

From Kaiviti to Kaivalagi, an  
exploration of I-Taukei identity.

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# Introduction

This write-up is the culmination of my 2-month anthropological research project among the people of Korotogo village in Nadroga, Fiji. It was undertaken with funding from the Laidlaw Foundation as part of their Laidlaw Leadership scholarship and, as such, I wish to thank the foundation for the opportunity to carry out this research. I also wish to thank the people of Korotogo village for opening their homes, arms and hearts to me during this period. Vina valevu Korotogo, Bola, Lyndia and the family, Pita, Laisa, Adriano, Mere, Manoa and all the rest from Malevu.

The discipline of anthropology, and as it is taught at Cambridge- Social Anthropology- is, to put it extremely oversimplly, a science focused on the study of social organisation and behaviour among humans. There have been, over centuries, many different approaches to anthropological theory and method ranging from looking at difference- viewed as part of a grand human social evolutionary history; looking for the purpose and structure of societies which, like a body or organism, were comprised of component parts working in harmony to engender social life; or looking for cognitive interpretations of phenomena in the world around us which create meaning for ethnographic participants.

Due to its nature as a profoundly critical discipline focused on human behaviour, social anthropology always battles against itself existentially in many conceptual ways. Thus, it is necessary for me to nail my colours to the mast. For my research I have taken an approach to anthropological methods often attributed to Geertz which looks at meaning, understanding and value – to look ‘over the shoulders’<sup>1</sup> of my interlocutors (participants in dialogue) to try to understand and emphasise my ethnographic participants’ own interpretation of their world. Through this I hope to avoid the dangerous trap of my own cultured positionality (as a white-British male) and hopefully stave off reified and unquestioned assumptions made with Eurocentric or cultured biases within my fieldwork and beyond to my analysis of it.

Ethnography, the means by which I collected my information, is an incredibly rich form of data collection. It consists of talking to, observing, interviewing and living with research participants in order to gain an empirical sense of the practices, roles, statuses and values that intertwine to create social life. Luckily for me, in Korotogo, community, discussion, and openness are all valued very highly, and my status as a kaivalagi who was desperate to absorb as much knowledge and as many viewpoints as possible about Fijian, Nadroga and village life lies somewhat out of the ordinary of standard touristic behaviour. The resultant huge volume of fieldnotes and experiences that I have had, attending church, hunting, spearfishing and most amazingly being the first outsider to ever attend the Bose (one of the important village meetings) fills me with an immense sense of privilege and I hope to write more about my research, with the intent to publish an academic paper on it in the future.

For this Laidlaw project, I will focus on ideas of group identity, looking to utilise Barth’s approach to ethnic groups and boundaries in tandem with my own fieldwork. As I unpack my observations from my time in Korotogo, I will keep the personal identities of my interlocutors anonymous.

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<sup>1</sup> Geertz, C. (1993) *The interpretation of cultures : selected essays* / Clifford Geertz. London: Fontana Press.

# Terms, Concepts and Pronunciation

For the sake of my non-Fijian readership, I wish to dedicate a section to the pronunciation of words in Fijian. The standard Fijian orthography is as follows:

*b* is pronounced /mb/ as in *number*

*c* is pronounced /th/ as in *this*

*d* is pronounced /nd/ as in *landing*

*g* is pronounced /ng/ as in *singer*

*q* is pronounced /ngg/ as in *finger*<sup>2</sup>

It is also necessary to highlight that I am approaching the concept of identity with an aim to investigate the ways in which people form groups, with an emphasis on the idea of ethnic groups and boundaries which people invoke to separate them socially. Fiji, with a heavily touristic economy has many different ethnicities in constant interaction with each other. Thus, there is a general system of categorisation which my interlocutors used in conversation:

**I-Taukei**- also translated as owner, is used in reference to indigenous Fijians. It is worth noting that crucially all my interlocutors bar one described themselves as I-Taukei.

**Kaiviti**- used in my title, refers to the same group of people. The prefix Kai denoting social group loyalties and viti- Fiji.

**Kailoma**- used to denote the idea of mixed, or part, I-Taukei (however some have different reactions to the use of this word, which I will address later).

**Indo-Fijians**- refer to the diaspora of Indian laborers brought to Fiji when it was a colony to work as indentured labourers on sugar cane plantations. My I-Taukei interlocutors formally would say Fijian-Indians, but for the most part would say Indian.

**Kaivalagi**, refers to a white person, or often is translated as European by my interlocutors. It is used when referring to those from South Africa, Australia and New Zealand most commonly. One can be Kaivalagi but also live in Fiji.

**Saravanua**-meaning tourist or tourism is used to refer to those who were visiting Fiji for touristic purposes.

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<sup>2</sup> Tomlinson, M. (2009) *In God's image: the metaculture of Fijian Christianity*. Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press (*Anthropology of Christianity* ; 5).

# Into the Village with Many Mangroves

Fiji, or Viti, is an island nation in the south Pacific known around the world for its rugby 7s team, famous surf breaks and tourism industry. Administratively, it is comprised of 14 units, provinces, stretching across the main island of Viti Levu- upon which the large cities of Nadi, Suva and Lautoka are located- and beyond to Vanua Levu, Kadavu, Taveuni and the scattered islands of the Mamanucas, Yasawas and the Lau group. These provinces are tied to clan identity as well as dialect differences.

Within Fiji there is a diverse set of contingent populations comprising the country's population of close to a million.<sup>3</sup> The two main groups listed by the Fijian bureau of statistics are I-taukei, indigenous Fijians, and Indo-Fijians who had been brought as indentured servants under the British imperial rule. Using the 2007 census, out of the total population of 837,271, there were 313,789 Indo-Fijians and 475,739 I-Taukei, making up roughly 37% and 57% of the population.<sup>4</sup>

Korotogo village is located on the Coral Coast, the southern stretch of shore on Viti Levu. It is located right alongside Queen's Road, the large road that runs down the entire south side of island, which was opened in 1976 connecting the capital, Suva, to the touristic centre and airport city of Nadi and then onto Lautoka, the centre of Fijian industry. The road runs right to the village and then on the other side of it is the sea, where lots of recently planted mangroves nestle in the sediment from the river that spills out from under a bridge onto the shore. This river acts as the boundary for the village on the east side and the road as the south side. On the western outskirts of the village lies the graveyard, slightly hidden in the forest, which marks the end of the housing line in that direction. The river winds around the back of the village, in a rough L shape which forms the northern boundary. Due to the close proximity of the river to the village there are sometimes floods in houses during rainy season- however many are building new homes with stilts to limit the damage. The road itself is raised, which also has the effect of tucking away the village slightly, rather than completely dissecting it like in the nearby Vatukurasa.

Korotogo is within the province of Nadroga-Navosa, but many would say that it is in Nadroga, as Navosa is viewed as the interior highlands of the province, whereas Nadroga is closer to the coast. Nadroga is known for their strong provincial rugby team, its sunny climate and its wild horses, which roam around leading into the interior. Fiji has one main language, Bauan, which the majority speak. This is usually the second language, for I-Taukei populations, who usually speak the dialect of their province, though there can be variations from village to village. Nadroga has its own dialect, viewed by many as one of the more complex to learn and speak. Described as breathier and raspier, the story goes that the dialect originated from someone washing up upon the shores of the coral coast who could hardly speak due to his seawater cracked and raspy throat.

The name Korotogo, contains two component parts, *koro*, meaning village, and *togo*. During my ethnography I encountered two explanations as to the origins of this descriptor. One, that *togo*

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<sup>3</sup> "The local government system in Fiji" (PDF). [Commonwealth Local Government Forum](#). 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Fijian Bureau of Statistics 2023

comes from the Bauan word for mangrove *dogo*, which symbolises the mangrove forest that runs alongside the river on the east side, and the coast in front of the reef to the south. The other explanation that was offered was that *togo* comes from the Tongan history in the coral coast. In his English-Fijian dictionary, Gatty offers the description of the verb '*togoraka*... to force' as due to their military expansion 'Tongans were considered a forceful people and the word Tonga was often transformed to *togo* as in *togoraka*, and in the place-name Korotogo.'<sup>5</sup> During my ethnography, a greater link was made towards the mangrove aspect of Korotogo rather than the Tongan aspect, perhaps reflecting a broader Fijian rhetorical preference to link land and nature to people and village identity.

The core pillars of Fijian society are explained using the metaphor of a three-legged stool. This stool is supported by the concepts *matanitu*, *vanua* and *Lotu*. Thomlinson writes, these concepts and their 'interrelationships reveal the constellation of social power in Fiji'<sup>6</sup> and in Korotogo all three are taken extremely seriously.

Matanitu is 'the term used for national government, which was originally applied to the large and powerful confederations that emerged in Fiji in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century'<sup>7</sup>. Matanitu is represented in the village through the role of the Turaga ni Koro, the village headman. This role was initially described to me as similar to a policeman in the village, responsible for keeping things orderly and safe. One usually holds the Turaga ni Koro role for four years, as this is the law given by the government- the I-taukei board. Appointment to the role must be approved by the village and is signed off on by the provincial council. The Turaga ni Koro then receives payment from the council every three months, however this isn't the same liveable wage as a career would provide. In Korotogo the role has four key responsibilities: representing the village to the wider matanitu councils such as the tikina (provincial council); leading the village cleanup every Monday; maintaining discipline in the village; and finally addressing visitors and conducting the Sevusevu ritual.

Vanua is defined as a 'complex domain encompassing chiefs, their people, land and tradition'<sup>8</sup> it can be in reference to a physical landmass, for example the island of Vanua Levu, but it also references the vanua social structure. Thomlinson records that 'as a social designation, the vanua are commoners, the people of the land, as opposed to chiefs. The issue is complicated, however, by the fact that chiefs represent the vanua... thus vanua can also be translated as chiefdom'<sup>9</sup>. The vanua ties people together from the *vale*, household, upwards into *tokatoka*, family units, then mataqali, clans, (or *bito* in Nadrogan dialect), which sit under tribes, *yavusa*. In Korotogo there are 5 mataqali: Koronikua, Nabiau, Lokalevu, Quaiquai and Namalese. Namalese forms the majority, as the village has fifty-five houses, twenty-six of which belong to families who are Namalese. The rest form similarly sized small groups of houses towards the top (east side) of the village whereas the bottom of the village is where all the Namalese houses are grouped. The mataqali come together regularly for functions, which involve events like funerals, weddings, and celebrations after fundraising. The whole village comes together in a *Bose*, which is a village meeting for the vanua, once a month in

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<sup>5</sup> Gatty R. 2009 Fijian-English Dictionary with notes on Fijian culture and natural history

<sup>6</sup> Tomlinson, M. (2009) In God's image : the metaculture of Fijian Christianity. Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press (Anthropology of Christianity ; 5).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

which the people of the village discuss their thoughts, problems, and issues within the village- and this meeting is open to all in the village.

Finally, Lotu, a word brought by Methodist missionaries from Tonga 'where it originally referred to a pre-Christian form of prayer'<sup>10</sup>, translates in Fijian discourse usually to Christianity, though Thomlinson remarks that 'in some contexts the most accurate translation is religion'<sup>11</sup>. Lotu is regarded as extremely important to the spiritual wellbeing and safety of I-Taukei. In a conversation with the district minister, he asserted that 'we really cannot live without Lotu, we have to fully commit ourselves to the church every Sunday.' Translating Lotu to Church he continues:

*"Church is different [to vanua]. Church is different altogether, it is a different atmosphere altogether. There is no barrier. Because... it is church. And we learn so many good things from church, so we really can't do that, build up barriers to come to church. The vanua, we have some barriers. The three-legged stool that keeps Fiji strong, the vanua- the people, lotu- the church and matanitu- the government [has barriers]. There are barriers within the vanua, there are barriers in politics, but the church is open."*

When exploring ideas of group identities in Korotogo it was clear that ideas about traditional vanua structure as well as Lotu combine to create a real invoked sense of I-Taukei identity when contrasted with Indo-Fijian identity. Within the following sections I will look to unpack my own data that I have gathered, combining it with Barth's ideas of the boundary and ethnic groups.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

# Lotu, Vanua and the Boundary-

To interrogate the nature of group identity in Fiji I will be deploying the analytical tools and theory of Barth in his seminal work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. It is a theoretical cornerstone, influential in leading the discourse on ideas of ethnicity as a structuring force in social groupings. It is necessary, therefore, to unpack and explain the precise theory that Barth has developed surrounding conceptions of ethnic groups.

Barth writes 'ethnicity is a matter of social organisation above and beyond questions of empirical cultural differences: it is about the social organisation of culture difference'<sup>12</sup>. Ethnicity is not how one is different, but how one organises themselves and others into groupings with cultural differences. This social organisation is, crucially, maintained by 'self-ascription and ascription by others in interaction' to form a boundary between a conception of us, and the other. Ethnicity is therefore 'situational... defined through people's relationships to others'<sup>13</sup> and therefore I will look to highlight 'the primacy of interpersonal relationships'<sup>14</sup> in group formation in the context of Korotogo village.

This, for Barth, is a more empirical means of analysing ethnic groups with a focus on 'the cultural materials that actors themselves are deploying'<sup>15</sup> to invoke their individual identities rather than 'cultural materials the analyst might wish to bring in to characterise cultural differences'<sup>16</sup> between various populations. Verdery summarises Barth's insights to highlight the idea that 'ethnicity is not about pre-existing cultural differences'<sup>17</sup> but a far more constant 'social interaction across social boundaries'<sup>18</sup> with a view that an understanding of ethnicity comes from its processual social organisation, rather than a collection of 'cultural content' as this might be 'fairly arbitrary'. Thus I take ethnicity and ethnic identities as a social practice of invoking dichotomous boundaries between separate groups interpersonally. Therefore, it follows that 'we must see ethnic identifications as based in ascription and self-ascription, rather than in possession of a certain cultural inventory'.<sup>19</sup> When ascribing to I-taukei identity, my interlocutors mainly focused on two fundamental concepts. Lotu, and being Christian, as well as land and vanua positioning. I will address these in turn.

The most common statement I heard concerning Fijian identity is that Fijians are Christians. In Korotogo village Christianity is everywhere. There are services each Wednesday in cell groups- groups of families coming together to pray- and a vanua service on Thursday. On Saturday, the choir practices. On Sunday there are two church services, one at 4 AM for the people who work in the morning and one starting at 10 AM which lasts until noon. To gather everyone for church a bell, (lali) is played. The bell, as my interlocutors called it is a drum sound played through two large speakers

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<sup>12</sup> Barth, F. (1998) *Ethnic groups and boundaries : the social organization of culture difference* / edited by Fredrik Barth. Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press.

<sup>13</sup> Eriksen et al. (2019) *Ethnic groups and boundaries today : a legacy of fifty years*. (Research in migration and ethnic relations series).

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Barth, F. (1998) *Ethnic groups and boundaries : the social organization of culture difference* / edited by Fredrik Barth. Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Eriksen et al. (2019) *Ethnic groups and boundaries today : a legacy of fifty years*. (Research in migration and ethnic relations series).

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

facing out of the church windows into the village. At the first bell Sunday school gathers, (around 9 AM), with the second bell most travel to the church. As one walks into the church the comparatively high ceiling is a noticeable change from the short Fijian houses. Red pews line the church in two lines of fifteen facing the altar and then one adjacent, where the choir sits. Sunday school gets a large turnout of around thirty children of various ages.

At the front of the church is an altar, a lectern/podium with a microphone as well as a table with two bowls and one more flat bowl, with a tall base. The two bowls are passed around to receive donations to the church. Behind the table with the bowls is another table, which is higher than the others. In front of it are bunches of orange flowers. At the very back (when sat facing forwards), behind everything else, is the cross- large, around 2m tall and lit from behind. The choir dress in a uniform dress code of a light green bula shirt (colourful, decorated shirts).

Aside from services in the church, each family has a family service at 6PM every day. This is regarded as the fundamental way of teaching Christianity to the youth. Children and parents sit together in a circle, and read a passage from the bible, then sing a sere (song). At my hosts' house they used the opportunity to remind the children to work hard in school, to further themselves, and to be gentle and kind to others. A striking thing I noticed was that prayers are long, even when used as in grace for food, or other usually time constrained environments. In the home prayer sessions children, before they can read, learn prayers and passages of the bible from listening, reciting and memorising. These home services start the process of learning about Christianity, and how to be good Christians- how to pray and how to sing.

Christianity is extremely important for Fijians because it provides spiritual wellbeing and protection. For the district minister, cannot actually live without Lotu, individual's lives are not fully complete without it. He recounts the significance of the adoption of Christianity in Fiji:

*DM- Christianity really helped us, a lot. When our ancestors, when they accepted Christianity, they really accepted it. They really committed to it, they gave their life to it. Because they knew it was something different, something good, that really transformed their life.*

*J- What made them change their minds? What was the appeal of Christianity over everything else?*

*DM- I believe it was the power of prayers that transformed them, it was through the holy spirit. Through the holy spirit our ancestors were transformed. It was divine power (laughs) it was through divine power and nothing else, I really believe that. They didn't have any schools. They just came and prayed and through that divine spirit they were transformed. Now we have reading schools, theological schools, bible schools, now you can learn. But those guys, our ancestors were transformed by the holy spirit, through divine power. So it's like that Jack. Myself I had to go to bible school, to theological college. To learn about the bible and transform my life, though my ancestors they just came and showed the miracles that these people, the Christians were doing, and some of them they changed through that. Looking at those miracles...*

*DM'S Wife- They were transformed by what they saw.*

For people in Korotogo, the adoption of Christianity by their ancestors is loaded with ideas of complete transformation, from 'cruel' cannibals, to 'strong Christians'. The wellbeing of the entirety of Fiji, because they had done such cruel and un-Christian things before, seems to rest upon the continued practice of Christianity to prevent Fijians from slipping back into that same cruelty. It seems that Christianity is viewed as the only force preventing the influence of older, traditional, superstitions, curses and monsters from invading the lives of the villagers. Superstitions and curses are often discussed, but a Christian identity provides safety against them.

Crucially, self-ascription to I-taukei identity, and Christian identity, comes in the social process of comparison to those who are godless, such as the ancestors, and those who follow other religions rather than Christianity. As mentioned before, the highlighting of the cruelty and violence of the pre-Christian Fijians is viewed with moral distain by Christian Fijians. Additionally, rhetoric around different Melanesian islands follows this godless narrative. When asking the difference between the Melanesian nations, Papua New Guinea was often brought up as completely different to Fiji- with the assertion that 'over there [PNG] they are godless' in reference to the violence that occurs. Indo-Fijians are predominantly Hindu. The large scale of this group, and their proximity to I-taukei in towns and cities as well as employment leads to the continued reassertion of the difference between the two identities. This leads, in the village, to the constant reminder that Fijians are Christian and Indians are Hindu, invoking a religious boundary between the two groups. In the village was the nephew of one of the I-taukei, who was 'part' Fijian (kailoma is a term usually used here, but in Korotogo it seemed to carry implications of being part Kaivalagi rather than any old mix of groups). His father was Indo-Fijian and his mother was I-taukei. Following tradition, he lived with his father in the nearby settlement of Olosara, but often was down in the village at social gatherings and events. Social gatherings are often characterised by the consumption of yaqona (otherwise known as Kava, or grog) a root that is ground into a powder and mixed with water. Drinking yaqona happens around a tanoa (a wooden bowl) with specific use of seating space. Usually, the drinkers are organised in a semicircle on one side of the tanoa, with the most respected sat on the other side, to denote rank. The idea being that the most important is like a nexus of social information. If messages or questions are passed through, they pass from person to person forward until they reach the front. Therefore, the individual at the front knows the most about what is happening at the room, rather than those at the back who miss out on messages as they start or are carried past them. Thus, cognitively, people are aware of the status that intertwines with seating position. This nephew, I will reference him as Shane, clearly felt a somewhat outsider status. In the events there would be a group of men sat by the tanoa, commanding the status of their gender and age, younger ones and wives and other women would be sat behind them. Shane, without fail, would always sit at the back but would always get asked to move forward and sit with the rest of the men.

In the yaqona sessions, it was clear that Shane identified strongly with the I-taukei part of his identity. He was a Christian, despite his father being Hindu, and the attendance at those events themselves showed a desire to maintain a claim to I-taukei identity. When talking about weddings he said he would have a Fijian wedding, a Christian one- rather than a Hindu wedding, which is a hugely significant remark to make as weddings are one of the most important functions within a village and Fijian life. The exact, ascriptive, statement he made was '*I am a Christian, so I will have a Christian, Fijian wedding*'. Other statements were made such as '*Shane is a Christian, so he is one of us*' and '*Shane is my nephew; I keep him close to me... he is a good Christian*'. This ascription of Shane to the I-taukei group is demonstrative of invoking the boundary, the rhetoric of using Christianity to alleviate Shane's shyness and welcome him into the group. However, it would be difficult to imagine that there would be such complete support if Shane was a stranger, not related through blood. Thus, it is necessary to bring one more crucial condition- which is the vanua structure- in the mechanism of boundary formation.

I-taukei are always Christians, yet obviously, Christians are not always I-taukei. There is a second important condition that people invoke, which- unlike the broad community of Christianity- has lots of boundaries within it. This is the vanua structure. The vanua structure is extremely important, and will almost always be one of the first avenues of conversation that any conversation or introduction goes down. This is through the question, "Where are you from?". It sounds simple but I would say the overwhelming majority of conversations and introductions I have had or witnessed always

address ideas of personal origin. This is usually geographic, met with statements like 'I am from Australia' or 'I am from the UK' or 'I'm from Nadi' but it must be conveyed that geographic conceptions of *being from somewhere* are, in villagers' perspectives, tied to physical land. The idea of your personal ownership of and tie to the land is paramount in forming this identity, and the land you own will be directed to you through mataqali and village ownership. Therefore, placing someone geographically is usually how people also place them in the vanua structure, which province they are from, which tribe they share ancestry from, which mataqali do they belong to and so forth.

As village identity comes from personal ownership of land, there is a troubling problem within the village as there is no more land to settle new houses. There is a large Namalese diaspora in Ba, which troubles the elders of that mataqali, concerned that their descendants will end up leading lives completely separate from their village, not claiming their birthright of land, and also becoming more metropolitan- which is viewed by the elderly with suspicion, with a breakdown of village community values.

An example of the importance of the Mataqali and village inhabitation in creating group ties and village identity can be seen through the actions of the Catholics in Korotogo. The main religion of Fiji is methodist Christianity, and in Korotogo the church follows that structure. In the nearby town of Sigatoka there is a space for Catholic worship, however, one of my interlocutors (we will call her Lara) invokes clearly the importance of vanua identity.

*Lara tells me that she in fact is a Catholic, rather than a Methodist. But her children are methodist. She says that she doesn't end up going to church much because it is in town, and she has too much housework. However, she says that despite the church in the village being Methodist - the church is the village church, she wants to support it, to support the village.*

Demonstrably the values of maintaining a good household, feeding her children, and keeping the compound clean (which is the domestic labour she is referencing) end up taking priority over attending Catholic church. She has loyalties to the village church because it is a symbol of village community. She is in the mataqali of Namalese and her children go to the church, inheriting the mataqali and religious identity from their father. Through this she demonstrates that village identity, itself tied to her personal land within the village (the home) as well as mataqali identity- a large responsibility of which is to raise good children who will generate pride, end up taking more of a driving role in everyday action than the importance of denominational loyalties. Lara would also not hugely differentiate ideas of Lotu between Methodism and Catholicism in a hugely critical way, because regardless of the church, she is still attending a service and maintaining her own Christian identity. Therefore, the factionalism of Christian denominations is not entirely significant in creating boundaries between people, these can be blurred if they share the same vanua structure and village identity.

The idea of the outsider in the village is significant. One cannot go into a village and settle land without having a claim to a mataqali. This, traditionally, can only be invoked through paternal lineage, or through marriage. 'Where your father is from, is where you're from'. Land held in Fiji by non- I-Taukei peoples is viewed as outside the vanua structure. The presence of freehold land, declared so by imperial powers, does not pay due reverence to the mataqali structure of land ownership. As such, those who live on freehold land, usually Kaivalagi expats and Fijian-Indians are not viewed as I-taukei, as they are not properly tied to their ancestors and their land. Asking about whether villagers would ascribe white Fijians (Kaivalagi born and raised in Fiji) as Kaiviti or I-taukei I was met with resounding rejection. Ideas that Kaivalagi ancestry is not tied to the land, regardless of their birthplace, is significant. Instead, the villagers say to call them Fijians, using the English word.

# Salience and Sevusevu

Throughout my ethnographic research boundaries were consistently invoked concerning ideas about Christianity, in response to Hinduism, and vanua structure in response to those who lay outside of it. As we are 'focusing on what is socially effective'<sup>20</sup> different boundaries are invoked in different circumstances. For this final section I will focus on a practice of sharing cultural space, making boundaries appear more salient, which counterintuitively serves to reinforce I-taukei identity itself.

As mentioned before, Fiji is a highly touristic country, with the majority of its exports involved in the tourism industry. Resultingly, villages along the Queens' road get a regular exposure to tourists. These tourists predominantly stay in large hotels, where most of the village go to work. Quite unique to Fiji is an idea of *Bula* (hello) culture. A way of greeting and being open to people you do not know. It's very common to walk around town, or the road leading up to it and have people shouting "bula" and waving. In addition, it is common for people to invite tourists and strangers to their houses, to drink yaqona with them, to eat with them and share stories. I wish to suggest that this seeming opening up of social settings to strangers actually serves to reinforce difference between them.

This is because I-taukei values are acknowledged and appreciated by tourists in the country, as often they regard them as very different to their own. Praise is given to the happiness and sense of community of the village, how people live 'a simple life' with better values. Foreign perceptions of Fiji are characterised by comparing selfishness 'back home' to sharing and feeling stressed, to feeling relaxed. *Seqa na leqa*, meaning no worries, is one of the more common phrases taught to tourists. In my personal experience, as I was working, transcribing conversations and noting observations people would frequently tell me to relax, to take it easy, to be on Fiji time.

When tourists first enter the country, Fiji airways plays a video featuring a commentary over scenic shots of Fijian landscapes and culture. The voiceover ties into an idea of sharing, happiness, and connectivity:

*Some are born into wealth. Some to power. But in Fiji, we are the lucky ones.*

*We are born into happiness. It fills our eyes, our ears, our lungs, and our bellies.*

*It shows us our hidden depths, and highest heights, it connects us- not just to each other- but to our land and to all who play on it.*

*Because here, we may be born into happiness, but there is more than enough to share.*

Tourism Fiji captures, in this campaign, a lot of the topics of conversation between saravanua and I-taukei peoples. Tourists are encouraged to, respectfully, come and see villages and homes, how I-taukei live, how I-taukei share with one another, how they drink yaqona and sing, to come and play rugby. An enjoyment of the culture by others, holding a symbiotic relationship with a large touristic industry, is fundamental for I-taukei identity being reinforced. Boundaries are encouraged to be salient and shared, because the action of sharing is fundamental to identity in the village. As I was constantly reminded by Lara, in the village 'if you have it, you share it' and this applies to stories and company as well.

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<sup>20</sup> Barth, F. (1998) *Ethnic groups and boundaries : the social organization of culture difference* / edited by Fredrik Barth. Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press.

When a stranger enters a village, it is important that they undergo a Sevusevu ritual with the Turaga ni Koro. This involves an introduction by a village member (you cannot introduce yourself) and bringing a gift of yaqona. A prayer is said in Fijian, and the introduction takes place in Fijian. Then you are asked to say your name, your intentions in the village, how long you are staying and where you are from. If all goes well, you are permitted to come and enter the village. After I was introduced and completed my Sevusevu, my introducer told me that you do not become welcomed into the village because you have exchanged yaqona, you become welcomed in the village because you are known, people know who you are and what you are here for.

It is worth noting that there are obvious boundaries that still remain, despite an encouragement of mixing. Rarely do tourists learn any more Bauan-Fijian than *bula* (hello), *vinaka* (thank you) and *moce* (goodbye) and tourists do not lie in any vanua structure. Despite being told repeatedly to introduce myself as Kaikorotogo (from Korotogo) I was not someone crossing over different ethnic groups. I was encouraged to do this, if approached cynically, because it created amusement for the villagers that a Kaivalagi would adopt Korotogo's identity, but also because due to my conduction of ethnography I had become well known around the village, and had talked to lots of people, I was picking up odd phrases in Bauan and in Nadroga dialect and crucially, when I was introduced into the village the conditions were clear, 'this is Jack, he wants to do interviews and research about Fijian culture, but he will be living like a Fijian, not a Kaivalagi'. Amusingly the ethnographic method seems to tie perfectly to the caricature of the ideal guest in the village, one who asks a lot of questions, is culturally sensitive, and wants to get involved in everything that goes on. In these ways certain boundaries were extended to encompass me, attending Namalese functions, attending the Bose, regularly drinking yaqona. But I was in no way gradually slipping across into I-taukei identity because, crucially, I lay outside the vanua structure, I was an observer, a guest, and didn't try to claim any right to land or mataqali identity.

Instead- my presence, and that of tourists, served as a mechanism by which pride was reinforced in village traditions: of sporting prowess and strength (especially when I was asked to play rugby); of Christianity and prayer; of family values; of the value of vanua and tradition as a point of fascination by others and therefore counterintuitively the encouraged sharing of social space did not serve to blur the lines between groups, but highlight their difference.

# Conclusion

Thus, to conclude, Fiji is a layered and complex nation and social life has a variety of extremely complex weighted interactions. As I have attempted to isolate the mechanism of boundary formation, and the dynamic of sharing social space to enforce the boundary I have looked specifically at the way in which people ascribe socially to an identity. Ascribing to i-taukei identity interpersonally will always involve an interaction of both Christian and vanua characteristics. Some are invoked differently in different situations, with a pre-eminence on the religious aspect when forming a boundary between I-taukei and Indo-Fijian. Concerning tourists, the openness of Fijian sociality to outsiders demonstrates that the boundary is unthreatened by the mixing of groups. The status of someone as a Kaivalagi, or saravanua, implicitly contains a wealth of social value, coming in the form of stories about different countries and general talanoa (conversation). The consistent interactions I witnessed as an ethnographer between saravanua and I-taukei highlighted consistently an appraisal of the central tenets of I-taukei behaviour, the culture of sharing, people's friendliness and the consumption of Fijian culture in an enthusiastic and energetic way. Obviously, it needs to be made clear that the Coral Coast is not the main hub or touristic activity, and arguably a slightly more adventurous type of tourist makes it down there. The sharing of space and culture with strangers, the majority of whom are respectful and culturally sensitive, serves to reinforce pride in i-taukei cultural characteristics and thus increases ascription to those.