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Youth and power in the village hybrid chiefdoms in Fiji

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

YOUTH AND POWER IN THE VILLAGE
HYBRID CHIEFDOMS IN FIJI

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY

by

Tali Ben David

1999

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To: Dean Arthur W. Herriott
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Tali Ben David, and entitled Youth And Power In The Village Hybrid Chiefdoms In Fiji, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Janet Chernela

Hugh Gladwin

Stephen M. Bjellman, Major Professor

Date of Defense: April 21, 1999

The thesis of Tali Ben David is approved.

Dean Arthur W. Herriott
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Dean Richard L. Campbell
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Florida International University, 1999

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Adi, Hili, Jerry, Archy and Efrat. I would have never been able to complete this work without their support and love.

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I wish to thank the villagers of Nasautoka for their incredible hospitality and patience. I particularly want to thank the Seruvakula family who made it possible for this fieldwork to take place. Dr. Michael M. Davis from the University of the South Pacific, thank you for all your guidance, patience and support and always being there when I needed someone to talk to. I would like to thank the members of my committee for their guidance and constructive criticism throughout this long thinking and writing process.

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

YOUTH AND POWER IN THE VILLAGE

HYBRID CHIEFDOMS IN FIJI

by

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Florida International University, 1999

Miami, Florida

Professor Stephen M Fjellman, Major professor

The purpose of this study is to provide an alternative approach in analyzing social hybrid situations. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in 1995 in the village of Nasautoka, Fiji. The suggested analysis for hybrid cases is based on Anthony Giddens's structuration theory, with an emphasis on the concept of "agency" and "signification" rules. Giddens conceptualizes agents as both knowledgeable and reflexive. The agent is not viewed as passive and impotent as he paces through social life. Signification rules are extremely useful in analyses of symbolic orders, and shed light on the meaning of both "new" and "old" symbols as they manifest themselves simultaneously in Nasautoka.

Of paramount importance is that these new symbols are unfolding beside the "old" symbols represented by the *vanua*. The *vanua* is a Fijian social structure with both sociocultural and physical dimensions. The current hybrid is exemplified by two merging structures and by the contrasting reactions of three groups within the village.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to provide an alternative approach to analyzing social hybrid situations. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in 1995 in the village Nasautoka, Fiji. The suggested analysis for hybrid cases is based on Anthony Giddens's structuration theory, with an emphasis on the concept of "agency" and "signification" rules. Giddens conceptualizes agents as both knowledgeable and reflexive. The agent is not viewed as passive and impotent as he paces through social life. Signification rules are extremely useful in analyses of symbolic orders, and shed light on the meaning of both "new" and "old" symbols as they manifest themselves simultaneously in Nasautoka.

The "new" symbols introduced by modernity are being re-articulated by the locals of Nasautoka. These symbols are wealth and education, and they are not equally accessible to the different groups within the village. The result is that there are very different reactions to the infiltration of these symbols, which are bringing with them dramatic changes to the formula of genuine power within the village. Of paramount importance is that these new symbols are unfolding beside the "old" symbols, represented by the *vanua*. The *vanua* is a Fijian social structure with both socio-cultural and physical dimensions. The current hybrid is exemplified by two merging structures and by the contrasting reactions of three groups within the village.

The rules and resources of the *vanua* and those of modernity manifest themselves simultaneously. Both are present. The hybrid approach is the only relevant one to apply in cases where the boundaries of the two or more structures are blurred and agents are in flux.

Background

The Fiji Islands are in the south-west Pacific Ocean, on the border between Melanesia to the west and Polynesia to the east. Fiji includes over 300 islands, 110 of which are inhabited. The two largest islands are Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Viti Levu, the largest island (10,388 sq. km), is the hub of the archipelago and has 70% of the population. Located on the island of Viti Levu is Suva, the capital of Fiji, which is both the largest city and the chief port. Also found on Viti Levu are the cities Nadi, where the international airport is located, and Lautoka, the second largest city and second port of entry. Vanua Levu, located north-east of Viti Levu, is the second largest island (5538 sq. km). Both Vanua Levu and Viti Levu are large producers of sugarcane and coconuts, although Vanua Levu is less densely populated. The production system of these two commodities is conducted through plantation agriculture. Fiji's economy is primarily agricultural, with a large subsistence sector, and also has a significant industrial farming service economic sector. Tourism and sugar provide the main sources of foreign exchange.

Fiji's population according to a July, 1995, estimate was 772,891. The two main ethnic groups are indigenous Fijians 49% and Indians 46%, and the remaining 5% are Pacific Islanders, Chinese, and others.

The indigenous Fijians are Melanesians, although the eastern islands (the Lau group), due to the proximity and contact with their Polynesian neighbors (Tonga in particular), have a mixture of Melanesian and Polynesian. "By the mid-nineteenth century, missionary and trade contact had reduced regional differences, and today a distinctly Fijian culture, resulting from the blending of Melanesian and Polynesian elements, can be said to exist alongside more characteristically distinctive Melanesian and Polynesian cultures" (Katz1993:13).

Brief History

Fiji became a British colony in 1874. In 1879 the British colonial administration, realizing the need for economic growth, began transporting indentured laborers from India to work on large-scale sugar plantations. Tension between the Indians and the indigenous Fijians dates back to this time, and the first recognized political manifestations of these tensions took place in the early 1900s. Today this mixture of Indians and indigenous Fijians continues to create crises and complicated moral, economic, and social controversies.

The communal landholding system does not allow for land to be sold. Eighty percent of all land is owned by Indigenous Fijians and the other twenty percent is either owned by the government or optioned out on long term leases in accordance to British property laws that were continued after independence. Indians are not allowed land virtually under any circumstances. Most of the land which is favorable for income production is either owned or operated on long-term leases. Fiji's commerce is predominately operated by outsiders, mainly from Australia and New Zealand, or Indo-Fijians who are generally dominant in the smaller commercial enterprises. (Katz1993:13).

Tension and conflict between the two largest ethnic groups repeatedly surfaces. Fijians describe themselves as "caring and sharing" peoples, and with this view of life they place themselves in direct contrast/opposition to Indians and Europeans. An older Fijian woman in the village once told me: "These Indians are just too different from us; all they look after is themselves, and making money. We Fijians always help each other out and worry about everyone. We are part of a group".

This struggle for control, power, political, and economic participation culminated in a 1987 coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka. The trigger was the defeat of

the conservative Fiji-dominated Alliance Party and the victory of The Fiji Labor Party in coalition with the Indian-backed National Federation Party. The Alliance Party had been in power since Fiji's independence (October 1970) and this was their first defeat. The victorious coalition took power only to be deposed a month later by a group of soldiers.

The power returned to Fijian hands and the "temporary" civil administration was very similar to the previous one. Rabuka suspended the constitution and the power of the Governor General, and formed his own council of ministers. Rabuka claimed that the coup's purpose was to return the power to Fijians and integrate into the constitution a guarantee of Fijian governmental control. The Great Council of Chiefs (Taukei) supported Rabuka, but with growing international pressure Rabuka eventually gave in and handed control of the government to the Governor General. Rabuka continued to be in command of the army and the police. Ratu Panaia began mediating negotiations between Ratu Mara and Bavadra (also Fijian) to form a caretaker government to lead the country back to democracy under an amended constitution agreeable to all parties. However, the Taukei conservative movement was opposed to these developments and protested violently in Suva. This was the last event before a second coup took place, in September, 1987. The second coup consolidated Rabuka's power. Fiji was declared a republic and its ties with the Commonwealth were broken off. The same "temporary" government continues in power today.

In 1992 the constitution was modified such that it continues to legitimize indigenous Fijian political supremacy. Following the coup Fiji suffered its first economic crisis since independence. The critical sugar harvest was delayed by the predominantly Indian cane workers, and large numbers of Indo-Fijians emigrated from Fiji after the coup. "Capital flight in 1987-88 was estimated to exceed F\$120 million. Many foreign tourists canceled bookings and major aid donors put their development assistance programs on

hold. Foreign investment dried up quickly. Trade unions in neighboring Australia and New Zealand implemented trade boycotts against the country.

The combination of a significant local brain drain as a result of the political unrest, high unemployment, and a 30% devaluation of the Fijian dollar also contributed to slowing down Fiji's economy.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for the current government is creating jobs for a rapidly growing population, many of which are young and out of school. Almost daily newspaper articles continue to inform the public of offenses throughout the country mostly committed by youth. A recent article about the Lautoka prison indicated that "many of the prisoners are between 17-25 years of age" (Daily Post Nov.7, 1995). Headlines such as "Armed Robberies On the Rise - Police Warn of Thefts" (Fiji Times, Oct. 17, 1995) are commonplace. All this is occurring in a time of warnings about increasing poverty. Squatter settlements continue growing in and around Suva and their conditions deteriorate as poverty becomes a critical growing problem.

The other great challenge that the current government is struggling with is encouraging overseas investment. Fiji has provided tax-free zones for economic development. Investors are provided with tax holidays and cheap labor, all this with hope that it will help solve the economic crisis at hand.

This historical perspective is very basic and important in providing the reader with an understanding of the current socio-economic and political situation within Fiji. One of the more important reasons to be familiar with the above is to have an understanding of how *kerekere* (a traditional redistributive economic system) exists in the indigenous Fijian population and of its importance to their social welfare within this group when put into the larger framework of overall contemporary Fijian society.

As mentioned earlier, the indigenous Fijian population has virtually no role in the commercial sector. Perhaps this can be directly related back to the early colonial policies

implemented by Sir Gordon Arthur, the first colonial governor of Fiji. Sir Gordon created a series of laws that in essence favored and protected indigenous culture, labor, and land. The administration he developed was truly paternalistic towards the indigenous Fijians. Although this was considered a visionary policy by some historians, the legacy of this in today's reality may be one of the reasons for the lack of entrepreneurial spirit within the indigenous population.

II. METHODOLOGY

This work is a case study based on ethnographic field research conducted in Viti Levu, Fiji in 1995. I spent ten months in Fiji, from February to November, on the main island of Viti Levu. I initially anchored in Suva, where I received tremendous help from faculty members at the University of the South Pacific. By the end of April I began a more formal dialogue with one chiefly family I met in Suva, who suggested I conduct my field work in their village of Nasautoka. In a matter of two weeks I arrived at Nasautoka with my *sevusevu* (a ceremonial offering of kava by either a guest to a host or host to guest in respect of recognition and acceptance of one another) for the village chief, Ratu (chief) Peni, and that same evening my field work began. The collection of data began with a mapping of the village Nasautoka as a means to identify the layout of the village, and the organization of the different social groupings within the geographic boundaries of the village. The map reveals the location of fallow land, gardening land, house sites, as well as common areas. The next step was the conduction of a household census to determine the composition of the village households: numbers of members per household, income variation and sources of income including government and/or assistance from relatives in towns were identified. In some cases where relatives live abroad remittances are important and reliable sources of income. The census provided an effective baseline

for monitoring the movements to and from Nasautoka. The most important vehicle for gathering the data was participant observation over a period of ten months.

Research Area - Nasautoka

Nasautoka is a village located in the central division of Viti Levu, composed of 43 houses, and with a total resident population of a little over 200. The village lies above the Wainibuka River and altogether owns about 8,000 acres of land. Nasautoka is located 65-70 km from Suva, along side Kings Road and with daily public transportation enabling the movement of people throughout the mainland. The village compound is about 300m X 250m. Every family is allocated a piece of the communally owned *mataqali* land for gardening. Most of the gardens are located on the other side of the Wainibuka River, and their sizes vary. The average size of a household's garden is 50 sq. meters, but some are much larger, and most households cultivate several lots. Generally the size of the gardens is determined by the number of members in a household. For a *mataqali* member to expand his land for cultivation he must make his request to the head of his *mataqali*. Consequently he will be expected to contribute more when events involving the whole village take place. Most gardens include root crops cassava and taro as well as more dispersed banana trees. The rest of the staple vegetation, both consumed as well as sold in markets, is gathered in the *veikau* (forest land).

Land (*vanua*) has physical and social as well as cultural dimensions, all of which are interrelated.

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

Beyond the security and confidence which the *vanua* provides, it is also a source of identity and belonging. The land and water areas belong to a *vanua* (tribe) or *yavusa* (the widest Fijian kinship group/clan) and include the following: gardening land (*qele ni teitei*), forest land (*veikau*), founding ancestors house sites (*yavutu*), and the fishing area (*qoliqoli*). The major constant income of most of the villagers of Nasautoka comes from the sale of bananas to a juice factory truck which collects sacks of bananas once or twice a month, as well as from selling produce on the road side or in Laqere (Suva area) and at times Rakiraki (north-east side of the island) markets. The produce sold is cassava, taro, a green leafy vegetable of the fern called (*ota*), a green leafy vegetable shrub (*bele*), tender root crop leaves (*rourou*), small chilies (*rokete*), and occasionally fish and sweet water prawns in Korovou (the center of Fiji's dairy industry, established by several English veterans at the end of W.W.I).

Korovou is a small commercial center, which contains a few stores, a market, a few government offices, including a small medical clinic, and a bank where some of the villagers have an account. Korovou, also known as Tailevu Town, is located no more than 25 km from Nasautoka. Other sources of income for the villagers is kava (*yaqona*), toffee and cigarettes, sold mainly within the village.

Social Organization

Nasautoka is one of two villages that together form the district (*tikina*) of Nasautoka; the smallest district in the province of Tailevu. The social organization of Nasautoka village is divided into three *yavusas* (the widest Fijian kinship group): Nasautoka-Delai, Nasautoka-Burenitu, and Buremaci. Nasautoka Delai is the chiefly *yavusa* and is sub-divided into three *mataqali* (the exogamous social unit in Fiji - patrilineal and a recognized land owning group): Nasautoka Delai, Koroivula, and

Naituitui. Nasautoka Burenitu includes four mataqali: Nasautoka Burenitu, Nadramai, Navua and Namatadora. Buremaci, traditionally warriors include two mataqali, Naiseu and Nalesa.

In Nasautoka, gaps and variances among the 43 households are evident. Some of these most important gaps are in the composition of these households. Extended versus nuclear, and whether the household is headed by a female or a male. Other important variables that create these gaps are due to varying sources as well as amount of cash earned by the members of the household, and the education of its members. The architecture and material used for house construction include concrete, combinations of bamboo and wood, and a majority of tin houses. Although I can certainly say that no one goes hungry in the village, I paid close attention to peoples' diets, and my data reveal significant variance from household to household. The traditional foods produced locally are present in all households and the purchase of canned goods, manufactured foods and foodstuffs are available at the village store (owned by the Buremaci *yavusa*) and provide a variety of food and other household goods however, there are very notable differences in terms of the frequency and quantity in which the manufactured foodstuffs are acquired by the different households.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

From Dualistic Models to Models of Articulation

In discussing the substantivist vs. formalist perspectives I am restating what has been echoed in disciplines ranging from history, political science, linguistics to sociology, and anthropology -- that dualistic models are no longer able to capture the complexity of the real world. In fact they not only miss the very essence of what is really happening in the real world, but they also create an imbalance between the concept of "society" and its

forces and the concept of "the individual" and his/her forces. Both camps neglect critical ingredients that in fact compose the real human world.

The path of the substantivists camp, whose main concern revolved around social structures and their shaping power, opened with Malinowski's examination of the kula ring among the Trobrianders of the western Pacific (Malinowski 1922). This was one of the first attempts of considering an economic activity as a social phenomenon. It was Malinowski who was the first to describe "reciprocity" and its centrality in the daily life of Melanesia. It became a theoretical construct for other comparative theorists, such as Marcell Mauss and Karl Polanyi (Harding and Wallace 1970:47). His analysis stressed the noneconomic aspects of the elaborate exchange system and placed it within a social context. He not only showed how this activity was socially motivated, but also how complex the "savages" of the western Pacific are with their elaborate trading expeditions. His influence was mixed. On the one hand, anthropologists began seeing the limitation of only considering technology when studying nonliterate people's economic activity. However, his extreme attacks on classic economic thinking made anthropologists completely turn their backs to conventional economics. Less and less attention was given to the individual and his/her free will within the particular structures. For Malinowski the sources for individual motivation were embedded in social practices. He described for instance "how magical practices served a positive function in the economic system by instilling confidence and hope in the individual who was setting out on a trade expedition" (Ed LeClair, Jr., and Schneider 1968:4). No one denies that Malinowski pioneered the area. Some twenty years later Raymond Firth and Melville J. Herskovits brought economic theory back on to the anthropologists table.

It was not until the 1970s that more action based approaches began surfacing. "In sociology, symbolic interactionism and other forms of so-called microsociology appear to be attracting new attention, and Anthony Giddens has dubbed the relationship between

structure and 'agency' one of the 'central problems' of modern social theory" (Ortner 1979:145). The position taken by symbolic interactionists was that action can not be determined, and thus structural features varying from "culture" to "social systems," "social stratification," or "social roles" are only capable of setting particular conditions for action.

Their reaction was mainly against Parsonian/Durkhemian approaches which gave too much "power" to rules and systems, while for them there was a need for a new way of looking at social life. They did not place themselves in opposition to the studies of structures and systems but rather added a new ingredient to the formula. Very much in consistence with anthropology in the 1960s there is a notion of "...the shaping power of culture/structure, this shaping power is viewed rather darkly , as a matter of 'constraint', 'hegemony', and 'symbolic domination'" (Ortner1984:147). Generally, their view is that most significant or important kinds of action occur in relations which are not symmetrical. It is these actions that can best explain a particular system or structure.

Another critical factor occurs with this new synthesis. Unlike in the sixties when Marx and Weber were seen as opposite poles on the continuum of "materialist" and "idealist," these new writers took the Marxist approach and made it compatible with Weber's.

The main attempt of modern practice theorists was to explain the relationship between human action and the wider or global "system." By "system" what they mean is "...patterns of relations between categories, and of relations between relations" (Ortner1984:148).

Practice anthropologists consider individual actors the main acting units. These actors are the analyst's reference points and help him/her understand either a particular event or the processes which manifest in the reproduction or the change of the characteristics of a particular structure (Ortner1984:149). Studies that deal with collective action also take the collective as a single subject. No doubt problems of

essential individualism rose from this practice theory approach. There are a variety of definitions of action. Pierre Bourdieu sees action "...in terms of relatively ad hoc decision making, and/or relatively short-term moves." Others like Sahlins, Ortner, Collier, and Rosaldo argue that people act with plans or programs that go beyond an immediate situation, and the only way to understand these actions is by looking at these wider structures where these movements occur (Ortner1984:150). For Anthony Giddens (who has been of particular interest in this thesis) the actor is most definitely a participant and not a bystander in social life. The actor is both reflexive and knowledgeable and does not operate on "automatic pilot." Giddens does acknowledge, though, aspects of society which constrain action as well as enable it.

The essential point that these writers are stressing is that although the actor can create, the emphasis is placed on these "wider" plans and not on the specific action. Action when it is isolated and not seen as dialoging or in relation to a wider structure is problematic according to their view and approach.

There are many things that practice theorists disagree on, but what they all agree on is that action can not be seen as purely a reenactment or reaction to rules and norms (Bourdieu1978;Sahlins1981;Giddens;1979). They also agree that actors are not completely free and purely inventive either. Their view is that action involves "...pragmatic choice and decision making, and/or active calculating and strategizing" (Ortner1984:150).

When looking at action we are forced to look at something quite critical, and that is what fuels action? What makes someone do something? In the 1980s the dominant theory of motivation in practice anthropology came from interest theory. This model sees the actor as rational, pragmatic, aggressive, and with a maximizing tendency. Basically the actor does what he wants within his/her cultural and political context. But what it misses is other elements which are just as significant and powerful: fear, suffering, desire,

etc. In the late 1970s and early 1980s writers such as Rosaldo, Friedrich, Geertz, Singer, Kirlpatrick, and Guemple had an interest in elaborating and exploring the self, person, emotion and motive. By adding to the formula psychological processes they were aiming at elaborating the actor-centered paradigm. On one side we have interest theory which overemphasizes active-ness. In the other we have strain theory which stresses the system itself, and how this system helps us analyze where these actors are coming from.

"...[A] system is analyzed with the aim of revealing the sorts of binds it creates for actors, the sorts of burdens it places upon them, and so on. This analysis, in turn, provides much of the context for understanding actors' motives, and the kinds of projects they construct for dealing with their situations" (Ortner1984:152).

Ortner points out that when looking at the interaction between practice and the system we get quite different perspectives from the British and American anthropologists. The Americans' view is that culture is a shaper, the source which channels and lays out to some extent the behavior of people. In the 1960s Geertz elaborated on the process itself and so did others although different perspectives sprouted there too. The practice framework looked not only at what or how culture provides and enables but also what it inhibits and restricts. They are not arguing that culture "fogs" reality, but rather, "...why the system as a whole has a certain configuration, and why and how it excludes alternative possible configurations" (Ortner1984:153).

A variety of perspectives on how practice impacts or affects the system developed, but generally practice may do two things, either reproduce it or change it. The unified theory of practice encompasses both these in a single framework. A focus on each individually creates a quite different picture. In reproduction what is being asked is how norms, values and conceptual schemes are reproduced by and for the actors. Before the 1960s in the United States the weight was placed on socialization as the agent of

reproduction. In England ritual was the central agent. The later practice approaches shifted their attention from ritual to more common, everyday living activities, routines.

"One question lurking behind all this is whether in fact *all* practice, everything everybody does, embodies and hence reproduces the assumptions of the system. There is actually a profound philosophic issue here: how, if actors are fully cultural beings, they could ever do anything that does not in some way carry forward core cultural assumptions...The question comes down to whether divergent or nonnormative practices are simply variations upon basic cultural themes, or whether they actually imply alternative modes of social and cultural being" (Ortner, 1984:155).

The Marxist model will deal with this question and will argue, of course, that change comes as a result of class struggle, and that once the dominated group gains power over the dominating group its approach and ways of seeing and organizing will prevail. In the case I have presented I did not find that class struggle is the sole ingredient which explicates the tangled scenario. This is particularly so because we are not faced with clear and neatly fenced parameters and the multiple worlds which Fijians are sewing together paint a picture of power which encompasses many variables, some of which at times make absolutely no economic sense. But this is not the place to elaborate on this issue.

A new model was presented by Marshall Sahlins who argues that radical change does not necessarily "...equate with the coming to power of groups with alternative visions of the world. He emphasizes instead the importance of changes of meaning of existing relations" (Ortner 1984:155). What he is saying is that peoples interests vary depending on their social position. These people do not necessarily see the world differently, and conflict is not a taken for granted result of these differences. What this does mean, though, is that they will try to enhance their positions using the available traditional means which their positions allow.

"Change comes about when traditional strategies, which assume traditional patterns of relations (e.g., between chiefs and commoner, or between men and women), are deployed in relation to novel phenomena

(e.g., the arrival of Captain Cook in Hawaii) which do not respond to those strategies in traditional ways" (Ortner 1984:155).

Sahlins sees change as failed reproduction, and this paints the word change in less dramatic colors and as not so extraordinary.

Dependency theorists embraced a "theory of economic, social and political change attempting to explain the continuing poverty, deprived social conditions, and political instability of many poor countries in terms of their dominance by rich and powerful countries" (Collins, Dictionary 1995:117).

Others arguing for modernization theory saw

"the overall societal process, including industrialization, by which previously agrarian historical and contemporary societies become developed. The overall contrast usually drawn is between premodern and modernized societies. The more particular model of societal development, suggested especially by US functionalist sociologists in the 1950s and 1960s, in which the decisive factor in modernization is the overcoming and replacement of traditional values and patterns of motivation hostile to social change and economic growth" (Collins, Dictionary 1995:312).

I will now review studies conducted in Fiji and other parts of the Pacific in the 1950s, 1960s and even into the 1970s and 1980s which still remained faithful to these approaches.

In his book *Leadership in Fiji* (1975) Nayacakalaou argued that, "there can be no structural adaptation between social forms whose principles of organization are contradictory." He argued that, "one of the greatest obstacles facing the Fijians today is the failure to recognise that there is a contradiction; they must now make the momentous choice between preserving and changing the 'way of life'. The belief that they can do both simultaneously is a monstrous nonsense" (Nayacakalaou 1975:135).

Well...in 1995 Nasautoka Tikina, Fiji, the "stitching operation" continues, and although it certainly is far from romantic, the Fijians live this "nonsensical" hybrid, and are faithful to whatever works from both worlds.

R. Gerard Ward, (1987) in his article "Native Fijian Villages: A Questionable Future?" echoes a similar argument, one which basically sees change as a death of one order - the native Fijian village economy and life. In his own words,

This chapter considers some aspects of the processes of change in native Fijian villages and questions whether it is possible to believe that the village will provide a place of security indefinitely. It is argued that development processes, both economic and social, tend to destroy important elements of the 'village' leaving an incomplete shell" (Ward1987:33)

When Ward mentions the exogenous forces lying outside the villages, yet affecting and altering them, it seems as though really there is no process or dialogue. Some external force is doing something to "...the village economy and land use and modifying its socio-political system" (Ward1987:34).

When he discusses the trend in the mid 1970s towards non-village living and the implications of this on the rural socio-economy, the dichotomous frame is very much present. This trend toward non-village living may be true for the smaller Fiji islands, but it is quite inaccurate to assume that this trend of "urban" migration is relevant to all of Fiji. Movement from Nasautoka village to Suva or other towns is periodical and ranges from a few days to a few years or even a couple of decades, and is thus rarely an indication of the degree of involvement, participation, and contribution to village life and affairs. Obligations to the *vanua* transcend the conceptual boundaries of village and city.

Defining the *Vanua*'s Multiple Roles

Vanua is a complex concept which has social, cultural, as well as physical dimensions, all of which are interrelated. It is critical to grasp the meaning of this central concept before we proceed.

By fusing the physical world with the ideological, social and spiritual worlds the *vanua* presents us with a complex web. Similar to the cob web, each string constructing the *vanua* fulfills a purpose, it is the sum of all these strings together that create it. Let us examine each of the components in order to understand how the *vanua* operates once it comes to life in the village of Nasautoka 1995.

The physical dimensions of the *vanua* refer to the land areas which people are identified with. Every clan (*mataqali*) within a *vanua* owns land, which is distributed to the families by the head of each clan. Land includes three main categories: Gardening land (*qeke ni teitei*), forest land (*viekau*), and fishing ground (*qoligoli*). This physical dimension of the *vanua* is not all equally available for exploitation. The *vanua tabu*, the sacred areas, have different degrees of restrictions which apply to it, while the *vanua tara*, the secular areas, can be used freely.

Gardening land is used for both cultivation and fallow. In Nasautoka the majority of the gardens are on the opposite side of the village site across the Wainibuka River which is below the village. Most of the people have smaller patches around the houses where in addition to the root crops and kava planted, women grow *pandanus thurstoni*, which is used specifically for mat making. The gardens located on the other side of the river are one to two kilometers from the village site, and each family retains the boundary of their gardens, which is also a source of identification for the household and families. At times boundary disputes erupt, and this indicates the vagueness of those boundaries. People have mental maps, and since gardening boundaries are not static, disputes are

inevitable. Factors such as status, as well as individual requests to expand gardens, are examples of the fluidity of these boundaries.

As demands for more cash grow and the heavy influence of "economic development" presses in

"the amount an individual can produce is generally determined by the amount of gardening land available to him, as well as by personal interest, enthusiasm and effort to satisfy his household needs and also meet the demands of the larger organizations such as the *vanua* (people and custom), *lotu* (the church) and *matanitu* (government) and the market"(Ravuvu1988:12).

The population growth along with shortage and abuse of good gardening land forces any ambitious gardeners to either move to a new garden site or lease another area which will be under his control. If he has rights to this land he may drive other users away, and this can easily turn to conflict. Different occasions organized by the *vanua*, the church, or governmental agencies require people to provide food, labor, and other contributions. Ravuvu argues this adds incentive for the people to grow more crops, but this is not necessarily the case. More and more people feel burdened by the constant calls for contributions, particularly when cash is involved. One of my informants related to me that they wanted to designate a particular area for gardening, to be reserved for *vanua* events, yet very few people cooperated and worked in the garden. The focus for the villagers is the home, and as the sugarcane harvest project case will reveal, people when they can avoid or sidestep the demands imposed on them. This is not to say that they are abandoning the *vanua* and what it represents. But it is an indication that there are severe economic pressures and not everyone has the same capability to fulfill both their familial and *vanua* obligations and demands.

The physical aspect of the *vanua* also includes the vast forests which surrounds the inland villages like Nasautoka. Forest (*veikau*) rights are more flexible, even though

legally each clan (*mataqali*) owns a particular area in the forest. So long as the individual is exploiting the forest for his own needs or *vanua* benefits there is no need for formal approval from the legal rightholders.

Similarly to the *veikau*, the fishing ground (*qoliqoli*) is available for all the *vanua* members. The fishing ground includes all rivers, creeks, lakes and other stretches of water claimed by the *vanua* as their traditional fishing grounds. Parts of the *qoliqoli* are placed under taboo for periods of time when special functions such as births, marriages and deaths involve these waters.

The territory itself provides its people with roots. This is where their ancestors were born, died and continue to linger as they look over the village affairs. This gives the *vanua* a timeless quality connecting the past with the present and the future's potential. Spiritually the *vanua* also provides its people with a source of *mana* to affect things. Ravuvu sees the *vanua* as an extension of the individual self, the group self (Ravuvu 1988:6).

The *vanua* is the largest grouping of kinsmen, and the members of a *vanua* pay allegiance to a titular chief. The social units which make up the *vanua* are as follows. Each *vanua* is made up of a number of *yavusas*, which are social units of agnatically related members larger than the *mataqali* (clans) and the members of which claim descendants from a common founding male ancestor. *Vanua* Nasautoka is comprised of three *yavusas* Nasautoka Delai (which is the chiefly clan), Nasautoka Burenitu, and Buremaci. These three *yavusas* are composed of 9 clans (*mataqali*) all together. Vanua Nasautoka belongs to the smallest province (*tikina*¹) of Tailevu, which includes two villages: Nasautoka, and Nabouva.

¹a government administrative unit

The *vanua* is also the people (*tamata*), "... their traditions, customs, beliefs and values" (Ravuvu1988:6). It is the people who not only give the land social identities, but who by using and exploiting the resources bring the *vanua* to life through their customs. The land is the basic material base upon which the identity and sense of security is built on.

Having to share land, material goods, and food in addition to having blood relations, creates the ideal of "caring and sharing" echoed constantly among the Fijians. In Nasautoka people depend on one another. Whether they group together to collect firewood, or simply run out of salt and request it from a family member, mutual dependence is very much a part of life.

In an economy that is still largely subsistence-based the ideal of "caring and sharing" is not only a value but simply is. It is a way of life which manifests in daily interactions in the village. Although no doubt the "way of the *vanua*" encourages ideals such as *veivukei* (giving a helping hand), and *veinanumi* (to be considerate of others) there are also equally important boundaries along with sanctions when help channels are abused. It is when individuals fail to assist and contribute when called on, or when requests for assistance become daily and abusive, that people are ridiculed and also refused assistance. The more complex cases are of people who would like to contribute and assist but are simply unable to do so. In Nasautoka village for instance, the range of households is extremely broad. The composition of the households varies from extended to nuclear, and the sources as well as amount of cash earned vary greatly from one household to the next. The materials the houses are constructed from include, tin, bamboo, wood, and concrete. The sizes also vary drastically. The reasons for such huge gaps within one village, one *vanua*, are critical factors to take into consideration since along side this reality lies the Fijian ethos emphasizing sharing, "communalism," and caring. This is where the *vanua* pulls its members into different directions. The people of a *vanua* are faced with the challenge of on the one hand sharing land, identity, food,

material paraphernalia etc., and on the other hand guarding to a certain degree their own rights and individual needs and wants. The closer the kinship link the more the mutual assistance, demands, and benefits become central in carrying out both daily chores and other assistance in times of crisis.

The abusers of the system are criticized constantly, and on many occasions are in fact not provided with requests they make. It is laziness that is the trait usually attached to the abusers of the "care-and-share" ideal.

Ward argues that "residential separation from the village does not mean a person severs all ties, but it does mean reduced capacity for the village to call on that person for direct involvement in village activities" (Ward1987:35). For instance when someone makes the decision to become a *galala*, someone who lives outside the village in a separate farm it is "symbolic of the precedence of commercial and individual interests over subsistence and communal interests"(Ward1987:35). He sees the monetised rural economy, specialization of village workforce, increased market orientation of agriculture, greater dependence on non-traditional systems of land holding, and greater dependence of savings as indications of a "weakening of the Fijian social system." Ward holds that Fijian life and community are not static and Fijians have lived through European contact and colonization which did have many powerful implications. By assuming that the Fijian system is weakening he suggests that there must have been a time when this system existed in a vacuum and that its structure does not have the flexibility and sufficiently strong adaptive capacity that it obviously has. The Fijian system is alive. Throughout its history, beginning with the first settlers who arrived from Asia through the Indonesian archipelago at least 8000 years ago, the process of shaping, reshaping, inventing, and reinventing traditions continues to secure, as Ward says, the Fijians "questionable" future.

Cash flows into the Nasautokan households from a variety of sources, some from within the village and some from outside. In Nasautoka groups of young men and women

are hired many times to do extensive weeding jobs for someone who has a particularly large garden. Cutting the grass of the village compound is usually performed by a Nasautokan who owns a lawn mower. Carpentry and construction jobs usually involve village men who have training in the area and are paid to build new houses, extend houses or in some cases repair damage to houses which they have suffered due to flooding or hurricanes. The village store owned by the Buremaci clan provides work for young men and women from the clan. Nasautoka also hired a primary school teacher who is Nasautokan. Sales of kava and cigarette rolls within the village are very common, and so is homemade toffee. On good fishing days families sell either cooked or raw fish outside their houses for to fellow members of the *vanua*.

There are also a variety of sources of income found outside the village. Every week sacks of produce, mainly root crops, ferns and hot chilies are mounted on trucks which head down along with the ladies to markets on the fringes of cities like Suva and Lautoka where they spend all of Saturday selling their produce. Sweet water prawns and fish are also sold out of the village in Tailevu town, about a 30 minute bus ride away from Nasautoka. Bananas are sold bi-weekly to a juice factory truck which travels along Kings Road. This functions as a quite consistent income for all villagers. Occasionally village projects such as a sugarcane harvest, pine planting projects or extensive grass cutting mobilize large numbers of men out of Nasautoka, at times even to other islands. The money generated from these projects does not always flow into the households. Sometimes the money is accumulated into a common basket which then allows the villagers to inject the cash into different projects such as, upgrading their water supply, improve or construct a school building, church, or whatever needs to get done for the benefit of the *vanua* as a whole. Some Nasautokans hold positions with the Public Works Department or other governmental agencies and are stationed in neighboring areas of the province.

Rural-Urban Movements

Some Nasautokans own houses in an urban area as well as in the village. The frequency and degree of movement to and from the city vary depending on whether they hold jobs, or are retired, and their different economic positions. Those living in the governmental housing in the city are in many cases barely making ends meet, and therefore do not have the luxury either in time or money to visit the village frequently. On the other hand, retired school teachers who receive a pension every month and have had other jobs as civil servants are more able to move back and forth to and from the cities even on a weekly basis. The Nasautokans who do not own or rent property in cities and are living in the village are not confined to the village. A couple of examples are the ladies who sell produce in the markets and may stay with relatives in urban areas for days at a time. The frequency of the visits and lengths of their stay in cities vary greatly according to the obligations which they have awaiting them in the village. Many young women move in with relatives and eventually find informal employment such as domestic labor for months at a time or even years and then decide to return to the village.

Nasautoka functions such as funerals and weddings mobilize people for purposes of presence, assistance and contributions of money and other wealth as well. The obligations to the *vamua* transcend the conceptual boundaries of city or village. As my case study will exemplify the hybrid is not a simple one, and the problems due to the gap between what would be the ideal, as opposed to the ability to contribute, share and assist many times is the cause of tension and frustration for all involved. But there is no doubt that the Fijians are acting in more than one stage in their daily lives. In order to capture a reality of multiple stages we must turn to models of articulation. As James Carrier

describes in an article on approaches to articulation, when he arrived in 1978 at Ponam Island where he did research for eight years what struck him was

"that on Ponam the old ways stood together with the new: complex kinship and exchange coexisted with wage employment and commodity relations; elaborate fishing techniques coexisted with tinned fish; traditional markets and trade partnerships coexisted with trade stores, bank loans, and cash transactions between market partners"(Carrier1992:116).

He describes two worlds embedded in each other. The village societies, he says, "are linked to and interact with the larger social, political, and economic orders"(Carrier1992:117). He takes a look at anthropological approaches in Melanesia from the 1950s and 1960s which generally saw the old ways as remains of precontact order which were being destroyed by colonization and the clash with Western capitalism. He mentions studies from the colonial times of Papua New Guinea conducted by people like C.D. Rowley, who argued that since the European contact Melanesia became "committed to a permanent process of change (note the usage of the word change here. It is interesting to realize that even though the word change appears he continues on and assumes an apocalyptic death of one order and a new one replacing it. This is the duality I am arguing is narrow and unable to capture the reality of social change.) from this point, the old order of society is doomed" (Rowley1965:94 as quoted by Carrier1992:119). Of course at the time what was being witnessed by all the social scientists in the region was the emergence of cargo cults, "...old trading systems collapsed, pulling down complex sets of economic dependencies and social relationships"(Harding1967;Mead1968; as quoted by Carrier1992:119). There was no doubt, as Carrier argues, that Melanesianists embraced this faith in the power of the British, German and Australian colonial forces, but again this was not unique to Melanesia at all. Even though the 1970s brought new approaches to interpreting the dramas which were occurring at amazing speed, many anthropologists

remained tied to the activist approaches. Their arguments continued to focus on the west and how it is impacting village life and its people. Studies conducted by Ben Finney (1973) and Paul Kay (1971) in Papeete over 25 years ago brought to the stage and to the attention of others studying the region actors such as entrepreneurs. It is these writers that began debunking the passive portraits. Entrepreneurs appeared as "...innovative individuals who are one locus of the articulation of the money economy and the village life. These studies were critical in revealing the dialogue which was taking place between two social systems which they inhabit, "using their gains in one realm to shore up and extend their position in the other"(Carrier1992:119). Carrier argues though that these studies, as important as they were, in highlighting the articulation that was manifesting itself, did have a few problems. The first he argues is their individual orientation, which inevitably neglected the wider impact of these circumstances on village organization.

Another problem he pinpoints is that especially Finney's work focused more on urban, more "westernized" spheres, and so he selected people that were actually successful in the urban sector(Carrier1992:119). I find the latter point problematic in that in fact many of the very important findings which resulted from his work pointed out the problems which arose in the urban arena, and thus Carrier's comment on the selection of successful urban dwellers is a bit unclear to me. As Mike M. Monsell points out, Finney's and Kay's urban work in relation to the changing roles of custom and tradition and the family reveal that: "...urban households are often larger than rural households; that members no longer make up a complimentary labor pool with all contributing to the household income and welfare; and that members are often more distantly related to the household head than in rural areas" (Davis1998:3). What Davis points out is that although there are extended households in urban areas some are quite dysfunctional.

Davis's research in settlements in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in the 1980s reveals stories of brothers who live under the same roof and hide food from each other.

His work in Suva in the 90s reveal similar stories, "...brothers and their wives quarreling over the use of cooking facilities, rather than cooking together on a common hearth; and it is well known that rural nephews and nieces living in urban households for schooling purposes often feel unwanted" (Davis1998:3). When Davis mentioned these examples in class one of the Fijian students said "Oh! But that's unFijian!", and it is these very comments which illustrate the contradictions between the reality and the mythological romance. Finney's urban work sheds light on the many new problems that were emerging in the urban areas, and in fact highlighted the challenges facing these households. At the same time Finney's work is consistent with the practice approach, which complements the study of both systems and structures. No doubt, as Carrier rightly point out, his focus on particular types of actor/individual, in this case the entrepreneur, left little to be said about the wider impact of these reference points on the village organization. In the 1970s T. K. Moulik conducted a study that analyzed cultural factors which affected cash cropping in various places in Papua New Guinea. He looked at cash crop entrepreneurs in terms of their individual strategies and transactions. The structural elements which both constrain and enable the individual, were not treated in his study. The variations he found among these entrepreneurs were explained in social-psychological terms. The degree of the individual's motivation was reduced to psychological constrains such as fear of sorcery. The problem is that we are left with very little knowledge regarding how the reorientation of the money economy affects the village societies.

Another study which completely neglects the individual orientation, also a product of the 1970s, is Rolf Gerritsen's work with PNG entrepreneurs. His study revolved around his concern "...with establishing the existence of an emerging big peasantry, to plot its links with the state and its privileged access to state resources" (Carrier1992:120). He takes a small group of people, and studies them not as individuals but rather as an emerging new class. Although he "takes a firm hold of sociological factors and

processes," (Carrier1992:120) he embraces strongly an urban orientation which limits his scope. His concern with change both in the political as well as the economic realms is unquestionable, but,

"it does mean that he slights consideration of the social organization of the villagers from which these big peasants have emerged and the way that articulation, which the big peasants embody, links these villages to the national economy and affects their structure" (Carrier1992:120).

One more study worth mentioning before we move on to the *persistence approaches* is one conducted by Lawrence Grossman in the 1980s. He looked at cattle projects in the Eastern Highlands Province, PNG. He finds these so called big peasants from within the village not by picking the initiators but rather by "looking at the village enterprises, cattle projects" (Carrier1992:120). He completely rejects the structural approach arguing that structures "cause nothing, that it is necessary to consider 'the strategies and aggregate actions of individuals and groups' if one is to understand articulation" (Carrier1992:120-21). By ignoring structures all together he provides us with all the strategies, actions, etc., that are relevant only to the specific cattle projects. He points out the importance of capturing the articulation, yet he fails to tie these projects in with the social organization of the villages where these projects are taking place. He also fails to "consider how a village society, as opposed to certain individuals, articulates with the larger economy" (Carrier1992:121). Carrier argues that Grossman fails mainly because he is guided by his interest in commodity relations found in the national economy. Although his study is rooted in the village, in relationships especially between leaders and those taking part in the cattle projects "he selectively perceives and recasts them in terms of the logic of the national economy" (Carrier1992:121). As a result all relationships that could not be reduced to economic calculus are removed and so is the distinction between the capitalist and precapitalist forms.

What all these studies have in common is that their orientations are individualistic. Although they appear to be tying these villages with the outside world they do not treat them as social units, and the result is an isolationist approach. These studies teach us very little about the impact that the west has on the village society, its interactions, and practices. What is needed to accommodate hybrid situations is a model which leaves room for the unpredictable, grasping change as non-evolutionary.

Giddens's Alternative Approach

The model which I have chosen to embrace for this purpose is Anthony Giddens Structuration Theory. In explaining social change Giddens first of all states that "no single and sovereign mechanism can be specified; there are no keys that will unlock the mysteries of human social development, reducing them to a unitary formula, or that will count for the major transitions between societal types in such a way either" (Giddens1984:243). By saying this Giddens is not proposing we relinquish all general conceptions which can be used to analyze change, neither is he arguing that we can not generalize about social change.

At the heart of Giddens's theory lies the duality of structure, the interconnectedness of the agent and structures. He finds it absurd to try to surgically separate the two, assuming one has priority over the other. It is critical to clarify right from the start that in fact these are not two things, but two aspects, two ways of looking at social practices in everyday life. One fuels the other; one can not exist without the other. An actor activates a structure and it is born, then reproduced or transformed. Structures are rules and resources and their habitat is virtual. It exists in people's minds. Structures are not external entities which constrain an individual actor. They are both enabling as well as constraining. What he is suggesting is that we must not give priority to

either structures or actors but to social practices. The duality of structure refers to the fact that structures are both produced by human action and are also the medium of human action (Craib1992:44). Structures for Giddens are, as I mentioned above, rules and resources. Both are the fuel needed for producing, reproducing and transforming social action as well as systems. His thesis is an attempt to place in one theoretical frame both structure and action. His theory shifts the focus from an epistemological concern to an ontological one. He argues that much attention has been placed on the base of our knowledge, and too much concern for producing adequate knowledge has persisted in sociology. Our attention should turn to the "real nature of the social world and what it is studying, i.e., ontology" (Craib1992:3). Giddens's interest lies in everyday life, in routines, and thus the less abstract laws are the more important. These are the laws that contribute to the realm of everyday life. If for instance we take a law in Fiji which comes into play at a time of mourning -- a law which forbids fishing in the river for 100 days after a death - this law affects not only peoples' activities in the village but their diets as well. This is not an abstract law like one forbidding murder, which does not affect the daily routine of life in the village. It is the simpler laws which become more important and contribute much to daily life, and these are the ones Giddens is primarily concerned with and finds more important. His focus on social practices makes him a praxis theorist, one concerned with dynamic action. In his own words the purpose or domain of the social sciences "...according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, not the existence of any form of societal totality, but the social practices ordered across space and time" (Giddens1984:2).

In focusing on his signification rules we come to see that symbolic rules have a potency which stimulates meaning. Giddens has a quite different conception of symbolism than the one that dominated sociology. In sociology "symbol is often used as merely equivalent to 'representation', and hence symbols are presumed to have rigid boundaries"

(Giddens1979:107). He see's this view as static, conservative and unable to explain the intimacy and subtlety whereby "symbolic orders are geared in to process of social change" (Giddens1979:107). If we accept that symbolism relates as Ricoeur says "the multiplicity of meaning to the equivocalness of being", we will find the metaphorical associations of symbols as not only important in science, but indeed they may be at the very root of innovation in scientific theories.

In the case study I will be discussing in depth the structure of the *vamua*, which is in short a complex concept which has social cultural as well as physical dimensions all of which are interrelated. It fuses the ideological, social and spiritual worlds, presenting a complex web. But it is important to stress here that this structure means very different things depending on who and where the agent is in relation to this structure. I will introduce three different groups within the village, all of whom in one way or another are connected and compose the *vamua* yet each group reacts to it very differently. I will also reveal how they react to the new symbolic rules that have penetrated the *vamua*.

The changes brought via modernity stressed individualism. The *vamua* was able to control individualism. The new symbols introduced gave an advantage to agents who as Giddens defines "are capable of 'making a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events"(Giddens1984:14). One of the central characters in this study is Ratu Semi who is both a member of the chiefly clan and an entrepreneur. He utilizes both the symbols of the *vamua* and modernity to satisfy primarily his individual desire to advance his own power and see his self-appointed initiatives fulfilled. In short the symbolism of wealth and education ("new" symbols) as well as a chief who is to be respected and obeyed ("old" symbols) are fused by him who benefits and makes use of both structures. Even though Ratu Semi is not capable of controlling everything he is an agent in both his interest in his own power and in his manipulations to obtain this power (see pp43-45 young peoples' views of his manipulation).

There are two more groups I address in reference to this matter: One group are the elders, who are resisting the new symbols while romanticizing their hollow roles which the *vanua* provided and which in the past gave them both a sense of purpose and importance within the structure. The second are the young generation in the village who represent a split. Both the elders and the young generation are caught between two worlds, unable to reign in neither one yet are still able to make decisions which indicate they do have some degree of power.

"To have 'no choice' does not mean that action has been replaced by reaction. Action logically involves power in the sense of transformative capacity. In this sense, the most all embracing meaning of 'power' is logically prior to subjectivity, to the constitution of the reflexive monitoring of conduct"(Giddens1984:15).

No agent has absolute power and each of the three groups operates within their constraints and possibilities.

I earlier explained that the *vanua* has multiple meanings along with enactments that vary depending on who and where you are. Let us delve into the meanings these three groups of agents attribute to the *vanua*.

The young people of Nasautoka argue the following:

"We are constantly told by our elders to contribute and maintain our "Fijian way." They continuously ask us for money, which is hard for us to come by. They speak of the *vanua* and the truth is that in the end of the day if my mother doesn't sell enough produce in the market we can go a whole week eating cassava and *rourou*. It isn't the *vanua* who feeds us. I am not sure how this can go on?"(17 year old female)

Simultaneously the young people view the *vanua* as a place where they are able to subsist. They see the structure as constraining their need to advance economically and individually while it enables them to own land, sell produce and in this manner the result is that the *vanua* is reproduced, and the structure is maintained.

The elders view the *vanua* as an ideal structure which is threatened by the incoming "new" symbols. The *vanua* is a romantic structure which highlighted the values and morals of "care and share" which they feel are being lost. Their marginality within the hybrid chiefdom is highlighted with the penetration of characters such as Ratu Semi who prove to them that times have changed and the *vanua* is not the sole determinator of law and power. They refuse to cooperate with Ratu Semi when he attempts to side step their approval of his sugar cane harvest project, and react by not only staying back in the village, but by keeping their sons from joining other men in the cane fields.

The outcome of this power struggle between three groups who are operating, affecting and acting in and out of two merging structures is not definitive. But it is certainly a fine example of a hybrid which justifies an approach that is able to grasp this current complexity.

The theory of structuration creates a balance between the deterministic aspects of both functionalism and structuralism. Giddens accomplishes this by adding the ingredient of agency, which is a concept of paramount importance in this study. The individual he conceptualizes is both knowledgeable and reflexive, he is an agent who has spontaneous potential as well. The roots of this conception lie in ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, and phenomenological sociology. From these action theories Giddens takes the active position of the individual. The individual here is not viewed as impotent and passive as he paces through social life. He is an active participant.

Giddens is critical of theories that tend to neglect aspects of society that are structural and which inevitably are constraining. The case study I am presenting will reveal that even though some actors are "transformers" or "innovators," individual actors can also be responsible for the reproduction of structural properties of larger collectivities. As Giddens explains,

"On a logical level altruism... (can be the reason why the conduct of an individual actor has such as impact). That it to say, while the continued existence of large collectivities or societies evidently does not depend upon the activities of any particular individual, such collectivities or societies manifestly would cease to be if all the agents involved disappeared...It is always the case that the day-to-day activity of social actors draws upon and reproduces structural features of wider social systems. But 'societies'...are not necessarily unified collectivities. 'Social reproduction' must not be equated with the consolidation of social cohesion"(Giddens1984:24).

Again, as my case study will exemplify - a social system like the *vanua* includes properties which are grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts and are produced and reproduced in interaction.

Giddens takes the concepts "structure" and "action" and describes a dialectical relationship between the two as they unfold in social practices. He does so by reconceptualizing them and sewing the two together. Action in its various aspects is captured in structuration theory when he discusses the "stratification model of action." Conditions of action are divided here into acknowledged and unacknowledged ones. Their sources lie in unconscious motivation and the structural features of society. Also, we take into account those facets of action which we are conscious of and can explicate, as well as those engraved in our routine and which we have internalized by repeating them over and over again.

Structure receives an additional meaning to the one previously mentioned. Giddens refers to the structure as a manner of construction of an object. "As I shall employ it, structure refers to structural property, or more exactly, to structuring property, structuring properties providing the binding of time space in social systems" (Giddens1979:64). The stratification model of action he includes connects "what can not be said with what has to be done." This is the aspect of agency which refers to the actors

intentional or purposive side. The intention of an actor refers to the repetitive process or routinized aspects of human practices. The other elements he includes in his model are rationalization of action and motivation of action.

The ability of an actor to verbalize his activities is what he means by rationalization of action. People both reflect and explain why they act in a particular way. It is in situations of social interactions that both the reflexive monitoring and rationalization of action take place. Once we get into the aspects which can not be grasped by rationalization we enter the arena of the more psychological forces such as the unconscious. This is where the motivation of action comes in.

There are motivations as well as structural properties which are not available to the actor/agent. It is these unacknowledged conditions which lead and produce unintended consequences of action (Giddens1979:59). It is these unintended consequences of action which pertain to the process of reproduction of society which involve both the present (reflexive monitoring of action) and absent (structural properties) aspects of human affairs.

The gatherings which take place at different houses in the village, the cane fields, and gatherings, while people are collectively working together in their gardens are the birthplaces which allowed either rebellious plans of escaping the demands of the *vamua* or its reproduction, by reinforcing the positive and on some occasions the apathy of the actors. Any setting of interaction shifted the scale either towards cooperation or fed the fire of rage and frustration.

IV. THE CASE STUDY

The sugarcane harvest project that began in April-May of 1995 offered Nasautoka men an opportunity to raise money for the *vanua* projects as well as to inject cash into their homes and families. This sort of incorporation of wage work along with their semi-subsistent system of agricultural production is nothing new. In 1984 a pine planting project in the island Vanua Levu mobilized a large number of men. The difference being that all the money went to the *vanua*, and was used to build their church.

So why is this project of interest? The case that I will discuss below will reveal scenarios indicating that frustrations, lawlessness, and intolerance are not exclusive to a particular sphere, nor do they have a time limit. The reality presented by the difficulties of young people of Nasautoka will lead us to a world of blurred boundaries. This case will highlight the importance of looking at young people in Fijian society, because it is through their confusion that I came to understand that dichotomous frames of analysis are limited and that only by transcending there is a possibility of understanding the current social order.

The case study will look at different events which took place while this project was in process. The reader will not be taken to the cane fields, but will hear reactions, feelings, and thoughts of both young and old people about not only the project itself but the *vanua* in a more general way. The sugarcane project was a means through which the general attitudes towards the *vanua* and leadership were unraveled. It is through the conversations I had with these men when they either returned on weekends or indefinitely abandoned the fields that the issues were raised discussed and developed.

Vanua projects taken up by villages in general contribute to the satisfaction of the overall welfare and needs of the villagers in terms of providing or improving water supply, school buildings and other educational facilities, village health projects and church affairs.

Rural development and money-making activities has greatly influenced the attitudes of the people of Nasautoka and brought to the fore the economic and monetary values of the various natural resources under their control. This spawned a new emphasis on legal rights over productive resources, such as land, which had once been freely exploited by the people for the sake of maintaining the solidarity in the *vanua* while simultaneously carrying out various social responsibilities and obligations.

"Under subtle pressure from political propaganda touting the 'economic backwardness' and 'traditionalism' of rural areas, as major impediments to national development, these old patterns began to evolve towards new models of socio-economic development. The emphasis on rural development after 1976 offered additional ideological justification for the adoption of new socio-economic roles at the expense of the existing communal system"(Ravuvu1988:83).

Traditional relationships and values which are seen as not incompatible with modern economic practices were less adhered to or ignored. Non-traditional behavior was justified on the grounds that the individual needed to economically develop himself as encouraged by the Government.

Many people were taken for a ride, still expecting the fulfillment of the promises of politicians. Many people of Nasautoka accepted as gospel truth the verbal utterances of leaders. Most would be reluctant to negotiate and make contracts on paper. The signing of contracts by them was regarded as frightening because of inflexibility and legal implications, as contracts could be used against them if they failed. This was in contrast to the traditional context where errors would be tolerated for the sake of group solidarity. This was an important principle of group living which was not in line with the capitalistic ideology of emphasizing individualism. Thus it was not generally encouraged as an effective base for development, particularly when it involved the securing of financial loans and other forms of credit. This has become a strong dividing force now at work among the people of the village.

The need to work together to satisfy obligations to units such as the *yavusa* (a social unit of the *vanua*), *koro* (the entire village community), *mataqali* (a Fijian social unit), or *vanua* often conflicts with the need to attend to individual or household needs. Primary allegiance is to the local group - the family. One provides food for the household unit, or supports one's *mataqali* and *yavusa* in funerals and weddings. One participates in church and school activities for the village. Beyond that one is reluctant to be fully involved. The larger the unit the less important and meaningful it is to people to be directly involved in the satisfaction of their everyday needs. The smaller the unit the closer the relationship, the stronger and more immediate the co-operation and support one receives from the group members and the greater importance and recognition of the unit. Thus to the people of Nasautoka the *tikina*, *yavusa*, and in the case at hand the *vanua* units are an anachronism that have very little to do with day to day living or personal or group development. Priority is generally given to immediate family affairs, both nucleated and extended in terms of the *mataqali* and *yavusa* units. Although support and co-operation are expected from other members of the village, this depends very much on existing relationships with members of the various groups within the village. Through the extended family system, a dissatisfaction with one member means the likely withdrawal of support by other members. Village affairs including *vanua* projects are only next in importance as far as they contribute to the satisfaction of the villagers needs and welfare. The Government however, is generally expected to be considerate of the people's problems and assist, protect, and support them. The unit which provides the most collaboration and support of the benefactors remains the family unit. The strength and extent of support and collaboration for larger-superordinate units depends on the degree and extent of benefits provided by them.

The people of Nasautoka are both eager and reluctant to accept various elements which constitute their livelihood, but as the case study below will reveal, their priorities,

new powerful entities in the village, and conflicting ideologies leaves the villagers and leaders in a state of tension.

One morning in April, 1995 I headed to Nadera (a neighborhood of Suva) to meet Ratu² Semi Seruvakula, who offered me a ride to the village. On our way to Nasautoka he told me of the new village project he had initiated - a sugar cane harvest project, on the western side of the island close to the city Lautoka. Ratu Semi explained that he is heading the village's development committee. Being from the chiefly clan gave him decision making power, as long as the issue was discussed and coordinated with other heads of clans and elders in the community.

The cane fields of Fiji lie along the seaboard from the south-west to the north-west coast of Viti Levu, and in the north portion of Vanua Levu, the second largest island. Cane is grown mainly on small holdings (averaging around 4 1/2 hectares) leased by Indian farmers from communally owned Fijian land. The cane is hand-harvested and sent by truck and small gauge railway to regional mills. It is then crushed and partially refined by the government-owned Fiji Sugar Corporation. The harvest contract was done with the Indian growers with whom Ratu Semi negotiated the terms. The agreement was that the Indians pay Ratu Semi \$F5 per ton harvested. The project involved two neighboring villages, Nasautoka and Nabouva, which together form the smallest district in the province of Tailevu. The contract that Ratu Semi signed was for roughly 14,000 tons of cane, and he calculated that by Christmas (May-December) the cane would be harvested and the men would be able to return to their villages. His plan was that from the revenue \$F8000 would go to the *vanua* and the rest would go to the cane cutters.

²Ratu is a title prefixed to the name of a man of chiefly status

"I am calling for men ages 18 - 65, knowing that not all will go; of course the lazy ones will stay behind."

Ratu Semi retired last year and is now returning to the village after being a teacher, and later, principle of RKS school (a very prestigious all-Fijian boys boarding school), and having worked as a civil servant in the Lands Department in Suva. Ratu Semi also ran for provincial candidacy (Tailevu) in 1994 and lost. Ratu Semi owns a house in Nadera, Suva where his sons and daughters, ages ranging 16-45, are living. And although he and his wife have both "retired back to the village," they spend half of their time in the village and the other in Nadera.

"When I returned to the village I was shocked at the state it was in , the passivity and lack of initiative as well as disrespect towards Ratu Peni (the current chief). What I saw was sufficient, and motivated me to appoint myself as chairman of the village development committee, and I began searching for a contract that would provide the people of Nasautoka with cash for both their homes as well as the *vanua*.

The provincial debt has been piling up, the state of our primary school and water supply is deteriorating, and there are many things that should be done around here".

When speaking about the villagers Ratu Semi stressed his frustration regarding their priorities. He argued that too much time and money is wasted on the church and other social events and too little on generating money and developing their village.

"Before Hurricane Kina there was electricity in this village. It seems as though the past decade has been a decade of apathy with very little motivation. It is tougher to get the villagers to cooperate in development projects than to organize a *bulubulu* (an atonement ceremony) on the other side of the island mobilizing two bus loads of people, with huge amounts of wealth"

Not all the villagers were very happy with this decision. Some of the older men and clan leaders were upset with Ratu Semi's initiative and did not feel a part of the decision making process. In addition to the older folk, young men and women in the village also voiced dissatisfaction to me.

Ratu Semi's priorities were not as different from the others as he felt. His own vision was not consistent. When his son married the villagers described an unforgettable event as far as the wealth and money spent were concerned. His current priorities as the head of the development committee are different but his participation in village functions has never failed, neither have his monetary contributions to such event which he criticizes the others for prioritizing. This already was one reason for the intolerance of some of the villagers to his agenda.

"Ratu Semi is a powerful man, he is rich and educated and he will also be the next chief. I'm not happy about this project or his attitude but what are my options?(young man, 26) Criticism is not a light matter in the village, and anything said or done in opposition to what he decides will be followed by severe criticism and its too much to deal with..." (young male 25).

Fear of criticism is central, and so even if someone disagrees with a decision or a calling, non-cooperation is highly criticized. Perhaps the root of the fear lies in putting one's reputation on the line. A group of young women sitting together in one of the homes was discussing the project. All were worried about the gardens and planting. "Who will help us in the gardens?" "It would be different if all the money would be coming into the homes but the *vanua*...its eating all our money"(young woman 24). Between the weekly, as well as annual fees, paid to the church (F\$50/couple or F\$25/single)³, annual provincial fees, *solis* (fund raisers) for different village committees, as well as school fees, bus fares, and other basic household expenditures, the villagers are

³F stands for Fijian Dollar. 1US\$=1.7 Fiji Dollar

having a hard time fulfilling all the demands and are more interested in investing money in their own homes.

The sugarcane harvest project began even though the opposition existed. Forty to fifty men were mobilized to the fields on the western side of the island. Without a doubt Ratu Semi's power as the upcoming chief of Nasautoka was a main factor which led to the overall cooperation, although there was dissatisfaction among the villagers. Their pay days were to take place every three weeks, and the aim was that each man contribute F\$80. Initially it was decided that both men who participated in the projects, as well as those who stayed back, were to contribute the F\$80 sum. Later this arrangement was adjusted and Ratu Semi decided to deduct an additional F\$2 per ton harvested until the end of the project, and relieve those men who stayed back in the village from the F\$80 sum and instead raise the entire sum (F\$10,000) through the sugarcane harvest project.

As the sugar-cane harvest project was commencing nurses arrived to the village to do community work. The work included digging up pits for toilets, rebuilding the village's small dispensary as well as providing the villagers with check-ups and providing medical advice on nutrition, and family planning. The rationale behind relieving the men who stayed behind in the village was that they would assist the nurses with digging up pits and painting the dispensary. Since the majority of the men would be gone, and the gardens needed tending, particularly planting, (which is only performed by men), there was a need to keep some men in the village. Another factor was to prevent a potential escalating anger from those who refused to cooperate in principle. Ratu Semi anticipated on the very first day we drove from Suva to the village that one hundred percent cooperation was not reasonable to expect. He called the "antagonists", the "lazy ones." Of those who stayed behind many were older men who were not called upon to make comments or suggestions regarding the state of the village, what needs to get done, and how it should be approached. There was also a smaller group of younger men who refused to join the

others because they were employed part time in Suva and were commuting back and forth to the village on weekends. Some of these young men were sons of the elders who were opposed to the project, and refused to cooperate with Ratu Semi's ideas and approach. Other young men who stayed behind showed the least interest in this *vanua* project, and were primarily interested in making money for themselves and their families

This decision to deduct 2\$F per ton harvested took place about a month after the project began, and when the men returned to the village after receiving their first "adjusted" pay checks, the discontent of youth was further aggravated. Although transportation and board were paid for by the Indian growers, the men were responsible for food. The pay was low, they argued, and then even more deduction of money intended for *vanua* projects seemed to be troubling the younger men. By now three men who hadn't come back to the village robbed a taxi driver, stole his taxi, and drove into the province of Ba, only to get caught by police the following day. Two of the three men were sentenced for three years and one was on the run. The young men who returned to the village were busy relating stories of the cane fields, most revealing a growing frustration regarding the demeaning treatment of being constantly commanded and treated as school children. Many young men, after their first pay day, did not return to the cane fields the following Sunday. It is important to note that while the decisions were made, young men said nothing, but did so as soon as the opportunity allowed itself, particularly when they were away from Ratu Semi (who as the project advanced remained in Lautoka or returned to Suva on many occasions). The dissatisfaction surfaced although no direct confrontation took place. Young men sat around brainstorming together, searching for some legitimate or convincing excuse that would keep them from returning to the cane fields. "We want to be left alone; we are tired of being bossed around"(21 yr. old male). "We feel like slaves in the cane fields, and we are tired of him changing his mind around all the time"(25 yr. old male).

Another young man opposed the project in principle, claiming that by focusing on more extensive planting in the village, there would be more long term benefits for everyone.

"Why should we invest all this time on an inconsistent and temporary project? I don't think that a water tank for the village or fixing up the kids' school is a bad idea, but I think it is much more important to find ways that we will be able to make money for ourselves while living in our village" (28 yr. old male who stayed back in the village and never went to the cane fields).

The bus arrived at the village early Monday morning. Many of the young men failed to appear, and the same occurred at the second stop, the neighboring village of Nabouva. When Ratu Semi returned to the village two weeks later he was furious not only because of the group that stayed back in the village, but at those who did go to the fields. "The young men are not looking after the cane knives and other utensils; they are taking things from others and either losing or misplacing them and are not respecting the elders. I really do not know what to do." That weekend he gathered all the young men and decided to speak to them harshly about their behavior. He approached them, reminding them of their traditional roles, highlighting their roles as role models for the young, and stressed the importance of maintaining the "Fijian way." Whether they belong to the warrior clan, the chiefly clan, or other clans, things do not begin and end with a title, they have roles that they must fulfill. (I have to add here that these traditional roles have themselves, of course, gone through transformations with time. The young men later tell me that these symbolic roles are of importance for characters such as Ratu Semi, who in their eyes manipulate "The Fijian Way" to accommodate himself and his own political or economic agendas.) The young men listened; their eyes stare into the ground. No one looked up, much less spoke up. "This is the way it is here, it is a formality. A silent agreement where we are not really expected to speak up in these meetings. We must

appear listen and obey. What do our clan titles have to do with our exhaustion of his inconsistent and demeaning treatment I do not understand".

Another thing I must add is the fact that after Ratu Semi's initial confrontation with the youth he succeeded in keeping things quiet for a very short time. It was only when he began grouping the young men together and thus allowing them the opportunity to make more profit than before that some of the tension was relieved. Initially he had the young men work with the older men, hoping that it would keep the young men from "slacking." But when this proved to be more problematic than useful as far as their motivation went, he decided to have the young men work with young men and older men with older men. But even more important, the conversations with six young males revealed that they are not only frustrated by the priorities imposed on them, but in fact they repeatedly told me they feel like they are being pulled in two opposing directions and are left confused and disoriented.

"We are constantly told by our elders to contribute and maintain our "Fijian ways." They continuously ask us for money, which is extremely hard for us to come by. They speak of the *vanua* and the truth is that in the end of the day if my mother doesn't sell enough produce in the market we can go a whole week eating cassava and *rourou*⁴. It isn't the *vanua* who feeds us. I am not sure how this can go on?" (17 year old female)

After the meeting with Ratu Semi, young men met at Jonasa's house (a recently married young man 22, whose wife has been working in Suva in an office for the past month). As they settled in the house two of them headed out to pound some kava roots, then brought in some water. The *yaqona* (kava) was being mixed and passed around. Two of the six that were present left the cane fields and were working in their gardens, and two other young men were desperately trying to come up with some legitimate excuse that would keep them from returning. "We contribute our labour out of obligation and

⁴Tender taro leaves prepared as supplementary food

pressure; we would rather just stay in the village, or maybe get some job in town." Another young man commented: "The *vanua* is smart for asking for money, but it has happened before that we give money for a particular purpose, it never gets done and the money is gone. I have three children to look after, I am divorced. I left the cane fields and instead got a job in Suva"(Betaya, 30, Siliva's lover). Jonasa was desperate to get out of the fields, and his problem was further complicated because he belongs to the same clan as Ratu Semi (the chiefly clan). Jonasa's obligation is much greater due to the closeness of the relationship between him and Ratu Semi, who not only belong to the same clan but his deceased father was Ratu Semi's cousin. His mother, a widow who was living with another widow from the same clan, decided to leave the village and join her older son in Mana island. Her son worked in the island's resort, and recently had a newborn and needed some help. She got into a very severe conflict with the woman she was living with and was so angry and humiliated she decided to leave. Since there would be no one available to tend the family gardens Jonasa of course volunteered to take up this responsibility. Jonasa's younger brother Saki was also present at the small gathering and was more quiet than the rest. He had been attending Lotu Bible School close to the town of Nausori. Saki had been in the village waiting for the head of the Church to give him his tuition money for the following term, and in the past few weeks had basically been told that there was no money. Saki looked at me apathetically and told me that he no longer cared what happened with his schooling. By the end of the night the decision about Jonasa was made, and to secure his success in being relieved from the cane fields Saki offered to replace Jonasa in the fields. This way he could raise his own school fees without the "help" of the Church. The following week Saki headed to the cane fields while Jonasa stayed back. I met with Jonasa in the middle of the week to see how things were going with him in the village and to find out if he was temporarily relieved or if he felt the arrangement meant that he did not have to return at all.

He explained: "See, once you are out it is much harder to get you back, and I really had a good excuse. Now all I miss is my wife. I really wish she would just come back to the village. This is no good. When she comes this weekend I am going to tell her that we will be fine with the money from the produce. I don't want her in Suva..."

As the project progressed many events affected the field workers. Numerous strikes, incineration of some of their fields, village functions, as well as the Tailevu provincial elections and special requests of men wanting to return to the village in order to help the women with gardens (particularly planting was needed), all led to a fluctuating labor force, and decrease in productivity, and the quotas were lagging behind as well as the money.

Months into the cane harvest project and after regular meetings with young men it was clear that their frustration had three components: A) Being "mute" and marginalized within the hierarchy; B) Having limited means to obtain cash; C) Confusion and loss of interest in the *vanua* (in a sense today the youth are expecting immediate compensation due to new expenditure and consumption patterns.)

Young people in general (both male and female) are witnesses of older villagers as well as clan leaders whose roles in the village are disappearing. Old men romanticize the old days when things were "really" done the "Fijian way" and feel detached from all these committees that are emerging providing decision making roles for people who in the past would simply be "nobodies."

In the evenings and nights, frustrations voiced by the elders contribute to young peoples' feelings of confusion. Master Emori, a retired school teacher who shared many of the same frustrations voiced by Ratu Semi in regards to youth, told me that they feel helpless and do not know what to do with the young people, who are extremely disobedient.

"Look at how they are behaving in the cane fields and in the village, too. All the single mothers...what will happen to all these children that will grow up with no fathers? Young men do what they want. Traditions have lost meaning for them. I guess even the river runs thin. They sit around at night, smoke marijuana, and drink, and the younger watch and will follow their example."

Marika, one of the oldest men in the village, one night entered into a long monologue while his grandchildren and other young people gathered in his house and drank kava.

"I belong to the *Colasau*. In the old days we were the warriors who guarded the chiefs. We also functioned as advisors to the other warriors as well as chiefs. Whenever some mission was to take place the chiefs were to consult with me, but that does not happen any more. Today the chiefs decide alone, and the government above them tells them what to do. We are left on the side, the people no longer have the decision making power."

The existing tension is not a simple case of chiefs vs. commoners. As we can see what has occurred over time is readjustments of roles, responsibilities, and duties. The problem is that in some instances there are people who are left roleless, or at least feel powerlessness. On the other hand a stage that allows commoners to take responsibility placing them in positions of decision making are village committees. Members of chiefly clans and/or those who have higher education and more money argue its not the "Fijian way" to have all these "nobodies" suddenly raising to decision making positions. Some of the committees that are operating within the village include: the women's club, the church committee, the men's club, and the school committee. But once again between the traditional roles and the new ones where does this leave the young people of the village? Are they aspiring to be village leaders later on in their lives? Is their frustration temporary? These questions are critical to answer, for it is with reference to them that youthful vision or lack of vision resides.

Obviously what they see is that the "real" leaders, or those that can act as voluntary dictators and actually get their way are those who not only have the traditional

etiquette of chiefs, but also have an education and money. The hierarchy places young people as the segment of the population that activates the system. They are the ones mobilized to perform and contribute both in daily activities and chores as well as to contribute during village functions by cooking, serving, cleaning (young women), slaughtering animals, digging underground ovens (*lovos*), building the sheds where groups congregate and perform exchanges, and serving kava (young men), and performing other jobs depending on the occasion. Whether the occasion be a wedding, funeral, atonement ceremony, or other *vanua* project, in all practical terms the young are the main labor force. But young people in the village have no real and clear cut "title" yet are expected to fulfill duties within a frame of respect and obedience. Young people in the village are expected to fulfill their duties within a frame of respect and obedience. What they lack is a stage to voice their ideas and concerns. They lack roles which fuse responsibility with creativity and initiative. Menial and repetitive labor is not producing a motivated group of young people. Instead it multiplies their side stepping and disinterest. They feel like "outsiders" within a hierarchy which provides them with the illusion that their current status is only temporary, but they know that without an education and cash the warrior or rain maker titles within the village hierarchy are hollow. These are certainly proven to be insufficient as far as the formula of decision making power goes. They see the manipulation that takes place by characters such as Ratu Semi, but at the same time feel that so long as their source of livelihood is dependent upon the *vanua*, lacking the resources and structure which can lead them to develop as individuals, they are left bound in a world that keeps them in the same place, locked and unable to set themselves free. Both economic resources as well as educational training are lacking. What Ratu Semi's return to the village did is highlight the very clear rolelessness of many elders in the village, as well as highlight what many of these young people may never be able to obtain, education and a job which generates a healthy income. On the other hand they feel that a life led outside

the village would push them even further into the margins of the society. Fear of failure and destitution keeps them from committing any dramatic changes in their life style. Ratu Semi represents a feared and arrogant character.

"Who does he think he is? All these years he was away and now he returns and becomes the big boss. I think it will be best that when he becomes chief the village will split into two. My father (his uncle) heads the Burenitu clan, and a long time ago before the British came we were separate villages. We should split up as soon as he is chief. If now he is already causing so much anger imagine what will happen when he becomes chief!"(Kedreika, male 21)

I now turn to the second point I raised earlier, which is their limited access to cash generating activities. Let us begin with what happens in school. Here children arrive thinking the main reason why school is important is so that it will later assist them in acquiring jobs. On the other hand they look around and see their brothers, cousins, and friends many of whom whether completed high school or not, are "mucking around," playing pool and getting in trouble. Some are pulled out of school by their parents who would rather have the children help generate money for their households. Others don't have enough money to send their children to high schools in Suva or other towns, and many lose interest all together and drop out. As these children enter their twenties their actions diversify, and many times selling produce in the market does not satisfy their desires.

One night as I was helping cook the evening meal Watisoni and Sereima [the village herald (*turaga ni koro*)and his wife)] approached Ratu Semi's house asking permission for their son Timoci to stay back for a few weeks and help them with the garden work. Permission was granted so Timoci stayed back from the cane fields for three weeks. The first week Timoci was working very hard in the gardens, and helped both in weeding and planting, and was hardly seen sitting around at all. The second week the pace was slower and Wednesday morning as I left the house everyone I spoke with

was talking about last night's break in into the church's store. No one knew who had done it, but it was not long before suspicions started surfacing. Timoci (21) was the prime suspect and an old woman said she saw two men walking around the area. One was wearing a red shirt. The second suspect was Jonasa (25) who was also away from the fields working on his mother's and his own garden. The goods stolen were canned foods, cigarettes, and candies. The decision the elders took is that this time instead of taking them to the community hall and giving them a good "hiding" with a stick from the healthy lemon tree, they would call the Korovou police and let them both investigate and punish whoever the guilty party was. It took a few days but the police arrived and took the two suspects for questioning. Jonasa was not taken down to the station in Korovou, but Timoci was asked to go with them to the station. Timoci was shaken up by the police's request (Timoci had already been to jail for breaking into a home in the province of Ba) and asked Petaya (a 30 year-old who is the informal leader of the younger men in the village) to go down to the station with him, and the two left the village with the police. The two returned later in the afternoon, and in the meantime the police were still working on the case. The next day the police arrived and they warned Timoci but did not take him to jail. A few nights later I sat with Jonasa and Timoci separately and was told by them that although Timoci was the one who actually took the goods from the church's store, Jonasa helped out in the back stage. They both said that it was exciting, something different. They were bored in other words. Obviously it would only have been a matter of time before they would have been caught, so there were other motivations that led to the break in.

The sugar cane project brings to the discussion of young people the third and very important point and that is the confusion as well as loss of interest the younger people have expressed about the *vanua*. The *vanua* on the one hand is home, family, gardens and on the other hand beyond the necessary and expected contribution of labor it

demands, there are monetary obligations as well. As I mentioned earlier, young people lack a stage to discuss their desires and ideas which would generate new activities. They view themselves as muted and dependent on decisions and activities dictated by elders and other leaders with the automatic expectation of not only support but cooperation. For young people, the city is a place they visit and perhaps live in temporarily. Many young women work in the cities as maids for a few months and then return to the village for a few months. They don't see themselves confined to either the city or the village, and even those with young children usually leave the children in the village with relatives and visit the village when ever they can. They send money and clothes to the relatives in the village. Most of the young people take part in the informal economic sector and their movements to and from the village are frequent. When young people go to visit their relatives in Suva , Lautoka, or Nadi their visits can be extended from a few days to a week or even longer. Many times they are asked by their relatives to come and help nurse someone who is sick, baby-sit, and do some gardening. Other times there are temporary employment opportunities such as grass cutting which will mobilize men for a few weeks to a city and then they return to the village with not only cash but goods such as soap, rice, oil and clothes for their homes. Since many times these small projects are for a limited number of people, not anyone who wants to go can go, and the priority is for those who are married and have children. The point I am trying to stress here is that young people are marginal both in the cities (when they go) and within the village. The sugar cane project amplifies the notion of the young peoples' marginality and the lack of self-expression channels as well as frustration with the *vanua's* expectations and demands. Since they want to have money of their own they tend to cooperate with money-generating activities but it isn't always a sufficient motivator and as we have seen there are other overriding issues which will keep them away from the cane fields. Since most of the money earned (\$F8000 went to *vanua* \$F1300 went to each man for eight

months of work) by this particular project went to a water tank for the village, the primary school and other projects that were yet to be decided upon, the young people had a difficult time finding interest in either of these things, which added to their not very cooperative behavior throughout the project.

Another important aspect the *vanua* raises is that the young people are angry at the amount of time and money that is invested in it unjustifiably according to them, while too little time and money invested in and around their homes and themselves. Young Fijians need the *vanua* and are trying to break free from it simultaneously, and that is the source of stress, feeling manipulated into obligations and labor as well as provided with a "safety net" which they can not create for themselves. Disassociating and total non-cooperation would completely cut them off from the only support mechanism that they know and have and therefore they do not turn the tables over and walk away.

V. DISCUSSION

Applying Model To Case

The images and metaphors that have been used to capture the essence of the region's motion have been either rooted in the realities of a previous and now-eclipsed generation - notably the period from the early 50s to certainly the 70s - or reflect the ongoing persistence of dichotomized thinking and dualistic frames of reference. Metaphors such as "urban-rural," "modern-traditional," and others that evoke powerful images do not ipso facto convey the contemporary ebb and flow of the South Pacific nor its inherently volatile and ambiguous character. It is for these reasons that I found in Giddens a channel that can explain the flow of a people who operate in multiple stages and are therefore constructing a hybrid, new social order.

"As implied in the field studies of Bonnemaïson and Frazer, the essence and meaning of Pacific Island movements become far more comprehensible when conceived as an active dialogue between places, some urban and some rural, some both and some neither, as incorporating a range of times simultaneously ancient and modern, and as the most visible manifestation of a dialectic between people and institutions"(Chapman1991:288)

It is the urgency of approaching our area of inquiry; the social world, with its asymmetry by taking into account the penetration and articulation of modernity and tradition that is called for. More generally, the contemporary world is placing its actors in multiple stages which result in symptoms of confusion of categories as well as their blending. As modern practice theory has been arguing,

"[t]he point is ...that society and history are not simply sums of ad hoc responses and adaptations to particular stimuli, but are governed by organizational and evaluative schemes. It is these that constitute the system (Ortner1984:148).

Returning now to Anthony Giddens, the key concepts that led me to his theory of structuration begin with his conception of change as unpredictable and therefore non-evolutionary, as well as his notion of the duality of structure. By anchoring social practices in everyday life he constructed a theory which provides an alternative perspective -- one which sews together the agent (actor) and the structure, suggesting that these two aspects of everyday life are interconnected in such a way that one can not exist without the other. It is his conception of the "duality of structure" which refers to structures as both produced by our action while at the same time being the medium of human action.

Action, or agency, is central in structuration theory. For Giddens action is not determined: "When we talk action, an implication is that it is always possible to have acted

otherwise"(Craib1992:35). He distinguishes between "event causality" and "agent causality." In the former he is referring to relations between cause and effect which are constant. The latter involves "necessary connections" and causal efficacy - "necessary connections" meaning that the relationship between one's "reflexive monitoring" of what one is doing and between the action one takes is sufficient to explain one's action. This does not mean one must act in the same way on other occasions.

Giddens sees action as "...a continuous flow, an ongoing process which can not be broken down into reasons, motives intentions, etc.. to be treated as separate entities. Rather it is a process which we constantly monitor and 'rationalise'"(Craib1992:35). Action is based in one's knowledge of oneself and the world, and rationalization is the "causal expression" of that. It is the human ability to be reflexive that makes human action unique. Action has transformative power and this aspect is very significant for him. In his analysis of power it becomes clear that power is a necessary component of action.

Having said that we also have to keep in mind that action here is also normative and also involves rules, and rule following, and that all action is social, since it implies rules. The outcome of action can either create intended or unintended consequences. The chain effect that one's action creates includes both intended and unintended consequences, which in turn allow other people to react by either choosing to act or not to.

"Giddens gives priority to the making of history rather than the makers; in this sense he can be seen as taking up the structuralist and post-structuralist theme of 'decentering' the subject, and we could almost talk about the actor as constituted in and by practices...but the actor is not an epiphenomenon - people remain very much at the centre of his theory. They are not however pure originators of action nor are they simple products of socialisation"(Craib1992:37).

My case study attempts to shed light on the notion that actors have both the constraints as well as the freedom as they operate simultaneously in two interconnected structures or worlds. I find structuration theory to be a model capable of grasping this. On the one hand his theory empowers the individual actor while at the same time the structure is not placed outside of the formula of change. The intolerance of dichotomous models towards the conception of omelets and blends is the root of their handicap. The case of the new power formula in Nasautoka reveals severe conflict. But the fact is that we see two forces pulling to different directions, and this is an indication that the new social order is resulting from a blend of "old" and "new" ingredients which transform via agents the basis for power. There is no elimination or death of one world and arising of a new one.

The central issues which arise from the case study of the sugarcane harvest project are as follows: For all practical reasons the Nasautokans operate simultaneously in two worlds. On the one hand, these two worlds provide them with their needs, and on the other hand they constrain them by not opening the doors so-to-speak completely. There is no denying that there is a crack, but clearly the possibility for accessing this new "power wand" is limited. The agents presented throughout the case are both young and old and it is through their conversations as well as actions that the potential of transformation is revealed. The paradox of it all is that practicality pushes the Fijians to embrace elements of the "old" structure which provide them with security while they feel bounded and frustrated by its obligations and demands. All the while, characters like Ratu Semi (the self appointed development agent) has taken the "old" and manipulated it in a way that serves his individual agenda. The "new" ingredients have provided an opening for a new blend not all familiar and for many not accessible.

The voices of the young and older folk in Nasautoka express anger at the double messages and obligations from the worlds they operate in. There are huge contradictions in present-day Fijian society (indeed, throughout the Pacific): demands for respect,

service and obedience conflict with demands - in educational institutions and most salaried employment - for thought, analysis, initiative and individual responsibility. There is a conflict between the rights of the individual and the nuclear family as against the rights of the community and the reality of new kinds of extended family. There are conflicts between the rights of local communities and their leaders to make rules for themselves, vis-à-vis the right of the state to legislate rules for the nation. Young people are told to be obedient and to be individual; to be unquestioning and to think; to keep their traditions and to go and find paid employment. They are brought up with ideals of service and the need to contribute to their family and community, yet the reality when they leave school ensures that vast numbers are without means to contribute anything; and they are told, rightly, that Fijians are a caring and sharing people. Yet the reality is that the old support systems can no longer cater to all the new problems.

"...the expansion in the time-space distancing of social systems, the intertwining of different modes of regionalization involved in the process of uneven development, the prominence of contradictions as structural features of societies, the prevalence of historicity as a mobilizing force of social organization and transmutation"(Giddens1984:245)

are all factors which are important as the background to whatever is manifesting itself in everyday life.

Final Remarks

What I have proposed to accomplish here is to show the urgency of fusing the structure and the individual by applying Giddens's model not only to suggest that the dualistic models are limited but to provide a different set of specs to view a world of hybrids.

In short it seems to me as to many anthropologists that the deep dive into the paradoxes, hybrids and incongruencies of our times is the very essence and heart beat of what is actually manifesting everywhere in all the different systems. Our societies and cultures undoubtedly are produced and reproduced by us, but at the same time we are trying to describe and understand people in motion - we are trying to describe life itself! The dynamic of the Pacific islanders "...can be conceived in terms of creative ambiguity and controlled paradox" (Chapman1991:29).

GLOSSARY

bele: hibiscus manihot - a green leafy vegetable shrub

bilibili: bamboo raft

dalo: taro; a valued and staple starchy root crop

ibe: mat

ibe ni kana: dining mat

kerekere: has the generic meaning of a request, is a form of economic transaction among kins and individuals (Sahlins)

mataqali: an agnatically related social unit - usually a lineage of the larger clan (Ravuvu)

ota: athyrium esculentum - a green leafy vegetable of the fern family

roketi: chili

rourou: Tender taro leaves prepared as supplementary food (Ravuvu)

sevusevu: ceremonial offering of yaqona by the host to the guest or the other way around done in respect of recognition and acceptance of one another (Ravuvu)

tikina: an administrative sub-unit of a province (Ravuvu)

turaqa ni koro: elected or appointed administrative head of a village (Ravuvu)

vanua: the land and its people and traditions

yaqona: piper methysticum - a plant the roots of which are prepared and used by Fijians as a social and ceremonial drink, also known as kava or grog

yau: goods, riches; wealth in the form of material goods especially traditional items such as tabua (whales teeth) and ibe (mats) - exchanged during ceremonies

yavusa: the widest Fijian kinship group - has a name and an honorific title - has one senior chief, and may have a totem of its own - A common ancestor god - descent within it is patrilineal - Its primary subdivisions are the mataqali

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