

Matanitu Kauwai:

A Fijian Philosophy of Governance
and Development

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Abstract

Governance and development are western constructs. Having them implemented in the Pacific automatically turns them into transplants. As such two things must happen: (1) the receiving ground will have to be prepared; and, (2) the transplant will have to be given due care. This paper proposes a philosophical approach for grounding modern governance and development in an indigenous setting. Using an emerging *matanitu kauwai* 'rising together to generate solutions' philosophy, the author will begin to amplify some mechanisms which already exist within a self-creating Fijian *vanua* 'place', and, which, may have implications in modern governance and development. Assuming that self-creation is self-governance, three major waves of development that have 'transformed' Fijian landscape will be critically examined. While this paper will not try to de-emphasise the colonising influence of such interventions, invited or otherwise, it is hoped it will reveal the very native mechanisms that allowed the change.

Key Concepts:

Governance; development; colonialism; philosophy; self-creation

1.0 Introduction

Governance and development are western constructs. Having them implemented in the Pacific automatically turns them into transplants. To survive, though, as transplants, the receiving native ground may have to be prepared and the transplants given due care. This paper introduces a *matanitu kauwai* Fijian philosophy with the view of preparing the *vanua* o Viti - Fiji, the place - to be a better host to ideas and processes brought to Fiji from the west. Literally, but, reductively, *matanitu kauwai* has now come to mean 'having a *matanitu*-government, that demonstrates *kauwai*-care'. This paper, however, in taking a philosophical approach, will attempt to unpack the ideas that make up the *matanitu kauwai* or 'caring government' concept. Ultimately, a 'rising together to generate solutions' understanding will begin to emerge to inform governance and development in Fiji today.

The Fijian *vanua* 'place' is understood to be the first place of creation from where everything Fijian has been derived. The *vanua* conception, taken to mean the land, its people, and their culture, is another reduction. According to Fijian ceremonies, the *vanua* is a *vanua vakaturaga*, or, 'place having leaders'. The Fijian who is grounded in the *vanua*, hence in place, is one who recognises how critical it is to have *turaga* leaders, and, who are generally known today, reductively also, as 'chiefs'. However, this paper will adapt Epeli Hau'ofa's (2008) "sea of islands" conception, and, rethink it in terms of the *vanua o Viti* idea to re-present the Fijian *vanua* as the '*vanua*-sea of viti-breakages' - unseating Fijians' 'forced' sense of settledness; and, reminding them that they only 'sit' on viti-breakages or discontinuities (islands). This, essentially, re-defines the *vanua* as the continuous sea 'whole' that places viti islands. The native Fijian, as *kaiViti*, therefore, is of the many viti 'break(age)s' (physical; social; cultural; spiritual) constituting the *vanua* whole (or sea). This makes it possible to make generalisations, across the Fijian group, from findings grounded in data ethnographically derived from a particular Fijian reality.

2.0 The *Matanitu Kauwai* Philosophy

Framed by the Fijian *Vanua* Research Framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2008), this paper uses phenomenology, and, its adapted inter-viewing method to continually engage Fijian men, particularly, in an anthropological 'one long conversation' (Gow, 2011). Indeed, these culturally appropriate knowledge-sharing moments are occasions where the empathic 'intersubjective and embodied' *talanoa* research method (Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba, 2012) will also be employed to test out and develop certain findings speaking to governance and leadership that came out of one's master's research (Tabilai, 2014). This *matanitu kauwai* philosophy, therefore, is a natural extension of that body of situated thought.

As alluded to earlier, a *matanitu* is a 'government': the person, family, community, nation, region, or, the world. In being government, it will be assumed that the *matanitu* is a living institution that is self-creating, hence, is self-sustaining. As such, a *matanitu*, like the Fijian *vanua* or place, will be viewed as a continuous whole that is continually transforming while adapting to changes in its environing world. For better or worse, these changes count as development. However, this paper hopes to speak, particularly, to development that is intended and funded, and monitored and evaluated, by the developed world. Furthermore, this paper will reconceptualise development as *wai* "solutions" formulated and *kau* channelled to solve a problem elsewhere, and, maintain the benefactor's sanity and humanity. To be sure that the paper remains philosophical in approach, *matanitu* and *kauwai*, as government and development, respectively, will be first presented as ways of knowing and being - to govern is to know; and, to develop is to be.

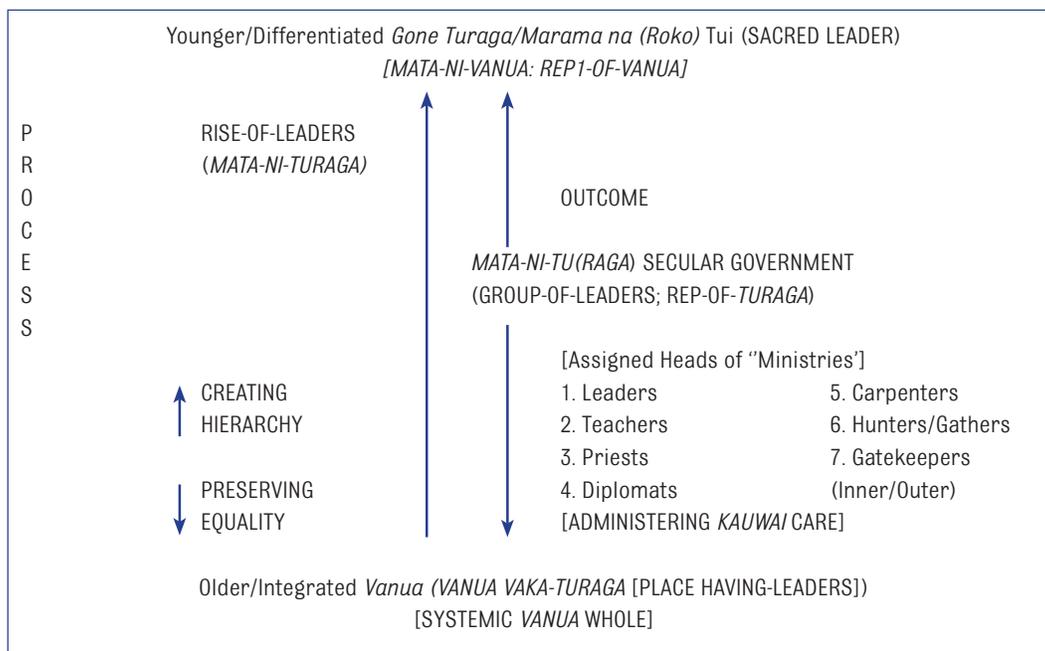
Matanitu, first of all, is given here as an epistemology; and, *kauwai*, an ontology. To mata rise as a mata group, and in the process of becoming a mata representative of that group who uses one's mata eyes to see, and to know, is epistemologically significant (refer to Tabilai, *ibid.*). The *matanitu* 'government' as *matanituraga* is a body consisting of mata representatives of mata groups who have taken a tu stand on *vanua* grounds not only as *turaga* leaders, but, as the political with the will to collaborate in the governance and creation of their people and their realities. It is in their practice of what they perceive as 'good' governance that members of this mata-ni-turaga 'group-of-leaders' rising together to generate solutions will begin to really get to know the *vanua* whole from a privileged detached standpoint - the secular arm administrating a spiritual *vanua* at the material level. Essentially, however, this governing body tu stands as the 'representative' and 'eye' of the *turaga*.

The question of what or who the *turaga* is will now be addressed. Today, the *turaga* is the chief, and/or the adult male person - again, another reduction. According to oral tradition, the sacred *turaga* or *tui* leader, though human and belonging to a sociality, is the embodiment of the 'gods'. This gives him a *tabu* sacred distance to keep and be kept because, in most cases, in those days, the gods were the ancestors from whom the whole *vanua* descended. This paper, therefore, will reconceptualise the *turaga* abstraction as the 'godded thing' or 'godded One'. While Tabilai (*ibid.*) used the idea of 'privileging' or 'pampering', this paper has opted for the idea of 'godding', and, mainly, because privileging is more of a general attitude. However, the godded thing/One conception still shows that a cultured people/person will always have high ideals to privilege and preserve. High ideas/ideals like the *turaga*, in the case of Fijians, exist to remind them of what and who matter the most in their cultured existence - the embodied high idea; and, its material embodiment. For now, and for clarity, the capitalised *Turaga* will be used to refer to that Fijian ideal and its human embodiment, and, the non-capitalised *turaga*, in reference to leaders at every other level of a hierarchy whose head is the *Turaga*.

Consider figure 1 below for an illustration of a theory on how a *matanitu* government may have come into being. Using a developmental perspective, figure 1 will illustrate how the differentiated parts of the *vanua* whole - the emerging specialised fields and knowledge communities that exist to 'serve' the highest differentiated office of the sacred *Turaga*, the 'true' mata representative of the *vanua* - have remained today

as a distinct character of Fijian society. Because these differentiated parts exist, this paper will argue that they are functional and adaptive. Therefore, there is much to learn from them for modern governance and development to make sense and work.

Figure 1: *Na Vanua vakaTuraga o Viti*: Fiji, a ‘Place having Leaders’



Though great care has been applied in translating these native ideas, reduction is inevitable. However, the author is convinced that the articulation of native philosophies is necessary for two reasons: (1) to help native Fijians see that the *vanua* is well-resourced when it comes to finding out cultured philosophical bases for founding modern and introduced ideas; and, (2) to better engage the non-native ‘other’ partnering with the Fijian in governance and development. Incidentally, these same reasons may be applied in terms of ‘preparing the ground’, and, ‘caring for the transplant’. Not only is the *vanua* represented here as self-creating in being self-governed, it has also been represented as self-sustaining in being self-determined. It is the degree of participation and representation of native peoples in how their worlds are governed, and, in the determination of the developmental outcomes to desire, that differentiates nation-states and lived realities.

Having established *matanitu* ‘governance’ as a way of knowing the outcomes to desire and the processes by which they may be attained, this paper now turns to philosophically treating the *kauwai* ‘care’ conception, and, as a Fijian way of being. The hierarchy is critical for development. In other words, making development a “need” reveals that a hierarchy is in place, and, that people at the upper end of it have made it their passion to assist the ones ranked beneath them. This is the only instant for the benevolent one to step up to seek ways to extend *kauwai* care from the abundance of their supply. *Kau-wai* is ‘taking-water’; and, by extension, ‘taking-medicine’ and ‘taking-solutions’. Take a particular Fijian case where mineral water from a village in rural Fiji believed to have healing powers was taken everywhere by people converging there for a bath and a drink, for instance, and, only in the last couple of years. That is one classic demonstration of the *kau-wai* ‘taking-water’ attitude: medicinal water to solve medical problems.

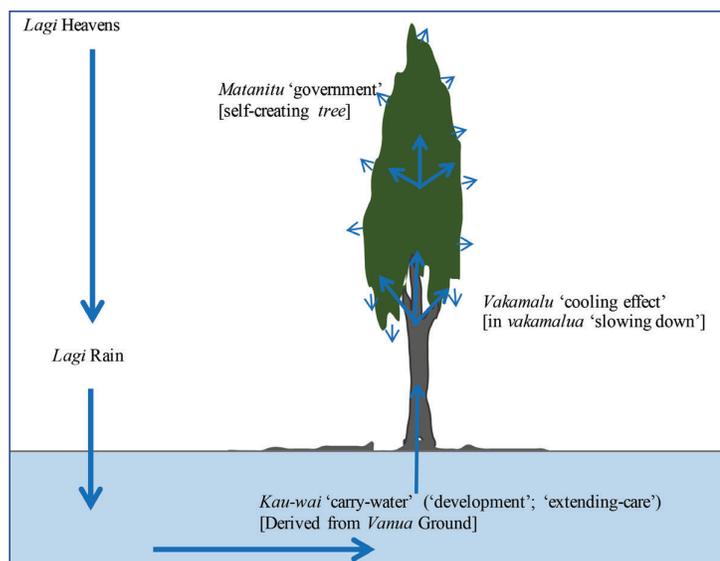
To *kauwai* ‘care’ is a Fijian way of being. When viewed with the understanding that the Fijian values *bula* life, and, as reflected in their *bula* ‘hello’ form of a greeting, a fact is revealed. The Fijian strength of desiring well-being for another self, and/or, the other self, could very well be his weakness: opening the doors to be penetrated from the outside by a dominant ‘other’, and, only to be changed into a confused native ‘trying’ to

live as a duplicate of his coloniser. This is not to suggest that the benevolent other desires more than just well-being for his beneficiary, but, also, his 'conversion' to a way of life that he has not been cultured to live. Or, can it be claimed that conversion, indeed, was - and which may still very well be - the agenda? This paper, therefore, has come as an expression of *kauwai* 'care', on the part of FRIEND¹ and its collaborators, and the author, to find out a native philosophical basis for founding Fijians' colonised realities; hence, reconcile what they have always kind-of-known to work with the introduced ideas and materials giving Pacific realities a 'colonial' look.

Introduced ways are not necessarily bad, therefore. The Fijian only needs to own the change that has come upon them. This can only happen if they are consciously aware of the reasons behind the change; the "what", "how", "why", "when", and "who", to change. Then will colonisation become empowerment. This paper, in this regard, argues that the philosophical approach is where to begin. Out of these articulated philosophies, therefore, Fijians will then begin to make propositions that become theories, and, also, formulate hypothesis to empirically test using the scientific method. This was how the developed world found out and founded itself. The philosophical approach is the way forward for Fiji. Fijians ought to learn how and why to resist the modern pressure to consumerise, for instance. Change must occur 'naturally' for it to best work, and, for its outcomes to be owned. Such is change that is not forced.

Consider figure 2 below for a tree metaphor that will illustrate what this paper is proposing as a generalisable vakamalu(ya) 'slow down to cool down' natural mechanism for keeping the kind of 'cool' that is needed for stability and prosperity to be pursued and attained. The Fijian word for such state of orderedness and abundance is sautu. Sautu, has a deeper meaning, however - the Sau (Mana) is tu standing, in place. When sau/mana ('power-to-effect') is embodied, its embodiment, a human, becomes a Sau. A Sau, therefore, is a 'full-of-mana' leader. In reference to figure 1, the Sau would be the secular leader heading the matanitu(rağa) 'representative/eye-of-[sacred] turağa' leader, or matanitu 'government'. In other words, sautu prosperity/stability comes when an effective Sau leader of the matanitu 'government' is tu standing in his right place. Furthermore, as this paper has been trying to establish, having a form of governance (as a way of knowing) is conditional for extending assistance/solutions (as a way of being) to those who most need it in a naturally ordered existence. While the knowing part (epistemology) is situated in place, like the tree system illustrated below, the being part (ontology) of the situated metaphorical tree still has universal significance, like the cooling system.

Figure 2: The Fijian *Vanua* as but One Tree System within a Universal Cooling System



¹ FRIEND is short for 'Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development', the non-governmental organisation collaborating with the author to *kau* 'channel' this Fijian philosophy into the living rooms of modern-day Fijians as 'food for thought', and, as a basis for seeking to generate wai 'solutions' for the problems of the world - and, because they *kauwai* 'care'.

There are at least two things to learn from this illustration. Firstly, the *matanitu* 'government', as *mata-ni-tu(raga)* 'rising-of-lead(er)s', can only rise, or be raised, from the ground-up - grounded in particularistic thought, and, reaching toward 'enlightenment'. Secondly, in being or in existing as a part of a greater cooling system, a placed-tree will then begin to function as nature has differentiated it to be: releasing water vapour into its surroundings, and, in the process of sustaining itself, maintains a safe level of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Such is the relevance of the governing body, or government; in comprising persons who have risen, or who have been raised, from home-ground up. In sustaining the whole out of which they have emerged - like the tree system, and, its differentiated and differentiating parts - the tree has 'fulfilled' its greater 'purpose' of making the environing world livable, for itself and other 'organisms'. In like manner, humankind and its creations do fit into an organic whole.

When every 'tree' has contributed, then is the environment more 'cool'. The same is true in terms of articulating native philosophies: the body of knowledge to draw from can only be enriched. If native peoples will not 'rise together to generate native philosophical solutions', then will they remain the coerced majority on the losing side. The tides of colonialism, in this regard, cannot be reversed. Native peoples must only learn to ride the waves and remain at the top. Otherwise, they are bound to find themselves either swimming or sinking, and, that is not likely to be a desirable outcome. This paper will now turn to critically examine three major waves to have transformed Fijian reality, for better or worse, and, derive lessons that may be learned from these historical moments.

Veisau: Three Waves of Change and the Continuity of the Fijian Way

Veisau is both change and exchange. This reveals that change is always two-way. Not only is the colonised changed, therefore. The coloniser too, in colonising, is changing. It only needs taking the historical approach to study the 'empire' to see this. At the psychological level, there is the dual process of accommodation and assimilation (refer to Toren, 1990). The human/social Fijian has accommodated much, therefore; and, to a lesser degree, the colonising 'other' among them. However, as is true in any relationship, one side of a relation will always play host, to the other, at any one given time; hence, in becoming 'friends', one becomes more and more familiar, and, possibly, familial, with/to the other. When the Fijian meets the 'other self' (non-Fijian), or even 'another self' (fellow Fijian) (refer to Pangle, 2002), both is bound to change, in time, and which is indeed facilitated by the exchange of materiality and ideas that take place when the two have found out good reasons to nurture that relationship. In this regard, change is seen as inevitable in cross-cultural engagements.

Three waves of change that have altered Fijian reality consist of a new religion, a schooling system, and the cash economy. One after the other, the next wave riding on and adding to the effect of the previous, these waves have not only changed the *vanua* 'place' that grounds Fijian creativity, but, also, Fijian priority on what ideas to project onto their lived realities. Though the uncritical eye will not be able to see how behaviour and outlook are governed and learned, ritualistically and ceremonially (Toren, *ibid.*; Ravuvu 1987), the subtle change in the Fijian way seem to point to the fact that there is now a shift in what they consume together and altogether, how and when that is done, and, why that end is pursued. However, because behaviour change is still self-governed to a certain degree - in the accommodation of ideas projected by one's 'other', and, in assimilating to his strange ways - it will be further assumed that cultured 'principles' guiding the Fijian manner exist, and, are functional. These principles stand as adaptive 'rules' that have been represented as 'norms', therefore, but, which change, in time, only at a relatively slower pace.

In reconceptualising the Fijian way as the *vakamalu(ya)* 'slowing down to cool down' way (as introduced in figure 2), this paper will amplify three processes that exist today as expressions of the *vakamalu(ya)*. Theoretically, these were the same processes that facilitated the change brought on Fijian society by the three major colonising waves to have hit their shores: *veivakataukeitaki* 'making the 'other' *taukei*' ('familiarising' [e.g. between friends]); *veivakaturagataki* 'making the 'other' *turaga*' ('privileging' [e.g. between 'god' and worshipper]); and, *veivakamenemenei* 'making the 'other' an object of mene' ('pampering' [e.g. between

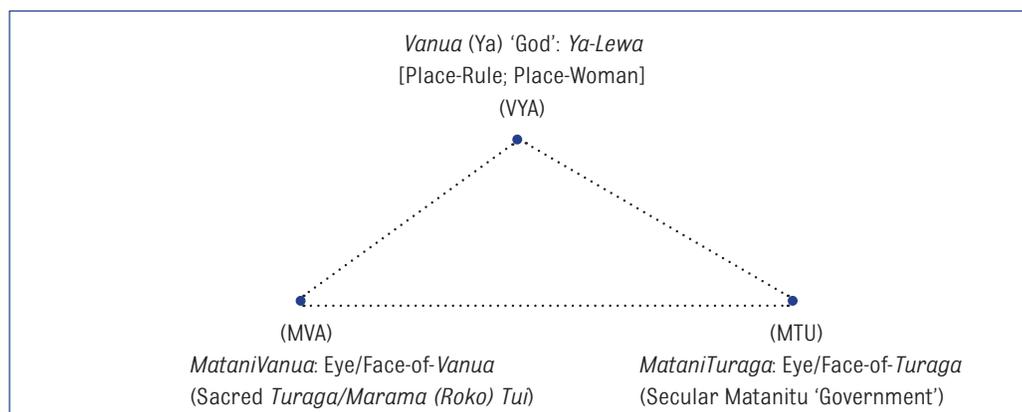
mother and child]). These processes, therefore, are also attitudes. An outsider, to the native Fijian, and, at any one given time, may be seen as a child to 'pamper', a god to 'privilege', or, a friend to 'familiarise'. As attitudes, these sum up Fijian respect. In other words, respect is utmost when one engages the Fijian. When they sense that the outsider is not slowing down, and, is only rushing things in pursuit of an agenda, they stand back reluctant to cooperate and participate - not cooled; but, possibly, 'hot' and angered. Even when they are in an awkward situation, Fijian silence has often worked to veil their frustration, and, fake their enthusiasm.

Nonetheless, Fijians have remained Fijians: proudly differentiated; and, soundly integrated. In other words, in *veisau* changing, they have only received sau answers that work to confirm what cultured ideas they learned when they were children. This understanding of the immutability of a 'natural' Fijian condition, particularly for Fijians nurtured by the *vanua*, and who have grown up governed by its traditions, customs, and rituals, has led the author to assume that these 'settled' ways are there for the inquisitive mind to read and interpret - captured in taken-for-granted Fijian words Fijians co-consume together and altogether today when they *talanoa* or tell stories. Indeed, in these *talanoa* storying moments, ideas and materials are tala shifted only to be no settled, in another place and another time - making relevant time-tried understandings while preserving the essence of Fijian thought and wisdom. Herein, therefore, it could be said that Fijians have always been conscious of how *talanoa*, or telling stories, is conditional to their own self-creation and self-governance; but, only until the idea became a dictionary entry - reduced by the very definition assigned to it. In other words, *talanoa* stories/storying have always been the way Fijian reality tala shifted and got no settled; the 'slow down to cool down' way that goes a long way.

The Fijian Mata Way

Fijian society is made up of mata intermediators. Every Fijian is first a *tamata*, of nature; and, second, a *mata*, of culture. In being *tamata* human, the Fijian is *ta-mata* 'not-mata': negation being a Fijian way of emphasising what is not to amplify what is. Therefore, over time, a *ta-mata* human, in being, can only become a *mata* intermedator: mediating more than one relation; hence, is always moving and repositioning oneself in relation to the two sides mediating at any one given time. The Fijian *vanua* is made that way also. Consider figure 3 below, and, in representing the hierarchy of relations given in figure 1 - a hierarchy that is supported by a "natural equality"; the common *tamata* humanity basis of equality out of which *mata* intermedators rise to form an intermedated hierarchy of relations necessary for putting in place a system of governance.

Figure 3: Two Mata - One Vanua: Inverting the Hierarchy; Revealing 'God'



The *vanua* or 'place' has two mata eyes/faces: the sacred MVA leader who represents the *vanua* 'led', to government; and, the governing secular MTU leader, and his group, representing the sacred leader back to the *vanua* 'led'. The inversion of figure 1, therefore, has revealed an interesting finding: the *vanua* whole consisting of the 'led' rules. While this points to a Fijian version of democracy, it is also consistent with the

idea of a 'carrier' or vessel being a "she"; and, indeed, because the *vanua* 'place' is the vessel that carries people, and leaders - secular or otherwise. Over time, therefore, the elevated *vanua* or *ya* (VYA) would have become a 'she-god'. In certain parts of Fiji, for instance, there is a *Ya* movement that is confusing the Fijian *vanua-ya* 'place' with the Hebrew YHWH, or Yahweh. In either case, it is not uncommon for indigenous societies which hold a spiritual connectedness with the land that 'births' them to relate to it as Mother. In this case, this 'god' that is 'place' is given the feminine nature; hence, revealing what could be pre-Christian Fijian spirituality. Interestingly, this is consistent with a particular eastern Fijian belief that their *lewa* women are *lewakalou* or 'goddesses'; hence, they rule.

This analysis, in this case, provides a Fijian interpretation of 'what' and 'who' God might be - their pre-Christian God, that is - making it believable to say that God's representative (MVA: chief/king), and, the representative of that representative to his elector(s) (MTU: government), are mere spiritual and political mata men, respectively. This paper, in this regard, argues that the origin of Fijian mata male leadership possibly lies in the fact that they once had she-gods. However, as this paper argues also, these are male leaders born of these very she-gods - she-gods who know the strength of these born leaders; and, who, in being, honour the generative 'womb' that bears them, the *vanua* 'place'. This place, as alluded to earlier, comprises the whole sea that 'births' the island-forms that break its surface, and, which is the deep and mysterious 'womb' out of which origin stories have come - biblical Moses' Genesis, for instance; and, much later, Darwin's interpretation of evolution. That is the expanse of the *vanua* 'place' that would have been a 'she-God' in the old religion. Critically, however, it would have been only too easy to accept a he-God story because political mata men, by then, would have been placed in Fijian society both as sacred and secular leaders - but, with the exception of a number of Fijian *vanua*.

Though what is perceived as the colonising he-God story has become the dominant one, and, with it, the patriarchal tendencies characterising modern forms of Fijian governance, it is a fact that female leadership still features prominently in Fijian society today. While it is easy to claim and justify what could have been a parallel development of such she-God based spiritualities in Polynesia, it remains interesting to note that, today, men still dominate in the church and in politics. Pacific peoples can only sort out what is becoming a 'battle-of-the-sexes', possibly, if they return to the table to *talanoa*. The west, for instance, has found this to be true. Calling it conversation, symposium, conference, forum, dialogue, or discourse, the west understands that *talanoa* is important. *Talanoa* is the basis of Pacific equality. At the table, Pacific leaders can sit as cultured but political mata leaders - the best minds and bodies to 'lead out' mata-tamata 'grouped-races' and mata-veiwekani 'grouped-socialities'.

The Fijian mata way has much potential, therefore, in governance and development; in Fiji, and, in the Pacific. Pacific peoples show their mata faces more than just to flash their smiles. It is the warmth of the Pacific way, the continuity out of which the Fijian way is, but, a 'breakage', or discontinuity, that comes through, and clearly, when mata representatives of the Pacific intermeditate at the table to *talanoa*. If the spirit of the *talanoa* can be recaptured, and, which reflects the kind of respect that *vakamalu(ya)* 'slowing down to cool down' is all about, Pacific peoples will then find the courage to confront their own 'demons'. This is a way to reclaim what they have lost, in terms of money, time, and relationships. Possibly, it may just be the only way. Then will they be enabled and empowered to embody and enact developmental goals, and, in the process, begin to earn the right to own the outcomes that they, with their benefactors, will be remembered for co-creating and co-consuming. Then will common sense prevail - the common sense of philosophy; grounded and functional.

This discussion, in highlighting the need to 'rise together to generate solutions', will now turn to the development that grounds the sustainable pursuit of the "good" - education; and, basically, because education is about "leading out".

The Fijian mata way, therefore, constitutes the worldview of a differentiated latter branch of humanity, the Fijian tamata: the branch owning 'a [particular] cultured set of signs for orienting intentional behaviour that has spectra of scale (ultimacy to proximate), sophistication (folk culture to philosophy), valuation (articulated to the implicit), identity (personal or group), and, commitment (deeply or intermittently) (Neville, 2009)'. While the articulating of Fijian philosophy is going to be a lifetime commitment for the author, two things will begin to occur, over time: (1) Fijian values, like equality and the hierarchy, for instance, will systematically and methodically surface to enlighten the Fijian; and, (2) the Fijian identity, both group and personal, will not only be found out, but, also, will find sound philosophical grounding to continue to source, support, and sustain it. This is the ultimate end, possibly, for 'one long conversation' that this paper will begin to initiate. In this regard, the revelation of the Fijian mata way is an opportunity for the Fijian to find out and found their mata 'eye' seeing/known capacity, make relevant their mata 'face' and 'group' identities, embrace their mata 'rising together' ontology, and, advance their generative mata 'womb'/'point' of creative beginnings. This paper, therefore, is itself an exploration of the Fijian potential; the seed of greatness that awaits cultivation. And, this author, a mata mediator representing Fijian worldview and reality, is one 'placed' to nurture the Fijian mata way in a manner he best knows how, and why - educational philosophy.

Education; Schooling; Learning: Tools for Decolonising Native Peoples

This paper will miss the point if it does not return to the place where the writing of papers such as this find their origin - education. Education is a university discipline that is informed by science and philosophy. It is a means to an end, and, possibly, an end in itself. However, there have been misconceptions and misinformation about what education is, in relation to schooling and learning. Schooling and learning, on the contrary are processes; processes whose outcomes may be presented as 'being schooled' and 'being learned', respectively. Despite the confusion, this paper will argue that education, schooling, and learning, are effective tools for decolonising the native mind, but, only when used having corrected the misunderstandings. This turn in the discussion is necessary, therefore, because the philosophical approach employed here has come as a result of one's own education, schooling and learning.

Why is decolonisation important in the framing of this paper? To suggest that there may be native philosophies to develop and articulate is to say that western philosophies, and the theories they have generated, will not prove effective on Fijian soil if policy makers will not adapt them to the multicultural nature of modern Fiji. According to a 2005 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) report, "... quality education must be locally relevant and culturally appropriate, quality education will take many forms around the world" (cited in Laurie et.al, 2016, p. 228)". A lot has been said about making quality education locally relevant. However, there seems to be a silence surrounding the idea of making it culturally appropriate. While proponents of a 'one-size fits all' will argue its relevance in terms of standardising education for a global cause, and which is presumed to be based on cost-cutting measures really, there remains a counter-argument that such a narrow approach is inhuman, and, will only work to further marginalise, and, keep colonised, the native learner.

Politics aside, culture remains as a critical element of learning. In fact, in the nature versus nurture debate, it is widely accepted that learning is cultural. However, when education is presented as a science, the push for generalisable solutions becomes much more aggressive and pronounced. What this paper asks is: 'If education has not made progress in terms of empowering Fijians to become self-governed and self-determined, what might be a problem, and, how and why must this wrong be righted?' Fijians' general inability to live sustainably in a modern economy is there for all to see: poverty; domestic violence; life of crime; and, lifestyle diseases. While denial will not do anything at all in terms of improving people's living conditions, the natives of the eastern Fijian Lau group of islands have a way of saying that though one is learned, there is a high chance that he has not been schooled - 'ko vuli ga ko ta sukulu'. Being schooled, in this particular case, is used in the sense of being practical. Presumably, this comes from a version of

American pragmatism. In other words, being schooled and practical, or being realistic, is more desirable than being learned, or just knowing. This, however, is consistent with Fijian wisdom that though 'seeing is knowing', it is 'doing' that matters (Tabilai, *ibid.*).

However, there is a catch in this taken-for-granted understanding, and, from an academic conception of what schooling truly entails. To be schooled, from this perspective, is to be disciplined. Becoming disciplined, however, may have its own problems when the "schooled" finds it 'impractical' to use interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, and, even, systems thinking and a kind of theoretical pluralism. How does this show up in governance and development, therefore? This question is not too difficult to answer. It is a fact that a group consisting of disciplined members who subscribe to different schools of thought is not a very easy group to try to organise into working towards a general agreement. In fact, each will want to pursue what one sees fit unless everyone has been trained in the politics of coming to a concord, and, in the sense it is used in the Greek, according to Pangle (*ibid.*) - 'as opposite of discord and civil war' (p. 157); an agreement that is 'not aimed at virtue but the common advantage' (p. 158). Presumably, this has been a reason why development has not quite found a good native ground to be embedded in; and, possibly, because Fijians generally want to believe that development and governance are about pursuing the moral end, when it is clearly not.

There is much for the Fijian to know, and, education is definitely the way forward. Becoming disciplined is one thing; breaking out of disciplinary boundaries into the philosophical realm is yet another. This paper has a bias, therefore, it favours the philosophical over the political. However, to balance that, the author maintains that the political will is needed in order to dare to re-think, re-interpret, re-present, and re-represent ideas and reality. In this particular instant, therefore, the author has dared to suggest that only native philosophies can ground native peoples' theorisings and practice, nothing more or less. Education is still the basis for sustainability; and, at the pinnacle of a sound educational program sits philosophy - the base that is the head; the grounding-place that is 'god'. If the developed world and development partners will not agree on helping native peoples surface and 'spell out' their native philosophies - the terms of reference with which they view their world - then will they continue to be guided by speculative thought that is never 'tried by fire', and/or put through the value-adding 'furnace' of scientific inquiry. In other words, therefore, native Fijian practice - in development and governance - will continue to be informed by untried thought, and misinformation.

3.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Talanoa is the way forward. However, *talanoa* must be based on mutual respect. Respect, as a way of being, is demonstrated by the Fijian in *vakamalu*(ya) 'slowing down to cool down'. *Talanoa* will open the Fijian mind to revelations on how they have been 'placed' to 'fail' at governance and development - particularly, in being self-governed to self-create; and, in being self-determined to self-sustain. However, *talanoa* must be allowed to adapt to stay functional; lest it becomes a dead institution. *Talanoa*, in this regard, must keep its embodied and intersubjective nature (Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba, *ibid.*) for it to become the right condition for facilitating dialogue and change that will right the wrongs done to Fijians in 'choosing' to become colonised. In peacefully resisting colonialism, therefore, the Fijian can begin to rise together to generate philosophical solutions that will become a beginning source for the next generations of Fijians to draw hypotheses and propositions from. Leading out in becoming educated, the Fijian must then find an academic *mata* group or community of practice, a school, to be schooled in. However, to keep one's practical edge, the Fijian must again learn to be decolonised in the 'becoming interdisciplinary' sense.

An advantage of the philosophical approach is its generalisability. When all native philosophies have been written down, and critiqued, a multicultural society like Fiji will then find a "common advantage" to agree upon and enact for the greater good. Not only will native thought begin to be amplified, but, also, western philosophies will then become more meaningful and relevant. When there is philosophical agreement, there

is a greater chance to 'rise together to generate solutions'. The matanitu *kauwai* philosophy, in this regard, has only made visible the idea of 'slowing down to cool down' that is critical in diplomacy, and, which is characteristic of the Fijian mata diplomat/envoy/mediator. This is why the Fijian mata 'schooled' in mata wisdom will seek to preserve the traditional mata communities of practice they are a natural part of - their specialised role-based groupings (refer to figure 1); and, which are indeed part of a greater mata system of knowing (Tabilai, *ibid.*). If educated 'led out' Fijians from these groupings will dare to rise beyond the restrictive boundaries of their schools or disciplines, and, into the realms of lifelong learning, then will they find the common philosophical advantage necessary for making thinkers who have been schooled differently work well together.

For a recommendation, therefore, this paper will propose that non-governmental and civil society organisations (NGOs and CSOs) use *vanua* based frameworks like Nabobo-Baba's (*ibid.*) FVRF, and, Tabilai's (*ibid.*) mata framings, whenever they engage the *vanua* with the view of collecting data for the purpose of research. Secondly, it has also been suggested that the privileging and mainstreaming of native thought is also something that NGOs and CSOs could play an active role in. While the use of *vanua*-doorways and connections to access traditional knowledge sites is more of a common knowledge, hence is still recommended, it is worth noting that in a modern reality, ceremonial agreements are quickly losing their mana-power to effect the kind of change that is desired. A reason for the growing ineffectiveness of the ceremonies, and when casually applied, seem to lie in personal, familial, or communal tendencies that have been cultivated, over time, and, as practice continues to adapt to the nearly unpredictable shifting of the social, economic, political, technological, and ecological landscapes. While Nabobo-Baba's (*ibid.*) FVRF acknowledges *vanua* structures and embraces traditional protocols, the mata framework (Tabilai, *ibid.*) has drawn largely from philosophical ideas like being and becoming, and, change and continuity. Together, the two frameworks make sound complementary bases for conducting scientific research in the *vanua*, and on *vanua* philosophies.

For a final recommendation, this paper will propose an acknowledgement of Fijian spirituality. In reference to figures 1 and 3, it could be said that the 'god' idea is one that Fijians must confront for it may be the missing link to dialogues on governance and development, and, because of the way the west has framed western secularism - silencing the spirit; and, 'killing God'. While western philosophies may be bent on disproving a Bible-based spirituality, the Fijian matanitu *kauwai* philosophy of governance and development works to prove that the pursuit of a high spiritual goal is that which gives form to the very way a people becomes self-governed and self-sustained. In other words, without spirituality and that "sacred canopy" (Neville, *ibid.*), the proximate and the secular become non-existent. From a particular anthropological standpoint, therefore, the *veisau*-change that follows the *veisau* exchange of materiality and ideas, and which is preceded by *veisa*-pairing for sharing', is only a condition for the kind of development to expect in the future on Fijian soil. However, this *veisa*-pairing is a way of being that is known, only, to the Fijian who believes in the spirit of such necessary partnerships, and as reported by Hocart's Lauan informant who said that "[i]n Fiji, all things go in pairs, or the sharks will bite (cited in Toren, 1994)". In this regard, this paper will lay waiting for a response; a sau answer to prove its mana/sau power to evoke, in its readers, a response to the arguments made herein. This is why this paper will add a call out for a commitment, on the part of FRIEND, to the continuing of this conversation, and, the further development of native philosophies. Indeed, it is a call out that invites Fijian thinkers, and practitioners alike - of the 'ground' and of the 'gods' - to use their schooledness to push their presence to the next and higher level. The philosophical grounding of governance and development in Fiji, therefore, is the founding of the Fijian tamata people and their Fijian mata-ways.

This philosophical and educational approach, therefore, must go on as we continue all efforts of attending to the immediate needs of Fijian people. It is a rethinking effort that is needed to address and redress the historical conditions that have shaped what and who native Fijians are on the only *vanua* o Viti-sea-of-breakages that has been home to them - before the west intervened with its theories on the Fijian origin; for better or worse, in its anthropological project of understanding the non-western other. It is a will that is awaiting enactment; and, FRIEND is one such organisation that is best positioned to do just that in this generation.

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