitled Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island Women highlights many of the projects and plans that have been implemented under the guise of sustainability, but offer nothing fundamentally different from market economic growth models (1996). The sustainability component of these projects has turned out to be just political rhetoric intended to pacify environmentalist and communities. In the 15 or so years since this publication very little has changed and sustainable practices continue to elude many PICS.

Sustainable development is not and cannot be the fix-all solution to current damaging development practices. This is primarily because sustainable use of anything requires sacrificing of other things, and in PICS the other things are often investments (Crocombe 2008, 17). Furthermore, population growth in many PICS, especially in urban areas, doesn’t allow for sustainable type growth or development, as it necessitates large amounts of forest clearing, increased food production, and the need to create employment. Under such conditions, conservation laws, while they exist are of little consequence and are rarely enforced (2008). In addition, sustainable development ideals commonly refer to the contradictions that exist between economic growth strategies and environmental protection, and neglect to recognize the contradictions that exist between environmental agendas and Pacific livelihoods.

Conservation and preservation ethics are troublesome in the Pacific as they focus on the needs of future generations. For most Pacific islanders current needs are substantially more important and naturally they are reluctant to forego large short-term
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gains (offered by logging and mining companies) for sustainable alternatives like
etcotourism that offer lower returns and require more work (Macintyre and Foale 2004,
161). Pacific Islanders have proven time and time again that they will risk their resources
for financial gain and modern material goods. Education and awareness campaigns
launched in the hopes of convincing landowners to act more sustainably have very often
been met with annoyance and requests for information on moneymaking alternatives not

Community management projects are a significant component of the
sustainability work being undertaken in the region. They are efforts that work with local
resource owners and users in developing management techniques that consider people’s
close relationship with resources (subsistence and cultural) as well as the environment
and are seen as a more equitable form of management (Samou 1999, 152-53). In the
Pacific many of these management projects are in coastal and marine areas. These
projects often go by different names, for example Local Marine Management Area
Networks in Fiji (LMMA), Rahui or ra’ui zones in Rarotonga, and Marine Resource
Management (MRM) activities in Vanuatu, and they each have a different set of
regulations, but all are based on principles of conservation and a recognized need to
protect and enhance resources (Johannes 2002a, 318-29). CMPs do not subscribe to the
national park concept of 100 percent conservation and are a new breed of protected areas
that take into account resource users needs (Connor, Houlbrook, and Tarihao 1995).
CMP activities have gained wide support from communities, governments, and NGOs,
and the result has been a proliferation of these projects across the region. 24

CMPs are a viable management alternative in the Pacific region because unlike
other regions 80 to 90 percent of land and near-shore resources are still held in customary tenure, and officially, if not actively, are still managed by local communities. This gives communities (usually through their chief) the legal authority to enter into CMP agreements and enforce CMP guidelines on both community members and outsiders (Johannes 2002a, 328). Furthermore near-shore fisheries resources have significant subsistence and cultural importance to local communities in PICS, thus their participation in the management of them is crucial (Veitayaki 2003). Most CMPs also incorporate and adopt management practices based on indigenous conservation ethics. Common examples are moratoriums on the use of resources during a particular season, in a particular area, and in honor of the birth of a child of high rank, or death of a chief; these restrictions are in addition to size limits, and method/gear restrictions (Johannes 2002, 3). Additionally CMPs also relieve governments of the work and the costs involved with managing complex near-shore resources, as landowners take on responsibility of enforcement and apply their own penalties for infringements (King & Fa’asili 1999, 4). Existing CMPs in the region allow us to deduce the necessary components of effective/successful CMPs involving near-shore resources in PICS.

First and foremost is education about the value of natural resources and ecological processes and the types of activities that threaten these resources. This helps to achieve understanding in communities about CMPs and how they can affect positive change on availability of resources and the specific benefits of these projects to community members’ lives (Connor, Houlbrook, & Tarihao 1995, 35). While communities/landowners may be aware of the growing scarcity of their resources, and this might drive CMP participation, explaining the purposes and main objectives of
CMPs is an integral part of the process and is critical to gaining support and compliance with project guidelines (Johannes 2002a, 320, 327). According to studies conducted by King and Fa’asili on projects in Samoa, Veitayaki on projects in Verata in Fiji, and Johannes on projects in Vanuatu, landowners are encouraged to participate in CMPs after seeing the positive results in other communities (Aalbersberg, Tawake & Parras 2006; Hickey and Johannes 2002; King and Fa’asili 1999). This often results in an increase in CMP sites in surrounding areas.

Second, participation by all community members in developing CMP guidelines including project area, protection regime, rules for sustainable resource use, and reinstitution of “traditional” practices is very important as it helps to ensure that the needs and uses of men, women, elders, and youth are accounted for along with all social and cultural conditions (Veitayaki 2003, 93). When people are given the chance to participate in developing projects they are more likely to endorse its guidelines and comply with it over the long run. The participation aspect of CMPs is so vital that one project in Votua, Ba, Fiji was given a $10,000 grant to hold a workshop with the sole purpose of getting people involved in the management formulation process (Veitayaki, Tawake, and Aalbersberg 2003). Also, including communities in resource monitoring activities and scientific research is important for fostering support and compliance with management guidelines. LMMA projects in Fiji that require community participation for conducting surveys, identifying resource use and threats, measuring resource availability before and after management, and delineating management responsibilities have helped communities gain knowledge and have lead to better conservation and more commitment to management areas (Aalbersberg, Tawake, and Parras 2006, 146). Such activities have
also taught people management skills that have been applied to other problems they are facing in their communities (2005, 150).

Third, there must be a commitment to monitoring compliance. It is impractical to assume that creating a CMP will automatically make people follow guidelines especially if there are no policing mechanisms or penalties. Successful fisheries management plans in Samoa are those that constantly enforce rules in management areas and apply severe traditional penalties like fines of pigs and canned goods, for infractions (King & Fa’asili 1999, 4). Some of these communities have even built watch houses and have watchmen or honorary (unpaid) fish wardens in patrol canoes keeping an eye out for illegal activity (Johannes 2002a, 323, 325). In this sense the placement and size of management areas are important as it is difficult for communities to monitor areas that are too big, too far from shore, or are located away from the communities they belong to (2002a, 335). A fundamental aspect of implementing strong compliance mechanisms are communities’ legal rights over managed areas and their government’s support of these rights and implemented regulations. Legal systems need to be in place to back-up communities when local/customary penalties are ignored. Related to strong compliance is strong leadership. Management area regimes are known to decline when a strong leader is replaced with an ineffective leader and be rejuvenated when an ineffective leader is replaced by a strong leader (Fong 1994, 85). Good leadership will have a positive effect on the long-term sustainability of management areas (Johannes 2002a, 335).

Fourth, size and placement of management areas is important for reasons beyond just monitoring compliance. Scientific information suggests that while restricting large areas will increase fish production the social disadvantages of not meeting subsistence
needs, will likely be greater (King & Fa’asili 1999). As such, the size of management areas must be dependent upon the needs of communities; this will help communities stay true to project guidelines for longer periods of time. At the same time, a management area that is too small is less likely to provide enough breeding space for inshore fish and thus less likely to affect a significant increase in fish resources (Johannes 2002a, 334). This has led to many communities combining their tenured areas for collective action creating both large management areas as well as areas available for community use (2002a).

Lastly and most importantly, many CMPs are guilty of adopting the appropriate people centered language but fail to actually account for them in their projects. Conservation of resources without accommodations is just as dangerous to communities as unsustainable extraction of them. Because of this, preservation will always take a back seat to subsistence needs and economic aspirations (Veitayaki 2003, 90). In the end management of resources must provide communities with short and long term tangible benefits in order to secure and sustain commitment to conservation practices (Connor, Houlbrook & Tarihao 1995, 43). This includes providing communities with alternative sites for subsistence collection, and alternative sustainable ways to generate income. Prominent examples we see at work in the region are eco-tourism and compensation with social services (schools, medical clinics) in exchange for conservation efforts (Johannes 2002a, 330).

**FISHERIES, FIJI & FUNCTION**

Activities relating to fishing are some of the most prominent in the region and the sea remains the most important natural resource socially and economically. In a section
above I discussed the economic importance of the regions fisheries resources largely supported by PICS substantial EEZs and deep-sea fish stocks. In previous years, development concerns focused on these fish stocks specifically offshore highly migratory tuna resources, canning operations, and related commercial activities, with these resources receiving the majority of government management and funding attention. Consequently the economic, subsistence, cultural, and social importance of near shore (or in-shore) fisheries’ resources in Pacific Island Countries was severely undervalued and poorly understood (Veitayaki 2000a, 135). Studies conducted over the last decade about the importance of near-shore fisheries to the local economy have increased awareness about the vital role these resources play in the lives of Pacific people (2000, 136). This section focuses specifically on near-shore resources in Fiji.

In Fiji, 90 percent of the country’s villages are located on the coast (ADB 1999, 173). Like most Pacific peoples, Fijians have a long and close relationship with their marine environments and are among some of the best fishers in the world. Hence, fisheries remain one of the country’s most productive sectors. However, the complex (rights, access, use, and abuse) nature of near-shore resources has made it difficult to fully measure their worth. At the economic level near shore resources in Fiji provide for an estimated 17,000 tons of fish and non-fish products annually (1999, 176). Of this amount 3,485 tons of fish are sold earning a total of FJD $12 million and another FJD $5 million is earned from crustaceans and shellfish (1999). Near-shore yields are increasing at a rate of 200 tons a year (Veitayaki 2000, 136).29

With an excess of 20,000 people involved in Fiji’s subsistence fisheries sector, the value of near-shore fisheries resources is immeasurable (Veitayaki 1995, 13). Most
importantly subsistence fishing activities provide for a huge portion of local food needs; an estimated 38.7 percent of total animal protein intake, it also complements islander’s high carbohydrate diets offering many health benefits (Island Business 2003, 37). At the same time it helps Fijians meet needs for income, employment, cultural obligations, and social well-being through community interactions and the sharing/passing on of specialized knowledge (Veitayaki 1995, 10-12). Income from fishing activities helps to support village life including the construction of churches, schools, houses, electricity generation facilities, and school fees (1995, 13). Local community groups dominate near shore fishing activities making coastlines along villages amongst the most heavily used near shore areas (Veitayaki 2000).

Unfortunately poor management and a general lack of information are threatening this important resource, and the local communities that dominate these areas are noticing a decrease in the overall health and quantity of fisheries’ resources (2000, 136). The need for cash has led to increased commercialization of these resources and in turn extreme over-use, especially in communities that are close to urban areas where there is competition and people can easily transport their catches to market for sale (ADB 1999, 176). Commercial fisherman in near-shore waters (customary fishing areas) are required to get permission from the head of the fishing area’s owning unit and then obtain a government license. The licenses issued by the Fiji Fisheries Division (FFD) must be renewed annually. The FFD charges a fee of FJD $13.50 for the license and for use of their fishing area the owning unit charges anywhere from FJD $50 to FJD $2000 (Veitayaki 2003, 90). It is government policy to limit the amount of commercial licenses that are given in a certain area and to reserve these licenses for the local people within
those customary fishing area boundaries first (2003). However, the commercial fish licensing process is often complicated by resource owners that grant every request because they are in need of extra cash.

Also putting pressure on these resources is increased consumption and demand due to population growth. Destructive fishing methods include the use of Duva (a local fish poison), bleach, and dynamite, which maximize catch sizes but kill everything from big fish (small fish too that are discarded) to seaweed, and coral reefs (Veitayaki 1995). In coastal areas where there are fish canneries, like Levuka in Fiji, near-shore resources are even more threatened as boats catch much of the fish in these areas for bait leaving little for local populations (Crocombe 2008, 16).

These canneries are also a threat to the well being of near-shore fisheries’ resources because of the pollution they cause. Effluents found in abundance in coastal waters where fish processing is a major industry causes cholera, hepatitis, and other diseases (2008, 58). The inability for coastal communities to manage their modern waste products and sewage are also disrupting near-shore ecosystems and future use. These pollutants are responsible for killing marine vegetation and causing ciguatera fish poisoning, an ailment thousands of islanders suffer from each year (2008). Local communities however, are not solely responsible for the dismal state of near-shore fisheries resources. Construction sites, logging, military installations, the use of pesticides, and tourists resorts are also major contributors of pollution (2008). Together these factors have all contributed to the heightening concern for long-term sustainability of fisheries resources in Fiji and the development of over 60 LMMA networks that involve 125 communities and cover 20% of near-shore areas in Fiji (Aalbersberg,
Fiji’s near-shore marine tenure system is based on traditional fishing grounds or *qoliqoli* that are vested, and regulated by owning communities or clans (Ravuvu 1983, 75). Officially called “customary fishing rights areas” these areas extend from the shoreline to the outer reef slope (Veitayaki 2000, 118). Customary fishing areas in Fiji range in size from 1 km² to 5000 km² and are located both near and far from owning units (Johannes 2002a, 334). Each *qoliqoli* and its boundaries are recorded, mapped, registered and maintained by the government run Native Fisheries Commission (Veitayaki 2003, 90). Currently there are 385 marine and 25 freshwater *qoliqoli* in Fiji, providing for the estimated 300,000 people who live in coastal villages (Aalbersberg, Tawake & Parras 2006, 144).

The “traditional” use and management of near-shore fisheries’ resources by local communities is very much a part of Fijian culture. This use system, according to noted fisheries expert Joeli Veitayaki, centers on people and is rooted in Fijian social organization (2000, 119). People are expected to use their own sections and use of other fishing grounds requires permission from the owners first (2000, 120). Fishing grounds are sometimes declared off-limits to preserve resources for upcoming events, ceremonies, or management and these closures are enforced through “traditional” authority and protocols with strict punishments for non-compliance (in earlier days this included death and/or banishment (Ravuvu 1983, 75). Many near shore fishing areas also have sacred grounds that are off-limits, except when permission for use is granted through rituals by a priest of high chief. Related to these sacred fishing grounds is Fijians’ belief in the supernatural. To disregard the rules of sacred fishing grounds would offend the spirits.
and this deters defiance ensuring that restricted areas are protected at all times (Veitayaki 1995).

Near-shore fishing activities are subjected to a “traditional” calendar that determines when certain species are in abundance; for example, January is best for land crabs, clams (kaikoso), and trochus shell; big eye scad is plentiful in April; May is good for chub mackerel, and octopus are fished for from July through August (Veitayaki 1995, 72-73). Some coastal villages have fish totems that are revered as sacred and are a symbol of their relationship with others. Totemic fish are not caught or consumed by their peoples (1995, 71). These practices that customarily inform safe harvest amounts, the best locations and times to catch certain species of fish, and restrict methods of fishing during certain seasons, were/are “traditional” resource management mechanisms (Samou 1999).

Fijians have great knowledge of fish and employ a variety of fishing and management methods with preference being influenced by sex, age, and individual skill. Fishing methods employed by women typically take place in shallow nearby waters allowing them to maintain their household responsibilities in child rearing, cooking, and cleaning (Bidesi 1996, 124). On the other hand, methods undertaken by men are in deeper waters further from the coast. Men usually catch bigger for sale; while the fish women catch are mostly for subsistence purposes (Veitayaki 1995, 123). The significant role women play in the use of near-shore fisheries resources, is taken up further in a subsequent sections.

NAIKOROKORO, THE NGO, & THE NO-TAKE ZONE

Naikorokoro village is located on the island of Ovalau about one mile from the
small port town of Levuka the site of Fiji’s first capital. It is part of the province of Lomaiviti, the tribe (vanua) of Qalivakabau, and the district (tikina) of Nasinu (Native Fisheries Commission map attached). In 2004 the village was made up of two mataqali and had 26 families in permanent residence with a population of approximately 120 men, women, and children (Josese Orevi. Personal interview. February 7, 2004). During my stay in the village the Chief was Maravu Tonuna and the Turanga Ni Koro (village spokesman) was Josese Orevi. A majority of village members are Catholics, and all are mandated to attend church located in the village, and participate in church activities and functions. Members of Naikorokoro are also closely related to those in nearby villages and interact with them on a regular basis.
View of Naikorokoro Village from the coast at low tide.

The newly renovated community center at Naikorokoro Village.
Cleaning and making ready the kindergarten classroom.

The first group of children to be served by the kindergarten classroom at Naikorokoro Village.
Naikorokoro is a coastal village and near-shore fisheries resources play a significant role in their lives. While most villagers possess some skill with regards to fishing and collection of *kaikoso* and other shellfish, the labor intensive and highly volatile state of fishing makes it difficult for them to rely on these resource for both food and income. The fish that is caught in their customary fishing areas is most often used for subsistence purposes. During my stay in the village fish was served for dinner only a couple of times a week and many village members expressed boredom with consuming fresh fish preferring tin meat, tin fish, fresh water prawns, chicken, and minced meat. Near-shore resources are important to Naikorokoro but like other villages it is not a daily activity; fishing is typically for a specific purpose and once this purpose is fulfilled, normal activities resume (Samou 1999, 144). In particular, Naikorokoro’s traditional
fishing grounds are currently more used by villagers for cultural purposes, ceremonies (the death of a chief, birth of a child), and special events (including the opening ceremonies for the community center). Their fisheries’ resources allow them to meet cultural obligations of reciprocity and engage with their physical, social, and spiritual cultural heritage. Through practices including: the passing on of place and fish specific knowledge, specialized fishing skills, and acknowledgement and protection of their fish totem (a red reef fish); villagers at Naikorokoro are able to reinforce and sustain the customs, beliefs, values, histories, and uniqueness of their mataqali and village. The simple existence of their customary fishing area is significant to Naikorokoro village members, for Fijians believe their environments are an extension of their beings (Ravuvu 1983, 70).

According to village members they do not rely on near-shore fisheries resources for income and before wage work became available the villages main source of cash was from yaqona (piper methysticum) production, but today very few rely on their plantations for income (Waqa Valekau. Personal interview. January 12, 2004). As of 2004, all 26 families at Naikorokoro had at least one member of their household who was involved in some sort of regular wage work. Some of the men worked in Suva and traveled back and forth between their homes in the village and relatives’ homes on Viti Levu. One woman worked as a waitress in Levuka town at the Whale’s Tale, a local eatery, another at Westpac Bank as a teller, and another at the local Morris Hedstrom grocery store. Most however were employed by PAFCO. 

PAFCO, short for Pacific Fishing Company is a (95 %) government owned fish processing factory located at the edge of Levuka town (ADB 1999, 174). It is the largest
fish processing company in Fiji capable of processing 16,000 tons of fish per year (1999). Most of the processed fish is sent overseas to the United States for canning and sale.

PAFCO is the foundation of Levuka’s economy employing over 500 people (Veitayaki 1995, 57). Most are Fijian women from villages outside Levuka including Naikorokoro village (Emberson-Bain 1996, 155). PAFCO has had a tumultuous existence. After changing owners in the 1980’s (it was first owned by the Japanese), it was hit by a profitability crisis in 1994 due to lowered fish stocks, industrial disputes, and hurricane damage; and it has consistent trouble competing on the global market (1996, 149). More widely known problems are its long association with low wages, extra long work hours, limited sick and leave benefits, and poor working conditions including excessive heat and overcrowding (1994, 162-163). Furthermore, it is responsible for dumping fish waste in the ocean polluting the near-shore lagoons around the factory (Fiji National Liquid Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan 2006, 26). The smell the factory emits is also a concern. Although Levuka residents and members of nearby villages have grown accustomed to it, it has created a permanent stench over Levuka town. Thus PAFCO’s operations affect even those who are not employees, and these days it is as if no one speaks of Levuka without mention of PAFCO. In reference to this paper, PAFCO was identified as the main reason why Naikorokoro was selected as a Seacology project site (www.seacology.org).

Seacology is a Berkeley, California based international non-profit organization established in 1999, to preserve the endangered species, habitats, and cultures of islands throughout the world. It operates with the understanding that indigenous islanders are often forced to decide between saving their natural resources or economic development.
To this end, they offer what they call “win-win” situations by providing communities with tangible benefits in exchange for preservation efforts (www.seacology.org). Through field representatives in various locales and assisted by a scientific advisory board, potential project sites are identified and their respective communities are approached for negotiations. Seacology prides itself on little bureaucracy, and works closely with communities to develop and monitor project guidelines, compliance, and benefits. They credit these methods for their successes, and have received much recognition and many awards for their community preservation work (Island Business 2002, 13). According to the Seacology website, this approach to preservation has saved 163,811 acres of terrestrial habitat and 1,808,146 acres of coral reef and other marine habitat, and in turn built 85 schools and community centers and funded 30 scholarship programs. Currently Seacology boasts projects in 44 countries and 97 different islands worldwide. Seventy-five of these projects are in Oceania, and of those, 23 are in Fiji (www.seacology.org). All funding for Seacology projects and administration is derived from private donations and investments. In 2008, Seacology had an operating budget of $1,400,00. Of this amount, 75 percent, approximately $1,058,000 was directly spent on project services (Seacology Annual Report 2008).

In 2002, when Naikorokoro signed an agreement with Seacology, Saula Vodonaivalu Jr. was the Fiji field director for the organization. PAFCO’s tuna fishing fleets were in the practice of collecting needed bait fish from near-shore lagoons around the factory and as result the area had been over-fished. Naikorokoro village located a couple kilometers from PAFCO was one of the villages affected by these practices. Naikorokoro was selected as a potential project site through a female village member
who lives in Suva and is married to a cousin of Saula Vodonaivalu Jr. In initial meetings between Chief Maravu of Naikorokoro and Mr. Vodonaivalu, that took place in Suva, Chief Maravu requested that in exchange for the villages’ preservation efforts Seacology make renovations to the village church (Chief Maravu Tonuna. Personal interview. December 8, 2003). Seacology denied this request because it does not support religious related activities. Instead an agreement was made for the development of a ten-year no-take reserve in a 17 square mile (10,880 acres) section of Naikorokoro village’s customary fishing grounds in exchange for renovations to their existing community center and a kindergarten classroom (Seacology 2008). As part of the agreement, Seacology would also furnish and supply the kindergarten classroom and provide training for two teachers. The kindergarten currently serves children from Naikorokoro and surrounding villages. The no-take reserve rules forbid the commercial collection of any fish or other resources from within the designated reserve area, also requiring the village to deny any requests for fish licenses in that section over the next 10 years. Subsistence use for any village purpose or function is allowed. The goal of the project is to allow fish and other near-shore resource stocks including *kaikoso*, crabs, and seaweeds to replenish.

**WOMEN, WORK & WANTS**

**Shellfish Recollection**

Gleaning the
Low tide mark
For food tonight
The *uniaine*
walks stooped
eyes close
to the sand
under the
noonday sun.
Slowly filling

38
her basket with shellfish, her mind shifts between good gathering concentration to day-dreams of better harvest, and how it could have been. (Rassmusen 1999, 10)

“Traditionally” and still very much today women’s roles in Fiji are built around family duties and are set up to support male dominance (Ravuvu, 1983). It is often reported that historically women have a lower status than men in Fijian culture and have struggled for representation, rights, and access in almost all areas of society (Reddy 2000). Well known Fijian scholar Asesela Ravuvu suggests that family and the community are dependent on the support and efforts of women, and their roles are held in high regard. Women who display distinctly female qualities in Fijian culture are admired by their peers (Ravuvu 1983). Furthermore Ravuvu claims most Fijian women know well, and accept their position in society and gladly perform expected tasks (1983, 8).\textsuperscript{31} Ravuvu’s view of women in Fijian culture is up for debate and probably less appropriate now than they were 25 years ago. Although this dialogue is beyond the scope of this paper, I make note of them because more recently released publications also suggest many women still see their “traditional” roles as exclusively important. For example, women in Fiji and Tonga claim that their roles as Tongans and Fijians come before their roles as women and such ideals will prevail over those of more recent women’s movements towards equality (Ewins 1998, 199). Regardless of this debate men exercise
authority over women in almost all aspects of life (especially husbands over wives who are expected to respect and obey) (Ravuvu 1983, 8). Women’s status and traditional roles have meant they have primarily usufruct rights of resources and these rights come second to those of men (Crocombe 2008, 281).

Women’s use of near-shore fisheries resources are directly related to their “traditional” and primary responsibilities of caring for their children, cooking, cleaning, washing, and other chores that require them to stay close to home. As a result, women’s involvement in fisheries is mainly in near-shore areas and tidal flats (Veitayaki 1995; Bidesi 1994). In Fiji (and elsewhere in the Pacific) women dominate near-shore fisheries activities and their collection efforts include small fish, seaweeds, crabs, shellfish, sea eggs, and a variety of other near-shore mollusks and invertebrates (The South Pacific Women’s Fisheries Development Project, 1996). Fishing methods employed by women include line fishing from the water (siwa tutu), scoop net fishing (tataga), net fishing (qoli), line fishing from boats (siwa), and reef gleaning (vakacakau) (Veitayaki 1995, 123; Samou 1999, 144). Collection efforts by women are pre-dominantly to support their families’ food needs and fish products are a substantial part of coastal communities diets (Samou 1999, 144). Subsistence practices (45% of rural women fish regularly) have meant women are skilled fishers and experts in near-shore inter-tidal resources (1999, 144). Their skills are supplemented by the passing on of “knowledge” from elder women who are amongst the most efficient at reef gleaning and other fish harvesting methods (Fay-Sauni et al. 2008, 26). Extended activities include: repairing nets, fashioning fish hooks, processing catches, and selling these catches at market (The South Pacific Women’s Fisheries Development Project 1996).
Prepping the fish net for use.

The women of Naikorokoro net fishing in front of the village.
Despite women’s significant knowledge and engagements with fisheries’ resources, information about their roles, their impact on resources, and their concerns are very limited (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2000). This is because near shore fisheries’ resources and the work women do to provide for their families is often seen as being unimportant since it does not earn a wage, and such activities do not contribute to the larger cash economy (Reddy 2000). Further contributing to this, is the commonly held view that Fijian women are of a lower status than men (Bidesi 1994). In a discussion with Fiji fisheries expert Joeli Veitayaki about women and CMPs in Fiji, he recognized that the work women do was desperately in need of attention and was completely under reported (Joeli Veitayaki. Personal interview. November 12, 2003). In the last 20 years, this lack in information has received much concentration in development and management debates (and much attention in international forums), but this still has not led to substantial and active efforts to equally account for women’s involvement in fisheries (Bidesi 1994; Fairbairn-Dunlop 2000; Fay-Sauni et al. 2008).

Perceptions that devalue women’s activities alongside “traditional” practices that situate women as inferior also inform decision-making roles and evidence shows women are not usually conferred with when land or resource decisions are being made (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2000). Both at the village and governmental level, women’s roles, needs, and participation have not featured prominently in development or management agendas (Reddy 2000). Although they may not be formally excluded from participation, pressures from their male dominated societies has meant women are often limited socially as many are not comfortable expressing their views to and in the presence of men (Connor, Houlbrook & Tarihao 1995). Physical alienation is also common at decision-
making activities since they are typically scheduled to accommodate men at times when women are unable to attend due to their responsibilities in the home and with their children (Gupte 2003). Women in Fiji are further oppressed by their lack of representation in government (Reddy 2000). In recent years as more outside groups and agencies have become involved in resource management the input of women is required, recommended, or at least desired, but actual participation and processes to acquire participation have been largely ineffective.

These decision-making practices are especially troublesome for community management of fisheries’ resources, which almost always address near-shore areas. Where men have other options and can conduct fishing activities beyond the reef, women’s other responsibilities that require them to stay close to shore do not allow them to utilize distant fishing areas or employ other fishing methods. As a result, women are the most affected and disadvantaged by the management of near-shore shallow waters (King & Fa’asili 1999). Because of this they are also the least likely to benefit and comply, and have the least incentive to participate in CMPs (unless the incentives directly affect them). Management for women has the tendency to translate into more time and work involved with their daily activities (Gupte 2003). Furthermore, failing to account for women’s ideas and work with resources in the long run will lead to inefficient functioning of sustainability initiatives (2003, 331).

Today heavier demands for cash to supplement their growing needs (education, loans, clothing, travel, etc.) has meant women are spending more time fishing and selling catches at market (Bidesi 1994). Reports show rural women earning around $FJD34 a week from fish sales and often times more if sales are supplemented by tourist bought
shell-craft (Fay-Sauni et al. 2008, 26). Because of these increased needs management of fisheries resources affect women in more and different ways than before. Women are now viewed as semi-subsistence fishers because their activities yield catches for both consumption and revenues. Women continue to be the most heavily affected by management projects, no-take zones, and reserves in coastal areas. Their reactions to the CMP at Naikorokoro are the first group of perspectives discussed.

Most of my interactions with the women of Naikorokoro took place in group settings while the women collectively looked after their children, cleaned _dalo_, prepared meals, or wove. My initial questions were about their lives at Naikorokoro. How many people lived at Naikorokoro? How was life there? What were some of their general concerns about village life? How many families were engaged in regular wage work? How often and for what purposes did they use their customary fishing area? Was the community center used often? Where did their children go to school? And later, what did they know about the Seacology project and did they have an influence in its creation and the development of its guidelines?

The women of Naikorokoro often talked about wanting more access to material goods like sewing machines, fabric, televisions, DVD players, mobile phones, school supplies, pots and pans, and dishes. The items they mentioned were never strictly personal like a new dress, shoes, or a purse but were all things that would help them take care of their families (DVD to occupy their children, mobile phones to keep in touch with family members in Suva and elsewhere). They also had very specific concerns about feeding their families, ensuring their children were healthy (and happy), and making sure they could afford to send their children to school (more so for the parents of secondary
When asked about their use and interactions with their customary fishing area, not one of the women said they fished on a regular basis. On one occasion I watched five women go net fishing at high tide. After wading out about 75 yards from shore they skillfully opened their large net and within a few minutes had a dozen or so silver fish. During the course of my stay at Naikorokoro, with the exception of fisher women who
were not from Naikorokoro but could be seen throwing their lines from the shore, this was the only time I actually saw the women of Naikorokoro actively fishing. While fishing, the women were also laughing, chatting and having a good time. All the women admitted that the no-take reserve had little affect on the way they interacted with their marine resources. The fact that the no-take reserve only prohibited commercial use made it even less likely that some sort of behavioral change would be required by the women. It is important to note here that commercial use in the no-take area may have been a concern, and non-use a challenge, if women from Naikorokoro had a venue from which to sell their catches. Seeing that Naikorokoro is a rural area and most surrounding communities have access to their own fishing grounds demand even from Levuka for fish and other marine resources is very limited.
unsure what the Seacology project hoped to achieve with regard to their marine resources. They also said they had not noticed a significant decrease in their fish catches and collection of *kaikoso* and seaweeds. And moreover, they did not anticipate seeing a substantial increase in the availability of these resources as a result of this initiative. For these reasons they were not very concerned with the how’s and why’s of the Seacology project (except for how it related to the community center and kindergarten classroom). For the most part they were unfamiliar with how the project originated at Naikorokoro and what its guidelines were. Not one of them could answer my questions about how Naikorokoro was selected, when the no-take reserve began or ended, and what part of their fishing grounds were designated a no-take reserve. When asked what parts of the project affected their lifestyles the most, not one of mentioned their use or non-use of the no-take zone.

Furthermore, the women were not at all bothered by the fact that they were not included in on the decision-making part of the Seacology project. When queried “who decided the village would participate in this no-take reserve with Seacology?,” responses were “the chief signed the paper in Suva then came and had a meeting with the other men and told them about it”, and “Maravu came from Suva, he’s the chief remember that’s his house over there you went to when you first came you met his brother he stays there in Maravu’s house, he [Maravu] came one day and that’s how we found out about it (Naikorokoro Village women. Personal correspondence. Feb 17, 2004).” When I questioned if they had been asked how they felt about the rules of the project I received smiles, some no’s and a few answers like “yes we like the project,” or “there are not really any rules just no fishing from outsiders for a while, but some people still can”
Conversations with women of all ages, elders, mothers, daughters, and even young girls (who would be older girls by the time the project ends) showed that they were not concerned about their non-existent role in developing the projects guidelines or that the guidelines developed would have influence over their lives. It has been argued that women do not often have public decision making roles but have great influence over community and family affairs through their husbands and other male members of their families (Ravuvu 1983). In this sense the women could have played a substantial role in the development of this project but do not count conversations and private pressures that occur in their homes as their participation.

While the women of Naikorokoro were not concerned with the impact of the no-take reserve on their lives in relation to marine resources, all of them considered the partnership with Seacology very important. The women were overwhelmingly happy that a kindergarten class would be available in the village. This was significant to them because it meant their children as well as other children from surrounding villages would have greater access to education. Education for children ages 6-14 is mandatory in Fiji and despite its expenses has become increasingly important amongst Fijian families. The general feeling amongst parents is that if their children do well in school, down the road it would bring access to more material goods and honor for their families (Ravuvu 1988, 69-70). Having a classroom right in the village meant they would not have to travel, usually by foot, the mile or so into town to drop off and collect their children daily. Previous to the opening of the kindergarten at Naikorokoro, the closest kindergarten was located in Levuka. The time it takes to walk young children to school and pick them up at the end of the day is critical. That time could be spent taking care of other
responsibilities. While sporadic transportation from Naikorokoro to Levuka is available, it is expensive and unaffordable.

The newly renovated community center provided many options for women’s activities and also provided the opportunity for potential revenues. There was much talk about plans to rent the space to visitors, organizations, and government agencies that often schedule meetings or retreats in Levuka. Many of the women even expressed the desire to put a large screen television in the community center for entertainment purposes. This was important to the women because they in particular could earn extra money from hosting and offering handicraft activities. The community center also provides a great space for the women to weave large pieces like mats, which require multiple hands and talents and a place for them to collectively look after their children.
They also appreciated that their husbands had a place to meet and drink yaqona. Third, the Seacology project at Naikorokoro represents a form of affluence and gives members of Naikorokoro an elevated status of sorts, or at least bragging rights on the island. Many of the women talked about how women in neighboring villages had communicated envy and a desire to have such a project in their own villages. This made the women at Naikorokoro feel good and happy about what they call their “good luck.”

**MEN, MARIGNILIZATION & MODERNITY**

In Fiji, like in all cultures, gender determines how you are treated, your expected behavior, how you interact with others, your specific role in your community, and your view of the world (Thomson 2002, 168). Page one in Asesela Ravuvu’s 1983 publication *Vaka i Taukei: The Fijian Way of Life* identifies “male emphasis” as the most central
foundation of Fijian culture (1983, 1). Patrilineal descent is a critical component of being considered an indigenous Fijian (Lawson 1997, 108). One’s lineage is typically traced through his/her father’s family and a child’s rights to land and other resources are derived through registration with his/her father’s mataqali (sub-clan) (Ravuvu 1983, 1). To this end, women, upon marriage move from their own mataqali to serve that of their husband’s and to raise their children (1983). A woman who produces male children secures her place amongst her husbands people as she is seen to have “given life” and “prosperity” to her husband’s mataqali (1983). “It is through the man that the local group continues to exist” and this maintains male importance in Fijian culture (Ravuvu 1983, 2). Consequently, authority, and leadership are primarily male dominated. The eldest male is the highest authority in his household and management of the village is based on this same premise. Hence power is held (after chiefly authority) by the most senior males jointly or the heads of various households (Nayacakalou 1978, 15).

Elder men oversee village decision making because they are believed to posses more decision making capabilities. As elder males, they are more informed, more experienced, have more knowledge of village life, of the environment, of resources, of village members, and know the appropriate cultural response to certain situations and specific circumstances (1978, 109). Thus their decisions are made with much evaluation of village needs and responsibilities. This reduces the potential for conflicts in activities and amongst village members.

Labor roles in the village are also determined by gender. Men are responsible for all the masculine work that requires lots of energy and physical strength. These jobs often include building homes, gathering materials like posts and thatching, planting food
crops, clearing land for gardens, hunting, and deep sea fishing (Ravuvu 1983, 8-10). For social functions men are expected to help in the preparation of food by making *lovo* (underground oven) and gathering crops like *cassava* (tapioca) and *dalo* (Taro) (1983, 8). Little work is allocated to elder men yet they often participate in the activities listed above as a token of moral support. As mentioned earlier, their main tasks lay in the village’s social and economic issues and these are usually discussed and decided upon while sitting around a bowl of *yaqona* (1983, 11).

In recent years modern desires, access to education (along with regulatory requirements), and the need to earn a wage have drawn many men away from their villages and into urban areas for secondary schooling and jobs. Of those who have not moved away, most have found wage work and suitable educational opportunities in surrounding areas. These changes have led to men spending less time in their villages and less time doing work that was traditionally required for optimal village functioning (Nayacakalou 1978, 32). Village life and expectations have adjusted to accommodate these new roles, and men are granted more leeway and flexibility with communal activities. For example, those who work are excused from showing up to help build another village member’s home or not taking part in clearing the grounds for an upcoming celebration. These men however, are expected to participate in any work that is still being done when they return from work, on their days off, and on weekends (with the exception of Sundays which are reserved for church).

Modern day changes to male responsibilities, work, and roles at Naikorokoro village are best exemplified through the adult males in the Valekau household. The Valekau household has four male members including: the head of the household (the
most senior male) Lanasa Valekau (or Tukai (grandfather) Vula as he is often called), his sons Waqa and Banuve, and his son in-law Semesa. His eldest son Waqa is a full-time member of the Fiji military and is often away on peacekeeping missions. Waqa does not have his own home in the village and spends very little time at Naikorokoro. On my first visit to Naikorokoro Waqa was in the village visiting, as he had just returned from a ten month mission in Sinai and was due to be in Afghanistan in the next month. During his visit he did participate in village activities working on the community with the other men and helping out with the lovo for the funeral of a recently deceased village member.

Waqa is not married and has no children. His brother Banuve does have his own home in the village, however he does not live there and usually the house is left empty. Banuve works as a taxi driver in Suva and only visits the village occasionally. During my time at Naikorokoro Banuve was only present for the community center opening ceremonies and festivities. However, while he was there he participated in village activities as if he were a permanent village member, doing last minute renovations on the community center and helping to prepare the food for the event. Banuve has been able to afford a home in the village because he and his wife both work and they have no children. His wife lives in America and cares for elderly people. Due to visa restrictions and her illegal status in America she has not returned to Fiji in ten years. Banuve has made multiple attempts to move to America to be with his wife but has been refused a visa that would allow him to travel (Banuve Valekau. Personal interview. July 19, 2004). Semesa, married to Lanasa’s daughter Sera, is originally from Lau. That he has moved to his wife’s village to live and raise their four sons is not “traditional” (and in earlier years would have been met with teasing (Ravuvu 1983) but is becoming more and more common. Semesa works full-
time as a laborer at PAFCO. When not a work Semesa could regularly be found helping with the renovations of the community center and meeting with the other village men.

The lifestyles, work, and residences, of the men in the Valekau household are representative of most families at Naikorokoro. The need to earn wages to support their families means most men at Naikorokoro have regular jobs. Many are employed at PAFCO, some commute every fortnight to Suva, others are members of the military, and a few still harvest and plant yaqona. These changes in work, and responsibilities along with modernization and urban-drift have created challenges to “traditional” male roles and authority.

Urban influences and increased educational opportunities offer alternative lifestyles that are at odds with traditional values and expectations (Ravuvu 1988, 70). As a result men have begun to look down on village life and seek lifestyles with fewer cultural obligations. Nayacakalou notes the time and physical work required of a man in the village is often unlimited and the incentive to keep working is derived from consideration of his reputation as a hard worker, public opinion (less he look lazy to others), and the sense of obligation to the other men who are carrying on the work (1978, 118-20). As village members become more independent and move further away from their villages obligatory feelings dissipate, as does the need for reciprocal relations, making it difficult for leaders’ to enforce rules of order or keep members as residents. Higher education and increased earnings have also meant many men are seeking more decision-making capabilities. Unfortunately what most have found is that while their ideas and opinions are given a voice “traditional” structures of rank still preclude them from any real authority (Lawson 1999, 108). It would be remiss of me to ignore that
television (every household at Naikorokoro had one) and access to the internet provide alternative male role models that have aided the changing male in modern day Fijian villages. The men at Naikorokoro are not exempt from these experiences. However, those that have remained in the village all seem committed to their customary activities and responsibilities.

When we think about decision-making rights and “traditions” that marginalize different groups in the village we are most often concerned with how women are being affected, and we fail to recognize the significant hierarchies that exist between village men of different ages and rank. Men who are not of chiefly lineages or village elders are just as marginalized (Lawson 1997, 109). The lives, roles, and responsibilities of these men are often ignored and suppressed by the small group of men who actually hold power. While it is true that at times men are more informed than women about village happenings and the decisions being made (usually through informal yaqona discussion sessions) about land and resources, this does not necessarily translate into decision-making roles or an increased ability to influence those decisions.

The lack of participation by men of lesser rank in the development of the Seacology project is troublesome. Not so much in regards to their use or non-use of fisheries’ resources, but because it is these men who were responsible for all the labor required to renovate the community center, build the kindergarten classroom, and ensure that rules about the project are shared and followed by their respective families (as the head of their households). The Seacology project has meant a substantial amount of work, in addition to their normal daily activities.

Before this partnership, the community center at Naikorokoro was in much
disrepair and needed a new roof, new windows, new walls and railings, and a paint job. Meetings were held to determine what work would take precedence, and when the men should get together to complete each project. Supplies would be purchased as funding flowed in from the Seacology representative in Suva, and the work would commence as necessary. Seacology funded these renovations, but the responsibility of ensuring that the work was done fell to the village men. Because of their other responsibilities including wage work and home life, work on the afternoons and on weekends. community center occurred primarily in the

[Image: Preparing the *lovo* that will cook the food the opening festivities.]

Most of the men took pride in the work on the community center because they felt honored to have the funds to be able to give the place the facelift it needed. Their work was noticed and they were often complimented for how nice it looked and how great it
was for their village. As with the women, villagers from nearby had expressed to some of the men their envy over the facilities and the other “benefits” of the project. Many of the men I spoke with mentioned how happy this made them. The men also mentioned their desire to rent out and host different activities at the community center, but were more interested in how they might be able to become involved in tourism activities using the center as a place for backpackers and the no-take reserve for scuba and snorkeling (Naikorokoro village men. Personal Correspondence. February 2004). Of course the revenues from these activities would first be used to purchase boats and other equipment. The community center was also important to the men, because it gave them a place to sit and drink yaqona comfortably and it provided a central meeting space.

In regards to fisheries resources, the fishing methods that men typically employ include turtle fishing (*vonu qoli*), spear fishing (*numu* and *cocoka*), and boat fishing and are usually more adventurous and tend to occur in deeper waters (Veitayaki 1995). Their knowledge of fisheries resources is a reflection of their use and Fijian men are skilled boatmen and swimmers. Management of near-shore fisheries resources typically does not affect male activity, since they are able to go beyond the reef outside the boundaries of management areas for harvesting. At the community and national level fisheries development tends to focus on male dominated activities. More likely than not, this is due to the fact that men have more representation in government and have more posts in the fisheries division (Reddy 2000).

With regard to the no-take zone at Naikorokoro, the men were better at explaining the boundaries of their customary fishing grounds, but did not seem to know a great deal about the guidelines of the project. Further discussions showed they too didn’t
think the no-take reserve would affect their lives. Due mostly to the lack of equipment, like boats, fishing line, bait, and gasoline, the men of Naikorokoro did not participate in commercial fishing activities (besides these activities would likely take place far out in the sea outside of the no-take area). While they did not anticipate seeing a change in marine resource harvests, they showed excitement over the no-take zone because it worked well with their proposed use of the community center as a tourist attraction. The men all agreed that the Seacology partnership was great for Naikorokoro.

**CHIEFS, CHANGES & CHALLENGES**

Fiji along with Tonga and Samoa has one of the three strongest chiefly systems in the Pacific region (Crocombe 2008, 454). The office gained primarily by birthright, passes down the male descent line from eldest son to eldest son and so forth (Nayacakalou 1975, 32). While hereditary lineage is the most acknowledged criteria for becoming a chief, Nayacakalou in his book *Leadership in Fiji*, suggests that genealogies cannot have been the only criteria (1975). “Traditionally,” attributes like age, knowledge of custom and lore, ability to maintain group cohesion, and appropriate performance of one’s role were critical to the selection process (1975, 31-35). The introduction of the Native Lands Commission in 1880, whose job is to record members of land-owning units and settle ownership disputes with regard to native land in Fiji, institutionalized the process by which chiefs are identified making selection of chiefs more restrictive and genealogies the official (not necessarily “traditional”) criteria (1975, 40) (see also Batibasaqa, Overton and Horsley 1999, 103). This method of chief selection is virtually absolute and the only one practiced today in Fiji.33

Customarily, chiefs in Fijian society maintain an extremely important place of
leadership and privilege. They are given the utmost respect, loyalty, and obedience and have decision-making power over village land and resources (what Fijians refer to as *ka vakavanua* matters of the land), as well as the village group as a whole (Nayacakalou, 1975, 31). In turn for this privilege and power, any person occupying the position of chief is expected to possess certain qualities and traits. These traits include love and kindness to all, humility, dignity, and unselfishness. A chief is to possess no conceit, be unruffled by bickering, maintain his self-respect and authority during a crisis, and remain steadfast when his views and feelings are challenged. He should embody what Fijians call *vakaturaga* (Ravuvu 1983, 103). *Vakaturaga* is a concept that defines personality traits of ideal behavior in Fijian culture.

Chiefs will usually live in bigger houses, enjoy better foods, and depend on their people in all areas of life. In return, they are held accountable for the welfare and well-being of their people and for ensuring those same people are contented and provided for (Nayacakalou 1975, 81). Assuming his decisions are in the best interest of his people, any decisions made by a chief are to be strictly adhered to, and there are social structures in place to support this. As such, a chief’s relationship with his people is one based on reciprocity and mutual respect. His ability to look after his people enhances his self-interest and reinforces his position as chief, as well as the role of chiefs in society as a whole (Crocombe 2008, 450). While a particular chief’s position may be questioned, the office itself is so entrenched and important in Fijian society that it is almost never challenged. Complicated modern lifestyles have even reinforced chieftainship in Fiji with chiefs being seen to symbolize an ideal “traditional” way of life that is linked to land and community and everything that indigenous Fijian “tradition” is (Lawson 1997, 109;
Today chiefs in Fiji have increasingly complex roles. Colonialism and the introduction of Western forms of government have served to both enhance and weaken their roles in Fijian society and amongst their own people. Fiji’s Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) or Bose Levu Vakaturaga, set up shortly after Fiji’s cessation to the British crown in 1874, to help maintain the “traditional” Fijian way of life, and expand colonial control by way of indirect rule through established Fijian structures is a prominent feature of Fijian chiefly power or lack thereof (Lawson 1997, 114). The GCC was originally formulated to unify Fijians under a single ruling body, as previous to colonization no such unity existed. From its inception the GCC shifted chiefly power away from the local level to a larger single national unit that favored eastern Fijian political structures and eastern Fijian chiefs (1997, 114-116). As time passed the GCCs primary role turned into that of an advisory board that would make recommendations and proposals to the president to the benefit of indigenous Fijians (Ralogaivau 2006). The council was also tasked with appointing the president, vice president, and 14 members of the Fiji Senate. In 1990, as a result of the 1987 coup that called for more protection of “tradition” the GCC saw its powers increase when it was given the constitutional power to veto all parliamentary law affecting Fijian interests (Lindstrom & White 1997, 14). The 1997 constitution further increased the powers of the GCC in the areas of Fijian affairs, land tenure, and customary rights through increased seats in the senate. Shortly after the last coup in 2006, the GCC was dissolved by coup leader Frank Bainimarama after they refused to endorse his military led government and his nomination for vice-president. It is important to note that while the GCC had constitutional rights, these rights did not
transfer power to all chiefs in Fiji and did little to explain or reinforce their roles and responsibilities at the village level or in everyday life. As noted by Peter Larmour in his book *Foreign Flowers*, constitutions typically recognize and honor chiefs as symbolic representatives of unity and then serve to isolate and marginalize them (2005).

Globalization, “development”, and the modernization of village life have further complicated chiefs’ positions in Fiji. Many have found urban lifestyles attractive and have left their villages in pursuit of education, career, and military service. These days, as is the case with the chief of Naikorokoro, it is common for a village chief to keep two residences. The first is usually in an urban center where they spend a majority of their time, and the second is in the village where they make appearances for ceremonial purposes and visit occasionally to protect their interests in the village and ensure they retain the privileges of their positions (Crocombe 2008, 454). In this regard, this has meant that many chiefs are unfamiliar with everyday village happenings and it makes them less in touch with villager needs, weakening their powers as well as their capacity to enforce decisions. Often chiefs’ decisions regarding their villages are made under the guise of “tradition” but instead are really self-serving and to their individual advantage.

Crocombe writes:

“Where land is valuable for tourist resorts, logging, or other commercial use, many chiefs have been tempted to forsake their obligation to their people and keep the benefits disproportionately for themselves. Chiefs in many places were responsible for allocating land use within their clan to adjust to changing sizes of component families, and to provide for the rare outsider who was admitted. In recent times, however, some chiefs have ‘reinterpreted’ the former trustee role of managing lands for the benefit of the clan, and now claim to be its personal ‘owners,’ renting, selling or using it commercially, with the chief keeping most of the benefit. In former times chiefs could not use more than a little of the first fruits they were entitled to, as perishables had to be distributed. Not so cash” (2008, 454-455).

This, above all else, has created ambivalence about the role of chiefs and many of the
values that legitimized their roles, and made them effective have eroded.

Customarily coastal villages had professional fishermen called \textit{gonedau}. The \textit{gonedau} was designated by the chief and had specialized skills and knowledge relating to fish species, optimal catch methods and conditions, and they would often control communal fishing operations. The main responsibility of the \textit{gonedau} was to catch fish for the chief (Veitayaki 1995, 70). As a result, a chief’s main role in regard to fisheries resources was/is to ensure proper use through their “traditional” authority and customary protocols. More recently their roles also include the ability to enter into CMPs and other modern management mechanisms.

As mentioned above, the chief of Naikorokoro does not live at Naikorokoro but spends most of his time in the capital city of Suva where he lives and works as a member of the Fiji military. When my aunt (his cousin) called and told him who I was and that I was interested in the Naikorokoro project with Seacology, he graciously agreed to meet and provide me with whatever information he could. Our first visit together was over tea at my aunt’s house in Raiwaqa. Because we were in the city, the formalities that often come with being in the presence of a chief were disregarded and Chief Maravu was very casual in his manner and appearance. A very tall and distinguished man in his early 50’s, he was dressed in khaki shorts and a bula (aloha) shirt.

During this meeting we chatted about how the Seacology project had come to be at Naikorokoro village and how he felt about the project. According to Chief Maravu, he met with Saula Vodonaivalu Jr. in Suva was briefed on Seacology’s work and what would be expected of Naikorokoro Village should they enter into a partnership. Shortly thereafter an agreement was drawn up and signed by Chief Maravu, Saula Vodonaivalu,
and two other village men. Chief Maravu had brought with him the agreement for me to see, a single sheet of paper with four signatures at the bottom of the page which had fewer details than were discussed in the Pacific Magazine article I had read in 2003. The agreement simply stated the establishment of a 10 year 17 square mile no-take zone in a part of Naikorokoro Village’s customary fishing grounds. Chief Maravu’s brother, Simione, who substitutes as chief when Maravu is absent, shared news of the partnership with the larger community. When asked, Chief Maravu had no clear answers about when the no-take zone went into effect and who would monitor compliance with project guidelines, but he did say that the vast majority of the project’s responsibilities would fall on those who lived in the village and that they would also figure out the details as necessary (Chief Maravu Tonuna. Personal interview. December 8, 2003).

Like myself, Chief Maravu traveled to Naikorokoro to participate in the opening celebrations the evening before the ceremonies were to take place, having little part in its preparation. Upon arriving in Ovalau he spent most of the evening visiting with friends and relatives in Levuka. On the day of the ceremonies as is customary, Chief Maravu officiated at the festivities and commented on how excited the village was to be working with Seacology. He sat at the head of the yqona bowl, welcomed the Seacology visitors, and went on to thank the American kindergarten teacher who was brought over to train the permanent teachers for the new kindergarten classroom. Chief Maravu was then honored and commended for his commitment to preservation and the great sacrifices he and his village were making by developing a no-take zone.

I had assumed, that as chief Maravu would have been able to give me all the project details that seemed to allude the other villagers, but when I asked he couldn’t (or
didn’t want to) tell me the day that the no-take reserve went into (or would go into) effect, where the boundaries were, how they had come up with 17 square miles and 10 years, why a project was needed at Naikorokoro, whether he believed this reserve would make a positive difference on the availability of resources after ten years, and most importantly how this would affect the lives of the members of his village. My findings prompt questions about his understanding of both the projects guidelines and the needs of Naikorokoro villagers. My first reaction was “how is it that Chief Maravu could so readily decide to partner up with Seacology while in Suva and away from the reserve site, with little to no input from village members, whom he agrees will be most affected by its existence?”

When assessing the way the chief handled the Seacology partnership we need to consider certain factors. His inability to answer project questions and organize participation is likely due to the fact that he is rarely in the village, and is unable to play a substantial role in the project on an everyday village level. Also, opportunities to work with NGOs, especially when funding and incentives are involved are desired by many communities (as evidenced by the sentiments of people from villagers surrounding Naikorokoro) and a quick agreement, while not the most studied or effective project, at least secures involvement. At the same time, working with NGOs can be time sensitive as projects need to be confirmed within a particular fiscal year or designated time frame. Communities who drag their feet or take their time can be seen as un-interested so resulting in other communities being approached with the opportunity.

Chief Maravu saw this as an opportunity to improve infrastructure at his village and so made the move. As chief, he had the power to make an agreement with Seacology
and acting within his “traditional” role he did what he believed would benefit Naikorokoro. That those benefits came in the form of an upgraded community center in exchange for an environmental project with limited information might have been a risk, but one that apparently was well worth it. Maravu found great pleasure in presenting this project to Naikorokoro village members and mentioned how happy the people in the village were to have a new kindergarten classroom and community center. He also talked about how many other villages on the island would love to have such a partnership. I could not find a single villager, children included, who felt the chief was out of line in signing this agreement or that his decision would adversely affect their lives.

**MOTIVATIONS & MANAGEMENT**

Today most efforts by NGO’s involved in CMP work in the Pacific combine environmentalism, cultural protection, and an increased material standard of living for involved communities (Overton 1999, 184). The increased material standard of living part, typically works through the offering of material incentives in exchange for preservation efforts (like the renovated community center and kindergarten classroom no-take reserve exchange at Naikorokoro village). Supported by grassroots groups and individual donors, these efforts appear to have some success in getting community participation. However, they too have struggled to appropriately engage with community members to ensure understanding of projects’ purposes.

This is one of the major problems with the recent trend to provide incentives to motivate communities into participating in CMPs. Communities make commitments to projects with little information, little participation, and little understanding about what is expected of them in regards to use or non-use of a particular resource. Most communities
are committed to only the incentive part not the management part. Naikorokoro is a prime example as all the villagers I spoke with could detail the renovations to the community center, and the supplies promised for the kindergarten classroom but not one could explain the specific guidelines of the project, why it was necessary, and what its purpose was. Providing incentives is not necessarily a bad approach to resource management, but it alone will not sustain management efforts. In the long run incentives must be accompanied by viable options for income generation or enhanced livelihoods, education, participation and appropriate policing. Let me discuss this further through another Pacific CMP experience.

In 1991 three villages in Samoa entered into an agreement with the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SNF) to protect and preserve lowland rainforests in the Tafua peninsula, in exchange for needed infrastructure (Hardie-Boys 1999, 193). Initiated by scientists P.A. Cox and T. Elmqvist, who were particularly interested in protecting the natural habitat of the flying fox, the Tafua Rainforest Preserve project is a 50 year agreement that restricts the use of the forest to subsistence use only, in exchange for the construction of a primary school, renovations after two large cyclones, a solar power unit, and trail clearing for eco-tourism efforts (1999). The scientists and SNF claimed that rather than have villagers sell their forest to logging interests to generate income, this project offered a viable alternative that suited village and environmental interests.

However, further investigations exposed that while the motivations for working together were compatible they were not similar in nature. The scientists and the SNF wanted conservation while the villagers were interested in the money that the agreement
would bring to the village (Olsson 1992 as referenced by Hardie-Boys 1999, 194). Interviews also exposed that villagers were confused about who the preserve belonged to, possessed limited levels of understanding as to why conservation was needed, and most villagers were only aware of the monetary gain they were receiving as a result of the preserve but could not make a connection between the money and conservation (Hardie-Boys 1999, 194). Incidentally, Dr. P. A. Cox one of the scientist who initiated the Tafua Rainforest Preserve, is also the founder of Seacology and his experience with this project contributed to both his creation of Seacology, and its approach to preservation in the Pacific (Cox 1997).

Both the Tafua and Naikorokoro experience prove that management of resources requires a buy-in by communities, not just in the form of tangible rewards, but also in the belief that resources actually need managing. Otherwise as Hardie-Boys concludes organizations will simply be paying people to protect and to sustain such practices for the long haul would be incredibly expensive (1999). The Seacology project at Naikorokoro makes evident that management efforts can pop up in environments where community members don’t necessarily feel efforts are needed (the cousin of a connected person maybe?). Like in Tafua, the results revealed no understanding of the purpose, designated area, and guidelines of the no-take reserve. The villagers’ use of duva to celebrate the reserve with project supporters is clearly a consequence of this lack in understanding.

Naturally community participation and resource management success cannot be mutually exclusive goals while developing CMPs. Often the level of change seen on the resource end of management projects is determined by and large by the level of participation that community members assume, from the development of project
guidelines, to monitoring compliance and changes, and identifying accomplishments. It is impossible to achieve resource management success without the commitment of community members and just as unlikely to achieve high levels of participation if there are not actual resource management needs. When CMPs don’t take this into account, they are likely to suffer the same fate, as many development projects in the region. This includes disputes over land and resources rights, displacement of people, disruption of communities, abandonment of projects, and in extreme cases armed insurrection (Connor, Houlbrook, and Tarihao 1995, 33).

Related to the discussion above is the question: What are the main goals of organizations like Seacology? If those goals are preservation, conservation, and environmentalism (despite what they might claim) then it is important for us to understand how these goals affect its commitment to community needs and wants. Strictly protectionist-only type management is unrealistic for the majority of Pacific people and is the reason why MPAs that typically do not account for community needs do not work in the Pacific (Veitayaki 2003, 88). Experience has shown efforts that promote environmental stewardship above all else will be not be supported by the local communities that use these same resources to support their lives (Overton 1999, 183). Community management projects of this nature are also worrisome, because despite their inability to ensure proper participation, and thus affect practical environmental change, communities welcome their presence in the region without question, which continually justifies and validates their environmental agendas before the agendas of the people themselves.

My assessment of the Naikorokoro Seacology project makes clear that we must
understand what drives people and communities or we cannot have valid concerns about resource management. Understanding how and why people interact with resources on a daily basis in relation to motivating factors like family, dignity, community, church, education, and even political pressures are paramount to recognizing what motivates them to get up and go fishing in the morning, to throw their trash along the shore, to use fish poison (although illegal), to grant commercial fish licenses, and to create community management projects. From here we can see more clearly how people are affected by management processes and give more value to their immediate wants and needs. In the end, it can mean improving their quality of life, their understanding of resource management, and the effectiveness of CMPs.

**SHORTCOMINGS & SUCCESSES**

My evaluation of the Seacology Naikorokoro project has revealed the existence of an almost static CMP and major inconsistencies between Seacology’s reported approach to working with communities and their actual actions. This is especially in relation to education regarding the project’s purposes and the need for resource management, participation in its creation, monitoring of compliance, and its size.

If education is key then the door remains locked and most people in the village have been left in the dark about the purpose and need for management of Naikorokoro’s near-shore resources. There is no evidence to suggest that Seacology made any effort towards education of villagers. As a result, not a single member I spoke with, was aware that practices by PAFCO were largely credited for the development of their CMP, the over-use of resources in their customary fishing grounds, or know what the expected project/resource outcomes would be when the no-take zone ends in 2012. Furthermore,
Seacology failed to educate itself about specific resource use and abuse at Naikorokoro beyond the general literature that suggests near-shore resources are more susceptible to over-use when located near fish processing factories. This reported reasoning for the project could easily transfer to any coastal village elsewhere in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, or Samoa where fish factories are nearby.

My own place specific education began on my first visit to Levuka. Upon arriving I immediately noticed multiple environmental concerns, the most obvious being the pollution along the coast in front of Naikorokoro village. In the past, a majority of the waste produced at Naikorokoro (like with other villages) was derived from copra production, plantations (yagona harvesting), and fisheries and much of this waste was biodegradable. Today however the waste littered along the coastline includes everything from disposable diapers to washing machines, to discarded animal products. Such waste is obviously hazardous, not just to the marine life that lives in these shallow areas, but also to the villagers who use the coastline for recreational and food collection purposes. I highlight this pollution, because had Seacology made even the slightest attempt to understand livelihoods at and around Naikorokoro or made a visit to the village, they would have recognized that there are other pressing environmental concerns. A partnership in the form of a no litter and coastline clean-up project, rather than a reserve like the one implemented, would more readily serve both sides’ interests because such a project would disclose visible changes, changes could be effectively measured, and compliance easily monitored. Most importantly, all village women, men, elders, and children could participate in its successes, clean-up efforts, and village level watch groups. In real terms, I don’t know that the project example above would be better than
the existing project. What I do know is Seacology did not account for resource use patterns, which are different in every community. In addition more effort could have been made to identify specific resource uses and concerns at Naikorokoro before any agreement was signed.

Seacology touts working closely with communities as one of the reasons it has been successful (www.seacology.org). However, my research and observations of this particular project reveal little interaction between village members both during project negotiations and after for monitoring and compliance purposes (the exception being Chief Maravu and Saula Vodonaivale Jr.). Similarly, the women and men I interviewed claimed their only interactions with the project were after it had been signed into agreement. Furthermore these interactions were limited to their responsibilities in renovating the community center, preparing for the opening ceremonies, and setting up the kindergarten classroom. Not one made mention of their responsibilities to or with no-take area resources, and I saw no pressure from Seacology to change this. As reported on the Seacology website, a follow-up visit was made to Naikorokoro in January of 2007. During this visit it was determined that the community center and kindergarten classroom were in need of new paint jobs (www.seacology.org). Surprisingly, or not so surprising, there was no follow-up or reports regarding changes in resource availability or use in the reserve area. At this point, five years and half way into the ten-year project, I don’t know that such a report would matter. There were no initial reports or research conducted so what would they have to compare current reports to and what would be their purpose? My concern here is that in failing to account for the environmental aspect of this project, Seacology is able to continually avoid doing the work that is required to do what they are
claiming to do, what they get funding for, and what people think they are all about.

On the, compliance end, policing activities seem to be no one’s job or concern. In my interview with Chief Maravu in Suva, he said it was up to those who live in the village to ensure rules were followed. But when I asked village members who would take on this responsibility no one had an answer. While on a short visit to Fiji a couple of years ago, I bumped into a Naikorokoro village member in Suva. Upon asking him how the village project was going, I was greeted with a confused expression. He had completely forgotten that the project even existed and I needed to remind him about the renovations to the community center to jar his memory. When he remembered the project I was referring to, he told that it was finished and that the villagers were happy with the community center, when in fact the no-take reserve is not set to end until 2012. Sentiments like this one make it hard to believe that village members are maintaining enforcement of the no-take reserve guidelines, especially when few if any members who live in the village know what the guidelines are. Furthermore monitoring for commercial use through prohibition of fish licenses is easily done through registration of the no-take reserve with the Eastern Fisheries division in Lami, Fiji, but who with Seacology or the village is checking to see whether they’ve maintained a record of this particular project. From personal experience I’ve learned that the FFD is not exactly the most efficient governmental organization in terms of providing information and services in a timely and effective manner. And what about poaching by non-villagers who might be making use of the no-take area without permission or a license? Commonly enforcement of rules in large customary fishing grounds, like many in Fiji, is difficult amongst people with no cultural link to these resources and no commitment to its long-term sustainability
(Johannes 2002a, 334). Most importantly, I could find no details about what Seacology defined as commercial use. Does semi-subsistence use count as commercial? From what I’ve learned about this project, there are no people or mechanisms in place to monitor compliance or non-compliance of any sort.

Very much related to compliance is concern about size and the large no-take reserve at Naikorokoro village. It is often difficult to deduce the appropriate size for a management area because customary fishing areas are not based on optimal biological units but are determined by historical events and geographic features (Johannes 2002a, 334). Also, there is no consensus among biologists on the ideal size or location of a management area (Johannes 2002a, 334). Management areas that are too small run the risk of being ineffective at conserving fish stocks that need space for spawning. Those that are too big leave little room for alternative sites of non-restricted use, and make compliance and policing extremely difficult. They also force people to use fishing areas in nearby villages and this can lead to conflicts between villages (King and Fa’asili 1999, 5). Furthermore, as discussed above large no-take reserve areas, tend to affect women’s lives more than men and can lead to a decline in their productivity, and social and economic status (King and Fa’asili 1999, 5). In Fiji, LMMAs (and other projects of a similar nature) typically restrict 10-15 percent of village fishing grounds. For those currently in existence, this represents about 60 acres and for initial periods of not more than three years, with the possibility for extension should communities desire it (Aalbersberg et al 2006). In comparison, the 10 year 10,880 acre (17 square mile) no-take reserve at Naikorokoro seems excessively large and ambitious. Ten years and 10,880 acres represents a substantial amount of loss revenue that could be used to
improve the quality of life at Naikorokoro. There is also the potential loss of specialized skills and knowledge of fisheries’ resources and fishing techniques by those from Naikorokoro, surrounding villagers, and even non-indigenous users who may have previously used the resource regularly to supplement their incomes but are now discouraged from doing so. Seacology’s overall approach (or lack thereof) makes it look like it pays for preservations and has very little expectations of participating villages. This is dangerous for it sets communities up for failure and makes the entire CMP process questionable.

Despite my many concerns about the Seacology Naikorokoro project, I want to also acknowledge the projects many successes. Since village community members are the most important participants in CMPs, it is only right to recognize their perspectives, and not in relation to expectations or literature but in regards to the value of this project to their lives as identified by them. By acknowledging the perspectives of all players involved in any given CMP, as opposed to acknowledging only the perspectives of those with influence and power (like the chief, initiating NGO, government official, or researcher) we are able to recognized multiple successes and realize what is important to real lives. This type of analysis can also help promote empowerment and improve the quality of community management projects across the region.

The incentives end of this project has been a huge success for members of Naikoroko village and has meant an improvement in their quality of life (interview Chief Maravu November 2003). The newly improved, and highly utilized community center is a central part of village life and has instilled in the village a great sense of pride (observations). Many villagers have voiced with certainty, “it is the nicest community
center in all of Levuka” (Luisa Gaunavou. Phone correspondence. April 25, 2004). The potential for villagers to earn money from renting the community center for meetings or dormitory-like lodging and hosting is an added bonus and an excellent example of a sustainable alternative source of revenue. The attached kindergarten classroom and on-site teacher have ensured more children from Naikorokoro and surrounding villages the opportunity to attend school. Also important is the fact that this project really brought the community together. It was not just in preparations for the ceremonial opening for the community center, but also in all the efforts required to get the community center renovated and the kindergarten classroom operating.

Above I discussed the compliance end of this project as being problematic in practice. However in principle, the project had the right elements for compliance. To elaborate, this CMP places few restrictions on the use of the near-shore resources by village members making compliance with project’s guidelines easy, especially since all subsistence use is allowed and villagers were showing little interest in its use for commercial purposes. Compliance with the projects guidelines can also be easily monitored by both Seacology and the village chief/headmen. Seacology can easily monitor activities by checking annual records with the FFD to see if any fish licenses have been issued. For those at Naikorokoro denying requests for fishing access, without feeling badly about not meeting cultural obligations or loosing out on possible revenues, only requires citing the arrangement they have with Seacology to not allow permits for commercial requests. Should villagers develop a need to grant use licenses this project will serve as a deterrent until at least the year 2012 when the no-take ban can be officially lifted. Naturally, restrictions on the use of resources over a period of ten years will likely
result in improvements to resource health and availability. We can also expect positive changes in the no-take section of Naikorokoro’s customary fishing grounds regardless of whether villagers felt catch and collection size and amounts had previously been on the decline or not. Naikorokoro should be commended for these conservation efforts. Seacology deserves recognition as well for their continuous work in PICS, their commitment to the betterment of islanders’ welfares, and their understanding and efforts towards a more people-centered approach to management of natural resources. It is important to celebrate all of these successes.

Naikorokoro village members are not alone in their experiences with community management efforts that involve NGOs and incentives. Accordingly, it is my hope that this analysis has helped to identify areas that require extra time and understanding when working with communities. I also hope that in some small way this paper has helped to validate islanders’ motivations and needs with regards to their resources, which are as important and worthy of attention equal to the attention received by more prominent ideas of preservation.

**RESEARCH, REFLECTIONS, & MY RE-EDUCATION**

I recount my experiences, ideas, and perceptions so you, the reader, can better understand and interpret the writings herein. I refrained from presenting this section first, as the positioning of one’s self often is, because I do not want my own experiences and perceptions to be privileged over those of the chief, the women, and the men who will interact with this project for the duration of its tenure, as my experiences are trivial in comparison. First and foremost I want to make clear that this paper is not meant to be a basis for evaluating or making judgments on community management projects in Fiji (or
the region for that matter) or even the discussed Naikorokoro project. Rather it is intended to offer up a different way of looking at community management projects as a method for learning about what drives individuals, organizations, and communities towards efforts in resource management and how these efforts are linked to (as I have since learned) wants for increased individual capacity, higher social status, more educational and economic opportunities, modern material goods, and even cultural strengthening. All are influenced to equal degrees by Fijians’ experiences with development and cultural “traditions.” In addition by recounting my own history, research, and writing process I hope to add to the growing literature on indigenous researchers, the insider/outsider experience, and Pacific Island identities so that other students in my position, and I suspect there are a growing number of us, will have a voice and a space to articulate the ocean in us.

I went to Naikorokoro village first as a visitor, second as a villager member, and third as a researcher. By far, the position of village member is the one that is most unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Despite Naikorokoro being the place of my paternal grandmother’s birth, I had never visited Naikorokoro before traveling there to conduct my research nor had I spent more than a couple of hours in any Fijian village. Being the member of a village requires close kinship ties with fellow village members usually all of who are members of your extended family (Ravuvu 4, 1983). I had none of these ties and had never even met a majority of my Fijian extended family.

Like many of us who hail, in one-way or another, from the Pacific I am the product of a very blended family. My mother a third generation Chinese was born and raised in Hawaii. My father a part Fijian, Indo-Fijian, European was born in Fiji and
moved to Hawaii in his teens after his father came to study here at the University of Hawaii. My father, being of mixed heritage in Fiji would most likely carry the label of “other.” The fact that his father was not Fijian meant, as is typical, that he was never registered as a member of a mataqali precluding him from any of the land rights that registration brings, and the deep familiarity of Fijian culture that being raised in a village engenders. I along with my five siblings were all born and raised in Hawaii, with little to no contact with Fiji. This is not to say that we have not hosted the occasional family visitor from Fiji and kept in touch via yearly Christmas cards, rather we were never exposed to Fijian cultural dynamics and “traditions” during our upbringing. Only I, of all six of us, has ever traveled or found interest in our history there.

I was named after my great-grandmother Luisa Volivale, and my desire to meet her is what initially drew me to Fiji. Not until I was 20 years old and she was 85, and living in Raiwaqa with her youngest daughter, did I finally make it there. My bubu (grandmother) was a tall, dark, thin, women who loved to smoke and anyone coming to visit her whether from the shop down the road, Suva town, Sinai, Hawaii, or Australia was sure to bring with them a pack of her favorite Benson and Hedges cigarettes (the further away you had come from the more cigarettes you were expected to bring). Upon greeting you she would immediately ask tavako (tobacco)? After fulfilling her request she would greet you with kisses and hugs, and every time a visitor left she would tear up. When I finally met her I was full of questions about her history and her family, my own in a sense, in efforts to link myself to Fiji. Unfortunately my inability to speak Fijian and her refusal to speak English meant our conversations were pretty limited. I say refusal because everyone claimed that my bubu could not speak English, but I find this hard to
believe. First because my *bubu* was married to a European man, second because English is an official language in Fiji, and third because when we were alone together she would direct me to do things in English — “get me my tea,” “matches,” “go iron those clothes,” and “hang out the washing.” The language barrier has been and continues to be a consistent source of difficulty for me both personally and in my research.

Distinguished Fijian scholar Dr. Nayacakalou suggests that Fijians were poor keepers of genealogical records and the shrugs I often received from family members when asking about our own genealogy supports his claims (33, 1978). Members of my family found it difficult to remember the surnames of grandparents, first cousins, aunts and uncles. It wasn’t until my *bubu*’s death in 2003 when relatives who had traveled from all over were present that I was able to piece together a little bit about her life.40 Through my aunts I learned my *bubu* was the daughter of Meresieni Volivale of Naikorokoro and Jone Raturaqalevu of Viwa. Her parents met while teenagers in Levuka and for whatever reasons, although rare at the time, settled in her mother’s village to raise their children. It was also on this visit to Fiji that I was able to confirm that the Naikorokoro Village I had read about in Pacific Magazine was in fact my grandmother’s village.

This confirmation came at the perfect time. I was just about to start my second year with Pacific Island Studies and was desperately looking for a research topic that would integrate my background and interests in Fiji, resource management, working with communities, and women’s studies. Naikorokoro Village’s involvement in a CMP did all this plus it allowed me to make connections with my own genealogical history. At the time, I also felt like I would have an easier time gaining access to the village and
information from its members since I had familial connections. From here I immediately began doing background research on marine resources in Fiji, with a focus on women’s roles with said resources. Before I knew it I was on my way back to Fiji bound for Naikorokoro village.

The very first time I visited Naikorokoro Village I traveled via Patterson Ferry with Thomas and Eddie, two of my male cousins who lived in Suva but visited the village often. Before our departure Thomas and Eddie, whose mothers Elaine and Claire are sisters of my grandmother Mary (Luisa Volivale was their mother) told me the following about inappropriate/appropriate dress and behavior: no showing your knees; make sure you bring yaqona, bread, kerosene, tea, and milk; and take along a nice dress for church on Sunday. Attendance is mandatory for everyone. That’s it. I had so many more questions about basic village protocol, but they were unconcerned and explained to me that because I was from Hawaii, and technically a guest no one would expect me to understand village rules or emulate the other young women residents.

In a section above I reported that children were typically and officially registered and brought up in their father’s mataqali as patrilineal descent lines are core to Fijian values. My connection to Naikorokoro through my father was through his mother, and through her mother. My cousins’ Thomas and Eddie are registered with their fathers’ mataqali but are still close to family members at Naikorokoro with whom they are also connected through their mothers. This is very common in Fiji as matrilineal connections and kinship ties remain important and are maintained despite not being recognized or made official by the government through registration (Nayacakalou 1975, 23). These
customary links were my ticket to Naikorokoro village and are what gave way to my easy acceptance by the chief and other village members.

Upon first arriving at Naikorokoro I quickly dropped my belongings off at the Valekau home where I stayed while in the village, and hurried over to the chief’s house to be introduced, present the *yaqona*, and get permission to visit and conduct my research. Chief Maravu was not present at Naikorokoro at this time, so his brother Simione who sits in for him when necessary and lives in the village permanently greeted us. My cousin Thomas presented the *yaqona* and introduced me explaining who I was by recognizing my father, my grandmother, and her mother. He also explained my purposes for being there and that this was my first time in the village. Simione then did a short speech (in Fijian) welcoming me to the village and announcing my presence to those that had passed before us. When he was finished he said that Naikorokoro was my village and that I could move around freely. His permission granting me the right to move around freely, did little to quell my worries about proper village behavior. I was still unfamiliar with what was expected of me as an insider or and outsider and as a result I walked on pins and needles those first few days. Although it was to be expected it didn’t help that I was told I was family and part of the village, but treated like a guest. I was given a private bedroom, I was fed first, I was told not to do tasks and chores around the house and on the village grounds (I was allowed to wash the occasional dish), I was invited to participate in village meetings where I was the only female present, and village members went out of there way to show me around. I was taken to see plantations, rivers and creeks, to meet neighboring villages/ers, to Levuka town, and someone even negotiated for a boat so that they could show me around the lagoon in front of the village.
On most of these outings I was the only female present. I later came to the realization, this was the case because the other village women had responsibilities at home with their children or were at work in town. All the girls that didn’t have children were still of schooling age and were at school when these outings were taking place. Also, the reason I was invited to the male dominated meetings was so they could show me how things were done in the village, the significance and use of yaqona, the meeting of the village headmen (the younger men would trail in as it got darker and their daily duties were completed), and their use of the community center space.

As the days passed and I got more comfortable in the village and I suspect they got more comfortable with having me around since I was left to hang out with the other un-married, childless girls, all of who were substantially younger than me. Together we would wake up early and stroll the mile or so into Levuka town to get hot bread and the daily copy of the Fiji Times. It was a great chance to see all the early morning happenings- kids running off to school, people fishing, and PAFCO workers changing shifts. For the other girls it was a chance to see the young men who were often hanging out in the cemetery drinking from the night before and any new tourists who might have arrived in town the previous day. It was with these same girls that I went into Levuka one night to attend a dance being held for Valentine’s day, and with whom I would talk about Hollywood gossip, and discuss which bar in Suva had better music. One of the girls even had an ipod (mp3 music player) and we would often sit on the sea wall late at night and share the earphones listening to the latest Beyonce song. I was constantly asked by these girls on my visits back to Suva to bring fashion magazines, movies recently released on DVD, and pre-paid mobile phone credit when I returned to
Naikorokoro. It didn’t take long for me to realize that their exposure to Western systems of education, music, technology, and urbanization meant that they had developed with the rest of the world. And as a result young women in a Fijian village were not much different from young women in Suva, Honolulu, or Sydney.

On one particular day, the village was busy preparing for the funeral of a recently deceased village member and us girls were sent out to collect coconuts. On our way we stopped at an elder man’s home to get his permission to gather coconuts. As we approached his house one of the girls yelled out “tukai kerekere vaga ra niu” (Grandpa please we’re looking for coconuts)? He came to the door smiled at us and we carried on. The girls were quick and had the eyes for coconuts hidden under the weeds and small bushes. In the amount of time I was able to locate four coconuts they had managed to collect over 15 each. Before I knew it, they were husking the coconuts for easier transport back to the village. I was amazed at their skill. Aided by a stick with a pointed end they managed to husk all 68 coconuts collected, in less than 20 minutes. While I sat there wondering how we were going to get the coconuts back to the village one of the girls began loading coconuts into her sulu (lavalava, pareo, wrap- we were all wearing to cover our knees while in the village). One by one our sulu were filled with coconuts and we headed back towards the village. We unloaded the coconuts on the side of the road just outside the village and put our sulu back on. Slowly we carried them in with the help of other village members who had seen us return.

On a separate occasion I was taken on a boat tour of the lagoon in front of the village with a group of young men and one older gentleman who was driving the boat. While aboard, we had a lunch of tin fish and bread. As the bags of bread slowly finished
and the tins of fish were emptied I watch horrified as the last person to serve himself threw the rubbish overboard. I couldn’t believe it, we had just spent the last hour swimming, diving, and admiring how beautiful and alive the reef was. I suspect my bewilderment showed because the elder gentleman asked what was wrong. I hesitated for a moment not wanting to seem like a know-it-all or another visitor trying to tell them how to live, but in the end couldn’t help myself. I proceeded to explain how easy it would be to take the rubbish back to the village and discard of it properly and how rubbish like plastic bags posed a threat to turtles who might mistake the bags for jellyfish and attempt to eat them. My explanations and use of the word properly were met with laughter. Apparently the proper way to get rid of unwanted rubbish was to throw it into the ocean. Despite their laughter the elder gentleman did direct one of the boys overboard to collect the rubbish. This story went around the village for the next couple of days, and was met with lots of laughter. I later found out that many of the villagers were concerned about rubbish being thrown in the ocean around the village because tourist didn’t like that and it wouldn’t look good if they wanted to do tours in the area. Also many of them had realized that the rubbish made today was not like coconut husk, voivoi (pandanus), and other waste villages typically made in the past. After a long time the rubbish was still there. They were laughing because I was worried about the turtles and they were thinking who cares about turtle survival they’re food for people survival.

These experiences exemplify the versatility of current day village dwellers. It showed me that the skills needed to survive in a modern urban or “traditional” village environment are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Village life is being affected by modern influences and modern problems (pollution, over fishing, unemployment, crime,
cash, technology) and thus requires an understanding of both immediate surroundings as well as the larger world. Villagers are not stuck in someplace in time where “tradition,” whatever that might mean, is the only influence shaping the way they live and learn. At Naikorokoro village members were more than able to understand the need to invoke “traditional” skills (husking coconuts) and modern demands (a pollution free shoreline to attract tourist) when a situation necessitated it and as long as it served their interests. This explained a lot about the way Naikorokoro residents were interacting with and reacting to my questions about the Seacology project, the community center, and the no-take reserve guidelines. Talk of the community center was always met with excitement regarding ideas about its potential economic benefits. Talk of the actual no-take zone usually ended up focusing on the potential use of that area for tourist activities. My prying regarding their use or overuse of near shore resources whether for subsistence or economic gain was often met with shrugs and comments like “yeah we fish there,” or “never mind that.” For a village that was using their near-shore marine resources less and less and instead is relying on tin fish purchased for a discounted price by those employed at PAFCO their reactions to my questions were understandable. The no-take reserve area was significant to villagers for the occasional feast, for symbolic reasons, and for status, but less so for subsistence.

My initial proposal to study the project at Naikorokoro was based on research I had conducted while still in Hawaii. I remember being really interested in the literature that explained women were the primary users of near-shore resources (Veitayaki 1995; Bidesi 1996) and that coastal CMPs typically sought to manage these same resources. Other literature suggested women, as a whole, were the group least conferred with when
attempting to manage resources (Gupte 2003; Bidesi 1996). This raised questions for me about the Naikorokoro project. Hence, my focus became the women of Naikorokoro, what they thought of the project, how it would affect their daily lives, and whether they had a say in its creation.

After spending time in Naikorokoro I was forced to reassess many of my assumptions and consider changes to: the use of marine environments, roles and responsibilities in Fijian villages, and peoples wants and needs caused by development and globalization. I also realized that village level promotion of modern day management mechanisms, developed out of modern day environmental concerns, that use modern day approaches and techniques, as CMPs do regardless of how many “traditional” practices or values they incorporate, require an understanding of modern day village operations, wants, needs, and concerns of all parties not just the women. I needed to honor all participants to get a realistic idea about the effects of this CMP on resources and lives at Naikorokoro village and my assessments needed to reflect multiple perspectives. My evaluation of the Seacology project its creation, its guidelines, and its failures or successes cannot strictly be reported through my Western, academic, researcher, outsider perspective.

The “insider” component of my stay at Naikorokoro was a difficult one to negotiate. Above I discussed how I felt uneasy in the village because I was unsure of expected behavior and other social interactions. Also challenging were economic interactions. The need for cash has changed the values of reciprocity and sharing that come with being a village member. Those who live overseas are often assumed to have more money to offer and upon visiting the village experience a substantial financial
burden. Expectations are wide and vary depending upon where the expectations are coming from. One can expect demands from their immediately family as well as from the village group as a whole. In my experience monetary requests from individual families were commonly used for school fees and supplies, and medical expenses. While at the group level requests were typically made to help fund a funeral, church functions, and to support activities in nearby villages as a means of maintaining ties and relationships. Financial burdens however go both ways. Most families at Naikorokoro survive off the earnings of one working member, mutual sharing, subsistence fishing, and small plantations where they grow yaqona, dalo (taro), and cassava (tapioca) mostly for consumption. I assume there are very little resources left at the end of each day for hosting guests. Despite this, whether beyond a family’s means or not, a visitor will enjoy only the best accommodations.

My stay at Naikorokoro with the Valekau family must have been an incredible expense for them as they were more than generous hosts. I did make every effort to contribute with food, soap, toiletries and other amenities to support my stay but the extra effort and energy required, when having someone in your home for long periods of time, must have been draining. This is especially true of Mere and Sera (the women of the household) who, despite my protests, would ensure my room was clean, my meals prepared, and my washing completed. My insistence to allow me to help cook and clean were received with directions to busy myself with my studies. They were so good to me I felt bad. In return I would try to compensate them by providing Sera with extra money for her trips into Levuka. Also I would always make sure she made me a list of things I could pick up for her and the children in Suva. My cousin Sera never asked for financial
assistance and was always extremely gracious and thankful when she received it, so I don’t believe that she expected me to contribute as I did. However, as word spread around the village that I had the means to provide Sera with extra cash and things from Suva, I was approached with requests from other village members.

Hanging out in the bus stop.
The influx of demands for cash and other material goods was probably my own fault as I proved to be less than savvy at negotiating my monetary assistance. As a result, accommodating or denying these requests became tricky and uncomfortable. My questions about the Seacology project prompted requests for me “to help support my village” by contributing to the further development of the community center. Among the requested items wanted for the space were a large flat screen TV like the one in O’reily’s a popular bar in Suva, a DVD player, a music system, and instruments for entertainment. With the exception of the ukulele that I purchased in Suva, none of the other items were within my ability to provide and telling them this was extremely difficult.

On many occasions I was invited over to village members’ homes for a meal and a visit and before leaving they would often ask for me to bring something back with me from Levuka or Suva. Of these requests very few were for elaborate things that I would consider unnecessary. Many were for items such as Panadol (Tylenol), sanitary pads, diapers, Moot (a topical pain aid), and rubbing alcohol. Things we consider necessities that they have normally managed to live without. Because I realized how much more difficult my life would be without many of these items I made every effort to purchase them. I thought often about how my visits in village members’ homes might be related to my continuing to supplement their lifestyles. Were they more willing to entertain my questions and answer in ways they thought I wanted them to, because I accommodated their requests?

Even more difficult was my struggle to purchase and support items or activities that were/are divisive. Requests for alcohol from older village men (Bounty rum or Fiji Bitter beer) were extremely troublesome. I was in a dilemma because I knew alcohol was
forbidden but how was I to tell an elder this? It was obvious that I could afford it as it cost substantially less than fees for a school term. More important than the costs, my concern was if I purchased the alcohol and others heard about it, I would be looked upon as having no respect for village rules. When I voiced this concern I was told it was OK just to sneak it in my backpack. I was placed in another compromising situation when a young girl I befriended wanted cash to attend an event in Levuka. Her parents had forbidden her to go to but she was intending on sneaking out and using the cash to get transport into town to hang out with her boyfriend. Although 18 years old the young woman still lived with her parents and was expected to follow their rules. They also did not approve of her boyfriend. Her persistence made me uncomfortable. I had spent time with this girl in Suva (where she attended school) and she knew very well my own personal life, which included a boyfriend that many family members in Suva (although they were courteous), did not approve of. How was I to deny her, and lecture her about respecting her parent’s wishes without being a hypocrite and sacrificing our relationship? Furthermore if I did provide her with the money, what message would that send? And worse what would be the ramifications if her parents were to find out?

Economics aside, my village experience was also enhanced and complicated by my upbringing. While I was not familiar with Fijian customs and beliefs I was more than well versed in Hawaiian culture. This upbringing provided me with a Pacific foundation from which to behave, see, hear and view activities at Naikorokoro. My understanding and practice of Hawaiian values and concepts like ‘aina, kako’o, and kapu helped me to comprehend similar concepts like vanua, kerekere, and tabu in Fiji. These concepts are critical to understanding a Fijian worldview, Fijian village social systems, and Fijian
The use of *yaqona* for ceremonial purposes is a practice in Hawaii and in Fiji. Had I not tasted *awa* (Hawaiian) in Hawaii I might have been alarmed (and unable to stomach) by its strong earth-like flavor and numbing qualities on my first experience with it in Fiji. My ability to clean fish, plant *dalo* (Taro, *kalo* in Hawaiian), make *salusalu* (flower garland, *lei* in Hawaiian), clean *voivoi* (pandanus, *lauhala* in Hawaiian), and make a *lovo* (underground oven, *imu* in Hawaiian) helped me to ease into village life. Once allowed to I had no trouble participating with villagers in their daily activities. If only I could husk coconuts quicker!

Reluctance and cautiousness arose during my efforts to do interviews and ask specific questions. In my own experience Hawaiians are very conscientious about information they share regarding their resources, cultural practices, family histories, and land. I learned to honor this. Growing up I was always told not to ask so many questions, don’t be *mahaoe* (nosey). I believe these sentiments originally existed to encourage children to learn through watching and paying attention to their surroundings. Talking and making lots of noise was not conducive to activities like hunting, ceremonies, hula dancing, chanting, collecting plants in the forest, or being out in the night. Consequently as time passed and resources became a hot commodity to be bought, stolen, or wiped out by foreign interests, financiers, and later each other. Hawaiians became extremely guarded about sharing information that could potentially result in the further loss of these resources. Unlike Fijians, whose children were expected to behave like children and make lots of noise (Ravuvu 1983, 17) and whose colonizers ensured the protection of native land held in communal tenure, Hawaiians had no system in place to protect their land or resource interests. My knowledge of the Hawaii experience and my
reluctance to appear *mahaoe* meant I hesitated to ask questions I thought would bring out sentiments of distrust. My initial interviews were more like informal discussions and left me with little information about the village or the no-take reserve, and no direction in which to broaden my research. Some difficult questions were: Who controls resource use in the village? How can the chief who lives in Suva make appropriate decisions for the village? Do women want more decision-making roles? and How do you feel about Seacology and their environmental agenda? To get a feel for how they would receive and respond to my inquiries, I ended up first asking the young women I was left to hang around with.

It didn’t take too long before I realized that members at Naikorokoro did not have the same defensive feelings that Hawaiians, in my experiences, often harbored. The villagers were more than willing to talk about their culture, their resources, and their beliefs. Our Discussions sensitized me to their pride in their cultural heritage. The opportunity to share their culture with me, someone recently accepted to their village, who was genuinely interested in their lives was exciting for both of us. I still suspect however, that initially there was some concern over my interest in the Seacology project. Many of them could not understand what I could possibly write about, and my questions made it as if like I was looking to find fault with what was a great benefit for the village. They were blessed to be getting their community center upgraded that’s all there really was to it. As I gained their trust and my own approach to the project changed I was able to explain with sincerity that my intent was to evaluate how each of them interacted with the project and it’s guidelines not to judge whether it was good or bad. This helped me to slowly become more comfortable asking difficult questions and they in turn let down
their guards and spoke more freely. Despite this I was still unable to get a lot of details about the project from any village member, and this was mostly because they simply never took the time to dissect or look into it. The chief told them it was good project, they were seeing the benefits of it and that was all they needed to know.

As the novelty of having a visitor from Hawaii wore off and people got use to seeing me in the village and around Levuka I got more comfortable making my way alone, often sitting and observing, or visiting homes for tea and small conversations. The language barrier was a problem when I visited with the elder village members since they spoke limited amounts of English and I spoke even less Fijian. Even so, one of my favorite places to spend time was with Bubu Sereana. Her house was the first building in the village and from her front doorway (no door) you can see the main road that travels around Ovalau, people leaving and coming into the village, and the sea. Often she would be weaving voivoi, or cleaning dalo and would motion with her hands for me to come and sit near her for company. During these visits, she would tell me stories about when my great-grandmother and my grandmother were young. She reminded me that we were related because her late husband was my great-grandmother’s cousin. Bubu Sereana was not originally from Naikorokoro, but as the eldest living member of the village she held an important social place and was often conferred with on issues relating to land, boundaries, and relations with nearby villages. Many of Bubu Sereana’s children are raising families at Naikorokoro so confirmation from her that I was family, gave me a sense of belonging. Nevertheless, I was keenly aware that I was an outsider.

It wasn’t until opening ceremonies for the newly upgraded community center, that day in July, with visitors from Seacology and the Grand Cayman Island High School
students that I became an insider to both village members and visitors. With upwards of 30 guests to feed (and all the village members and visitor) and entertain there was much to be done around the village. It was evident that the village wanted to show their appreciation to Seacology by providing (as was probably expected) Fijian cultural entertainment, complete with new matching attire for the women who would perform the meke and other costuming and props for the men performers. To signify our pride and support for the project, on the ceremony day, most of us women purchased and wore a bright yellow sulu that featured a sketch of new community center.

This day was an especially significant day for me in the village. Not because it was the opening of the community center, but rather because it was the first time I felt like I was not an outsider. It was the first day that I was treated by villagers like one of them. I credit this to two things. First and foremost there was too much to be done (preparing of food, decorating the grounds, washing of dishes, entertainment) for anyone even remotely connected to Naikorokoro village to be exempt from work, including those of us whose presence in the village was temporary. There were other “outsider” family members present visiting from Suva, Nadi, and Australia who had come just for the celebrations. Second, in comparison to myself and the other visiting family members the Seacology group was significantly more outsider than we could ever be. Of the many visitors who had come to celebrate, only Saula Vodonaivalu, the Seacology Fiji Field Director was from Fiji. The only familiarity the rest of them had to the village was as financial donors, project supporters, or as members of Seacology’s 2004 expedition team. My straight hair and mixed look, which usually set me apart from other village members, seemed almost non-existent. The physical differences between the visitors and villagers
were much more stark as most of the visitors had blond to brown hair and were fair skinned. It is important for me to mention this because their differences meant that I blended in with villagers that much more. In retrospect this was also one of the few days I spent in the village that I did not feel pressured to be constantly observing everything around me for information and details that would support my research. With so much to do, I could not possibly be a researcher, and instead became fully involved in the day’s events with the other women.

I will note that you didn’t need a researcher present to notice that none of the time spent at Naikorokoro by the Seacology visitors was in review of the no-take zone, in tour of the no-take area, or in formal discussions about the roles and responsibilities of Seacology or Naikorokoro village members. Additionally, with the exception of the male teacher (from a Montessori school in Marin, CA) who was brought in for a month to train the women who would be the kindergarten teachers (he stayed the month of July), the other visitors remained at Naikorokoro for about five hours. Not nearly sufficient time needed for Seacology supporters to review how this project might affect villagers’ lives in regards to the no-take zone, the kindergarten classroom, or the renovated community center. The project for them simply created an opportunity for a visit that offered food and cultural entertainment. While village members seemed happy to indulge the visitors, I was disappointed.

This was my last visit to Naikorokoro. I left a few days after the opening ceremony and spent the remaining days of that summer in Suva in contemplation of how I was going to present what I had experienced and learned since first going to “my” village. This contemplation unfortunately took longer than I had anticipated and was
interrupted repeatedly by those things in life that at some point become unavoidable and all consuming (love, marriage, children, health, finances, work). But all this time, going on six years, gave me the opportunity to reflect (and reflect, and reflect, and reflect) on my research. I debated at great length over what is important for me to discuss, what might be important to villagers, and my understanding of “tradition;” culture; sustainability; village life; Fiji; globalization; development; resources; community management projects; and people’s wants and needs. As an “outsider” and a researcher with certain responsibilities to my degree program (such is the deal when you decide to pursue academic studies in a University setting) I feel the need to be critical, un-biased, and almost cold in my discussion of this project. However, if I am honest, as an “insider,” I feel a responsibility to make an extra effort to understand villagers’ motivations for becoming involved in this project without any pre-conceived notions about what an effective CMP is. On one hand I feel like I need to protect my fellow village members from criticism, and have found it extremely difficult to discuss what I might have seen as their lack of understanding of the project or nonchalant attitude about its inception, guidelines and potential ramifications. On the other hand I believe that discussing my critical observations are necessary and need to be brought to the attention of village members and Seacology, so that they may potentially develop and participate in more participatory and effective CMPs in the future.

I am keenly aware of the fact that should either members of Seacology or Naikorokoro read this they might disagree with my discussion and find some of my writings distasteful or even hurtful. This worries me a great deal, not because I think my observations are invalid, but rather because I think both groups entered into this
agreement with the best of intentions. I’m sure they both believe they are doing valuable and important work. To pass judgment on their efforts seems ungrateful, especially when both sides were accommodating with their time and hospitality. Furthermore, in a Fijian village the relationships you have with your chief and other members of your mataqali are the cornerstones of life. While I may not rely on these relationships on a daily basis for my life I still have a responsibility to those relationships after being accepted as a village member.

On a personal note my time in Fiji did help me to clarify some questions I had with my own identity as a part-Fijian/non-Hawaiian raised in Hawaii. From my research, readings, and relationships I’ve come to understand my place in Oceania is not specific but Pacific, as many places in the region have contributed to my identity as a person. I went to Fiji in search of a place where I could draw some genealogical connections, where I could say with confidence this is where my ancestors are from, this is part of my culture, and I found it through experiences and relationships I had/have with people in Fiji, Hawaii, New Zealand, Tahiti, and elsewhere (my part Fijian husband, my Indo-Fijian cousins, my Hawaiian niece and nephew, my Chinese grandparents, my own child). As probably the longest in-active and active student in this program (not something I am entirely proud of) I can say that Pacific Studies gave me the opportunity to discover myself and helped me to understand that my ethnicity does not tie me to an individual space, or place, or culture but an entire region to develop my ideas, read, write, dream, and live my life.
NAIKOROKORO VILLAGE RESIDENTS FEBRUARY 13, 2004

SURNAME: M= MALE, F= FEMALE

KOSENI: Marika (M), Aniti (M), Vaciseva (F), Koroi (M)

NUKULOALOA: Sailosi (M), Mere (F), Sovea (M), Samu (M), Filipe (M), Tusi (M)

LOMA: Pita (M), Akeneta (F), Michael (M), Akesa (F), Alumita (F), Tusi (M), Elesi (F), Sikeli (M)

NADURU: Sia (F)

NAKUA: Salanieta (F), Jotame (M), Naomi (F), Vakasere (F), Sereana (F), Maleli (M)

DELACO: Mereseini (F), Lepani (M), Lanieta (F), Luisa (F), Laisiasa (M)

OREVI: Josese (M), Alumita (F)

YAVULAGILAGI: Joeli (M), Sereima (F), Mesu (M), Amini (F), Timaima (F), Gabrielle (M)

VALEKAU: Sera (F), Vulava/Lanasa (M), Mere (F), Waqa (M), Semesa (M), Tuni (M), Banuve (M), Banuve (M), Lau (M), Tuni (M), Taitusi (M), Joana (F)
NABOU: Michael (M), Melaia (F), Isoa (M), Naomi (F), Marion (F)

GAUNAVOU: Setita (F), Jone (M), Luisa (F), Vilikesa (M), Anasa (M)

LAGAKALI: Kiola (M), Mesu (M), Marianna (F), Elena (F)

VUGA: Vuya (F), Solomoni (M), Vuya (F)

TONUNA: Elenoa (F), Nosese (M), Vasenai (F), Simione (M), Karalaini (F)

VUNIBUCO: Inoke (M), Litiana (F), Meiva (F), Naca (M), Elenoa (F)

LOMA NI BAI: Eroni (M), Lasalini (F), Sovaira (F), Neomai (F), Sai (F)

VALEBALAVU: Eleni (F), Va (F), Elesi (F), Jona (M), Wati (F)

VALELEVU: Biau (F)

VALORATA: Marama (F), Mosese (M)

VUCI: Lasa (M), Divono (F), Bau (F), Viwa (F), Marama (F), Maravu (M), Dises (F), Tawake (M), Ratu (M)

QARASARA: Vinaina (F), Simone (M), Jona (M), Kelera (F), Vara (F), Apete (M)

SALESI: Jone (M), Siteni (F), Viliame (M)

KAIVUNIVISERE: Filimoni (M), Akisi (F), Amini (M), Ke (M), Bolei (F), Lusi (F)
Fiji
REGISTER OF NATIVE CUSTOMARY FISHING RIGHTS


recorded as the proprietary unit owing the Fishing Rights situated and contained within the following boundaries commencing at Veikuta (Naveilewayaga) or the edge of high water mark on the sea coast (mutual boundary with Vanua ko Bureta) thence by a direction of 143° (M) to Nadaba passage thence by a direction of 69° (M) to Nasalisali thence by a direction of 213° (M) to Matinabureni passage thence by a direction of 91° (M) crossing Matinabureni reef to its outer edge thence following the outer edge of the said reef generally northerly passing Gave passage, Maulu or Wesley entrance and Malavu reef to the centre of Naubari entrance (mutual boundary with Vanua ko Levuka) thence by a direction of 260° (M) to the mouth of Naseva creek on the edge of high water mark on the sea coast thence following the edge of high water mark along the sea coast to Veikuta (Naveilewayaga) the point of commencement.

Included in this Customary Fishing Rights are the creeks within the Tribal boundaries of the Yavusas named above, being more particularly delineated and marked No.1 in the Plan NFC O10 kept at the office of the Native Lands and Fisheries Commission.

Approved at the Native Fisheries Commission inquiry held at Nasova on the 10th day of March, 1970.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto affixed my signature this 10th day of March, 1970.

[Signature]
Native Fisheries Commissioner
By way of background the aunt who traveled with me is my grandmother’s youngest sister. She now resides in Raiwaqa near Fiji’s capital of Suva. Naikorokoro is their mother Luisa Volivale Swann’s village.

At the time a return ticket on Air Fiji from Nausori Airport in Suva to Bureta Airfield on Ovalau cost anywhere from $130.00 FJD to $200.00 FJD as compared to a return ticket on Patterson Ferry service which costs $48.00 FJD. By stuff I mean food, clothes, medical supplies, tools and everything that people travel with when returning or going to the city.

A more traditional yaqona and ask permission routine usually accompanies visiting a village that you are not a resident of, even if it is your family village and especially if it is your first visit. Being that my aunt was born at Naikorokoro and I had done the routine on a previous occasion we easily fell into the happenings and preparations.

Students from John Gray High School in the Grand Cayman Islands, helped to fund the project at Naikorokoro which Seacology estimates cost about $12,000.00, donating over $1500 through their group called John Gray Recyclers.

The Yasawa Islands are another island group in Fiji.

For more on these ideas see (Gupte 2003; Kavaliku 2000)

It would be imprudent for me not to acknowledge that there is a grave danger is looking at these projects from such a factionalized perspective as they have the potential to further divide communities that are already experiencing huge amounts of change. Fijian villages are built upon collectivism and the roles of men, women and chief together all help to support the overall survival of the group. History has shown that we cannot dismiss the value of this system and I almost feel like such evaluations create more difference than they do solutions. However I still believe it is an important method of assessment if we want to see all views and experiences represented. Otherwise one persons experience can be easily suppressed by the experiences of those in power.

For a more comprehensive study on the reasons for and purposes of development see David Alexander Clark’s book Visions of Development which discusses development ethics, suggesting that there has been limited studies and understanding of the meanings and goals of development and/or Development As Freedom by Amartya Sen which argues that overcoming oppression is the central goal of the exercise of development (Sen 1999; Clark 2002)

Classical economic theory sees these values to be impediments to growth.

The words “tradition” and “traditional” will appear in quotations throughout this work to indicate its evolving meaning and use. Also to recognize the many political, social, economic, and racial abuses that have been justified under the guise of tradition that have served to marginalize groups and individuals. For more on the constructs of “tradition” in Fiji read Stephanie Lawson’s Chiefs, Politics, and the Power of Tradition in Contemporary Fiji (1997).

In reports published by the World Bank (1991) PICS were compared to other island groups (what they call comparable countries”) in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, which were experiencing between five, and seven percent GNP growth rates respectively in comparison to the 0.1 percent growth in average real per capita income PICS were
experiencing. Hooper suggests that in those places there are only small cultural groups
that exist usually far from where national decisions are made as opposed to Pacific places
where culture is linked to all aspects of society and found in full force everywhere not
just in hill enclaves and pockets or secluded often isolated areas (1999).

The public enterprise reform program in Fiji was reversed by the Chaudry government
who realized that such services needed to be held by the public. In the hopes of gaining
revenues they instead attempted to sell shares in these enterprises but made no distinction
between those enterprises that were a financial burden to the government and those that
were a financial gain, hence selling shares in profitable enterprises too (Prasad 2000,
169).

The many economic growth strategies and development woes being pursued and
experienced in the region are beyond the scope of this paper the examples listed within
this paper are meant to give you a general understanding of development processes, why
they have continued despite unfavorable results, and explain the need for change and the
emergence of sustainable development ideals.

Sen also argues that “if freedom is what development advances then we must focus on
the objective rather than those processes that reach that objective” (Sen, 1999). This
tells me that we should not adhere to development theories rather we should buy into
practices that achieve our development goals.

We must also be aware of the dangers that exist in creating development policies that
are region specific as opposed to place and people specific. It is important that we
recognize and take into account the diversity that exists in the region and ask important
questions like what do Samoans, Tongans, Fijians, and Solomon Islanders see as their
needs (Kavaliku 2000, 26). What may be good development plans and needed policies
for Fijians may not be so for Samoans and/or Tongans.

On a more positive note we have to recognize that Pacific Island peoples have been
able to maintain relatively high standards of living. Most have made significant strides in
the areas of health, literacy and education, human rights, transport, life expectancy, infant
mortality, and communications (Slatter 1996, 25)

Teresia Teaiwa would suggests that third world countries are third world because of
theft by first world countries, which is why they provide conditional aid now. Aid is
“never free” and “very messy business.” (Teaiwa 2002, 1).

According to Michael Ogden PICS economies (in his discussion of Smaller Island
Countries) are most heavily influenced by government spending on development projects
and government services that are underwritten by budgetary aid (1987).

Crocombe also notes that in 1985 after Russia was looking to have a stronger presence
in the region and approached the Cook Islands and Kiribati with agreements Australia
increased its aid by 400% (Crocombe 2008, 355).

These stipulations were the secondary purpose for this aid that was really given to PNG
and Nauru from Australia in exchange for accepting refugees that would have otherwise
sought asylum in Australia (Teaiwa 2002, 3).

Countries have continued to borrow and lending institutions continue to lend despite
the fact that money is often not paid back on schedule and new money is borrowed to pay
off old debts only continuing the cycle of dependency (Larmour 2005, 25).
Jully Makini previously went by the name Jully Sipolo when publishing this work in 1986. Although this work was done over 20 years ago the contents are still very applicable as development complexities in the Pacific are still extremely pressing.

This information was derived from work done by the WWF Community Resource Conservation Program with landowners in the Solomon Islands (Foale 2004, 149-164). For a detailed look at these projects across the region see (Johannes 2002, 318-329).

Islanders in general, indigenous and non-indigenous, are familiar with traditional management practices and the limitations they set on certain areas and resources, if not the actual or original management mechanism.

With the exception of the re-introduction of rahui zones in Rarotonga and very few others, almost all CMPs in the Pacific are initiated by external groups rather than the communities and villages in which they are established (Johannes 2002a, 324). Alluding to the fact that many communities are on the fence about their resource management needs or that CMPs exist and could have a positive impact on the availability of resources in their communities.

There are a few exceptions to this. In a study of the project in Ba Fiji landowners claim preservation of their resources for future generations of their own people was more important than any revenues they could derive from those resources (Veitayaki, Tawake and Aalbersberg 2003).

Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA) is a network that currently helps to manage about 10 percent of Fiji’s inshore fisheries in six different districts. The network formed in 2000 is comprised of government agencies, communities, NGOs, and research and training institutions (University of the South Pacific) and has been recognized for developing CMPs that are both highly participatory and successful in bringing positive changes to resources (Veitayaki et al, 2003). FLMMA networks have also identified methods and approaches that help to make their CMPs effective and attractive. Notable amongst these methods is their incorporation of what they call “The Learning Framework” and their application of social contracts. *The Learning Framework* encourages participating communities to monitor, assess, and describe conditions at proposed project sites, collect analyze and communicate information, and even check the effectiveness of projects by questioning initial resource assumptions and changing project designs as necessary. All information collected and shared is done with a uniform strategy and a common language, making learning, participation, and the entire management process more efficient. Through the use of social contracts (these are not legally binding) that require participants to observe common values like commitment, teamwork, transparency, empowerment, mutual respect and a strong belief that the network can make a difference in their lives, FLMMA has been able to avoid the distrust that often surrounds conservationist and their organizations (2003). Non- FLLMA affiliated CMPs and conservation organizations could learn a lot from the experiences of the network and should make attempts to emulate their efforts.

Near-shore resources include over 100 different species of Fin Fish and 50 different kinds of invertebrates (Island Business 2003, 37)

Government regulations and severe penalties for using these fishing methods has deterred much of these activities but such practices remain a problem in remote areas and outer islands where there is limited policing.
Ravuvu writes: “It is only when one is aspiring to a different way of life made possible by the presence of alternative life-styles and the freedom of choice, that one begins to make and low evaluation of the position and contribution of women in Fijian communities; and says it only with emergence of alternative lifestyles “that one begins to make a low evaluation of the position and contribution of women in Fijian communities; and to unfairly compare two different life-styles which could only be meaningfully understood and appreciated in their respective contexts” (Ravuvu 1983, 2).

Many were also concerned with the use of drugs and alcohol by their children and suicide. In the short time that I spent in the village three girls attempted to commit suicide.

On my last visit to Naikorokoro there were whispers about Chief Maravu not being the real chief of Naikorokoro. Apparently a family who lived in a nearby village (yet of the same mataqali) claimed their lineage to be the rightful titleholders. My aunt who explained the hushed and hidden conversations to me, as most of them were in Fijian, said that Ratu Maravu living in Suva had posed problems for his post as chief and there were concerns about his prolonged absences from the village. She also mentioned that claims like this one are common and are usually based on jealousy and struggles for power. As a result I gave these conversations little weight and passed them off as rumors. In a recent telephone conversation with my cousin in Suva he explained that a couple of years back the Native Land Commission was brought down to Naikorokoro to remedy this situation as hushed conversations had turned in long discussions and arguments. Based on documents they had brought with them that showed a history of registered land owners and chiefs at Naikorokoro they determined that Maravu was in fact not the rightful chief and his post belonged to an elder gentleman now in his 70’s named Peni Serevi. Elders from Naikorokoro and surrounding villagers helped to clarify the situation by explaining that Peni Serevi’s father had become ill and could not hold his position as chief. His title was handed over to Maravu’s father who was meant to temporarily hold the position until a suitable replacement from the original lineage became old or qualified enough. Over time village leaders and members lost sight of this arrangement and Maravu found himself as chief. Peni Serevi is now the acting chief of Naikorokoro (Thomas Tavutonivalu. Phone Correspondence. February 27, 2010). However, for the purposes of this paper all references to the chief of Naikorokoro are referring to Chief Maravu, as he was the acting chief during negotiations with Seacology and for the duration of my research in the village.

The Great Council of Chiefs is comprised of 56 members. Three members from each of the 14 provinces in Fiji, six high chiefs, the President, the Vice-president, three Rotuman council members, and the one life member Sitiveni Rabuka leader of the 1987 coup (Ralogaivau 2006).

Customarily if a leader is absent a close family member can substitute for them during village happenings and for other purposes (Nayacakalou 1975, 34). When I first went to Naikorokoro Chief Maravu was not present. As such I was taken to see Chief Maravu’s brother Simione to present the yaqona I had brought and ask permission to be in the village.

It is a chief’s responsibility to control and direct proceedings at all village gatherings and other social occasions (Nayacakalou 1978, 15).
The people of Tafua were still able to use the forest for gathering food, hunting, collecting wood for housing and cooking, collecting medicinal plants, and for eco-tourism (Hardie-Boys 1999, 193).

Unless of course you consider the four hour Seacology expedition visit for the community center opening ceremonies “working closely.”

The size of these areas is not even influenced by the number of people who depend on them (Johannes 2002a, 334).

Death according to Ravuvu is of much significance to Fijians and it is common for relatives to make extra efforts to be at the funeral activities of a deceased family or village member. Being present at these activities he says re-affirms kinship ties and social links and sometimes even serves to help reconcile broken relationships (Ravuvu 1983, 62).

I say concept rather than word because these words incorporate values, ideas, the supernatural, the physical, and the social and have no English word equivalent that could fully explain their meaning and scope.

A recent article discussing Fijian women in fisheries does mention when women from Nadoria Village were asked about their fishing skills and knowledge that has been handed down they were very reluctant to share information (Fay-Sauni et al. 2008).

A short video clip featuring Seacology supporters and travel expedition members features a couple who state that their reasoning for participating in Seacology’s efforts is: “for a greater cultural experience than one that they would receive at a resort.” I rest my case. (www.seacology.org)


Crocombe, Ron. 2008 *The South Pacific.* Suva, Fiji: IPS Publications University of South Pacific.


http://www.seacology.org/about/index.htm
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