DECLARATION

Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis or dissertation by which I have been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person’s work, either published or unpublished, has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of this thesis. Similarly, this thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or tertiary institution.

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Date:

S11026646

Statement by Supervisor

I supervised Mereia Carling’s MA thesis and to my knowledge it is her own work.

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Acknowledgements

There are many to whom I owe thanks and acknowledgements. I owe my inspiration of course to Fiji’s young people, in whom I see potential and hope for a brighter future. I acknowledge and thank Fiji’s leaders, past and present, who have given their time, wisdom and honesty to this endeavour. I acknowledge the writers and historians, from whom I have learnt and understood who and why we are today. In particular, I wish to thank my supervisor Professor Vijay Naidu for his innate wisdom and guidance that has helped to shape this thesis.

This journey has been a long one and has had to find space amongst a full-time job and a busy family so there are many who I must thank here who have shared the challenges, encouraged me all the way and patiently waited on me and for me, to complete this. There are no words to wholly describe the depth of my gratitude to my husband Christian Carling and children, Ella, Tiana and Ben, my parents Kalio and Helen Tavola and my mother-in-law Shirley Cunico.

This thesis is dedicated to my family and in particular, my favourite young citizens:

Ella
Tiana
Ben
Abstract

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of the country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

UN 1948: Art. 21(1)

The democratic world values the concept of citizenship as a principle that enables good governance. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights determines the will of people that is the basis of the authority of government (UN 1948:21(3)). The theory does not make distinction between people – who has this right and who does not. It assumes that citizens are people of all ages and all of them have a citizenship status and role that contributes to the efficient advancement of a nation.

The determination of what constitutes a citizenship role is, however, a process that is less clearly defined. Exactly how citizens contribute to development is dependent on epistemology, which defines how those in leadership positions value such contributions. This is rather more established for citizens above the age of suffrage, where each has equal opportunity to determine by vote their leading representative. For those who are younger there are few if any opportunities to influence development agendas, yet they are wholly reliant on the decisions of others who determine their futures. As this paper explains, decisions made have affected the lives of young people in Fiji both older and younger than the age of suffrage in ways that will have an impact on many generations to come. Problems associated with the youth population are causing increasing concern and impinging significantly upon the progress of the nation.

Critical youth issues are related to citizenship status and role. These are analysed from young people’s perspectives, to test the feasibility of making adjustments that would facilitate the emergence of a more appropriate role for young people. Such role redefinition could enrich the social and economic contribution of their greater involvement. This thesis explores the willingness of leaders in Fiji to extend notions of democracy to include the younger population. The implications considered include a change in development priorities, expansion of self-sufficiency strategies and a practice of listening to young people at all levels. Fiji’s current political status provides opportunity to introduce such significant and systemic change. The
feasibility of a greater citizenship role for young people is ultimately dependent on the will of those who wield state power.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATD</td>
<td>Centre for Appropriate Technology and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWC</td>
<td>Concerned for Working Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP6</td>
<td>Fiji’s Sixth Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP7</td>
<td>Fiji’s Seventh Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP9</td>
<td>Fiji’s Ninth Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAPRO</td>
<td>East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECPAT</td>
<td>End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIR</td>
<td>Fiji Infantry Regiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Great Council of Chiefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoF</td>
<td>Government of Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIES</td>
<td>Household Income and Expenditure Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAWGCP</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Working Group on Child Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-government organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLTB</td>
<td>Native Lands Trust Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYAB</td>
<td>National Youth Advisory Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>PER</td>
<td>Public Emergency Regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFMF</td>
<td>Royal Fiji Military Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Secretariat of the Pacific Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STI</td>
<td>Sexually transmitted infection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDHR</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNGASS</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNIFIL</td>
<td>United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon</td>
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MAXIMISING POTENTIAL

The Citizenship Role of Young People in Fiji

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1. Introduction

Crabbed age and youth cannot live together:
Youth is full of pleasure, age is full of care;
Youth like summer morn, age like winter weather;
Youth like summer brave, age like winter bare.

The Passionate Pilgrim, XII, William Shakespeare

Essentially, this thesis is about relationships and power, or to be more specific, about partnerships. It is also about citizenship, democratic governance, leadership and young people. One could decide to look at all of these in purely technical terms – the rights of citizens, the principles of good governance, the characteristics of great leaders and the situational analysis of young people. However, what weaves all of these elements together and provides the substance of this study is the relationships and the power dynamics between: the role of the citizen in a political culture, in this case, Fiji; the impact of Fiji’s governing structures on citizens, particularly on young citizens; and traditional attitudes of leaders towards younger generations for these influence the nature and emphasis of governing structures. Indeed, it is in the richness of associations that we can explore dynamics that have great significance on the lives and futures of people.

This study is founded on the relationships between young people and adults, which in turn determine how young people and leaders relate. This customary practice invariably defines the status of young people in families, communities and the State, and might conveniently be called youth citizenship. These relationships, like all relationships, are established on traditional values, cultures, attitudes and practices that set the rules of the game for social and political interaction. Thus, the interface of officials and citizens in political and bureaucratic arenas, and the mandates of formal institutions are influenced by informal norms and networks of engagement, which are not necessarily created to be efficient, nor do they necessarily always reflect equity and inclusiveness. On the other hand, traditional values and practices cultivate identities in a way that no formal skills-building can do. The complexities of such processes inexorably shape the role and function of citizens.
In Fiji, much of the literature on relationships and identity has concentrated on ethnic
relations.¹ The formation of political structures, institutions and other assertions to
date has been shaped to varying extents by indigenous Fijian tradition (pre-
capitalism), the arrival of Christian missionaries, British colonial rule, constitutional
independence and in recent times, the emergence of the military as a political force.
All of these have addressed issues of race and ethnicity, either directly or indirectly,
and all have affected relationships among citizens of Fiji. Indeed, ethnic relationships
have featured centrally to the discourse on Fiji’s development, as Norton remarks:
“Fiji’s political development since late colonial times has been primarily a story of
the assertion and containment of the indigenous Fijian claim to power” (Norton
2009:109). The role of Fiji’s citizens has adjusted accordingly as the structures of
participation are remodelled to accommodate new alliances and divisions between
and within ethnic groups. The subject is discussed in more detail in the wider review
of literature (Chapter 3).

Yet, despite all the analysis and scrutiny of the stratifications of Fiji’s ethnic groups,
there remains little beyond the commentary on dimensions of class. Within class
groups, there are further relationships between men and women, and between adults
and young people, yet often the significance of these, especially relationships
between adults and young people, is noted only as anecdote.² This thesis highlights
issues of common interest across young people in Fiji that transcend class and
ethnicity, and argues that the significance of these is possibly where our greatest
challenge lies – not simply in seeking justice between ethnic groups, rather in
seeking justice and equality for all people, of all ages.

The argument is founded on a human rights premise, reinforced by the researcher’s
personal experiences and convictions as children’s rights activist.³ This conviction
has transpired upon seeing the results of rights in practice, in particular the value of
rights to freedom of expression. Participation rights underlie this study as does the

¹ The more precise analysis explores the stratifications of class within ethnic groups and
acknowledges the unequal distribution of power within these. Thus the term ‘ethnic relations’ includes
² Some analyses explore in some depth impacts of ethnic relations on gender roles and status, for
example, see Teatiwa, 2004.
³ I have worked for 10 years in Fiji and the Pacific region advocating for the rights of children and
young people, in particular the right to freedom of expression and their rights to participate in all
matters that concern their welfare. Important findings in the course of this work are believed to be of
benefit to nations.
belief or hope that such effective results, seen at individual, community and even institutional levels, may be scaled up to be realised at the national level. Taking a social constructionist approach, the thesis explores expanded notions of democracy, citizenship and development that give greater prominence to the role of young citizens in the nation’s development. The feasibility of such is discussed with key figures in Fiji’s leadership. Without professing to have all the answers, but also essentially with Fiji’s leaders in mind, this thesis aims to inform, in the pursuit of solutions to our current dilemmas.

This introduction considers the relevance of this thesis and its rationale within the context of study – the Republic of the Fiji Islands and the current political environment and state of development. It discusses the reality of coups and multi-ethnicity in a democratic framework. Employing constructivist theoretical approaches and practical applications the study seeks to facilitate and understand the learning experience towards creating value for those participating in this study. These approaches are elaborated upon in Chapter 2. The thesis then explores in depth the scope and various aspects related to the study, by literature review, in Chapter 3. The nature of these aspects is diverse and ranges from understanding research on children’s development to learning from rights-based development initiatives in other countries to taking an anthropological glance at Fiji’s history. The literature review gives substance and basis for the analytical framework. The findings of the analysis are presented in Chapter 4 where the important themes are corroborated. Finally, the conclusion draws together the analysis in answer to the research objectives. As an option to the status quo of development in Fiji, the conclusion presents for consideration, a sequence of recommendations that are relevant to the realisation of thesis.

1.1. The Human Rights Rationale

Citizenship can be by definition, the collection of rights and responsibilities that define members of a community, dimensions of which extend to legal empowerment and justice, political participation and decision-making, social engagement and economic rights and access to resources (IAWGCP 2008: 3). The formal rationale for determining the roles of citizens is explicit in a number of international declarations: Article 1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development states,
“...[e]very human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development...” (UN 1986).

The Millennium Declaration reaffirms the commitments made under other treaties, and itself commits in Article 25, “... to work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens in all our countries...” (UN 2000; emphasis added).

The right to such participation is specific and defined for those aged 18 years and under, in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989). There is no ambiguity in the principle of participation in Article 12, which states: “States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his/her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

The most obvious role of citizens is the right to vote in democratic elections, though the age of voter registration almost universally denies those citizens in the first two decades of life this opportunity.

“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

UN 1948: Art. 21(3)

Part (3) of Article 21 of The Declaration of Human Rights above, states, “the basis of the authority of government is determined by the will of people”, which one is led to assume, are the people that are old enough to vote, though in parts (1) and (2) the Article states, “(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of the country, directly or through freely chosen representatives” and “(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public services in his country” (UN 1948; emphasis added).

So what of those people who are not old enough to vote? How are these people represented in democratic societies? What is their role? Furthermore, what are the opportunities for political participation – other than voting? These civil rights are of importance to all citizens, but particularly so for young people, who may often not
have the modes of representation that adults have. At this juncture, some discussion on the definition of ‘young person’ is helpful.

1.2. A definition for ‘youth’ or ‘young people’

Rather than categorising this group of people by age, it is more relevant here to focus on the stage of life that contributes to their status as young people. The particular stage of life referred to is the period of transition between childhood (dependence) and adulthood (independence), during the second and third decades of life, and during which time people are subject to negotiating particular biological, emotional and social challenges that are different from those of children and those of adults. While the United Nations General Assembly defines this population as those aged between 16 and 24 years (see A/36/215 and resolution 36/28, 1981:169) many countries of the world define their youth population as both older and younger than the UN-defined cohort, highlighting the heterogeneous nature of young people as a population group. In the Pacific region, definitions of youth commonly extend to at least 30 years old and sometimes to as young as 12 years old. There is recognition, however, that a young person’s social status may graduate when they marry, which in some traditions entitles them to speak at community meetings (UNICEF, SPC, UNFPA 2005: xii).

...[T]he major task for adolescents is to re-evaluate who they are and how their bodies and identities have changed. They strive to establish final independence from their families and others their age, to become their own person. They struggle to understand the meaning of life and how to interact with others of the opposite sex. They are faced with answering the question of how they want to spend the rest of their lives...

(Donley and Keen 2000, cited in UNICEF, SPC & UNFPA 2005:2)

The predicament, and circumstances of young people, whether they are of voting age or not, are defined by their lack of representation by social status or by independent association. The question of their roles as citizens remains: How is this nebulous population figured in the political landscape? Are they passive recipients – ‘citizens in waiting’ or are they active participants? Furthermore, how does this affect national development?
Further dimensions to this study are derived from the rights of citizens – and particularly those that are young citizens. Based on the theory of rights-based approaches, can the effective political participation of young people be factored into development processes? What positive benefits would such participation bring? In practical terms, this is an exercise of working to fill in the deficit. So where young people feature for example, as unemployed – a burden to society and the economy – what is needed to negate that? Where young people feature as an asset to society, what is needed to maintain and expand on that?

These questions form the overall research objectives of this study. Within this topic, the study explores whether this ill-defined population always existed in Fiji as it does today. Some cultural practices in the world feature the initiation of children to ‘adult’ capabilities at the point of puberty, for example child-brides, which suggest that the recognition of a cohort of people ‘in transition’ between childhood and adulthood, with particular characteristics, is not universal.

1.3. Seeking Space for Discourse on Youth Citizenship

Citizenship is for some, an issue for which there is no space for discourse in the Pacific region. Konai Thaman notes of the tensions surrounding citizenship education that, “...national governments and indigenous majority populations perceive citizenship education differently, the latter group seeing it as a tool for cultural, political and economic oppression with negative consequences” (2004: 1). Politically, it may be seen as the potential means for opposition to the thrust of leading parties. Indeed, the relevance of this thesis in Fiji’s current political climate would raise this question for some. To talk of an active and political citizenship role for young people while living under Public Emergency Regulations may seem a futile exercise. The current government has publicly attempted to quash the voices of the few youth activists for democracy who have spoken out against the overthrow of

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4 Public Emergency Regulations (PER) were gazetted and extended frequently by the current government on 10 April 2009, as measures seen necessary by the current leadership to maintain public safety. Such measures include limitations on freedom of association (GoF 2009:12 Part II 3(1-5)), and broadcast and publication (GoF 2009:15 Part II 16 (1-3)).
the elected government. The issues at stake for the current government are driven by the concern that a serious omission of justice against sections of the population was being perpetrated by practices of corruption and greed (Bainimarama 2009). The ‘cause’ has been fiercely protected from intervention, from the international community and from dissenting groups within the country, at all levels, including from within the military base itself. The regime considers any statement or intervention in opposition to its actions inciteful and a distraction from the course of righting the wrongs that have for so long been entrenched in Fiji’s social, cultural, economic and political institutions (GoF 2009; Bainimarama 2009).

The implications, however, of silencing voices, run much deeper than is perhaps recognised. For if the significance and potential for change was known, the political environment would be quite different from what it is. The dismissal of youth dissent is hard to justify when we consider the situation and predicament that young people in Fiji are faced with.

Firstly, if we consider the sheer proportion of Fiji’s population that is considered ‘young’, we are looking at 19.1% (159,870 people) aged between the ages of 15 and 24 years (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008: Attachment 1). The youth population is considered the fastest growing segment of the Fiji population. There are inconsistencies across statistics for unemployment amongst the 16–24 age-group. However the common trend across the Pacific region can be applied, which is that the unemployment rate in this age-group is on average, double that of the entire workforce (16–64 age-group) (UNICEF, SPC, UNFPA 2005:6). Therefore, based on the year 2007 figures for ‘unemployment including subsistence workers actively seeking paid employment’ for the 15–64 age-group in Fiji, which is 11.8% (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2009:32), we can estimate that around 22% of the

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5 ABC, 27 December 2006, downloaded from http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2006/s1818520.htm; ABC, 26 December 2006, downloaded from http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200612/s1818428.htm. Reports from Fiji Times, 26 December 2006; fijivillage, 25 December 2006; Fiji TV, 26 December 2006, are not accessible on line. However these reports of retaliation against youth activists were observed and verified as actual events by the researcher.

6 The 2004 ADB Report Governance in the Pacific refers to youth unemployment in Fiji as 14.1%. This, however, is qualified in a footnote as referring to adult unemployment rate (15 years and above) as per 2002 Urban household income and expenditure survey (Abbott and Pollard 2004:52). A review of the 2002 HIES report, though, did not find this figure. The Fiji National Report Millennium Development Goals refers to youth unemployment as 13.3[3] in rural areas and 24.5[3] in urban areas; however there are discrepancies between the narrative and the tabulated information (GoF 2004:65-66). The 2007 National Census does not refer to youth unemployment; rather, it only disaggregates Labour Force Participation Rate by age (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2009:20-22).
younger population is unemployed, which roughly equates to 35,171 young people aged 15–24 years who are unemployed. Typically, more of these are expected to be unemployed females and this figure does not include other subsistence workers who are not seeking paid employment, but have ‘no money income’.

Figures on youth unemployment can be contrasted with statistics on job creation. In Fiji there were 4.3 people of working age for every formal sector job in 2000 (McMurray 2001:7). Furthermore, many of those who do have a source of income, are underemployed. In the search for jobs, many young citizens have migrated en masse to towns and cities, losing cultural values and having to negotiate conflicting values of modern, industrial and urban cultures (Thaman 2004:10).

Secondly, recognising the greater vulnerability of adolescents in comparison to younger children and adults, and the factors that contribute to vulnerability, we can be concerned at the level of vulnerability amongst Fiji’s population. The World Bank illustrates this distribution of risk against the life-cycle of children and adolescents (See Figure 1).
Clearly, the ages of adolescence and youth face greater vulnerability when confronted with virtually all the factors. The interrelation of the factors can be realised when one understands that vulnerability against one or a few factors sets the preconditions for risk behaviour, abuse and exploitation. For example, a young person who has received little care, stimulation and guidance, and has experienced domestic violence is more likely to be subjected to abusive relationships or encounter exploitative situations, or submit to peer pressure to resort to drugs and substances. Similarly, a young unemployed person may resort to criminal behaviour more easily, when necessity or opportunity is presented.
A quick scan of whether such manifestations exist in Fiji confirms that we indeed have significant vulnerability issues amongst the youth population. Table 1 illustrates the high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STI) in Fiji. Of the reported cases of gonorrhoea, a total of 82.6% were associated by those under 30 years, of whom 19% were diagnosed in the 10–19 age-group – higher than the proportions for the other age-groups. Similarly for syphilis, 72.9% of all reported cases were found in those under 30 years. As a proxy indicator for HIV & AIDS, the high prevalence of STIs amongst the youth population also corresponds to the reported cases of HIV infection. Of the known infections, 60% are in people under 30 years of age, 10% are in those under 20 years. Data suggest also that women are a large and growing group at risk, for they have little control over the sexual behaviour of their partners and little opportunity to protect themselves from infection. Fiji is said to be in the early stages of a possible HIV epidemic with potentially explosive growth. Related to this is the steadily increasing trend of percentage of births to teenage mothers under 19 years (UNICEF 2007a:25–34).\(^7\)

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Gonorrhoea</th>
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<th>Syphilis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reported cases</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Reported cases</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>9.2</td>
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<td>20-29</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>63.7</td>
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<td>30-39</td>
<td>111</td>
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<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>100</td>
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A National Nutrition Survey conducted in 2004, recorded an increase in the proportion of young adolescents (12–17 year olds) who smoked, by 3.7% for males and by 4.3% for females since 1993. The survey also identified that 46% of 12–17 year old males and 17% females regularly consumed alcohol. 50% of these young people reporting binge drinking. Marijuana use was reportedly widespread, including amongst school children, despite mandatory prison sentences for possession and use (UNICEF 2007a:34).

\(^7\) All data in this paragraph have been sourced from UNICEF 2007a.
Youth behaviour has been linked to crime rates in Fiji. In a survey conducted to explore why Fiji prisons are disproportionately over-populated by young people, amongst other objectives, one of the reasons identified for youth crime was to support the costing of social activities such as drinking and smoking. A lack of things to do suggested that the young people in the focus groups in high-crime suburbs of Suva had nothing ‘constructive to do’ and so resorted to simply ‘hanging around’ with their friends, which would often require drinking and smoking, which would have to be financed. Furthermore, youth survey respondents did not believe that community leaders were good role models, as they themselves flouted the law (Oceanik Psi 2005:18).

As for reasons why so many social problems are clustered around the youth population, the State of Pacific Youth Report, 2005, explains the underlying causes of youth issues. In resonance with the information above, the report highlights the role of low self-esteem in high-risk behaviour. This, the report says, contributes to or is exacerbated by the underlying causes classified as: poverty and hardship; education systems focused on white-collar employment skills; a scarcity of employment opportunities; rural / urban inequalities; conflict between traditional and modern cultures; and authoritarian parenting methods. These factors that contribute to greater vulnerability and risk for young people are present in Fiji.

Adinkrah, writing of authoritarian parenting of children in Fiji, says:

“... deference to authority pervades the entire Fijian social structure and is reproduced throughout the socialisation process, beginning in infancy. From the time they learn to speak, Fijian children learn that to ask questions of adults is to incite verbal rebukes, while to challenge or actively disobey the dictates of an adult is to invite corporal punishment” (1995:168, quoted in UNICEF, SPC and UNFPA 2005:32).

“Some Fijian youth interviewed for this report said that children tend to be raised as the property of parents and taught that it is the right of parents and family to discipline them. ‘We are taught to sit quietly in adult company without speaking, or to go outside and not bother the adults. If we attempt to express our opinions we are criticised and belittled and told to keep quiet because we do not know anything about life’” (Excerpt from UNICEF, SPC and UNFPA 2005:32).
Chapter 3 explores in greater depth the effect suppression of the expression of opinion has on child and youth development, as part of the argument behind the promotion of participatory approaches to dealing with young people. However, suffice to say, authoritarian styles of parenting undermine youth self-esteem, foster resentment and alienate youth from their parents, especially when harsh physical punishments or belittling is used to enforce passivity and silence. Youth oppressed in this way tend to turn to their peers for support and often form stronger bonds with siblings and peers than with parents, especially fathers. This brings the risk that if they are subjected to peer pressure to engage in high-risk behaviour, they are unlikely to confide in their parents or seek their support (UNICEF, SPC and UNFPA 2005:32).

The gloomy outlook has one wondering whether Fiji’s governing bodies recognise youth as ‘leaders of tomorrow’, worth investing in, to ensure the security of Fiji’s economic and social development. It is little surprise really that young people, and parents of young people, and communities with young people, would feel discontent at their predicament. The scale of the problems and their direct correlation with the economic and social status of the country simply necessitate a close look at options for change. The answer has not yet emerged from today’s leaders or from previous leaders. Perhaps the answer lies with the voice of young people. Perhaps we should consider them as ‘leaders today’?  

The questions feature as specific research objectives of this study, which are: To what extent do Fiji’s adult leaders accept the participation of young people in decision-making processes? What are the reasons that influence leaders’ acceptance? How does this affect Fiji’s development – past, present and future?

This chapter has introduced the thesis that there is development potential in the role of young people in Fiji, as per a theoretical rights-based rationale. It has highlighted the significance of this as being largely ignored, in favour of preoccupation with ethnic and political issues in Fiji and suggests that ignorance is a key factor that not

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8 The intention of this situational analysis is to illustrate the situation of youth in Fiji in the context of this thesis. However this situation is not unlike situations of youth in many other countries. Vasta says that national governments are losing their capacity to protect their citizens from threatening changes with regard to globalising forces of economic integration, supranational governance and transnational media as well as the burgeoning of diverse communities and social and political identities (2000:vii; Introduction).
only contributes to the further detriment of the situation of youth in Fiji, but also to the economy as a whole and to society at large. As such, the fact that the development potential of youth citizenship is not fully recognised raises the question of whether the current role and status of youth citizenship is relevant to all members of communities, society and the nation, - relevance here suggesting that young people and adult leaders at all levels, see benefit in it. Finally the chapter poses the research objectives of exploring where the most relevant application of youth citizenship lies.

The next chapter explores how investigating leaders’ knowledge on youth issues, youth potential and development significance has required careful facilitation. The theory of social construction has been an appropriate response for negotiating what might be considered as the beginnings of change, through the process of the primary research.
2. Methodology: The Study of the Subjective

*The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done – men who are creative, inventive and discoverers.*

(Piaget 1955)

As highlighted in Chapter 1, looking just briefly at the situation of young people in Fiji, indicates that something is amiss, for whatever reason. Whether young people have a role and are fulfilling a role or not, somewhere, somehow, outcomes for young people are not happening, at least not as much as they should be. To understand why this is so, naturally implies an analysis of leaders’ perspectives. However the nature of such an analysis ventures into territory where interpretive dimensions, subject to various influences, feature prominently. This chapter provides detail on the constructivist approach, which is required to understand and manage the various influences on the characteristics and tendencies of leaders involved in the primary research of this study. Further methodological aspects are provided in this chapter to understand how findings were derived and analysed. These include issues of sampling a cross-section of Fiji’s leadership (at 2.2).

2.1. The Theory and Application of Constructing Knowledge

Not unlike the concept of participation itself (see Beers 2002:37–38; Bessell 2006:2–3), ‘social construction’ is the psychological theory of how human learning happens, how people generate knowledge and meaning from their experience, thus providing the basis of perspective. Leaders, however, particularly politically appointed leaders, may generate their points of perspective by other means and may be less inclined to offer objective viewpoints. They may need to ‘toe the party line’, to make political assertions, or they may declare their present actions are the way things should be done, because anything else may question their
purpose or authority. Thus, leaders’ perspectives are subjective, based on processes of ‘accommodation and assimilation’, the processes I will return to. The social construction theory further acknowledges the participative effect, when engaging with leaders as informants to the research – how their learning that may happen during the course of interviews may influence their perspectives. How this is so is explained in the methodology used for the primary research below.

It was not the intention of this study to ‘expose’ leaders in a negative light; rather, the value of targeting leaders was to gain an important perspective from the privilege of their positions that could be analysed comparatively with young people’s perspectives to identify a feasible and effective role for youth citizens. Therefore, the research questions required leaders to make honest and critical assessment of governing structures and attitudes from their perspective, followed by informed and considered suggestions to contribute towards the analysis. Using the theory of social construction allows interview respondents, in this case, leaders, to become discoverers, prompts honest and critical assessment and speculation that may not necessarily be the status quo nor the ‘party line’.

Jean Piaget (1955) explains what determines human learning – or not – where the ‘learner’ resists the information – by describing the processes of accommodation and assimilation. Each learner, he says, is a unique individual and has become so as the result of the relations and associations with knowledgeable members of society. Once the learner has received the information presented, the process of accommodating instructs the learner to reframe the information against his or her mental representation of the external world. This may result in the mental representation changing (the learner learns) when their own internal experiences are more aligned with the external experience. Or sometimes, the ‘learner’ adjusts the external experience to fit their internal representation (does not learn). This depends on the factors that have contributed towards the formulation of the internal representation. The emphasis of the constructivist theory is the importance of the learner being engaged in the process.

In this study, the unique and individual learners are leaders of Fijian society who represent various political, social, cultural and economic positions. Each possesses internal representations of knowledge that are based on their associations and life
experiences. This methodology is thus based on ‘testing’, for want of a better word, today’s leaders’ processes of accommodation and assimilation, to identify the factors that determine the citizenship role of young people in Fiji’s development. For only once that is understood, can we start looking forward to discussing a possible future role for young people in Fiji’s development.

Given the research objectives, which involve looking forward and considering change, it is necessary to frame the objectives in a process of investigation that allows the participant to ‘clock in’ to their internal representation, in order to look forward or consider change, rather than reporting on the status quo. Socratic questioning⁹ allows the process of framing and sequencing to hold the leaders accountable in terms of their role and responsibility to development, in which youth and their issues are interwoven. The role of the researcher is thus adapted to fulfil the role of a facilitator. Through in-depth interviews with leaders in Fiji, the facilitator guides the interviewee (the ‘learner’) through a carefully constructed process of dialogue and logical questioning that builds foundations of learning that enable the interviewee to reflect on the implications of their role on the lives of young people and then think ‘outside of their box’ and propose ways forward. The process of knowledge construction is facilitated and is shown in Figure 2.

A semi-structured questionnaire (attached at Annex 1.) was developed in four parts that were constructed to run in sequence, to facilitate the ‘learning experience’:

Part 1: Demographic characteristics

Part 2: Understanding the situation of Fiji’s Young People

Part 3: Is there a role for young people in development?

Part 4: Setting up participatory systems [theoretical]

Parts 1 and 2 required the interviewees to recall from established knowledge and experience as leaders. The leaders were required to apply this knowledge and experience, in Steps 1 and 2 (Figure 2) to consider what they understood to be the situation of young people in Fiji within the context of national development.

⁹ Socratic questioning is a form of philosophical inquiry in which the questioner explores the implications of others’ positions, to stimulate rational thinking and illuminate ideas.
Questions were framed in a way to compare leaders’ knowledge of youth issues against information drawn from the youth study and other research. In Step 3 (Figure 2), the questions required respondents to make linkages between their role as a leader and the situation of youth as they understand it. Having established the linkages between themselves and the situation of youth and the significance of this to national development, the leaders were then asked to consider strategic solutions. The issue of youth unemployment was used as the case example to explore leaders’ responses.

The purpose of questions in Part 3 was to use the information provided in Steps 1 to 3, to ‘build’ on, to move to solutions. If the ‘party line’ or status quo had had a different solution or focus, it would have been inappropriate to introduce at this point, for it would have figured as arbitrary to the question. Rather, the leader was more inclined to opt for a solution that was generated from their own knowledge base, as had been the process for Steps 1 to 3. Part 3 (Step 4 in Figure 2) presented statements drawn from the youth study, which prompted the interviewee to negotiate potential controversy (in that leaders’ answers may not necessarily reflect their ‘party line’ or the status quo) and deliberate on the machinery of governing systems. Without working through Steps 1 to 3, leaders could have had the opportunity to present the ‘official stance’ with regard to youth and may not have genuinely considered the statements by youth. In addition, a
simple speculation was used for discussion (Step 5 in Figure 2), which looked at the potential financial returns from investing in the area of youth employment. Having discussed the issue of youth unemployment in Part 2, the speculation, required the leaders to explain how they might operationalise their suggested strategic solutions in reality and in national budget terms. Leaders were further asked to speculate on other economic and social implications related to this. At the end of Part 3, it was hoped that there would be some clarity on whether inclusive systems that valued contributions from young people were indeed of benefit to Fiji’s development, or not.

Based on the final estimation of Part 3, leaders were then asked in Part 4 (Step 6 in Figure 2) to explore the feasibility of setting up participatory systems. Aspects of the theoretical framework for participation were discussed to identify possibilities, challenges and solutions. The entire process of discussion covered several issues from two or three aspects to ensure a consistency of leaders’ rationale. Issues were discussed in the context of national development, with regard to their own positions, and considered from the perspectives of young people. The analysis therefore is further assured of reliability of perspective. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with one leader, who was requested to give constructive and impartial feedback on the ‘flow’ of questioning, the length of interview and the wording of questions. This leader gave advice on how best to approach senior leaders. Adjustments to the questionnaire were made accordingly. The interview was structured to last an hour on average.

2.2. Sampling Fiji’s Leadership

Given the nature of this study founded on perspectives of different groups of people, which are created by the context from which they come, it is necessary to seek a range of views to understand the range of perspective and the variables that come into play. For example, a young person would have one perspective based on his or her reality on the ground and a government bureaucrat would have another, and they are quite likely to stand poles apart. Furthermore, perspectives between government bureaucrats and leaders from civil society may be positioned in opposition to each other. Having said that, the perspectives amongst young people and amongst government bureaucrats may also differ significantly for various reasons. The scope
of these perspectives and how they are reconciled is the basis of the analysis. This section considers the range of leaders required to validate this analysis.

Firstly, for purposes of comparison, the perspectives of young people are sourced from previous research on young Pacific Islanders conducted by the researcher. This research, referred to henceforth as the ‘youth study’, focuses on identifying the role of young people in national development, from young Pacific Islanders’ perspectives (this is discussed in depth in Chapter 3). This thesis therefore seeks to contextualise the findings of the ‘youth study’, by determining its relevance in Fiji and weighing the perspectives of young people against those in Fiji’s leadership.

Secondly, to explore the range of perspectives within Fiji’s leadership, it was important to look beyond the ruling party in government, 10 which would represent only one political viewpoint. Leaders were chosen to represent a range of political viewpoints, from within government and from non-government and faith-based sectors, from the reigning military administration to the ousted and former government administrations. In planning the sample group of interviewees, the leadership position held precedence over the need for age, ethnicity and gender balance. Though attempts were made to seek the perspectives of all variations of leaders, the composition of the resulting sample is in itself a point of analysis, as the overview of the sample group illustrates below.

Representatives with experience from 12 government ministries and departments most relevant to youth development were interviewed. Within these groups, a spread of leaders from various ethnic backgrounds was chosen, though these leaders were often associated with political representations. Within those from the Indigenous Fijian ethnic group, some were chosen for their Fijian chiefly position. 11 As far as was possible, women leaders were sought for interview, though the lack of representation by women at leadership levels made parity impracticable. Though the

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10 At the time of writing (November 2009), the ruling government was headed by the military commander, Frank Baimarara, who came into power by force by a military coup on 5 December 2006. Ministers and Permanent Secretaries have accepted appointment by the military.

11 It should be noted that members of the current military government have sought to dismantle the institution of the Great Council of Chiefs, created by the British Colonial government, and other political biases towards a prominence of Eastern chiefly rule, that were said to have been favoured by the former ruling party led by the Soqosogo Duavata ni Lewenivunua (SDL) (Norton in Firth, Fraenkel and Lal (eds) 2009:108). In this regard, these leaders (of the current government) represent those opposed to indigenous Fijian regionalism.
interviews were targeted at the most senior echelons of ministries, departments and other organisations, at times, a less senior or middle-level representative was selected to offer either more relevant information on the topic of youth, or to offer more equity in terms of gender, age or ethnicity. Finally, youth leaders with positions within Fiji’s governance structures were interviewed.

In all, 23 in-depth interviews were conducted for this analysis, 20 of which were directed at leadership positions and three directed at young people with experience of working with Fiji’s leaders in national, traditional and non-government structures. The interviews with young people served to provide a point of comparison with adult leaders as well as a mode of verification against perspectives from young people studied in the researcher’s ‘youth study’.

There are several ways to describe the range of leaders. In terms of seniority, 10 of the 20 leaders were politically appointed, either as a Member of Parliament in the former Government, or Minister with the former and present Governments – including one of the Prime Ministers, or a Permanent Secretary\(^{12}\) with this present Government. Five held or had held Ministerial portfolios, four were Permanent Secretaries. These leaders represented political parties or mandates such as that of the current interim administration. Seven of these leaders were current leaders appointed by the interim administration. Two of the ten politically appointed leaders were women.

Three leaders were selected at director or senior officer level. At times this was to seek further perspective from a sector of leadership less represented, or when the more senior leader was unavailable, or for more in-depth information on the Ministry’s programmes. One interviewee was the head of one of government’s statutory bodies. Two young people provided perspectives of the National Youth Advisory Board\(^{13}\) of the Ministry of Youth and the National Coordinating

\(^{12}\) Permanent Secretaries were called Chief Executive Officers by the previous government. These positions report directly to Ministers and would be considered as ‘political’ positions as their appointments and dismissals have largely been reliant on their allegiance to ruling parties.

\(^{13}\) The National Youth Advisory Board (NYAB) consists of 19 members who represent the Provincial Youth Forum (15), the faith-based organisations (1), the uniformed services (1), the non-government youth organisations (1) and the national youth parliament alumni (1). Members are representatives chosen by the groups they represent and are not chosen for gender parity. The majority of those in the group discussion were male and were indigenous Fijians.
Committee on Children. A group discussion with all members of the National Youth Advisory Board also provided information used in this analysis.

Seven interviews drew perspectives from the non-government sector, which included representatives from the Great Council of Chiefs, and representatives from two major faith-based organisations in Fiji. Three interview respondents headed non-government organisations and two were young people working or volunteering with non-government organisations.

Some 78% of all leaders and young people interviewed were male and 22% were female. The larger proportion of leaders and young people interviewed were indigenous Fijians. These were 16 out of 23 people interviewed, while another four were Indo-Fijians and three, ‘Other’ who represented Fiji citizens who were neither indigenous nor Indo-Fijian. Requests for interviews with other Indo-Fijian and women leaders were not granted. The resulting prominence of both indigenous Fijian and male leaders, however, correctly reflects the proportions of leaders, particularly those in government leadership positions.

Three-quarters of all leaders interviewed were over 50 years of age with the greater proportion (40%) aged between 60 and 69 years (all but one of whom were male) and 30% aged between 50 and 59 years. One non-government leader was older than this, and was the oldest, in the ‘over 70 years’ category. Two of the civil servants at around senior officer level were aged between 30 and 39 years, with the remaining three leaders being between 40 and 49 years of age. The three young people interviewed were aged between 20 and 29 years. While at times, comments from the youth respondents were significantly unified, they did not differ strongly from the scope of responses provided by the adult leaders. They did, however, offer different perspectives and brought an added level of reasoning and consideration to the analysis. Certainly the youth responses were not considered to be arbitrary; rather, they added richness and depth to the qualitative assessment, as other responses did.

2.3. Facilitating the Interviews

All leaders were provided with the semi-structured questionnaire in advance of the interview, as a practice to show openness, rather than to inform them of the questions, allowing them to prepare their responses. Appointments were made at
leaders’ convenience. At the start of each interview, leaders were introduced to the researcher, the topic of study and its purpose. To ensure ethical principles were considered, each leader was assured of the confidentiality of their responses with regard to their name and identity. The researcher offered a promise to seek prior approval, if any referenced citations were to be made. All interviews except for the pilot interview were digitally recorded at the interviewee’s consent, only for the purposes of capturing all the information for transcription, and allowing the researcher to engage fully in and facilitate the dialogue. To facilitate the process, the interviewee was provided with a sheet of information, which was referred to during the course of discussion. A secondary intention was to leave with the leader thought-provoking material to continue the process of learning, after the duration of the interview.

As per the Socratic line of questioning, at times the researcher shared information from other interviews to prompt reflection on the leader’s role and authority. During the course of the interview, it was sometimes necessary, as facilitator, to adapt the learning experience by taking the initiative and prerogative to steer the learning experience to where more value was being created. The semi-structured style of interviewing allowed this to happen. In such cases, the order of questioning may have been rearranged, or other aspects discussed and others omitted; however, all responses were considered valid for analysis. Great sensitivity was required to facilitate sections of the discussion, in which possible perceived shortcomings of leaders’ roles were implied. Focus was thus directed at the ‘system’ of governance rather than the characteristics of the particular leader in question and his or her leadership style.

2.4. Framing the Analysis

A grounded theory approach is used to generate a theoretical framework of analysis. The literature review thus serves as an important component of the analysis for it serves to provide the building blocks of information that construct categories for assessment. After review of aspects of youth citizenship and participation gleaned from global research and theory, important reference points of measure are developed. Secondly, a study of the Fiji context attempts to apply background information on governance structures to explain important factors that influence the
analysis. The ‘youth study’, previously conducted by the researcher, is described at length as this thesis responds to the themes of that study. The theoretical framework is presented in Chapter 3 and reflected upon in the analysis at Chapter 4.

An analytical framework was constructed to organise the information generated by the interviews. The elements of the theoretical framework (from review of literature) are used as the points of analysis. For example, where the theoretical framework of youth citizenship links young people to national levels of governance, the analytical framework would explore the existence and functionality of that link, by measuring the research data against the framework, considering and evaluating the range of perspectives, motivations and proof of outcomes. Interview questions were assigned to the theoretical elements and questions for analysis were developed to seek answers that provided assessment against the theoretical framework. This is shown at Annex 2.14

In organising the data drawn from the interviews, each interviewee was coded to describe his/her ‘social fabric’ or representation. All interviews were transcribed, word for word. The written dialogue was then deconstructed and entered into data tables for each category of information. Data tables were constructed so as to draw out keywords, which form the basis of emergent themes. Keywords were selected as those that responded directly to the analytical questions. For example, if the analytical question was, “Which youth should have the opportunity to have their voice heard in decision-making processes to allow for fair representation?”, probable keywords would include such categories as, ‘church youth groups’, ‘school students’ or ‘young people in squatter settlements’.

A qualitative description related to the keyword is tabled next to that, followed by the interviewee code. Responses were then clustered by keyword to identify common themes and to construct a descriptive narrative from the qualitative descriptions. The frequency of keyword indicates the strength of the theme. The narrative serves to illustrate the reasoning supporting the themes represented by leaders. This process acknowledges the inconsistencies and ambiguities presented in the data – which

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14 The analytical framework was prepared prior to the field research, hence the final analysis does not always follow according to what had been anticipated; the substance of the information did not always allow for planned deconstruction, nor lead to significant themes.
feature significantly as part of the social complexity and nature of this study – while avoiding oversimplification and generalisations.

A few points to note relate to how interpretation of the dialogue allowed for the emergence and development of themes: While interpreting the discourse, the researcher respected the intentions of interviewees’ semantics. It was important to analyse the answers in the context of the question, though, the relevance of some allowed for verification of other answers. Given that ‘access to information’ features in the theoretical framework as an independent variable that has bearing on the leaders’ acceptance or perception of the youth citizenship role, there was a need to observe how the leaders’ perspective changes or not as the case may be, during the course of the interview as more information is transferred and discussed. The observation, as mentioned before, provides some commentary on the process of accommodation and assimilation. Leaders who explicitly noted some change in perspective during the course of the interview were analysed by code and by discourse analysis to draw out emerging patterns.

While this study is substantiated in essence by the richness of descriptive analysis, several points of further analysis are applied once the data is clustered into themes. The codes are studied to identify whether leaders’ characteristics or social background has any bearing on the theme. The analysis of these characteristics reveals the change or continuity of Fiji’s history or the impacts of such, with regard to youth citizenship. In addition, comparison is made at a number of points to the same question asked of young people in the youth study. The comparison results contribute to the determination of the ‘value’ of the youth citizenship role.

The next chapter presents the development of the theoretical framework for youth citizenship and considers how governance structures in Fiji have a bearing on this.
3. The Theoretical Framework for Young People’s Citizenship

No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death.

Kofi Annan, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(8 August 1998, Statement delivered at the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth)

The study of citizenship covers a wide scope, for it encompasses the management and function of all peoples in a nation and the structures that facilitate this. Furthermore, the historical context influences the evolution of these. There is a clear rationale underlying the concept of citizenship – and ‘youth citizenship’, as laid out in Chapter 1. However the practicalities and realities of realising youth citizenship bring all sorts of complexities to the fore. It is necessary therefore to explore the value and benefits of youth citizenship to understand the potential for replication or expansion in Fiji, and to build convincing arguments for advocating such a course. This chapter identifies the key elements of a theoretical framework for young people’s citizenship, drawing from a review of case studies and other literature from global practice. A commentary on the history of Fiji’s governing structures then provides the context for the evolving concepts of youth citizenship in Fiji.

Extending the discussion from Chapter 1 on citizenship, we can refer to two theoretical points of reference. Firstly, we can look at participation rights in the framework of human development, which are specified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, designed to guide States parties and other duty bearers to provide children with all rights that enable them to develop to their fullest potential. Secondly, we can take reference from governance principles, which hold the principle of participation as an essential component to ensure responsiveness and accountability of governing structures. Along with the principle of inclusiveness, a good governing structure ensures that all citizens, including the marginalised and vulnerable, have opportunity to feel that they have a stake in decisions and do not feel excluded from the mainstream. The greater the opportunity to do this, the theory goes, the greater the accountability of those who govern. Reflecting, furthermore, on
the theory of social constructivism, the greater the opportunity for participation, the greater the ‘shared learning’ and generation of knowledge, and hence, development.

However, in differentiating participation from citizenship, we introduce the notion of ‘role’ – the privileges and duties beholden to citizens that are carried out by right of their civic participation. In other words, exercising rights to participation enables citizens to carry out a role in society. Scholars of citizenship often cite two complementary aspects: citizenship ‘rights’ and citizenship ‘practice’ (IAWGCP 2008:3, referencing Marshall and Bottomore, 1992 and Lister, 2003 and 2006). Though ‘citizenship rights’ are not assigned to any universal principle that determines what those rights and duties should be (Marshall 1950, reprinted in Beers et al. (eds) 2006:37), they are generally accepted as how citizens are apportioned space to voice their opinions (democratic action) and contribute to decisions on issues of public concern (civic responsibility). In other words, citizenship role is not merely political contributions to decision-making; rather, it includes all spheres of active and productive engagement with communities and societies. Citizenship rights are the instruments for active citizenship (IAWGCP 2008:3). This thinking has derivatives in global discourse on the role of children in society, particularly issues surrounding the application of rights of working children. The new school of thought moves forward from the popular adage, ‘children and young people are the leaders of tomorrow,’ towards the notion that children have a vital role to play in the present – ‘children, young people and leaders are partners today’. This is discussed in more depth in this chapter.

3.1. Determining ‘Meaningful Participation’ in the Human Development Framework

Participation rights are clearly ensconced in various international human rights-based declarations (UN 1948; UN 1966; UN 1989). They are clearly defined for children and young people, at least those under 18 years of age. Rights-based organisations, particularly those mandated to promote and protect the rights of children and young people under 18 years of age, are well versed in the rhetoric. This particular principle is known to be less practiced. Rather, the common view of children and young

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15 Articles 1, 2, 19, 20, 21, 23 & 29 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948); Articles 1, 19, 22 & 25 in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (UN 1966); Articles 12, 13, 14 & 15 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989).
people holds them as household dependents, neither decision-makers nor productive economic or social actors, for reasons that will be discussed later on. However, it is important to understand the rationale behind the participation rights.

The rationale essentially is premised on children’s development, how children develop into responsible, active, competent and mature human beings and how they are integrated into the modern world. Human agency, a vital part of managing independence and survival, is not a presumption at the age of majority at 18 or 21 years. It is a process of development that is the result of many social and familial interactions that children ought to experience during childhood and adolescence.

Effective participation is not a given. Like adults, children build competence and confidence through direct experience: Participation leads to greater levels of competence, which in turn enhances the quality of participation. It is the involvement in shared activities with both adults and peers where there is a presumption of ability to complete a task successfully that encourages children’s development. Such skills are neither innate nor an inevitable consequence of social maturation. They develop in accordance with experience, with adults’ assumptions of competence and the levels of responsibility afforded to the child. Participation is not only a means by which children can effect change but also provides an opportunity for developing a sense of autonomy, independence, heightened social competence and resilience.


There is much research that confirms the association between participation and well-being, as Lansdown goes on to say: “[t]he development of competence is the capacity to exercise control over valued spheres of life, and ... this experience is a universal characteristic of psychological well-being, although its expression is formed differently in different contexts”. As the development of competence take place throughout life, it is important to recognise that these processes are not unique to children, but occur in adults as well. The type of participation differs according to the age and maturity or evolving capacity of the person. In their collection of texts in

16 Children are recognised as having ‘agency’ in the sense of human agency as “the capacity for human beings to make choices and to impose those choices on the world” (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. n.d. Accessed on 15 December 2009).
the publication *Beyond Article 12* related to children’s participation, Beers and his co-editors select several accounts of pieces of research to highlight the importance of participation to children from premature babies to toddlers in nurseries to older children and young people. Though the physical, emotional and intellectual capacities vary tremendously, their interaction with adults allows space for children to develop autonomy, in some cases critical to their survival. The following quotations from this publication illustrate this:

Of premature babies, the question of whether they are rights-holders, particularly with regard to their rights to participation, is resoundingly affirmed by parents: “….stroking him does sometimes help, and talking to him, that sometimes stops him crying, but I have to be careful because then his respiration rate goes up…” (Alderson, Hawthorne & Killen 2005, reprinted in Beers et al. (eds) 2006:60).

Of toddlers in nurseries, where staff negotiate and encourage toddlers to determine the appropriate time for changes of nappies (diapers): “[t]he former practice of putting on a new nappy without listening to the toddlers’ voices is described as a form of coercion exercised by adults over toddlers. The new discourse constructing the toddlers as subjects with rights of participation allows no room for this kind of practice on the part of adults…” (Kjørholt 2005, reprinted in Beers et al. (eds) 2006:66).

Of young children’s competence to consent to surgery, the contested issue of autonomy is discussed. The child patient’s full understanding of the relevant information related to his/her condition and surgical procedures was revealed to be important not only for enabling the child’s consent to surgery, but as means for the child to handle the facts and the emotional tension of the situation: “….wisdom has little to do with intelligence or academic ability. It is gained through experience and very young children who have had intense and profound experience [of serious illness] can become very wise” (Alderson 1998, reprinted in Beers et al. (eds) 2006:69).

Of working children, the principle of ‘best interests of the child’ is discussed. Whether children who dropped out of school to work had the wisdom to evaluate knowledge to make the decision was the objective of research conducted with working children and school children in Portugal and Peru. The studies concluded
that these decisions were indeed valid, though ‘correctness’ of the decision was of-course subjective: “[w]hen struggling for family survival as well as keeping the family farm going, helping ill or disabled parents, faced with difficult access to school and professional training or experiencing repeated failure at school, some young people might consider that spending as much as 12 or 13 years in compulsory education is not necessarily ‘in their best interest’. This is especially likely if, later in their lives, they will be unable to afford professional training, to complete it or find a job in the profession they learned. Such situations are frequent enough in their communities to suggest that their position does not entirely lack reason” (Invernizzi 2005, reprinted in Beers et al. (eds) 2006:73).

These scholars and others challenge older schools of thought, which accepted as scientific wisdom on child development the opinion that human competence is essentially a function of age, where children are understood to be immature beings in a state of development and training for competent adulthood and social majority. Furthermore, children, according to most economic models, are perceived as both a cost to society and the passive receptacles of benefits and knowledge imparted by adults (Boyden and Levison 2000:10-13). Consequently, children are characterised by their deficiencies, in relation to adults. They are ‘adults in waiting’.

Child psychological and psychiatric development research more consistently these days informs us of several interrelated aspects of children’s development, for which participation is an essential component contributing to social (or interpersonal), emotional (or intrapersonal), educational and cognitive development (Blum 2009; Durrant 2007:107 for example; Lansdown 2001:29; NASW 2003:5). Figure 3 illustrates different but interrelated areas of children’s development. Through their participation, children are given opportunity to develop.

![Figure 3: Children’s Development](image)

*Figure 3: Children’s Development. Based on, inter alia, Blum 2009; Cahill 2009; Durrant 2007.*
personal and interpersonal skills such as critical thought, expression, communication and working in a team. These in turn have positive impacts on children’s social development, educational development and mental and emotional development. By contributing effectively to activities concerning children’s welfare and futures, children and young people can develop confidence, self-respect and an awareness of social responsibility (ibid.) and thus develop resilience, personal mastery and coping mechanisms to resist and overcome risk and adversity. The effects can be long-lasting, with profound implications on children’s individual development and future opportunities. In contrast, denying children and young people opportunities to participate has negative impacts in many areas of their development and consequently their futures.

Young people can participate in many ways, wherein they have different levels of agency, execute different functions and produce different types of output. Roger Hart’s Ladder of Participation has popularly assumed the position of ‘model of participation’ (Figure 4) though subsequent models have also been developed. It remains though, as a useful tool for describing the types of participation in gradations of adult-involvement.

The lowest three rungs do not demonstrate participation, but show the exploitative nature of when adults use their power to coerce or force a situation. Adults often misconstrue tokenism as participation for example, an articulate child selected by an adult to sit on a panel with little opportunity to consult with their peers whom they purportedly represent, is a tokenistic involvement of the child. The child does not influence the proceedings;

Figure 4: Ladder of Participation. Hart 1997:41.
rather, the adult uses the child’s presence to add symbolic value to his or her own message (Hart 1997:41–42). The upper five rungs are examples of different levels of participation. Hart himself stresses the importance of not seeing the top of the ladder as the most desired type of participation, nor should the levels of participation be understood as sequential or a graduation of better participation (Hart 2005. pers. comm., September). Rather, the top five rungs of the ladder can be applied to suit the activity and the level of empowerment of the young people. In the theoretical framework, it is important to provide opportunities for young people to participate in different ways, appropriate to the level of contribution required to address the particular issue most effectively, and that suits the level of capacity and empowerment of the participant (Hart 1997:41).  

The theory presented implies that respecting children as competent actors and providing meaningful opportunities for them to participate in community and family life furthers their holistic development and enables them more chance of successfully realising their full potential.

3.2. Considering Active Citizenship in Development Agendas

Boyden and Levison (2000:11-12), in their analysis of children as economic and social actors in the development process in Sweden, refer to the most institutionalised example of child participation that can be interpreted by analogy to investments in human capital, through the education of children in schools. Children are educated in the hope and expectation that they may eventually contribute economically to the development of nations, not least through individual rates of returns. Note though that human capital theory focuses on adults that children will become. The child or young adult is of interest only as the learner who will later be a worker (ibid.).

Boyden and Levison critique this line of thinking for its rather blinkered and ‘adult-centric’ take on the world. They extend the discourse by highlighting for one, the unrecognised contribution to development of child workers in developing countries or of children’s domestic roles in households, and even the conscious acts of

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17 Different children require different modes of participation. Girls, for example, may require different facilitation to boys. Street children would require a different setting and different method of contribution, than what school students would require.
commission by governments against children, such as their recruitment into the military. They then suggest a much broader notion of participation in relation to nations’ reservoirs of human resources, one that emphasises the fact that human betterment is not only a means to an end, but also an end in itself. In other words, nations may access the resource potential of children and young people by virtue of their active participation in society and development processes, rather than having to invest for 12 or 13 years or longer in the hope they may contribute back to the economy as adults. It is noted that social contexts vary and the nature of participation must adapt to suit the social, cultural, historical as well as intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that influence the behaviour of both children and adults (ibid.:26-30).

Boyden and Levison argue that children learn about the world not so much by studying it (in education systems) as by operating in it, or in other words through practical application. Firstly at the familial level, “Through guided participation, children are taught accepted social practices through positive reinforcement of approved behaviour and learn the duties of adults through rites of passage and/or by observing, copying and managing tasks undertaken by elder siblings and adult family members” (2000:35-36).

At the societal level, “...involving the young in social planning and action builds in them an understanding of civil society and civil and democratic processes, thus providing for the formation of democratic values and a commitment to collective effort. Hence, the skills and responsibilities that are necessary for active engagement in societal processes contribute also to competent and honourable citizenship and sustainable social change” (2000:44).

The authors further suggest the involvement of children in political and economic processes, “This is a matter of sheer pragmatism, since children often have sound ideas about their problems and needs and the possible solutions to these and are in any case better able to protect themselves when properly informed and given some say in decisions and processes affecting them. Such engagement may be especially important for children in middle childhood and adolescence” (2000:51).

Recognisably, these propose radical changes in the way that business is done. The ‘child-centred vision’ proposed by Boyden and Levison is presented with all that
would entail in practical terms if the vision was implemented, to reconfigure social arrangements to open new channels of communication and dialogue with adults. These are substantial to say the least, but are imperative to the point that participation must be meaningful first and foremost to the participant. It must be effective, representative of those involved, including those who are frequently excluded. It must ensure that participants must not be made more vulnerable through their participation in public processes. It means providing participants with effective information and helping them assess their validity and worth and it means building the capacity of adults in leadership positions to listen, value and truthfully consider their contributions (2000:46-58). Here the relation between Social Constructivism – the process of individual learning, and Social Constructionism – the process of social phenomena, is evident. It is sequential in that individuals must learn new ways of thinking, communicating and decision-making, in this case, to trigger a new movement of social change.

These findings and requirements support the current epistemology used by international development agencies for children and young people. An Inter-agency group on Child Participation, including ECPAT International, Knowing Children, Plan International, Save the Children Alliance, UNICEF EAPRO and World Vision, solidified this thinking and the results of various participatory events around the world, including the participation of children at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (2002), and produced and adopted the Minimum Standards for Consulting with Children.

Though these are specific for children under 18 years and so include sections on the safety and protection of children, which are less relevant for those older than 18 years, the principles may still apply for those older, indeed it can be argued that they apply in adaptation for everyone. The principles of participation (IAWGCP 2007:18-19) in summary are:

1. Transparency, honesty and accountability;
2. A child-friendly environment;
3. Equality of opportunity;
4. Safety and protection of children; and
5. Commitment and competency of adults.

The Minimum Standards then go on to specify the actions required to comply for three phases of before, during and after consultation with children (IAWGCP 2007:22-36). The actions or standards in effect have huge implications on program development and delivery, so much so that they are often regarded as ‘best practice’ rather than ‘minimum standards’ by those who work in the field. For example, selection of child participants needs to be fair and equal, inclusive of the marginalised and take into account the heterogeneity of children. Child participants need ample opportunity to prepare for participation – information needs to be prepared and conveyed in child-friendly terms. Methodologies need to be adapted to create enabling environments for effective participation. Measures need to be taken to ensure children’s protection and safety during participatory processes and there needs to be as much attention given to the adults who need to be receptive to contributions from children.

The complexity of factoring in children and young people’s participation probably well justifies the global statistic of less than a quarter of UNICEF country offices, which report implementation of institutionalised mechanisms for the sustained involvement of children and young people in policy development (UNICEF 2007b:16). The researcher, who also fulfils the role of Social Policy Officer at UNICEF Pacific in Fiji, responds, “The complexity however does not relieve us of the fact that we must work out how to do this within the means that we have available. For unless we factor in the participation of children and young people into decision-making, we can expect to be consistently falling short of the mark, where children should be reaching their full developmental potential” (Carling 2009:7).

3.2.1. Institutionalising Participation of Young People in Governing Structures

Though there are noticeably few practices documented of institutionalised and sustained child and youth participation, and even fewer that chart the impact of participation, there is significant evidence to concur with Boyden and Levison’s concepts of children as economic and social actors in the development processes, where children’s citizenship role has been defined in terms of both active (sometimes economic) and political participation. Furthermore, a host of examples document the
significant impact on development, both of the community in which the participatory activity was conducted, and on individual participating children.

One such example is an elaborate integration of working children into local government structures in the state of Karnataka, India (Reddy and Ratna 2002). In a state where the economic role of children is significant, where literally tens of thousands of children work as labourers in factories, markets and fields, over three decades of practising democracy for working children has ensured labour and employment entitlements are accorded to all child workers and their rights as children respected. The systematic creation of several unions and elected councils exercises children’s freedom of association and has been successful in eliminating child labour 18 and has made the state accountable by the participation of children in the political structures.

The structural changes in Karnataka have been documented by the organisation Concerned for Working Children (CWC) who has worked consistently to assist the working children to become protagonists in claiming their rights. The organisation states, “[c]hildren’s participation is not a project, it is not event based; it is a running theme through every action or intervention” (Reddy and Ratna 2002:4). The system of participation operates in 5 districts in Karnataka, using the panchayat19 system as the vehicle for institutionalising the participation of children. All the children of a panchayat elect a parallel children’s government. The election is held by the formal government administration and the secretary of the adult panchayat acts as the secretary of the children’s panchayat. A task force that is chaired by the District Minister links the adult and children’s panchayats. Each village has an adult Ombudsperson, whose role it is to protect the rights of children and intervene in matters as requested by children. These systemic changes have formalised political space for children. For these children, participation is not just an opportunity to take

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18 Note the differentiation between child labour and working children. Child labour is the situation where children’s capacities are exploited, denying them of their rights to health, protection from danger and injury, education, recreation and participation. Child work is where it is in the best interests of children to be working, but where the aforementioned rights are provided. In such situations, the best interests of children are relevant when their rights to basic survival and development would be jeopardised if they were restricted from working.

19 ‘Panchayat’ is the lowest level of administration in the system of local government. The term ‘panchayat’ refers to both the geographical and administrative units, and the elected body, which acts as the local council. A ‘panchayat’ is composed of a cluster of villages and several ‘panchayats’ constitute a ‘taluk’.
part in meetings, to be consulted occasionally, or to sing a song at an inaugural function. For them participation is a means to advocate their own causes and transform their situations – a political intervention.

CWC notes several positive social impacts that were not anticipated. Other marginalised groups such as women and ethnic groups have been empowered to make systematic changes in their immediate situation in similar fashion, strengthening and redefining democracy in the process. Furthermore, adults who were traditionally feudal, patriarchal and gender insensitive have become advocates of children’s rights and see the value in the active and equal participation of children as they have seen how this translated into benefits for the whole community.

Similar systems have been established in other parts of the world, such as Child Clubs in Nepal, which have been influential in village and local government-level decisions on issues concerning children, including child labour, school drop-outs, early child marriage and other forms of discrimination and exploitation (Theis and O’Kane 2004 in IAWGCP 2008:75). Documentation on this establishment cites notable impacts on child participants who have greater confidence and are more articulate in discussion and addressing their concerns through different media. Over time, girls have assumed more leadership positions and the groups of children are more inclusive towards children with disabilities, younger children and both boys and girls (ibid.).

While these are just a couple examples of many, they serve to illustrate the potential and positive impact on community well-being, not only for children but for other sectors of community. They function on democratic governing principles and have been adapted and integrated into local and traditional structures. They differ from what is popularly conceived as participatory activity, which are large one-off events in which children and young people have participated, for example the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS) in 2002.

This landmark occasion saw child and youth representatives from United Nations member states sit alongside world leaders, to discuss and deliberate over priorities for children’s development world over. Leaders learnt of specific measures that children required in order to improve effectiveness of service delivery for children. Though these types of activities draw important attention and commitment to
children’s issues and perhaps develop new standards, which may consider contributions from children, they are but one facet of democratic systems of participation. Without the more practical and systematic application of participation to the greater majority of children and young people, such as the examples in Karnataka and Nepal, large one-off events can sometimes result in a more tokenistic effort than meaningful and effective participation. A citizenship role for young people should therefore emphasise an institutionalised approach to participation that is more relevant for the everyday lives of the greater mass of young people.

That is not to say that there is no place for one-off events. There are many successful examples of annual events such youth parliaments or conferences that are supported by equitable and inclusive structures and are sustained by the efforts of government and non-government development agendas. For example, the United Kingdom (UK) Youth Parliament has established agreements with local education authorities in England and youth parliament bodies in Scotland, Wales and Ireland who represent ‘constituencies’ in the youth parliament structure, and who facilitate democratic elections to appoint the members of the UK Youth Parliament. Though they meet once annually on a national level, they meet more regularly at regional levels to organise campaigns, projects and events and identify common issues of concern and they exchange views and opinions via the UKYP Website (Pond et al. 2005:3; UK Youth Parliament n.d).

Importantly, the youth parliament structure has a channel of communication with the UK House of Commons, who receive and deliberate on the annual Youth Parliament Manifesto. Issues ranging from transport and education to health and the media have been discussed. Members of the youth parliament have conducted several pieces of research via the website and with the support of the founding charity body, to support their campaigns. They have successfully brought reforms to national education curricula on topics such as sex and relationships, as well as forged new ground in the debate around lowering the voting age to 16 years (UK Youth Parliament 2008a; 2008b). To ensure meaningful participation and impact therefore, a theoretical framework of youth citizenship should factor in clear linkage to development agenda.
Clearly, the annual national event with all the media hype and attention is the culminating event of a more comprehensive system of meaningful engagement with young people and local government authorities, purposely structured to provide ongoing capacity building on youth citizenship, confidence building and empowerment for participants, to provide youth-friendly space for discussion and planning and to ensure that opportunities for participation are shared widely with young people in local communities. The institutionalisation of such a system constitutes an additional component of a theoretical framework for youth citizenship.

The task is not without its challenges, however, for at almost every corner there is a battle to be had with the attitudes of adults and local government leaders. Emily Middleton, at age 16 years, investigated the history, extent and impact of youth participation in the UK in her paper entitled ‘Youth Participation in the UK: Bureaucratic Disaster or Triumph of Child Rights?’ (2006:180-190). She catalogued a number of instances that represented tokenism though they were part and parcel of participatory initiatives with all good intentions, remarking on young people’s frustrations that their space for participation was sometimes marginal but allowed organisations to tick their box and move on with their own impositions. Middleton concluded her paper by acknowledging the problems, but noting that the benefits of young people’s involvement outweighed the challenges and that progress was surely being made in terms of the influence and impact of their engagement (Middleton 2006:187).

3.2.2. Nurturing a Culture of Adult ‘Responsiveness’

The issue of adult opposition creating barriers to young people’s participation is a fundamental issue, for without the ‘buy in’ of adults, there is little hope of participation being meaningful – in the sense that young participants experience learning and development through the process, as well as the final outcome being any different from what it was going to be without the participation of youth.

Over two decades after the debates of the 1980s, considerable lack of clarity remains in children’s rights circles, despite growing acceptance of the CRC as a framework for rights-based programming among international child welfare organisations (Invernizzi and Milne, 2003). Participation is one of the ideas that provides the strongest – although frequently the least factual –
backlash against the CRC. Particularly in developing nations a cultural-relativity argument is used to denounce the CRC for being based on Western values.

(Beers et al. 2006:13)

In addressing what is recognised as a ‘crisis in children’s participation’, Save the Children Sweden operating in Vietnam undertook an ambitious 4-year program (from 2000 to 2004) of capacity building to improve the conceptual understanding of participation as one of the main principles of the rights of children (Beers et al. 2006). The program focused on working at institutional level with adults rather than children and gave priority to increasing understanding and capacity of all staff and management within the organisation of Save the Children itself, before working with the partners. It is important to ensure that adults have the knowledge and skills to facilitate children’s involvement as it is to ensure that children themselves having the capacity to participate.

A team at Save the Children implemented a Child-Friendly District Project in several locations in Vietnam including Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. The project involved schools and education training centres in creating child-friendly learning environments and integrating children’s rights into the elementary school curriculum. Part of the capacity-building process was to raise awareness on children’s rights in general, before moving to the concept of participation. In their evaluation of the program, the team acknowledged the limitations of a single capacity-building program to build ‘enabling environments’ for children’s participation, particularly in government and civil society organisations, which tend to lack institutional memory due to poor documentation of their work, and consequently tend to retain bad practices and attitudes. Various evaluation tools were used with children and adults, including parents, to identify change in practice and attitudes over the four-year period. Despite the limitations, however, and a verdict that the data was influenced by teleological reasoning, the findings point to several conclusions that are important and instructive to the institutionalisation of sustainable participatory systems informed by children, and that are relevant to this Fiji-based research in terms of the environment in Fiji and young people’s and adults’ roles within it.
The Save the Children research in Vietnam identified that a process towards a greater understanding of the concept of children as social actors had indeed been stimulated by the capacity building program. The process of learning was noted as being ‘uneven’ and very much depended on increments of lifetime learning throughout childhood, adulthood and parenthood and thus, communication needed to be tailored to different audiences. An unanticipated result showed the important communication and advocacy function of children to parents and family members. All parents had indicated that they had learned something about children’s rights through their children. Other adults reported key learning experiences from actually working with children. The experience illustrated the need to put emphasis on preparing adults, rather than children, to promote children’s participation and that adult knowledge of children’s rights was an important prerequisite to ensure that, as duty bearers, they ensured these rights be fulfilled (Beers et al. 2006:67-97).

The Save the Children team noted that cultural attitudes towards rights and to children’s participation were changing in Vietnam and there were clear links made to the capacity-building program. Though participatory one-off forums were a part of the program, as the means for demonstrating participation, the team underscored the need to mainstream participation and capacity building if the idea is to take root and flourish. They reflected on the need to do this at the family and local levels on an ongoing basis, providing all children with opportunity to participate, while national and international events are considered periodically and involve selected representatives. The team concluded that the result of the decisions made by children was dependent upon the quality of this capacity-building process (Beers et al. 2006:108-118).

These important findings are particular to Vietnam; indeed, it was noted that capacity building on children’s participation needs to be tailored to the local context. However, they do alert us to a framework that enables a meaningful participation as part of a citizenship role that young people could have in Fiji, a framework, moreover, that addresses the attitudes of adults – of parents, community leaders, heads of institutions and of national-level leaders, a determinant in the level of effectiveness of participation. The process of capacity building for adults, in terms of their understanding of children’s rights and particularly, the concept of participation, is not so clear-cut however. ‘A life-time of learning experiences’ is rather hard to
factor into a theoretical model. Given the magnitude of shift in attitude – nothing short of a paradigm shift – it can be expected that such change is generational, will not happen overnight and as was demonstrated in Vietnam, will require a raft of approaches, specific to each target group. Despite this, however, the component of capacity building for adult acceptance and responsiveness to the participation of young people is critical to the theoretical framework of child and youth citizenship.

3.2.3. Structuring in Accountability to Young People

The growing body of practice is proving the theory of participation to be an important, if not critical, component of development and governance, and equally so for development of children and young people. So much is this the case that the trend of lowering the voting age has embarked on a second wave of descent. During the 20th century a large number of countries reduced the voting age from 21 years, with most lowering it to 18. However, around the turn of the 21st century a number of countries began to consider whether the voting age ought to be reduced further, with arguments often being made in favour of a reduction to 16 years. Several states and municipalities in the European Union have proceeded to do so (some states in Germany during the 1990s, and in 2007 Austria adopted a voting age of 16 years for all purposes), though the debate remains lively as to its merit.

The objective for lowering the voting age is, among other reasons, often to maintain some balance between the generations, especially in populations with larger aging populations, and to generate a greater level of interest amongst teenagers towards politics, in nations where apathy on the topic is widespread amongst youth. While conclusive results are yet to be seen in national elections in Austria, some states that have had the lower voting age for a few years have not seen a significant increase in young people’s interest in politics and numbers turning out on polling day remain low.

The recent debate amongst German politicians to extend voting rights to babies (Quetteville 10 July 2008; The Local 9 July 2008) is an avant-garde demonstration of working towards systematising children’s participation rights into national and municipal governing structures. The debate advanced to a higher level when a new law was tabled in parliament in 2008, to lower the voting age to birth. Their argument, notably more polemic than previous arguments used in debate, cited
decades of “exclusion” and “discrimination” against minors. “This is a situation we cannot accept any longer. We generally have to pay more attention to their interests,” stated one politician. The constitutional change would effectively enfranchise 14 million people and give children a say in the country’s political future. The members of parliament made reference to “numerous studies” which they said have found that it is in the public interest that children and adolescents be allowed to exercise political rights. They proposed that parents be allowed to vote for their offspring, until such time as the children felt they were ready to cast ballots themselves.

While we can accept that Germany is a developed democratic nation, where the notion of children ‘speaking out’ or questioning their parents is perhaps not so far fetched an idea, from what Germans are traditionally familiar with, the proposed change provides a visionary outlook of how governing administrations and implementing bodies would need to be restructured, when the voice of children becomes an important input to development processes. Children effectively become the concern of all adults, including politicians and other leaders; information disseminated is rearticulated to capture the interest (and vote) of all citizens; children’s capacities are engineered for civic participation and responsibility; and all members of society and the nation as a whole, theoretically, make gains.

Perhaps this debate is the luxury of a developed nation? One could argue that this nation has basic needs well under its belt, low levels of need and hardship, and steady economic growth, and therefore can afford to spend time and money on expanded notions of democracy. Perhaps, though, the argument is more significant in developing countries? Countries that need to be as resourceful as possible. Maybe not to the extent of such institutional change of the magnitude implied by lowering voting age to birth or even to 16 years, but there is perhaps scope for a greater contribution from young people that can benefit Fiji’s development – young people, including those of voting age, who are currently not contributing to national development for various reasons.
3.3. The Consequences of Denying Participation and Citizenship to Children and Young People

There is no doubt in both the human development framework and citizenship framework of the importance of participation to both the participant and the development agenda. Several examples of positive influence and impact have already been noted so far and are fairly well known around the world though these practices have often remained on the peripheries of development agendas. Many authors (such as Beers et al. 2006:13; IAWGCP 2008:ix-x; Lansdown 2001:3–4) recognise that politicians, community leaders and others are far from convinced that harnessing the active involvement of youth represents an effective strategy for achieving better outcomes. Though there are notably many obstacles to this, its greatest challenge may be due to a lack of recognition of the inadequacies of current systems. Leaders may not consider current systems of governance and service delivery to be perfect or fully comprehensive, but they often think that a little is better than nothing. They rarely consider the negative consequences of failing to address youth issues, including the need for a more meaningful engagement of young people in development.

The World Youth Report, 2003, reveals in its analysis the extent to which the absence of young people’s perspectives in policy-making at all levels has consistently militated against their best interests (UNDESA 2003:272). The report highlights instances where young people lack the power of the large commercial lobbies to wield influence on governments, or lack access to media and the courts, trade unions or professional associations, or their subordinate status renders them vulnerable and subject to adults who abuse their power over them and adults who do not act in young people’s best interests. Evidence, the report states, is not hard to come by. Boyden and Levison reiterate the sentiment for children and provide examples of the evidence:

*Policies and programmes intended to assist children do not always have the expected beneficial outcomes; some are merely ineffective and a waste of resources, but others have been shown to be counterproductive and detrimental to the children involved. Witness for example, the generations of children throughout the world who have failed to thrive or died in neglectful*
residential institutions. Witness also, the countless numbers ‘temporarily’ evacuated from war zones who have been lost to their families forever through hastily arranged adoptions and foster placements. Consider the runaway children who have been reunited with their families, only to be exposed to further violence and abuse and the children made to leave their jobs, following political pressure, only to end up not in school but in occupations far more detrimental to their health and wellbeing.

(Boyden and Levison 2000:7)

In addition, when parents’ rights are given a greater priority over children and young people, at their expense, issues such as physical punishment of children and young people remain as legally sanctioned practice (UNDESA 2003:273), inculcating the notion that ‘might is right’ or that violence is acceptable, though such practice between adults is most commonly legally classified as an offence. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a General Comment on the issue of corporal punishment stating that addressing acceptance of corporal punishment is a key strategy for reducing and preventing all forms of violence in societies (2006:2). Because young people have no outlet through which they might share their experiences, they are effectively silenced, which allows adults to behave, with relative impunity and ignorance, in ways contrary to their welfare (UNDESA 2003:273).

Though it is difficult to monetise the cost of ‘social ills’ such as commercial exploitation of young people, youth crime, social segregation, violence and others, it can more easily be appreciated at the very least in qualitative terms, when there is consideration of the interventions currently being invested, and that need to be invested in welfare-oriented service delivery for the marginalised, the criminalised and the impoverished. It is important to do so, if analyses of public expenditure on children and young people and subsequent policy development in their favour are to occur.

The World Youth Report highlights a further aggravating factor, that is when young people’s interests are often disregarded in public policy (UNDESA 2003:274). Youth issues simply are not considered important enough to be explicitly expressed in policy. Rather, they are often subsumed into broad development strategies for
‘people’ in general though children and young people experience poverty and development in significantly different ways from adults, as women and girls do from men and boys. For example, adults, more often, do not tolerate forms of violence between adults and will readily accept the traumatising effects of such on themselves, yet they fail to recognise the same effects on children and young people. Many children and young people suffer mental and physical violence on a daily basis, the results of which are all the more damaging on maturities still evolving, simply because there is no understanding or thought given to the impacts of policies on the welfare of young people. Their voice presents a gravely different scenario from what adults assume (Pinheiro 2006:5-12), yet because there is no platform for their voice to be heard, the system continues with adult-centric generality, and issues such as corporal punishment continue to have negative implications for individual development and society as whole.

So in summary, the value of young people’s voices is exemplified by virtue of their being different from adults. Young people’s perspectives are more specific than what adults generalise and assume, and they can offer solutions that have wide-impacting benefit for themselves and for community cohesion and national development. The need for systemic focus on young people as a specific cohort, worthy of having a stake in the decision-making of specific policies, strategies and interventions, elevates institutional responsibility in a citizenship framework towards young people and their role in development, if service delivery is to be more effective for youth development.

The next section reflects on Fiji’s history of development, to understand how young people in Fiji have existed as a specific cohort, how they have been valued and how institutions within governing structures have featured the citizenship role of young people.

3.4. The Context for Youth Citizenship in Fiji’s development.

To the ethnic divisions extant since 1879 with the arrival of indentured labourers from India and the racial policies followed by the British Colonial administration, we now have intra-ethnic differences most recently apparent in the Fijian community. The rural / urban divide, provincial loyalties, eastern and western ties, professional and non-professional as well as chiefly
and commoner interests have all played their part. These tensions are caused by the impact of change and modernity.

(Madraiwiwi 2001:7)

The pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras in Fiji are discussed in this section, covering the significant social, cultural and political formations and associated political structures over the last couple of centuries. This starts with a look at the Fijian chiefly system that existed before British Colonial Rule. The impacts of the arrival and work of Christian missionaries, and then the British colonisers are then elaborated. Finally, Fiji’s recent history of constitutional independence is discussed.

The search for secondary information on the topic of the role of young people in Fiji’s development was broad, for there are few direct references that discuss the role of young people as ‘citizens’ in its entirety – the broad definition spanning legal empowerment and justice, political participation and decision-making, social engagement and economic rights with access to resources. A range of literature has been reviewed though much of it has not specifically been youth-related, thus a good measure of perception by proxy has been applied to discern the significance of the youth citizenship role.

3.4.1. The Autonomy of Traditional Fijian Kinship Groups

To understand how these ‘tensions’ arose, we can reflect firstly upon the writings of Asesela Ravuvu on the Fijian chiefly system and the democratic system in the days before British Colonial Rule and Christian mission (Ravuvu 1988; 1991). One popular notion that exists of pre-capitalist Fiji is that the concept of democracy was far-removed – it was a feudal nation of great chiefdoms. Ravuvu, however, explores a contrasting dimension, which highlights more harmonious practices within the many small autonomous communities or kinship groups, that demanded total allegiance of their members for the sake of the _vanua_, by exercising principles, not too unlike the democratic principles that are advocated today as ‘good governance’ principles.

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20 _Vanua_ – land, place, the body politic (Nayacakalou 1975). Also meaning ‘tradition’ (Durutalo 1986).
For one thing, the chief of a community was firstly accountable to the people – the community members (1991:6). The chief would have been nominated by the majority of the group as the one who demonstrates most convincingly the innate qualities of a chief. These are described as: showing *loloma*, love and kindness to all; readiness to help and even to serve others; dignified, composed and is unruffled by bickering, gossip or challenges to his authority; tolerant; ready to excuse and forgive; a protector and defender; and assures that those around him are not ill-treated. Once ceremonially installed, the chief acquires divine power and thus has the *mana* to realise his followers’ needs and aspirations (1991:1-2).

Outsiders or foreigners did not know, that the divine chiefs of Fiji were judged by results. If the harvests were good the people were prepared to put up with a moderate amount of tyranny. But excessive tyranny would evoke a demand for his death whether harvests were good or bad. His accountability was to the people. (Ravuvu 1991:6)

The close relationship between chiefs and community members is illustrated in the Fijian aphorism, *na turaga na tamata, na tamata na turaga*, translating as ‘the chief is the people and the people is the chief’. As Ravuvu says, “The chief is the embodiment of his people, and the people are embodiments of their chief” (1991:2).

As for the role of youth within Fijian communities at this time, Durutalo points to the fact that traditional Fijian society operated within a lineage mode of production, for self-sufficiency and autonomy (1986:10). Depending on one’s lineage, one was accorded with a traditional role, such as *bati* (warrior), *vasu* (person with ‘commodity value’ to another clan by maternal lineage) or *tarotaro* (chief’s spokesman) that enabled the community to function and prosper with relative harmony. In this regard, we can assume that all members of Fijian society, physically capable of contributing to the pool of village human resources, were respected as ‘participants’ to the process of advancement. Young people and their youthful strength and zeal would have been deemed highly important in their roles.

However, their position to carry out a role contrary to what was traditionally prescribed was likely to have been rather minimal. Belief in the chief’s godly
connection determined customs and authority. Security was thus vested in the chief and his decisions.

3.4.2. The Displacement of Power by Christian Missions

The introduction of Christianity in the 1840s by the Protestant Victorian missionaries would have had a significant impact on the role of the ‘young person’. The Christian missionaries (to whom Ravuvu referred as ‘outsiders’ or ‘foreigners’ (1991:6)) witnessed in Fiji savage warfare and other practices deemed uncivil and downright evil. James Calvert recorded in his accounts of Christian mission in Fiji, “…within the many shores of this secluded group, every evil passion has grown up unchecked, and run riot in unheard-of abominations…The Savage of Fiji broke beyond the common limits of rapine and bloodshed, and violating the elementary instincts of humanity, stood unrivalled as a disgrace to mankind” (Calvert 1858:1-2). A great change was needed in the eyes of the Christian missionaries, which effectively was to displace power from chiefs to God.

...the need from within for a change to a new way of life where insecurity and fear of reprisal and attachment on life and property would no longer haunt the minds of the people. An alternative choice had at last been made available and it provided a means of escape from customs sanctioned by the arbitrary whims of some chiefs and priests. A new source of power had emerged to free those who were oppressed by the excesses of traditional authority.


The missionaries worked to bring salvation to the ‘savage inhabitants’, and eradicate the practice of warfare, instead uniting chiefdoms under one God. Similarly, the practices of cannibalism, polygamy and other forms of ‘moral depravity’ were rigourously barred from chiefly custom. Schools were introduced to teach basic arithmetic, practical farming, craftwork and scriptures, and were respected as sacred institutions, exempt from open questioning – those who did so were often labelled tamata butobuto (non-enlightened) (Ravuvu 1988:69). New cultural patterns of socialisation were inculcated that promoted modern civilisation and progress. Reputations of chiefdoms previously elevated by fearlessness and relative power were diminished or vanquished to the past. The discreditation of belief in the
ancestor gods by Christian teachings weakened the spiritual aura and sanctity attached to the chief and the authority with which he was invested. This enabled the transfer of some authority from the chiefs to the missionaries (Ravuvu 1988:51).

Young men and women, whose roles were re-consigned to regular day-to-day subsistence living, may have indeed found some reprieve from chiefly tyranny, and perhaps enjoyed a newfound freedom. However, such freedom may have been counteracted by new religious instruction. Furthermore, the freedom from traditional authority, was highlighted by some as causing disintegration within village governance:

Lakeba’s paramount Tui Nayau accused Christianity of leveling distinctions of rank, sanctioning insubordination and of producing poverty and famine.

(Henderson 1931:111. In Ravuvu 1988:27)

With the newly educated Fijians came the beginnings of a new class, distinct from others as being ‘enlightened’. Some of these young people were growing up with the understanding that they were better than others and could undermine the positions of the divine chiefs. Christianity took root, predominantly in the eastern regions of Fiji, which has naturalised as a class divide. The issue of ‘regionalism’ will be discussed in the next section. Christianity also introduced the notion of ‘dependence’ – on ‘alien values’ and the international institution of the church, though the process of dependency was more vociferous during the time of British Colonial rule.

3.4.3. British Colonial Divide and Rule

On 10 October 1874, the leading Fijian chiefs ceded Fiji to Britain’s Queen Victoria. British Colonial rule accelerated and established social and economic dimensions of change to the indigenous population in ways that have been seemingly irreversible to date. The current Prime Minister stated in his address to the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2009:

Fiji has had a colonial history, which created anomalies and inequalities, the legacy of which resonates today. Consequently and of the making of the politicians, our post-colonial period has been punctuated with political instability. On each occasion that a new government is voted into power, the old elite which benefited financially from the previous established
government has been able to successfully destabilize the government and to replace it with its own supporters and representatives.

(Bainimarama 2009)

The statement highlights several critical issues that have proved divisive to Fiji’s society, which are elaborated here.

While the colonial leaders may have articulated their intentions as seeking to preserve the indigenous Fijian race, what is increasingly recognised today by more scrupulous historians is that the foremost ambition of the British was to accumulate wealth and imperialistic power. The crafting of the collaboration with indigenous Fijians through the establishment of the Great Council of Chiefs not only effected a system of ‘indirect rule’ for ‘indigenous Fijians’, it solidified the establishment of an indigenous Fijian class system and entrenched discriminatory policies and attitudes towards the new population of settlers from India, whom the British, in the interests of ‘protecting’ the Fijians, had introduced as indentured labourers. The colonial government had masterminded the indentured labour system to resource the sugar plantations, premised on their interpretation that Fijians did not want to work, that being their ‘way of life’ (Narayan 1976:96).

It is recorded that the Indians who were chosen to serve as indentured labourers in Fiji, were chosen for their strength and physique, rather than because of their position in the caste system (Gillion 1997: 6). Gillion notes in his published documentation of the Indian indenture in Fiji, that “[a]part from the disproportion of the sexes, the salient demographic fact about the Indian population [of indentured labourers] was its youthfulness...” (1997:12). Unlike the role of the indigenous Fijian, which was accorded some dignity by the colonial government for its traditional identity, the role of the indentured Indian labourer was classified as simply a labour means for economic gain, though they were not a party to the benefits of such.

With the final demise of indenture in 1920, those that opted to settle in Fiji diversified themselves according to their aspirations and interests. They still remained the bulk of the labour force, but were also now smallholders, planters, hawkers, small shopkeepers, clerks, and artisans as well. They built on their cultural traditions, which emigration and plantation life had weakened but not obliterated. Thus, if Indian youth had had a defined status culturally prior to their emigration to
Fiji, it was in effect, minimised during the period of indenture and did not feature as a defining point of their identity at the end of indenture.

Class formation within the indigenous Fijian population arose as a result of political alliances between the eastern Fijian chiefs and the British Colonial Administration. Alliances were institutionalised in both the system of indirect rule for indigenous Fijians – with the eastern Fijian chiefs positioned as higher ranking chiefs than those from western regions; and also in the way wealth was distributed – from the western enterprises where it was generated, towards development initiatives in the eastern regions (Durutalo 1985: 18-22).

A further example of this was access to education. Though there was inequality of access between the Indo-Fijian population and indigenous Fijians, there was also unequal access and varying provision of facilities in schools within the indigenous Fijian population, for example, between rural and urban areas and between chiefs and commoners. Access to basic primary and secondary education remained largely dependent on the socio-economic and political status of parents (Narayan 1976: 130-133), and these were dependent on the alliances and the benefits of such, as described above. Durutalo noted in his study of ‘The Paramountcy of Fijian interest and the Politicization of Ethnicity’ that such division between ‘those who work with their heads and those who work with their hands’ was one of the many lines of cleavage that were exploited to weaken opposition to the ruling class (1986:7).

The institution of the Fijian Administration, established to regularise traditional governance through chieftainship, and land ownership, changed the practices of chiefly installation referred at 3.4.1 and resulted in entrenched distinctions between Fijians of a chiefly lineage and the Fijian commoner. The Fijian ‘commoner’ remained subordinate to their chiefs, traditionally and politically, for many years, and was bound to the decisions made communally and on their behalf in the Fijian

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21 Though 40% of indentured labourers returned to their homeland over time at the end of their bond, the remaining Indian population eventually became a permanent part of Fiji’s population. The term ‘Indo-Fijian’ has only been introduced and used in the last few decades, however it is used in this instance, though historical texts often refer to ‘Indians’, to acknowledge their status as settled immigrants of the Fiji Islands.

22 The Fijian Administration gave role to the Buli (District Administrative Head) and the Turaga-ni-koro (Government representative in the village or village headman), but this often sat uncomfortably in the traditional system. The Buli and the Turaga-ni-koro often found themselves torn between complying with official requirements and satisfying kinship obligations (Ravuvu 1988:60).
Administration. The Fijian Administration also helped to minimise the interaction between the Fijians and other communities, thereby both isolating the Fijians and discouraging any development of common interest across cultural boundaries (Narayan 1976:101).

The colonial government’s relationship with the Indo-Fijian population was entirely different. The Indo-Fijian had in fact more to oppose and challenge with the Europeans in Fiji, than with the indigenous Fijians. Without land or a cohesive social structure that provided the Fijian community with defined role and assets to sustain themselves, Indo-Fijians sought their security and futures in education for their children. It was the Indian hunger for education that was seen as a threat to the European hold on the few non-manual occupations. Their education and their relative freedom of expression, compared with the Fijians, concerned Fletcher, the governor who in 1936, cautioned against meeting the requests of all that ‘the Indians clamour loudly for’ lest they act unfairly by the Fijians who ‘never defend their needs’ (Gillion 1977:125).

In 1920, Indo-Fijians rioted and held a strike against their meagre wages and high cost of living. This political assertion, which had inevitable economic dimensions, was not entirely effective in its intention, as the Government had recruited armed troops to bolster their position. It did, however, serve to empower the Indian community, who continued to use their workers’ associations, external networks and labour value as a means of assertion to swing the balance of favour towards their benefit. Over time, the Colonial Office in Fiji was forced to review the focus of their system, from one where Indian labourers merely provided an unskilled labour force for the wealth of the British empire, to another that had to handle a newly economically independent Indian community that demanded increasing levels of political rights.

For the Fiji-born Indian young person in the first half of the 20th Century, their common identity was founded on their collective fight against political and social discrimination and their ambition and ability to improve their living conditions which had been determined by the policies of the Colonial administration and other Europeans. Their indenture buffered their position with a ‘nothing to lose’ attitude. This was even used to petition against new immigrant communities from Gujurat in
India. During a 1937 election campaign, a new secret body, called the Nawa Jawan Sainik (New Youth Army) was organised specifically to oppose Gujurati interests (Gillion 1977:118).

The colonial government’s contrasting treatment of the two ethnic groups laid down historical paths of development that still to an extent determine the nature of people today, as well as the parliamentary and party system of political representation, though other socio-economic influences have also intervened and created different clusters of people in Fiji. The ‘Fijianisation’ of the state, through the system of indirect rule for indigenous Fijians, is criticised by Durutalo, who noted that from a western Native Fijian perspective, it was in fact little more than the ascension to power of eastern chiefs and their allies (1985:18).

The notion, however, that the Great Council of Chiefs is a major symbol of Fijian identity and political strength is still widely recognised, though at the time of writing this thesis, the GCC has effectively been dismantled by the current military-led government. The notion is also said to fuel the persistence of indigenous Fijian conservatism that limits free communication and any divergent political orientation (Mausio 1998:191). In her study of ethnic Fijian conservatism, Mausio says, “...Fijian conservatism is most potent where social hierarchies and social structures are well defined...conservatism is stronger where institutions of chieftainship are more rigidly defined,” and this she says, was most strongly displayed by eastern respondents. Such conservatism has also been observed by Dr Rusiate Nayacakalou. He notes the dominance of chiefly ranks over all aspects of their subjects’ daily life in Tavuki, Kadavu in the early 1960s:

*The first impression I had was of a disturbing silence, but it was a reflection of the awe and respect with which the chiefs were held, not only by lower-ranking men but also by themselves in their relations with one another. There seemed to be a standing rule that children should not cry and cocks should not crow. The babbling of women beside houses working under the shade of trees, the laughter of young men preparing to go to the bush or to the sea, which often characterise village life in Fiji, were not at all common in Tavuki. Here the chief’s houses dominated the village scene, and lesser men*
were bound by rules of respect towards chiefs to maintain silence in their presence.

(Nayacakalou 1975:61-62)

Dr Rusiate Nayacakalou explored the impacts of capitalism on power dynamics in Fijian villages in the 1950s and 1960s, the observations of which are relevant to this discussion, in understanding the impacts of nearly a decade of colonial undertaking. It is also in Nayacakalou’s analyses that some commentary of the role of the young Fijian can be discerned. For while the cleavages as described above served to determine role and status for different groups of people in Fiji, there were also several layers within these stratifications that also underlie social, economic and political dimensions today. These were the relations between elders and young people, men and women. The problems of modernisation were seen to affect particularly the relationships between the young and the old. It was noted by one chief in Daku, Kadavu, who shared with Nayacakalou his concerns related to the young men of his village, who had left school and did not appear to have any definite objectives in life.

*He thought they were between two worlds, neither of which they understood: the world of traditional society and its obligations, and the modern one of commerce and money. ...He told how difficult it was to supervise the youths (it was suggested they were almost ‘culture-less’), and that ‘it needs a firm hand and considerable patience’.*

(Nayacakalou 1975:60)

The establishments to preserve and manage Fijian affairs and the endeavour to make economic progress, it seems, have never rested easily alongside each other. Though colonial government policy attempted and demonstrated some success at adopting co-operative styles of enterprise, which resonated fairly comfortably with the communal village life-style, greater complexities of the monetised economy inevitably infiltrated and destabilised village operations. Furthermore, more powerful economic forces continued to concentrate economic activity and prosperity in the urban areas, perpetuating business and commercial specialisation along ethnic lines (Ravuvu 1988:83). The colonial government’s policies and Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna’s steadfast belief in them, are held in Nayacakalou’s view, as cause for such
entrenchment of Fijians’ tenacity to preserve tradition, often forgoing the advantages of more democratic principles.

The new monetary economy and the introduction of administrative structures promoted principles that were in fact more inclined to individual freedoms than incentives for shared gain, amongst members of a village or mataqali. Ravuvu endorses this:

_The need to work together to satisfy obligations to units such as the yasana, tikina, koro, yavusa or mataqali often conflicts with the need to attend to individual or household needs. Primary allegiance is to the local group – the family..._

(1988:83-84)

In contrast to wage-earning employment, there is no financial reward for work in the Fijian economy. Rather, the major sanctions that urge men to keep at work are consideration for one’s reputation as a hard worker, the force of public opinion, and a sense of obligation to other members of the group who are carrying on with the work (Nayacakalou 1978:108-109). Nayacakalou questions the efficacy of labour organised along these lines and highlights several instances, in his ethnographic observation, of workers ‘slacking off’ in the absence of the village headman. Indeed it casts doubt on the authenticity of the respect for the traditional leader, or if in fact, it is a matter of ‘fear of authority’. It perhaps can be argued that respect is coupled with reciprocity. The expectation of paying respects is to receive in return, respect. To receive animosity or indifference would alter the state of respect to perhaps contempt. If one were required to pay respect despite short returns, the matter of ‘fear of authority’ might be more apt to the situation. So the question of the returns to young people in terms of respect given to them, is key to whether their respect paid to chiefs and elders was so, or was accorded out of social obligation.

The matter can be elaborated upon, for Nayacakalou’s portrayal of the increasing influence of commercial aspiration in village living has particular bearing and acknowledgement of the cohort of young people. In the village tradition, young people held roles that required, as in the past, physical ability and dexterity, to keep the household fed, watered and sheltered. They were instructed by the heads of households as to their daily duties, by authority of members of the local kin-group
who were senior by reason of age or sex, or by the chief and elders for communal
duties, such as house-building or preparations for ceremonies (Nayacakalou 1978:24-
26). It does not seem that any other role, other than young people’s labour, had a
place in the well-being and development of the village. Rank was determined by age
and sex, with seniority to exercise authority being accorded to the older over the
young and by men over women. Persistent disobedience by younger household
members was at times addressed by removal from home to live elsewhere (ibid.).
The administration of the land, the conduct of land disputes, and the day-to-day
control of lands rests with the senior members of the group. In theory every member
was supposed to have a say; in practice, however, it was the elders who shouldered
the responsibility of making these decisions (Nayacakalou 1978:111).

In the presence of the higher levels of the social hierarchy, while it was possible that
a particular incumbent may be in dispute, the customary office of chief was hardly
ever questioned (Nayacakalou 1975:31). Though it was observed with less formality
at other levels, the supremacy of such authority was inhibitive to all commoners,
most especially the younger and the females. The design of the new political
administrative sphere of governance, in seeking to give Fijians a part in the
administration of their own affairs, had the effect of utilising the personnel of
traditional leadership to carry out the policies of the colonial government
(Nayacakalou 1975:83-85). Thus, it is presumed that the traditional marginalisation
of youth and females was carried over to the Fijian Administration and the
Legislative Council.

In his study on traditional leadership, Nayacakalou identified the relative
accessibility to commercial centres as one of the key variables. The greater the
sources of income, the greater the proportion of money income is spent on ‘food-
getting’ activities and a wider range of transactions, and consequently the more
advanced is the acculturation. He notes that the villagers who are engaged in wage
employment comprise the younger age-group (Nayacakalou 1978: 129; Thomson
1994: 76) who, by reason of their employment, can most easily ignore the communal
obligations in day-to-day village life. Their employment exonerates them from
paying to the turaga ni koro their statutory $1 per day for every day of their absence
from communal duties, as they have found adequate sustenance for themselves and
their families. As Nayacakalou says, “it is a new source of strength to them. They
need not heed the work of their elders. Here is an excellent illustration of how the traditional authority of the leaders may be rendered ineffective by what appears to be a welcome change in the economic pattern” (loc. cit.).

A further point is made: “[t]he freedom of modern associations implies that there is, at least theoretically, unlimited room for a man to diversify his social role” (Nayacakalou 1975:133). It is specifically this point that suggests that the returns, in terms of respect and acknowledgement to young people, from fulfilling their traditional role were less than returns seen to be gained from wage employment, which were not only financial but absolved them from traditional obligation. Nayacakalou points out frankly, “[t]here is a limit to the amount of authoritarian direction which people will accept…” (ibid.).

When wage labour involved the permanent relocation of the labour force, largely younger men, their roles in the village were reallocated to the remaining members of the village – often women. The inevitable shifts in the authority structure created opportunity for potential disintegration of village harmony. The young person’s role was most significantly an economic role whether as wage earners or contributing to the village traditional economy. Evidence to support a decision-making role for them in the traditional Fijian economy is negligible. On the other hand, the formal economy offered workers, young and old, opportunity to join workers’ unions designed to protect their interests, though Nayacakalou noted traditional influences in force in these spheres as well. Thus whether one examines the situation of communal gain by co-operative arrangement (as promoted by Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna) or the situation of individual gain in urban areas, the common feature of both is the blurred distinction between modern aspiration and traditional identity, though they are positioned differently in both scenarios. One seeks to preserve traditional structure while the other shirks this, but both are lured by the need to acquire the means to assert status, whether communally or individually. Both scenarios are dependent on international capitalism to enable their acquisition.

It is perhaps this feature, the dependence on ‘outside resources’ that has had more lasting implication for Fiji’s history and perhaps future. Ravuvu’s study on Development of Dependence: The Pattern of Change in a Fijian Village (1988) was an outgrowth of a long-standing concern with the problems of rural development and
modernisation, specifically on the declining self-sufficiency and self-reliance among Fijians. “Continuing dependence on some outside resources is inevitable but rural Fijians may become helpless and at the mercy of those few who ultimately control the economic power of the country” (1988.ix). He goes on to say, “The country is witnessing the emergence of a new breed of people who are like Zombies or puppets. They cannot return to their local way of living and have no influence over their future. They are a new breed of tamata vakararavi – dependent persons” (1988:187).

This section has elaborated in some detail the impacts of colonial governance that extend to Fiji’s recent history as well as the modern day. The threads of division and discrimination have been examined by historians as a complex arrangement of inter- and intra-ethnic stratifications that descend from the institutions of colonial administration. However, underlying these was simply the discrimination of some and preferential access of others to state resources. Though it can be said that Fiji saw relative prosperity under colonial rule, albeit through the labour and suffering of the Indian people, this was done foremost for the benefit of the metropolis as subject to Britain. This expanded the state of dependency widely through social, economic and political dimensions that still remain with Fiji today in many ways. Nayacakalou describes how the new socio-economic patterns effectively empowered young Fijians in less conservative regions of Fiji to become agents of change with regard to the traditional economy and to some extent in the formal economy.

The British colonial government on the one hand regulated a systematised version of indigenous Fijian tradition and identity. However, on the other hand, colonial capitalism contradicted the very values promoted, by what was known as ‘Fijian tradition’. For all Fijians, but perhaps most significantly for young Fijians, the challenge of negotiating capitalist aspirations, which allowed for greater self-empowerment and autonomy, together with innate traditional understanding would have created much personal conflict and social instability. Thus the divisions created by colonial rule can be said to have been evident at all levels – national, community and personal. Durutalo considers the period of colonial governance as the ‘development of underdevelopment’ (1985:5).
The next section looks at Fiji’s constitutional independence and considers how the past has prepared the nation for opportunities of the modern world and it discusses the significance of young people in this context.

3.4.4. The Militarisation of Constitutional Independence

In 1970, Fiji as a newly independent nation was now challenged to manage a more inclusive form of independent government and to negotiate its own development path. The challenge has been fraught with turbulence. Citizens previously suppressed by colonial rule explored new political opportunity, while others grappled to maintain their privileges and paramountcy attained by colonial rule. Unity by constitution, is evidently not so easy to command, after years of entrenched division. Four political coups, at least three of them instigated by the military, have been founded on ethnic and racial issues. In his paper on The Changing Role of the Great Council of Chiefs (n.d.), Norton remarks:

_The central dilemma in Fiji’s political development has been the problem of how to devise constitutional government that can reconcile the indigenous Fijian conviction of entitlement to political pre-eminence with a just representation of interests of other sections of the population, primarily the Indians. Both the army and the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) have gained prominence during the last 20 years as institutions of indigenous Fijian power with capacities for the extra-constitutional management of crises arising after the electorate defeat of Fijian-dominated governments._

(Norton 2009:97)

When the Fiji Labour Party, the membership of which held a majority of Indo-Fijians, was democratically elected to power in 1987, nationalistic Fijian political consciousness was prompted to take drastic action. The long-held fears of Indian dominance seemed to have eventuated. For while the position of Indo-Fijians underwent a marked change, from merely a labour force to one of independent farmers and cultivators of cash crops, the economic position of the indigenous Fijian remained somewhat static (Narayan 1976: 94). Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka staged Fiji’s first coup, justifying his extreme actions by stating at the time that Fijian chiefs should always govern Fiji and therefore, the Prime Minister, and indeed all Ministers, should always be of chiefly rank (Singh 1995:9. In CCF 1995). From 1994
onwards, however, Rabuka began to concern himself with constitutional reform. He began to see the need for a more unified approach, where people of all races could have equality of opportunity and political rights (Sharpham 2001:188).

A period of reclamation of leased land was prompted by the coups from 1987 and this issue remains as a source of discontent. For while those of an entrepreneurial inclination view land as an economic utility, it is for the indigenous Fijians, part of their very being, their soul; inherited from forebears and destined for their progeny and generations to come till time immemorial (Singh 1995:11. In CCF 1995).

The people of Nakorosule cannot live without their physical embodiment in terms of their land, upon which survival of individuals and groups depends. It provides nourishment, shelter and protection, as well as a source of security and the material basis for identity and belonging. Land in this sense is thus an extension of the self; and conversely the people are an extension of the land. Land becomes lifeless and useless without the people, and likewise the people are also helpless and insecure without land to thrive upon.

(Ravuvu 1988:7-8)

Let not the race associations deceive us into thinking that all Fijians are land-rich, however, for the clan-based Fijian traditional system can also effectively deny members of any land worth using (Singh 2001:11). The fact also that, about 51% of Fiji’s population (half of them Fijians) choose to live in urban centres for various reasons (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008:1), points to the fact that many Fijians do not have land accessible to them from which they can live sustainably. So while land is an issue that has been commonly racialised and politicised, there are further dimensions of complexity that prevent its classification as a racial issue. Rather, it is an economic issue and a development issue. For while agricultural and rural development initiatives have been a major concern of all Development Plans, these have had the effect of increasing the utility of money, which has inevitably returned to urban areas, as rural people bought more goods that they previously could not buy (Ravuvu 1988:82). In other words, land ownership and utilisation by either race in rural areas cannot be seen as a direct path to prosperity, for ultimately if development

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23 This was emphasised in post-colonial period from the 7th Development Plan 1976 – 1980 onwards as a move away from the established pattern of development that had been promoted by the colonial government (GoF 1975:5).
gains are not distributed to develop rural areas in terms of services and facilities, then such initiatives only perpetuate urbanisation. Equity issues surrounding the matter of land transcend race.

‘Equity’ in fact can be used to describe many endeavours of constitutional independence. Ravuvu remarked of the people of Nakorosule:

> The acquisition of constitutional independence in 1970 further reinforced in the minds of the people of Nakorosule their rights to be free, not only from the yoke of colonialism but also from subordination and servitude to traditional authority and its customary obligations. This not only affected relationships between chiefs and commoners, but also relationships between young and old, male and female. Thus respect for old people by young people weakened; and women demanded to be more equal with men.

(1988:81)

These endeavours for equity, particularly between the young and the old and between male and female, have been supported by the international human rights rationale. However, many issues of inequality between these groups remain, as has been described in the introduction to this thesis, and as will be further discussed in the next section. Though social norms still subscribe to many traditional principles and protocols, the Fijian phrases “tabana ni bula vakapolitiki” (in the nature of politics), equated with “tabana ni vosa vakadoudou” (in the nature of freedom of speech) suggest that it may be considered more acceptable to question the rights of the traditional order or the modern political leadership in assuming power and making decisions affecting the lives of individuals.

In further reviewing the impacts of colonial governance in the post-colonial era, it is appropriate to look at the institution of the military, established by the colonial government in 1920 to suppress dissent amongst striking Indo-Fijian workers. The Fiji Military Forces have been to date a predominantly indigenous Fijian male force. Teresia Teaiwa examines in her paper *Militarism and Masculinities in Fiji during the Mid 1990s* how militarism has extended beyond the confines of military institutions and how military values and ideals have influenced and reflected social, political and cultural divisions in Fiji (c.2004:201). She highlights how an ‘aura of Christian mission’ is invested in the military, due to the predominance of Fijians in the military
who, with very few exceptions, are followers of Christianity. Teaiwa’s comment, “The articulation of militarism with Christianity and indigenous identity is reinforced by the articulation of Christianity with Fijian culture” (c.2004: 211), resonates with Norton’s remark of the split between the Great Council of Chiefs and the army in 2006:

There was briefly a suggestion in the GCC that chiefs should direct their traditional subjects to leave the army. Only one chief attempted, unsuccessfully, to this prompting a newspaper editor to remark that for many Fijians the armed forces were ‘the new vanua’ (Fijian community).

(Norton 2009:108)

This thesis explores the situation of youth and the status of youth citizenship in this recent context. Constitutional independence may have brought greater freedoms to young people in Fiji in terms of freedom of speech and individual identity but these are counteracted by the limitations of their poverty of opportunity for development, the predicaments of which have been explained in the introduction to this thesis. The question of whether young people are experiencing a greater freedom since Fiji’s independence is further probed by the control of such freedoms by military rule. Constitutional independence may have relieved young people of their subordination to traditional authority. However, the notion that military dominance is akin to ‘the new vanua’ suggests rather that constitutional independence may have subjected them to complete disempowerment under military order.

Furthermore, young people within the military and others who work with private security companies face a greater vulnerability to risk and violence. Torika Bolatagici (2009) discusses what she calls the ongoing colonisation of Fijian male bodies through the economy of war. On the one hand, militarism has promoted the notion of the Fijian body as masculine, strong, a protector and a warrior, while on the other it has exploited Fijians by placing them in positions of vulnerability, has rendered them dependent on war for their employment as soldiers or as security, and has and will have long-term implications on families and societies as a whole (2009:2-18).

A short review of the first few Development Plans following independence portrays an interesting transition of roles for the military. In the first Development Plan after
independence (DP6) the role of the military changed from its purely security function to an involvement in rural development work. Its expanded size, to include skills training and a new Naval Squadron, required a substantial increase in budgetary allocation to account for its increased role (GoF 1975:219-220). A highlight of DP7 was the formation and development of the first Fiji Infantry Regiment (1 FIR) as a peacekeeping unit of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The speed with which this unit was mounted involved a significant orientation of RFMF resources, the effects of which continued well into the subsequent planning period (GoF 1980:274). In DP9, the military forces had expanded its peacekeeping presence in both Lebanon and Sinai. This was noted as a “timely and short-term measure of slightly easing the unemployment problem” (GoF 1985:161-162). However, domestically, DP9 also noted that in terms of its rural development function, the military’s major role only came into force after natural disasters (ibid.).

In comparison to expenditure on youth development programmes, the military’s budget has always been significantly higher: by around 60% in DP7 and by 90% in DP8. In DP9, the military’s budget was not specified, though an asterisk advised that this budget was subsumed under ‘Administration and Other Services’. While all plans’ initiatives for youth development are presented as strategic and helpful, the overall expenditure ranging from 0.05% (DP7) to 1.4% (DP9) of the national budget, simply has not been sufficient to reverse the trends that each plan attempts to address. Consequently, the military has provided a significant employment opportunity for many young people, particularly for those who do not achieve in formal education but are reluctant to take up opportunities for ‘drop outs’, as the term used in some of these plans. No doubt this has contributed to the militarisation of Fiji in recent history.

The distinctions between people continue to rise as Fiji’s political history continues. For example, in 2009, one could place people in Fiji in two further factions, those who support the military regime and those who do not. We may have realigned ourselves against different delineations, we may be more or less segregated then before, but what is clear is that the divisions are multi-layered. The simplest of analyses is to say that divisions are based on ethnic interests. The more precise

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24 This does not include expenditure on education.
analysis explores the layers within these divisions. The significance of the relationships between the young and the old in particular are explored in the next section, for as stated earlier, the issues related to this have huge implications for development in Fiji.

3.5. Youth citizenship: Opinions from Young Pacific Islanders\textsuperscript{25}

Perhaps most significant for this thesis are the findings from a study previously conducted by the researcher that sought perspectives of young people in the Pacific region (Carling 2007). The study was conducted in 2007 to contribute towards the development of UNICEF Pacific’s multi-country program of action for young people. The intentions of the study were to: identify youth priorities within UNICEF’s programmatic scope; determine factors that contributed to the development of youth to their fullest potential; discuss options for overcoming the obstacles; identify how young people wanted to receive information and impart information on their situations, particularly for marginalised young people; and determine what they believed was their citizenship role. A total of 626 young people from 9 Pacific Island countries were represented in the analysis of the survey.\textsuperscript{26} The information generated was entirely qualitative although some quantifications were derived through the process of coding and clustering. The analysis was framed within three segments of a governance model: 1). The process of decision-making; 2). Processes by which decisions are implemented; and 3). Traditions, institutions and processes that determine how power is exercised.

The study highlighted important differences in the way that youth are regarded by officials in the ‘development industry’ and by young people themselves. Both development and government officials refer to youth as a list of youth problems (school drop-outs; unemployment among school leavers; youth substance abuse; youth living on the street; youth crime and involvement in civil unrest; teenage pregnancy; exposure to STIs including HIV & AIDS; and youth suicide). Youth, on

\textsuperscript{25} This section draws from the research paper Carling (2007).
\textsuperscript{26} The research sample was determined by sending by email, a questionnaire in English to all Ministries of Youth and Education in 14 countries in the region, all youth organisations with known email contacts, all UNICEF, Save the Children and other development agencies’ offices in the region and to many individuals and facilitators. Requests were made to disseminate the questionnaire widely, including to rural areas. Responses included many from provincial areas of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Fiji as well as Chuuk, a less developed state in the Federated States of Micronesia. Many cited a village as their location.
the other hand, as reflected by this regional survey, highlighted their issues quite differently. Rather than focus on the problems associated with their vulnerability, they chose to highlight issues related to where they saw their potential. Young people view themselves as a development resource rather than a burdensome problem and hindrance to development. Similarly, their recommendations for development assistance reflected notions of positive adolescence and youth citizenship.

The findings underscored common themes and specified types of civic engagement that young people emphasise as most relevant to their lives, and it is these that constitute the measure of assessment for this thesis and investigation targeted at Fiji’s leadership. Though they represent the voice of ‘Pacific’ youth, and not specifically young ‘Fiji Islanders’, they are useful on a few counts: firstly, to discern Fiji-specific relevance; secondly, to compare the perspectives of youth with those of ‘adults’ or leaders; and finally, to explore further issues within leadership that young Pacific Islanders had deemed critical to their situation, such as the systems of governance that relate to the delivery of services. The significant themes are elaborated here as they provide an important reference for the analysis of leaders’ perspectives that follows.

The themes in order of importance were presented as:

- **Focusing on building youth capacity**: The delivery of services and creation of opportunities by government institutions to build youth capacity in a wide range of areas for equitable and inclusive rights to development and participation.

- **Access to information**: The collection and dissemination of information on aspects of child and youth life, survival, development and protection, appropriate for the general public, in particular, children and young people, parents and those who work with and for children, as well as for effective and efficient planning and decision-making by leaders.

- **Active youth participation**: Inclusion of young people in decision-making, the economy and social development at the family and community levels but also at the institutional and national levels.

- **Traditions and customs**: Building on the positive traditions and reviewing the discriminatory or negative influences at traditional level that determine young
people’s status and how they are engaged at community, institutional and political levels.

- **Equality in leadership:** Enhancing the ability of leaders both traditional and political, so that the needs of all people – of all ages, genders and ethnicities and including those living in rural locations – are met equitably.

By far, most issues (59%) raised by youth related to services and actions of administrations and public institutions (mainly government systems), which according to the survey respondents, marginalise young people and fail to include them as recipients of opportunities to develop individual capacities. As a result, their ability to contribute effectively to national development is minimised if not completely removed.

The most significant obstacle facing the development of young people was recognised as socio-economic factors such as poor economic growth and high population growth, limiting resources for development and keeping people in poverty. The scarcity of employment opportunities created by poor socio-economic situations is perhaps reflected by the 0.1% of young people who mentioned ‘holding service jobs’ as a useful way of currently contributing to society. Coupled with this is the fact that young people do not feel adequately resourced to be managing independence, in either professional or personal capacities.

Just over a quarter (26%) of issues raised involved the informal governing institutions of culture and tradition. This type of governance was recognised as being vital to the identity and future of Pacific Islanders as well as rendering children helpless to abuse and young people vulnerable to exploitation, without a voice. Fifteen percent of other important issues mentioned involved the democratic system through which young citizens could influence leaders’ decisions. This area of governance included the elements of participatory processes involving access to information and building capacity of skills to participate, such as communication skills and rights education, as well as actually being represented in national and provincial government.
Focusing on building youth capacity

Despite the recognition that socio-economic conditions across the Pacific presented few employment opportunities for young people, survey respondents identified building youth capacity as the strategic investment required, rather than suggesting an increased investment in job creation. A general sentiment of ‘loss of faith’ in governing institutions at community and national level seemed to prompt young people into recommending and reiterating investment in themselves as a prerequisite to addressing development challenges. They believed that the greatest obstacle to their development was the failure of governments to provide essential services or sufficient training opportunities for them to build their capacities in a wide range of ways, specifically in life-skills and in quality education. Current education systems were highlighted as inadequate in catering for all children and many quality issues were raised, such as curricula being teacher-focused and aimed solely at academic achievement rather than the development of the whole person or the development of children more artistically inclined. Without life-skills and values, young people did not feel sufficiently equipped to address change and difficult situations in their lives, resist peer pressure, find meaningful and productive livelihoods in the modern world and participate as valid social actors.

The need for a greater investment in young people’s capacity development was reiterated in the survey question that asked for opinions on what constituted ‘a young person developed to their full potential’. Overall, 66.3% of young people surveyed opted for elements of youth development that require governments and institutions to deliver quality services for a wide range of youth development aspects. In addition to education, life-skills and values, livelihoods skills and communication skills, young people also specified the need for young people to have perseverance and leadership skills, and to develop talents.

Of those who recommended building youth capacity as a solution to overcoming obstacles, 92.7% suggested many forms of training for young people, such as vocational training, some specifically aimed at young women, life-skills training, literacy programs and peer-to-peer training. Young people highlighted the need for many types of services for youth development, such as activity centres, talent development programs and sports development.
Access to information

Young people rated highly their need for information on a whole host of issues, which would equip them with knowledge to make wise decisions and safeguard their health and well-being. They also recommended the need for information to be directed to parents, as ignorance was pinpointed as the critical factor contributing to the occurrence of preventable infant and childhood diseases, malnutrition, injury, abuse and neglect. In addition to the lack of public awareness at community level, young people felt that governments needed a greater understanding of children and youth issues – at the decision-making level and at institutional level.

The collection of information about children for effective and relevant government planning was ranked as the third most important issue from a list of eleven options related to UNICEF’s programmatic scope. Many respondents cited the lack of government responsiveness as problematic. One young person claimed that “leaders have forgotten about us”. Others said that issues faced by young people in rural areas are especially unknown and thus fewer development efforts were directed towards rural areas. Young people linked the lack of information on child and youth development to the poor and insufficient delivery of services for children and young people.

The means of information delivery to children as part of their rights as citizens were explored in depth in the survey, to identify the best ways of reaching children and young people. Suggestions for reaching rural youth and marginalised youth illustrated how young people like to receive messages in active rather than passive ways – by engaging them in activities such as camps, through associations of youth-interest groups, youth conventions, team-building activities, talent competitions, music nights and sports events. In addition, a personal approach was recommended, using local volunteers and peers, trained to convey messages. A few mentioned the use of role models and advocates, such as Waisele Serevi, to inspire and influence. Young survey respondents often suggested the engagement the community and parents and emphasised the importance of devising information strategies to cater for diversity within the youth population.
Active youth participation

While the issue of governments suffering a lack of information and understanding of children and youth issues was very apparent, only 9.2% of respondents felt that their participation at the national decision-making level was the most important way for young people to participate, thus providing governments with the relevant information from which to develop child- and youth-friendly policies and programs. Reasons for this possibly are related to the fact that only a few meaningful exercises of child and youth participation at national decision-making level have happened to date resulting in very limited levels of government responsiveness.

Some respondents said while there had been some positive change in recent times with governments, schools and NGOs being more willing to listen to young people, there remain few avenues for expression and participation at the decision-making level. Furthermore, the youth participation that did occur was often not representative, only including the ‘elite’ young people and often being more tokenistic in approach, perhaps because of the widespread lack of significance accorded to children in society and the general disregard by Pacific governments and traditional leaders for young people and their participation.

While only 9.2% of survey respondents feel that participation in national decision-making processes is important, it still marks a significant increase from the 0.8% of young people who said that contributing to the process of decision-making was a useful way that young people currently participate. Young people clearly want greater opportunities to influence national decision-making, though not in ways that have been popularly used (e.g. youth parliaments). While there were various suggestions to develop possible mechanisms for participation such as youth councils, advisory committees, youth parliament and other types of youth forum, ratings of these never constituted more than 4% of ways young people preferred to have their voice heard or participate generally. Rather, they specified a wide range of innovative activities to elicit perspectives of children and young people and as with accessing information, had a preference for participating ‘by doing’ rather than by ‘sitting in dialogue’. Practical methods were suggested such as sending concerns through youth groups or youth centres, and planning, developing and implementing
projects and programs with development agencies, rather than sitting through onerous national consultations.

The voice of young people in decision-making at traditional and community levels is apparently extremely limited. A minuscule 0.3% mentioned ‘useful participation’ as related to influencing decisions in the home. Young people encountered rigorous opposition from adults to the type of participation that involved discussion about sensitive issues or actions that pushed the rules and boundaries of social order. They also felt resistance to their participation in ‘cultural or serious issues’. The following quotes indicate some of the barriers to participation and information dissemination:

“Women’s voices are not heard at the village level, only chiefs and men…”

“Taboo subjects in villages are HIV/AIDS and sex…”

“Children’s voices are not always allowed in villages”

Traditions and customs

The issue of tradition and culture reverberated throughout the survey responses as dichotomous in character. On the one hand, tradition was noted significantly as an obstacle to children and young people’s development – more so than obstacles in poor education systems. On the other hand, tradition was seen as important to young people’s identity and skills base. As an obstacle, the loss of tradition was highlighted as problematic although the greater majority recognised the negative and overwhelming pressures or limitations of tradition and the lack of significance apportioned to children and youth. Negative features of tradition were said to create generation gaps that limited participation of young people, in particular girls. The word of the elders is seen is sufficient and representative of everyone – youth participation is seen as a waste of time and money.

Traditional pressures were seen to be sometimes discouraging of formal education and less accommodating to the changing lifestyles of the modern world. However, young people who highlighted the importance of education and features of the modern world as important to their development clearly saw possibility or at least the need to build on traditional strengths to equip young people with the skills needed to live and succeed in the modern world – in all settings from urban to rural.
In terms of recommendations, young people suggested reviewing tradition, for example, to allow greater involvement of women in community activities. This highlighted their key role in holding or preserving traditional practices for future generations. They also recommended directly targeting village representatives and leaders as well as church Ministers in raising the status and engagement of young people in traditional settings.

*Equality in leadership*

Though the issues above all relate to aspects of leadership and governance, the analysis pointed to a recognised need to promote the use of a human rights framework to ensure that governments systematically address issues of marginalisation and systems to enforce leaders’ accountabilities. A few respondents suggested ‘racial prejudices’ as obstacles to development. Others branded ‘poor leadership and corruption’, ‘political upheavals’ and ‘conflict’ as other causes.

The need to extend vital programs and services to reach the most vulnerable of children and young people, most deserving of targeted development assistance, was expressed in reference to young people living with disabilities, school drop-outs and those living in squatter settlements or rural and isolated locations. Communities living in rural areas suffer greater marginalisation in terms of development, they receive less information and young people there have fewer recreational and sports facilities and activities, poorer education facilities and few opportunities for formal employment. Many migrate to urban centres and face further discrimination in squatter settlements. Additionally, women were identified as groups discriminated against, as were those at the bottom of the caste system in Micronesia.

Young people recommended governance and rights education for teachers, adults including leaders, for parents and for children and young people. Within this, legislative and regulatory frameworks would benefit from reforming towards a rights-based compliance. Specific suggestions addressing barriers to inclusion were focused on the role of duty bearers to develop capacities of young people in rural areas, planning and allocating sufficient resources for providing opportunities for livelihood development such as coconut crushing.
The paper concluded with the assessment that young people were more in favour of socialistic styles of governance, bolstered by the fact that current capitalist approaches had not garnered much opportunity for young people to advance their status and improve their welfare. They also deemed a socialistic style of governance to be more participatory and responsive to citizens, including the youth population.

They clearly saw a greater potential citizenship role for themselves in their countries’ development at community and national levels – but most significantly at community level. This was demonstrated by examples of how young people currently participated and how they wished to participate. Young people’s lack of confidence in participatory initiatives such as youth parliaments is perhaps justified by the fact that these initiatives have not been supported by participatory structures and ongoing activities to engage young people in meaningful ways. Results from the national youth parliament type of activity have been minimal.

Young people saw both the ‘glass ceiling’ and the ‘golden opportunities’ that exist in traditional structures. Additionally, there are evidently more livelihood opportunities available for young people in the informal sector, the fact of which promoted development strategies that were often divergent from those that are currently favoured by governments.

Underlying the analysis was the call for a greater adherence to rights and democracy for greater inclusiveness of all people. Citizenship involves enjoying rights and exercising responsibilities that benefit community members. This way of seeing citizenship encompasses the specific idea of political participation and also includes the more general notion that citizenship embraces a range of participatory activities, not all overtly political, that affect the overall welfare of communities.

3.6. Drawing conclusions: A Theoretical Framework for Youth Citizenship

This literature review covers a wide scope of information related to citizenship and participation, referencing both human development and governance frameworks and exploring in depth the context for this study. Both the human development and the governance frameworks clearly highlight the theory and practice supporting the notion that active citizenship of people constitutes proper democracy but specifically that active citizenship of *children and young people* is part and process of proper
democracy as well. This contributes to the efficacy of a citizenship role, by means of young people who achieve individual development to a greater potential and who are able to make greater contributions to national development.

The realities of implementing a governing system that enable active citizenship roles of young people are, however, complex and difficult. Many contributing factors affect the effectiveness of young people’s citizenship, ranging from the efficiency of participatory structures for young people to influence development agendas, the capacity and acceptance of all adults to facilitate and act upon the voices of young people, and the need to hold leaders accountable to young people. The change of attitude implied, indeed of entire value systems is effectively a paradigm shift. As a result, there are few examples in the world of active youth citizenship and governing systems that systematically engage with young people, and less documentation of the impacts of active youth citizenship. It is perhaps easier to realise the consequences of denying children and young people a voice, which can give some indication of the value of their engagement. For example, the situation of children and young people would be more widely known, to governments and service providers. Perpetrators of abuse, exploitation and abuse would be less able to continue their practice unchecked. Decisions relating to the welfare of children and young people that are informed by children and young people, would in theory lead to more appropriate responses and more effective results.

To construct a theoretical framework from this literature review would feature several ‘inputs’ that would contribute to comprehensive youth development and active youth citizenship, which would in turn lead to several outputs. The inputs would feature prerequisite elements ensuring that:

1. education systems develop the ‘whole child’
2. participatory structures allow space for children and young people to contribute to decisions at community to sub-national and national level
3. attitudes of adults are accepting and responsive to young people’s contributions
4. leaders are held accountable to young people, by policy and legislation.
Outputs would include elements of social and economic development such as:
reduced inevitability of problems related to abuse, exploitation, violence and risk
behaviour; greater social cohesion and capital; and increased numbers of young
people involved in economic development.

In understanding the evolution of citizenship roles, it is necessary to reflect back on
history. This literature review examines historical texts of early Fiji through to recent
modern day. Clearly the role of the young person in Fiji has encountered several
significant factors that have changed the way young people are regarded, their role in
society, their freedoms and opportunities. Not least of these has been the way that
Fijian ‘tradition’, as defined and redefined by the first missionaries and the British
colonial government, still does define the rank and role of Fijians including young
indigenous Fijians. The introduction of industrialisation changed the nation and the
communities irreversibly. The role of the young person during these transitions has
waned and waxed in ways that have had both positive and negative effects on their
welfare and on society as a whole. Finally, analysis of the current era of
constitutional independence, political instability and increasing role of the military
forces indicates that these political developments have had significant negative
impacts on young people in particular.

The situation today if read by the situation of a Pacific-wide study (that included Fiji)
on youth citizenship depicts a situation of passivity, marginalisation and
disempowerment. So significant is the scale of the youth population in the Pacific
that the development issues facing young people, the dearth of opportunities for
betterment and their low status in society compound their situation so detrimentally
that their situation can be described as a ‘ticking time-bomb’. 
4.0 The Analysis of the Role of Youth Citizens in Fiji’s Development

Fiji, still under Public Emergency Regulations installed as security measures following the fifth coup d’état since 1987, on Good Friday, 10 April 2009, battles against the global economic and financial crisis, while embroiled in rather messy national, regional and international relations concerning the political situation and future of the country. The country’s current political and economic status provides an appropriate juncture to consider strategic options that could benefit from better capitalising on the role of young people. Like other nations in the world, Fiji will need to be as efficient, resourceful and strategic as it can be, to have any hope of weathering the storms. This analysis presents an opportunity to see how Fiji’s government machinery and development strategy can be employed effectively to realise the human resource potential of youth citizenship.

The scope of investigating youth citizenship explores the realms of participatory structures, government machinery, leadership characteristics, and development initiatives and outcomes – both present and future. In the first instance, the analysis looks at the current citizenship role of young people, how it is determined and what impact it has on Fiji’s development. Secondly, the analysis provides a prospective view of how the citizenship role of young people could be nurtured to maximise their potential and add value towards national development.

In the sections that follow in this analysis are the key findings, which are substantiated by information drawn from the leaders and young people surveyed. At times, reference is made to Fiji’s history and the information findings from the ‘youth study’. First, however, is an overview of a youth citizenship model that has emerged from the analysis of the findings.

4.1. A Model of Active Youth Citizenship

This analysis has exposed several facets that are presented as key elements or prerequisites required for young people to achieve sufficient levels of development and maturity to fulfil meaningful and responsible roles in community and national development. Of course, many variables work together to determine the social and

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27 Rabuka led two coups in 1987, a third coup was staged in 2000, a fourth in 2006, and many regard the abrogation of the Constitution in April 2009 as the fifth coup.
The model (Figure 5) is founded on the premise that a nation is able to draw on the benefits of its young citizens’ contributions only when their capacities are developed sufficiently and when the environment is enabling. Evidence drawn from this investigation illustrates the potential for the nation to maximise on young people having an active, meaningful and significant social and economic role when:

1. schools, communities and tertiary institutes nurture and build skills required for the transition from dependence to independence, or from school to work

2. young people’s voices are equitably represented and facilitated to inform program and policy development, and are considered in decision-making
processes that concern their welfare at community, institutional and national levels

3. all relevant ministries, departments and other government mechanisms are mandated and guided by legislative, policy and regulatory frameworks that explicitly respond to the needs of the youth cohort

4. information related to the situation of young people, their developmental requirements, and their potential contribution to development is systematically directed and utilised by relevant leaders

5. when the attitudes and values of those in leadership positions embrace accountability to young citizens, and respond to their voice and situational needs.

These five elements are considered integrally. For example, a young person who is developed to his or her full potential is not able to exercise an active citizenship role if the ministry responsible for generation of employment and livelihood and working with the private sector does not provide appropriate opportunities for him or her to contribute economically. Additionally, the ministry responsible for employment and livelihood may not know where to focus its attention if it does not have the relevant information related to the resource base that is present in the youth population.

An analogy can be made to a car engine, for which fuel is needed and a particular arrangement of specific conditions that are required for the combustion of fuel to occur, which in turn drives the engine. With a competent driver, good navigation and proper maintenance, the vehicle can travel a trajectory from A to B. The car is an asset.

Without proper maintenance, inefficiencies occur and the vehicle does not run at full potential. The ability of the vehicle to travel at speed, consume fuel efficiently or negotiate a winding way becomes compromised and the car travels a different journey. Taken to the extreme, if no fuel reaches the engine, or the engine is plagued with mechanical problems, it fails to work and it becomes a liability. It is not able to carry its load the distance.
In the same way, when young citizens’ capacities are denied opportunity to develop, problems arise that hinder the development of the nation. Many of these are expressed in this analysis where young people are unable to secure employment, do not have equal access to development resources, have resorted to crime and violence, are unable to support families and so on, and a generational cycle of poverty or hardship is perpetuated. Hence the deficit of the fundamental elements of active youth citizenship does not merely mean young people remain passively ‘in waiting’ for an active citizenship role; rather, the deficit creates a burden and a detriment to the progress of the nation. These can weigh up significantly to be seemingly insurmountable.

This analysis considers an assessment of young Fiji Islanders and their current citizenship role, compares this to their situation and the current development strategy being implemented; highlights future possibilities; points out obstacles and suggests strategies based on this proposed model for overcoming the challenges.

**4.2. The Disempowered, Marginalised and Passive Position of Fiji’s Young People**

Several elements of the interviews conducted with leaders provided insights into aspects of youth citizenship: capacity development of children and adolescents; participatory structures; legal mandated authority and accountability; information systems; and responsive leadership (See Figure 5). Leaders were questioned on how their role related to young people and youth development and how that was positioned in the context of national development. They were asked whether information on youth or from young people influenced the systematic functioning and strategic direction within their spheres of work. They were asked to discuss and critique current strategies addressing youth issues as well as ways in which young people could contribute to the development of the nation.

The interview findings suggest that on the whole, young people in Fiji are largely recognised as *passive beneficiaries* of development, rather than as *active participants* in development and political processes. The findings resonate with the Pacific Youth Study, which also concluded in its assessment of the status of youth citizens in the Pacific, that they figure in governance and development structures ‘passively’ and are often marginalised from mainstream development strategies.
Some differences between the two major ethnic groups in Fiji stem from the factors that influence social engagement at community level. Yet even merely as beneficiaries, youth are generally positioned at the periphery of national development strategies. Though young people were frequently highlighted as a great resource for expanded development, particularly in agricultural and rural development, investment in youth development was not considered integrally in economic initiatives. For example, the development of young people’s talents in singing or music for possible development of an entertainment industry has not received significant investment. \(^{28}\) The common perception amongst leaders that investment in youth development is a ‘luxury’ of development rather than a ‘means’ for development constitutes some of the argument that determines current youth citizenship in Fiji as ‘passive’ rather than ‘active’.

Leaders interviewed generally agreed that the potential youth contribution towards economic and social development was significantly greater than what was recognised as the current situation. Certainly the social status of young people was seen to be passive, rather than active and positioned them as subordinate to other members of society, to the point where targeted investment on youth development (other than tertiary education) was said to be marginal. Many young people in Fiji are disempowered and vulnerable to exploitation and/or falling into risky patterns of behaviour. It can be easily assumed that a more significant social status and role would have a positive impact not only on their situation but also on Fiji’s economic and social development prospects. However, before such speculation can be made, some analysis must be applied to understand the current implications – both positive and negative – of youth citizenship on Fiji’s development. It is necessary to understand as much as is possible the returns to the country of current investments in youth development and it is necessary to understand what implications exist where investment in youth development is lacking.

Significant factors contribute to the determination of young people’s status and their role in society. Perhaps most fundamentally, often it is traditional attitudes and customs that diverge from the developmental needs of young people, that do not

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\(^{28}\) Youth development can be thought of generically as the development of life-skills, which can done in a variety of experiential ways that result in greater personal mastery, self-confidence, positive outlook, healthy social interaction, greater physical and emotional security, and other competency areas. Sport, social activities and talent development are examples of how this can occur.
provide much impetus for advancing towards modernity, and consequently disregard the prominence of young people within that. At the traditional level, the most important contribution recognised of young people is their labour. Young people plant produce, fish, keep house and clean villages, tend to children and undertake ceremonial preparations and rituals. Fijian villages depend on young people’s performance of these roles. The roles in themselves are not problematic; indeed, several interview respondents highlighted the skills of ‘subsistent village work’ being important for all young people, fostering important values such as resourcefulness, diligence and responsibility. It is the fact that the significance of young people’s traditional role does not equally correspond to the significance of their contribution in village development decisions. Their opportunity to graduate above subsistence living is greatly limited by their lack of influence on those who make decisions that impact on their welfare. Fijian traditions were highlighted as one of the more significant influences that determine social attitudes and engagement. This is discussed in greater depth in this chapter.

Coupled with the dearth of economic opportunities and poorer quality and access to social services in rural areas, the incentive to leave for urban centres offers the freedom of opportunity to improve quality of life. The impact of this trend on traditional living has been studied and documented for over half a century already. This analysis confirms that the lack of an economic role for young people in rural areas and their subsistence social role described above that lacks meaningful engagement in decisions over village welfare, continues to contribute to disintegration of Fijian traditional structures, perpetuates urban drift and overwhelms social services and facilities in urban centres.

In the few examples where this situation was not the case, it was clearly where young people had a greater role both economically and socially. They had independent economic success within the traditional context – with support from individuals, the Ministry of Agriculture or a vocational training institute such as the Centre for Appropriate Technology and Development (CATD) in Nadave. Importantly, these cases were endorsed by the traditional leadership; some were given voice in village

29 In contrast, Indo-Fijians are moving to urban and peri-urban informal settlements because of expiry of land-leases and the increasing realisation that planting new crops and saving on leasing fees reaps higher incomes. Relocated families are able to allocate a greater proportion of their income to their children’s education.
discussions and accorded with traditional roles and greater authority, e.g. Turaga-ni-koro. The few examples demonstrated the possibility of maintaining village harmony by facilitating an enhanced role and more autonomy for young people, while respecting traditional protocols and practices. These positive examples of decentralised development assistance and cases of modern approaches to traditional leadership are said to be increasing, generationally, as more educated people graduate to traditional leadership, though the impact is relatively marginal in terms of outcomes for the youth population.

The process of generational change is slow, needless to say, and does not seem to be greatly assisted by the formal and traditional representative structures that exist, which supposedly constitute a two-way channel of communication between national and community level. The political engagement of young people within government administration to generate information, contribute to development strategies or to facilitate development interventions is minimal. The fact that participatory structures exist at all with any youth representation is very positive and shows some commitment to democratic principles and some recognition of the potential youth contribution. However, the futility of youth representation to date in terms of actual outcomes for young people, coupled with the lack of responsiveness from older representatives and authorities, has effectively negated the efforts of any youth activism.

In the Fijian traditional setting, young people are regarded as essential manual labour – this was cited by leaders as the most common example of youth actively contributing to development – planting, fishing and doing housework. It is important to recognise that communities depend on this contribution. However it is equally important to note that for many, particularly for those in the Fijian traditional context, this role is determined by and benefits the interests of others before themselves. Young people in this role, though their contribution of manual labour is critical to the functioning of households and communities, may still remain disempowered and marginalised in terms of their potential to change their position in society and make a difference in their lives.

Formal education is viewed as the main human resource development strategy, necessary for equipping people with the means to make a difference in their lives.
However, youth development is not regarded universally as part of the continuum of resource development that sees children and young people through to secured employment or livelihood. Acknowledging the ongoing and significant improvements to school curriculum and other educational aspects, the current curriculum focus is still predominantly academic and exam-oriented. While there has been significant investment in the development of capacities of children and young people through education and tertiary education – indeed the national budget allocation for education has always commanded the lion’s share – this analysis points to a lack of investment in key areas of youth development, in particular for young people without tertiary qualifications, which has rendered them considerably marginalised from the benefits of development and from opportunities to contribute actively to development.

While the lack of employment opportunities was a significant issue in itself, it was the inability of young people to secure existing opportunities that related to the system of human resource development, more than the status of the economy that raised greater concern. The positioning of youth is more commonly recognised as isolated from the main thrust of economic growth. While tertiary education is part of Fiji’s human resource development strategy, there is little in the way of nurturing the development potential of young people who do not have tertiary qualifications or of directing economic development strategies in their way, particularly for potential informal livelihoods in the agricultural sector. It is acknowledged, however, that increasing numbers of Fijian men are recruited by foreign private security companies (Bolatagici 2009:10) and many of these are likely to be young men.

One of the vocational institutions, Montfort Boys Town, highlighted its 100% success rate of graduates securing employment and remarked that it did not have enough graduates for jobs available. Feedback is that its graduates are more practically oriented and prepared quotidian for working environments than those from the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT). The issue of job matching for skills sets in both formal and informal sectors was noted as an institutional requirement to address the ‘disconnect’ between young unemployed people and job and livelihood opportunities.
Respondents complained that the education system does not sufficiently nurture the skills required for independence and employment or livelihood. Additionally, non-academic subjects such as sport, music and art are not examinable, nor promoted enough in tertiary education institutions as viable career options. One interview respondent highlighted an impact of this: “...they are not supported when they come out [of school] – just like good rugby players that come out from school, they turn into big drunkards.” Those without formal sector skills were said to be able to utilise natural resources appropriately as their means for livelihood. Government’s lack of investment in rural development where the natural resources are located, though, further impedes the realisation of this opportunity.

While there are no accurate figures, it is said that children emerge from the school system better equipped than if they had had no education at all. Nevertheless, many emerge from the school system, either prematurely or at term, still ill-prepared to deal with the challenges of life, finding formal work or gainful livelihood in the non-formal sector. Informal livelihoods in particular (for example, in agriculture or other non-formal trades), are often only considered by those who drop out or do not succeed in the formal academic system and opt for vocational studies. However many lack opportunities to upgrade their skills because too few non-formal training programmes are available (UNDP 1999:35).

There was general consensus from all interviewed that a greater targeted investment in youth development was required. The youth statement pinpointing ‘insufficient investment in youth development’ generated the greatest agreement from the leaders’ responses, though several specified that such investment was not merely financial, but a matter of time and effort invested to guide and mentor young people, particularly for those in rural areas. As one respondent said, “money helps but knowledge is more important. The idea has to be there and the motivation. Without that, very little can get done.” The role of the church and traditional leaders was highlighted as having the potential to play a key role in this area. Many respondents indicated other types of investment such as building youth capacity to secure employment or start up small livelihood initiatives. On the statement related to ‘little focus on building appropriate skills’, leaders agreed and highlighted the need to focus skills training in the non-formal sector on more vocational training, micro-enterprise development, talent development and self-reliance. A couple of
respondents identified the label ‘youth development’ as problematic, suggesting instead that it be referred to as ‘resource development’.

Clearly, the current citizenship status of young people is inadequate in relation to their potential labour force. The increasing and large-scale youth unemployment existing in both the skilled and unskilled populations of young people, despite various tax incentives for the recruitment of first-time employees, is not only the result of a slowed-down economy, but one that does not adequately harness its human resource potential. Fiji’s development prioritises industry development led by foreign investment, over agricultural or rural sector development or industries aligned to the skills base of the unemployed. It does not seem entirely convincing in terms of the intention to apportion sufficient segments of the national budget towards youth development and decentralised development when sufficient economic growth occurs. A member of the current government administration remarked that the extent of youth unemployment was far beyond the capacity of government to provide them with enough job opportunities: “...if we could employ say 5-10,000 people in new employment in the next 12 months we would be happy with that.” The comment refers to Government’s harnessing of foreign investors for development of the information technology and tourism sectors.

Youth unemployment figures in both the Pacific youth study and as addressed by leaders interviewed for this study were seen as the most critical issue facing both young people and the nation. Referring once again to the numbers of unemployed youth – 35,171 between the ages of 15 and 24 years – and a negative trend in labour force participation, coupled with the fact that only about 15% of Form 6 graduates find gainful employment annually (interview quote), it can be expected that youth unemployment and underemployment will continue to rise. This poses a greater challenge to government to support the growing, and preponderantly young, dependent population, rather than finding ways to move them to a more promising economic base. The burden of such a dependent population would increase hardship and poverty, providing the conditions for widespread discontent and increased crime. National security issues would continue to take greater prominence in government development strategies and budgets, diverting funds from basic services. The

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30 An estimated 35,171 people aged 15 – 24 years are unemployed (See the discussion of unemployment at 1.3).
situation is not helped by a justice system that was said to be contributing to recidivism rather than effective rehabilitation, though this is currently under reform.

Nor is it assisted by Government’s sector-based approach to development, which does not effectively address cross-sectoral issues holistically such as gender, children or youth. Though information on youth has been generated, its management has largely been confined to the line ministry with little to no absorption across government. Youth unemployment features as the most critical issue facing young citizens in Fiji, yet it is not specifically considered by the relevant ministries, in terms of understanding the skills base, capacity gaps and industry implications for youth and their communities. Youth related information would appropriately inform the development of national human resource development strategies, which would be designed to equip children and young people with the appropriate skills and competencies required for making the transition from school to formal and vocational employment, or to productive livelihoods, especially for the significant proportion of young people who do not have opportunities for formal sector tertiary education. Yet, information on youth capacity needs generated by the Ministry for Youth (which now sits within the same ministry as that for education) has not, apparently, been considered by school curriculum developers. Rather, the interview respondent from the Ministry of Education declared the Ministry’s sole preoccupation with its own educational task, clearly detached from the youth development mandate.

Leaders’ assessment of current development strategies that have been implemented to address youth employment, revealed a greater number of initiatives that have had negative or no outcomes than those with positive outcomes for young people. However, several innovative examples were cited by leaders, which showed clear signs of success, though these initiatives were often small or pilot and were not of the scale required to tackle the size of the employment issue. The Ministry of Youth’s National Youth Service Scheme was highlighted as an important support to young school leavers and tertiary institution graduates trying to secure first-time employment. The scheme includes a two-week empowering program that is focused on life-skills and positive mental attitudes, followed by a three-week training program and finally an attachment with an employer. Seed capital is also offered for small business start-up. The challenge for the Ministry is in securing job placements
and apprenticeships for those who graduate through the scheme. Continued investment is dependent on success shown with the first tranche of funding. However, cut-backs have already been put in place, for reasons associated with cost-cutting directives across government, reducing the number of intakes from 2,000 per year to just 600 per year. It will inevitably be difficult to show success when the availability of willing employers is so limited.

Leaders identified as huge the potential of sport to provide career-base opportunities for young people and to develop the industry as well as fostering national unity and pride, particularly because of the abundance of natural talent in Fiji amongst young people, and the success of Fiji’s rugby sevens team, netball team and other sporting groups and individuals. The example highlights how industries aligned to young people’s talents can reap great rewards. A former parliamentarian remarked great disappointment at the lack of innovation in industry development: “I’m a great believer in exploiting the young people’s talent, you know, why haven’t we got an orchestra in Fiji? Why don’t our young people play the violin and the trombone and the trumpet? Why can’t we have a brass troop playing in a hotel – we’ve got a billion dollar hotel industry and we haven’t even got a million dollar entertainment industry.”

Support from the Department of Agriculture to diversify crop production, to complement income from sugar cane, has seen some success. Several examples were cited of young farmers drawing good incomes to build 3-bedroom houses for themselves and their families and buying four-wheel drive vehicles. The representative from the Ministry of Agriculture emphasised the opportunity: “...the bush is where the money is.” Likewise, some leaders interviewed had supported youth in their villages to produce and sell high-return crops in their plantations. One remarked that the returns from one harvest of Chinese cabbage had exceeded the returns from an entire year of selling copra by the whole extended family. The factors of this success are founded on the recognition that potential for livelihood and welfare exists in the agricultural sector, where young people can fulfil the labour role appropriately. Specific support is required in terms of basic equipment and good leadership and guidance on crop choice, husbandry and marketing.
The non-governmental organisation FRIEND \(^{31}\) focuses its support on marginalised groups in society, unemployed women, people with disabilities, ex-convict youth and other young people. The organisation delivers educational activities aimed at improving self-esteem, upgrading skills, facilitating small business ventures and securing ready markets. Then there are the high success rates of the few vocational schools, such as Montfort Boys Town and CATD in Nadave, which focus on skills such as carpentry, mechanics, metalwork, construction and plumbing, as well as agricultural skills for livelihoods and skills like writing curricula vitae, and interview and communication skills. One institution remarked that their 130 graduates a year were not enough to meet the demand for work.

An example provided by one of government’s statutory bodies demonstrated clear focus on both children and youth. The Fiji Development Bank offers a Graduate Career Opportunity Programme for new graduates, who are nurtured for substantive careers in the organisation. About 5% of the salaries bill is dedicated towards this. The impact on the availability of jobs for young people would be considerable if every company and employment agency of a similar size (200+ staff) offered the same opportunity focused specifically on youth. The same body manages a nation-wide program focused on teaching children skills in money management, budgeting and saving, which is a 10-year investment with $200,000 spent on initial start-up and $50-70,000 in subsequent years. In its first year, the program recorded engagement of 90-100% participation of all school students, with 100% of children saving a collective total of just short of FJD$450,000.

While some of the non-government organisations are fully dedicated to social justice initiatives and provided some of the ‘best practice’ examples of nurturing active youth citizenship, others that also provided good examples were noted by some of the respondents as having much more potential for doing more for young people. For example: small business support could allocate a minimum percentage specifically for youth business initiatives; the church with its large proportion of youth members could facilitate a much more active and meaningful role within its ambit and could be pivotal in providing youth development information and support. Sometimes the

\(^{31}\) FRIEND stands for Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises ‘N’ Development. Their mission is to alleviate poverty through social and economic empowerment.
potential is known by the ministries themselves but there is a lack of high-level political will and commitment necessary for increased government investment.

In summary, the evidence suggests that where there have been smart investments in youth development, space for young people to participate in decision-making, in accessing resources and in social and economic development, positive outcomes are achieved. Conversely, where this has not been so, the result is not merely the lack of positive outcomes; rather, the result is a negative outcome – a result that works in opposition to the thrust of development. So when young people are left out of the picture, when their citizenship role is minimised, the resource deficit is detrimental to Fiji’s development. In terms of scale, however, the result is varied. Youth are described as the ‘backbone’ of the traditional economy, in terms of their manual labour, yet in as far as navigating forward the course of development, young people have not featured in a significant role, though they have perhaps been most affected. In the formal economy, however, young people’s role is further minimised by their low labour participation rates. Paradoxically, the most significant national development issue – economic development – impacts on young people as the most significant youth issue – unemployment.

With regard to the model of active youth citizenship, the country’s ‘engine for growth and development’ is compromised by the inefficiencies created by a largely dependent youth population and challenged by the magnitude of social problems that stem from lack of investment in several areas. The engine does not run at full capacity and its condition facilitates only a motion of fits and starts.

4.3. Determinants that Enable and Disable Active Youth Citizenship in Fiji

*A man was standing beside a stream when he saw a baby struggling in the water. Without a thought he jumped in and saved it. No sooner had he placed it gently on the shore than he saw another and jumped in to save it, then another and another. Totally focused on saving babies, he never thought to look upstream to answer the following question: Where were the babies coming from, and how did they get in the water?*

Anonymous, as quoted in Korten, D.C. (2009:3)
The Pacific Youth Study presents a host of obstacles identified by young people as blocking the path to their development. Essentially, they say it is the failure of government to provide essential services and sufficient training opportunities for them to build their capacities in a wide range of ways, specifically in life-skills and in education. They recognise socio-economic factors as the common cause underlying the lack of attention by the State. In addition, young Pacific Islanders recognise the consequences of their predicament, which they see contributing to the low self-esteem amongst youth populations. The dilemma between modern and traditional values remains unresolved as does the disparity between rural and urban living. Poor access to information, poor parenting, lack of participation and an unresponsive state, national instability and racial tensions all contribute to the pot of impediments that influence the development and achievement of young people. The obstacles identified by the Youth Study all exist in Fiji and were all highlighted by interview respondents. However, there are three interrelated elements that determine the relationship between young people and communities, institutions and the State.

The most direct determinant is the level of leaders’ knowledge of youth and their potential, for this establishes their personal relationship with young people and the level of development attention given to them. Leaders’ knowledge, however, has two key variable factors that are interrelated, with one being more foundational than the other. The more fundamental factor is that of tradition, which sets attitudes and values and the second refers to several systemic factors related to the administrative machinery that influences governance, including the provisions that affect the levels of leaders’ knowledge. The three determinants underlie the decisions of leaders to provide the services that they do, for communities including young people.

4.3.1. Leaders’ Knowledge of Youth and their Potential

The most directly significant underlying factor determining the predicament of youth citizens and the level of investment in youth development was the lack of leaders’ knowledge about their situation or their potential contribution to development, across all sectors. Leaders interviewed were questioned on this issue from several angles. They were asked whether they were provided with information on young people and whether they felt that more information on youth was required. They were presented with five statements generated from the youth study and asked for their response, on
whether they agreed or disagreed with them. They were asked if they thought that leaders knew of youth issues such as the statements presented to them.

The youth statements were:

**Young people say:**

- ...that there is little focus on building **appropriate** skills and capacity in young people who do not have tertiary education or formal sector skills – and few opportunities to support young people in small and micro-enterprise development and for livelihood in the informal sector or careers in sports

- ...that young people in **rural areas** need greater attention and focus so that they can remain in their villages and be productive

- ...that the **specific** needs and challenges of young people are not known by leaders at community and national level, thus their specific needs are not being met

- ...that a **greater investment** in this area would assist in developing young people to a greater potential, thus giving them more opportunity to contribute to individual, communal and national economic and social development.

Though the interview respondents themselves did in fact agree, in general, with the Pacific youth statements, this has to be understood as part of a constructivist process, which was quite evident during the course of the interviews as leaders discussed national development and leadership issues using 'youth focused lenses'. About a third of the leaders made a specific point of mentioning how much they had learnt during the course of the interview. So by virtue of the introduction and discussion of the topic, leaders’ views changed. Leaders, having just discussed national development issues, the relevance of these to young people, followed by in-depth discussion on youth issues and concerns, assessment of current strategies and then prompted to consider and suggest more effective solutions, found that they had little argument to oppose the youth statements. Despite their own resulting agreement with the youth statements, they resoundingly agreed that the youth statements were quite different from what leaders in general knew about young people. Leaders agreed that
there was indeed ‘little focus on building appropriate skills’, ‘a greater attention required for young people in rural areas’ and that ‘the specific needs and challenges of young people are not known by leaders at community and national level, thus their specific needs are not being met’. They also recommended that leaders should know the specific needs and challenges of young people as the appropriate starting point and prerequisite for effectively addressing youth issues.

The most common reason cited was that leaders were too far removed from realities faced by young people. Some leaders were said not to have the experience to understand the challenges, such as leaders of elite rank, or traditional leaders with little knowledge of or exposure to the modern day including its pressures and attractions. In Fijian tradition, leaders are not encouraged to listen to young people or include them in village development discussions. Others were said to have greater self-interest, concern with the supremacy of their political position and other personal agendas, rather than agendas based on the needs of their constituents. Race and politics were rated highly as most distracting from the real development issues, including youth development. Representative structures, which hold potential for addressing development issues, using participatory approaches, instead have been heavily involved in political issues and were said to have ‘miss[ed] the target for progress’.

The issue of lowering the age of suffrage was raised by respondents several times throughout the interview process as a bid to make politicians more accountable and responsive to young citizens. One Minister remarked:

I really think, and I am talking political leaders here, I don’t think that the political leaders really listen or want to know about the young, mainly because they are young and you know there’s no vote from the young. So I think they tend to just brush what they think aside and the old style in Fiji culture is that ‘children should be seen and not heard’.

The point is curious in that the age of suffrage relatively speaking is still ‘young’, though it is more probably the fact that no political parties have explicitly responded to the needs of young people. They have, more commonly, responded to the race-based political structure of constituencies. That aside, the issue of understanding the youth population to respond accordingly raises concern when it comes to
government’s systematic programmatic and policy response. Though there are participatory and representative structures in place, which theoretically link young people to development agendas, these are largely not used to address youth issues sufficiently. The governing system is not geared towards understanding the youth cohort.

Another reason was related to structures of government administration. Ministries with mandates for youth do conduct research, usually with donor financial and technical assistance, but results from these are considered for use only by the ministries concerned. Ministries without explicit mandates for youth are not usually involved in utilising this information for their own program delivery. Most leaders from ministries without explicit mandates for youth have received information on youth through informal means – through the media or by word of mouth, *talanoa*. These methods do sometimes raise a moral concern but do not generally stimulate a formal response. There is an assumption that the youth ministry sufficiently addresses all issues related to young people. A few leaders spoke of informal responses to young people in their villages or in schools. They were able to identify their challenges and address them on a personal level. With the wisdom of education and development experience, they were able to do this perhaps more effectively than other adults in these environments. Directly observing young people’s lives was therefore noted to be a fairly effective means of understanding their situation and responding appropriately, though these examples were not part of the formal government service delivery. The issue of mandated authority and accountability as well as information coordination is discussed further on in this chapter.

One respondent noted the need to empower young people to be problem-solvers and be more proactive, explaining that the engagement of young people providing solutions to their issues would enforce a greater accountability of leaders towards young citizens and would ensure young people’s ownership, and consequent success, of government policies. The development of policies and development programs without the engagement of young people providing information on their specific needs and challenges was recognised as marginalising young people by delivering generalised and ineffective services that do little to address their specific issues. Another initiative, conducted by an NGO, is aimed at broadening leaders’ visions and heightening their knowledge and awareness of leadership principles and
development issues including youth issues, and consequently their level of commitment to social justice. This leadership initiative responds to the lack of opportunity for leaders to learn directly from development experts, especially those that worked outside of their sphere of work.

If leaders were not in positions, either personally or professionally, to make connections with young people and have real conversations with them, they were said not to have an interest or awareness of youth issues. When leaders were asked in the interviews to suggest what obstacles impeded the development of young people, it was only those who had direct relationship with young people, those who were directly mandated to focus on children and young people and those who were younger themselves, who mentioned obstacles that were aligned with obstacles raised by the youth respondents and by young people in the Pacific youth study. Leaders who worked with young people on youth-focused programs were privy to in-depth information on the lives and behaviour of youth, particularly marginalised young people. Generally, however, only the lower level of government management and administration worked closely with young people. These programs operated at the ground level and information from these reached the upper levels of government machinery only through several layers of filters.

A further section of the interview presented a speculative calculation of returns gained from investing in ways suggested by the youth statements. The speculative calculation, which was based on the scenario where all unemployed young people in Fiji were supported and developed sufficiently to earn at least F$6,000 per annum, showed that the financial returns from their earnings alone would amount to around F$235,254,000. The raised eyebrows and engaged discussion of many respondents was a demonstration that leaders had not previously considered youth development investment in economic terms and provided this as a reason for why there was not more investment in youth development.

I think the contribution that the youths make and the fact that they are the future citizens of this country has not really sunk in. If it had, Government would have allocated more resources than it presently does in the development of relevant youths and addressing some of the concerns that they have.
The point highlights why young people are in the predicament they face, which is that information on young people, their lives, challenges and ambitions is hard to come by, at the highest levels of Fiji’s leadership, and thus their potential, in terms of economic and development contribution at village and industry levels is simply not thought of. Leaders’ lack of knowledge of youth, their issues and potential, was identified as the greatest reason why there was not more investment in youth development.

4.3.2. Systemic factors of Institutions and Government Machinery

1. Development path focused on urban industrialisation

Partly, it is the overall development strategy laid down by the ruling party that determines development priorities. Political parties earn constituents’ favour by advocating their manifestos that promise greater investment in particular sectors and attention to particular issues. So to some extent, political mandate is a determinant factor in the role that young citizens fulfil in Fiji. For example, a political mandate that emphasises agricultural and rural development would have a positive bearing on unskilled and rural-based youth. The current strategic development emphasis is very much led by where opportunities for foreign investments lie. Social equity – or decentralisation of development opportunities to rural areas, is a secondary concern to be considered only when economic progress allows it. Reflecting back on Ravuvu’s assessment of rural development initiatives to date makes it apparent that even what has been invested has not been used effectively: wealth has invariably returned to urban areas (1988:82). Thus the neglect of rural development is doubly emphasised by the lack of development priority and the inadequacies of investments to date.

Whether ‘beggars cannot be choosers’ is true or not, there is little evidence to oppose the suggestion that ‘beggars can be tactical and selective’ in sourcing financial investment to correspond with the resource base. The point was emphasised by one respondent who labelled the current vision for industry development as ‘too tunnel-visioned’: development strategies are not relevant and responsive to what Fiji’s needs are, nor do they nurture and take advantage of the skills and talents inherent in the youth population, such as young people’s flair for communication, the media and entertainment.
The relationship between the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Agriculture, and the need to explicitly target the youth resource base in rural development strategies emerged as extremely important. The youth statement that related to the greater attention needed for young people in rural areas generated the greatest debate. Clearly the discourse stemming from the policies of the 1950s and 60s in Fiji and Nayacakalou’s attempts to reform and modernise traditional and rural economies continues today. Rural development strategies evidently have not stemmed the flow of people migrating from rural to urban areas, prompting several leaders to shift the emphasis of development strategies to addressing increasing pressures on the growing urban and peri-urban areas. However, as demonstrated by the example cited by one interview respondent, the logic of one of these rural development strategies is questionable. Referring to government’s effort to develop the agricultural sector by investing in agricultural schools, the respondent remarked on the office-bound nature of the curriculum and the lack of support towards graduates actually setting up agricultural production in rural areas, which did not in fact meet students’ aspirations to work in agricultural production, and created an oversupply of young graduates hopeful of office and urban-based jobs. Rural areas remain in waiting for development to reach them as their population depletes and migrates to urban-based opportunities.

In alignment with the global acceptance of urbanisation as the necessary and inevitable means for economic progress and advancement of citizens, people’s desire to move to urban areas was generally accepted by several of the leaders as a natural course of action, given their unwillingness to use the resources of the land in rural areas. Some acknowledged the better education and health services available in urban centres. The young people interviewed, however, unanimously requested rural development opportunities for young people. This sentiment was echoed by several adult leaders as well, along with specific strategies for traditional leadership to provide guidance and on-going support for young people to manage the land for lucrative markets.

Of course, the availability of employment opportunities is not solely dependent on government’s development path. The fact is that the high levels of political instability have truncated development processes in the last twenty years, leaving little room for actual realisation of development strategies and an increased
proportion of the national budget devoted to security under the administration sector. Whether it is dependent or not on the chosen development path, the lack of opportunities for employment presented the greatest obstacle to young people’s development. However, the situation perhaps calls for a reality check of sorts in that the current development focus is simply not going to satisfy the demand that exists, nor is it sufficiently aligned to the skills base that exists in the largest productive group in society. There is even more need to explore and innovate new smart strategies to iron out inefficiencies in the human resource and economic development processes. The cost savings of such an approach would contribute to the pool of resources that could be reallocated to youth development.

2. Lack of cross-sectoral approach and coordination for youth citizenship

One of the more significant issues that has affected the development of youth and their role in development is the fact that the responsibility is directed to a limited number of ministries within government. Issues relating to youth citizenship relate to health, education, justice, social protection and employment sectors, yet the legal mandated authority and accountability rests with one line-ministry for youth – except for issues related to the care and protection of young offenders and young victims of abuse, which rest with the justice and social welfare ministries.

This analysis suggested that a ministry with an explicit mandate for youth was more effective in that it was made accountable for its work, by legislation or by policy. For example, the Ministries of Youth and of Education are mandated by a collection of policies and Acts to equip children and young people with specific sets of skills and levels of knowledge, and the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Prisons are mandated by the Juveniles Act (1974) to care for and protect young offenders and young victims of abuse. Ministries for labour, trade, commerce and primary industries do not have a specific mandate for young people within their broader mandate.

It can be argued that all ministries are mandated to serve young people with mandates and policies that refer to ‘communities’ or people in general, rather than specific sectors of community. However, without explicit targeting of policies, programmatic responses remain generic and often in reality present an environment in which young people cannot compete. Though young people are assumed to be
beneficiaries of foreign investment for industry development, the notion of young people, skilled and unskilled, as a targeted resource base for economic development did not seem to figure as the primary consideration. In fact, of the leaders that categorically felt that it was beyond the capacity of government to be investing more in youth development, the most vocal denial came from the leaders from the economic development sectors of government. Despite economic growth rating highest as the most urgent national development issue to address, and youth employment rating by far the most critical youth issue to address, the integration of youth development for employment and economic development strategy seems disjointed rather than strategically planned.

The few examples of effective targeting that were identified were dependent on the leaders’ own commitment and capacity as well as that of the officers lower down the ranks. The Fiji Development Bank’s graduate scheme, previously mentioned, demonstrates this example: both the leader and work environment nurture learning and mentoring in all facets of the organisation, including the provincial offices, to enable graduates’ promotion to specialist positions. The scale of this, however, does not compare to the thousands of graduates and unqualified young people who would benefit from such opportunity. The findings suggested that there exists a huge potential benefit for young people if all relevant ministries and bodies applied a greater targeted approach to the youth cohort as beneficiaries or as a resource base, rather than subsuming youth into the general population of skilled or unskilled jobseekers. Current legislative and regulatory provisions to address youth employment were considered insufficient and as having a negative impact on young people’s citizenship rights to economic resources. Given the transient nature of leaders holding their positions and the variation in levels of commitment and capacity, an explicit mandate for youth for all relevant ministries would be regarded as beneficial as long as the accountability systems function effectively.

The guiding framework is already present in Fiji though this was virtually not mentioned at all by respondents. The Ministry responsible for youth has formulated a 20 Year Strategic Plan for Youth Development (2006-2025) in response to findings from a nation-wide survey on youth (MYEOS 2005), though authority for its coordination lacks high-level endorsement. Youth development objectives derived from this plan are not reflected in other government ministries’ and departments’
corporate strategies such as the Ministry of Provincial Development. A common feature of many organisations and administrations is the ‘silo’ mentality, when each sector remains solely focused on meeting its own corporate deliverables. Thus they often do not think beyond their performance objectives, to see the overall vision and relevance of other ministries to the anticipated outcomes.

There is a perceived assumption by ministries that the Ministry of Youth has all youth issues covered and addressed within its mandate, when the reality is that the Ministry of Youth depends on other ministries for job creation, for enterprise support, for labour protection, for skills development and so on. This was further demonstrated by the speculative returns from investments in youth development. When presented to leaders, those who spoke convincingly of the possibility of such investment (including the economists) remarked that the reason why this investment had not been made comprehensively before was because they had not seen such speculations before. The information has simply not been generated. Thus for a cross-cutting issue such as youth, the system of coordination and information sharing for cross-sectoral programming within government machinery is a critical factor and by this assessment remains weak.

Other than the ministries and agencies with some mandate or mission for young people, other ministries and agencies had very little information on young people, though their portfolios bear directly on youth as a resource or youth as a beneficiary, for example, the Ministry for Industry, Tourism, Trade and Communication charged with duties including industry development and job creation. Though there is information available from ministries’ client databases and there are a few good examples of how research had been conducted and used to formulate an evidence-based programmatic and policy response, these have only been utilised by the line ministry with the explicit mandate to address youth issues. Though the Ministry of Youth had shared the findings of the 2005 survey and Cabinet had endorsed the 20-year Strategic Plan for Youth Development (2006-2025), the depth of knowledge related to the research was clearly not evident to Cabinet Ministers interviewed for this investigation, neither was the research applied to the spheres of work associated with other ministries. Effective flow of information upwards to senior levels of government was noted to be uncertain, particularly when there are frequent changes of personnel in leadership positions.
For the ministries without explicit mandates for youth, there are few other avenues for systematic provision of information on youth. Leaders with some interest in youth sought out publications in the parliamentary library or from development agencies, though it was pointed out by one respondent that only two publications on youth had been seen in the parliamentary library. The effectiveness of this channel of communication is limited. As one leader remarked, unless the leaders are able to connect personally with the information, they remained detached from youth issues and merely discussed them academically, and not in the context of their role as leaders. The Ministry of Youth therefore holds the key responsibility for providing comprehensive information on youth across government. This, however, is challenged by the low priority the development agenda accords youth issues, to the extent that the issues are not deemed relevant enough for the ministries that are not explicitly mandated to do so, to respond with targeted policies.\textsuperscript{32}

Though the Ministry for Education operates and develops admirably under challenging circumstances, there is a vast difference between the competence of the school or university leaver and the competence requirement for employment and even livelihood. Admission from the Ministry itself as to its working in isolation from other Ministries, especially with regard to this particular issue, further reiterated the importance of cross-sectoral information sharing and coordination for addressing youth issues. Despite recent and ongoing changes to the school curriculum, interview respondents were still critical of it as being too academic and exam-focused, and not being able to harness the potential of students. One respondent remarked, \textit{“I know people who fail Form 5 or pass only Form 5 and later in life, after they work they go to university and they finish off with a Masters or PhD and come back and they are great leaders today.”}

The fact that the transition from school to work or non-formal livelihood has obvious and significant linkages further emphasises the cross-sectoral nature of youth development and the importance of needing to involve private sector, labour, commerce and other sectors in aspects of education curriculum development. This analysis shows clearly the inadequacies of Fiji’s governance machinery in

\textsuperscript{32} The 2008 National Budget of Fiji features the Ministry of Youth’s development programming as 0.4% of the overall estimated annual expenditure. This does not include, however, budgetary allocation for higher and non-vocational education and training.
coordinating a cross-sectoral issue such as youth across sectors. Mandated authority and accountability would thus assist in applying the required focus given proper systems of accountability. Ultimately however, it comes down to the values and attitudes inherent in leaders, transferred to institutions, that has the direct bearing on the citizenship status and role of young people.

3. Ineffectual Participatory structures

The Ministry of Youth has in place a fairly sophisticated consultative mechanism for youth representation on a National Youth Advisory Board (NYAB) at the Ministry level. The structure, which serves as the youth mouthpiece into the government machinery, was noted by youth board members as having the potential to provide a greater amount of information on youth to government’s leadership and vice versa, to receive and disseminate information to young people throughout Fiji on youth related issues. This structure can be seen at Annex 3.

The system of provincial development involving Fijian Provincial Councils and Advisory Councils for Indo-Fijians focuses on community development as determined by the Ministry of Provincial Development’s corporate strategy and responds to the needs as articulated by representatives of the Provincial and Advisory Councils. Provincial development activities are generally focused on infrastructure for communities as a whole: roads, housing, water supply etc. At times, other Ministries use the provincial development structures to deliver or discuss other development issues related to perhaps health or social welfare. Though youth representatives are allocated a seat in these discussions, they are said to be reserved with their contributions. One leader remarked of the traditional chiefly structure as being male- and adult-oriented: “...they talk about very broad policy issues and perhaps they should be concentrating on things that affect people’s everyday lives, youth employment, that sort of thing”, and, “[o]ften in terms of say ‘youth representative’, first, it sometimes leaves a lot to be desired, the ‘representative’ is not a young person and secondly, he or she often feels intimidated because they are only one person.”

Church and other faith-based structures reach many thousands of people and young people in Fiji. These are, however, obviously focused on religious instruction and are more informally and less frequently used as a means to facilitate participation in the
development arena. Rather, their involvement of young people is usually related to fundraising activities. The National Youth Advisory Board and the Ministry of Health’s Adolescent Reproductive Health peer education program were both highlighted as attempts to do this, though the impacts of these two initiatives were not qualified by the interview feedback. The national youth parliament, which has been staged three times in Fiji, has been a youth focused forum for young people to discuss youth issues, but few outcomes have been seen in terms of impact or actual changes in the development agenda and actual change. Though some leaders recognised the potential for influence, they noted low levels of recognition of this across government.

The existence of a representative and participatory structure does not necessarily signify that young people’s interests are sufficiently addressed. Some leaders provided teleological responses in assuming that because participatory mechanisms were in place, youth issues were naturally known and addressed. Others, however, gave some critique of these mechanisms. One leader said of the provincial council structure, which includes representatives of young people: “…the District and Provincial Council is too high above – it does not touch on the realities of the people and their daily lives…it should have a wider scope really…”. Youth representation was said to be deficient in comparison to representation of other sectors of community and thus youth issues did not often feature on the agenda of these structures. The issue of youth representation on structures such as these was stated as problematic when the structures were influenced by traditional customs of respect and authority, which effectively denied young people the opportunity to contribute towards decision-making. The NYAB was also criticised for its lack of representation of all young people. Its consultative structure is heavily weighted to representation of indigenous Fijian young people from each provincial council. Indo-Fijian representation is only present if they are selected to represent non-government organisations, faith-based organisations, the uniformed groups or the national youth parliament alumni.

In sum, while systematic and participatory structures are indeed helpful, they do not guarantee the welfare of young people is being addressed, if they are not facilitated in the interests of young people. There is little evidence to suggest that the contributions of young people through participatory structures and decision-making
have had much impact on Fiji’s development to date. Participatory structures and mechanisms that exist and have existed are heavily criticised for not being representative of all categories of young people. They are also not sufficiently linking young people to the development agenda and hence youth issues remain unaddressed. The role for youth in decision-making at national level has some way to go before it is systematically recognised on an ongoing basis. Given their lack of presence, it is difficult for government to know and understand the diversity and intangible detail of young people’s lives and situations, particularly to identify most-at-risk young people such as unemployed and unskilled youth, or the specific difficulties facing young people, which are not systematically addressed by sectoral programs, such as their transition between school and employment or livelihood. Most-at-risk young people are thus effectively left without a voice, often not equipped with the tools to negotiate any change to their situation and are dependent on the advocacy efforts and good will of others for their security.

4. Race based development

Both the Fijian administrative and faith-based representative systems are integrated into the Provincial Development structure, so the influence of custom and tradition is institutionalised into the development agenda at local, provincial and national level. Government’s allocated resources and established policies within this framework have been the source of great discontent and instability between races in recent political history. Historical segregation of ethnic groups by policy since the earliest colonial times has manifested in many ways in society. Ethnic division and race politics were rated highly as an obstacle and a development issue by a number of respondents, more so than issues related to education and skills development. The issue has affected the way political parties are established, the way people vote, the way children are educated, the jobs that they work towards and the way natural resources are used. More Fijians populate Fiji’s prisons (Oceanic Psi 2005:13). More Indo-Fijians emigrate (Mohanty 2006:112). Fijians on the whole, achieve less academically than their Indo-Fijian counterparts (Williams 2000:186). Indo-Fijians are overrepresented in suicide statistics (Morris and Maniam 2000).

The fact that many children are effectively segregated by race in schools was said by respondents to contribute to inequality, leadership bias and intolerance, which in turn
leads to disunity, national instability and economic downturn, although this assumption has not actually been put to the test. The current political climate was commonly recognised as one of the greatest distractions from development, diverting the already meagre financial resources towards reconciliatory efforts, security and interim development measures. A view is widely held that multiethnic schools foster a new generation of people who could mix socially and relate positively with each other and thus hold hope for a more united future. Children attending multiethnic schools are generally thought to be more embracing of Fiji’s diversity, which in turn should lead to fair leadership and a more stable society although there is no systematic evidence to support this view.33 The geographical distribution of the two main ethnic groups in Fiji is unequal, however, which means multiethnic schools are not feasible for many children living in rural and island-based communities. Also, the nature of schooling in Fiji, which is largely community based, means that parents can choose schools for their children based on their ethos and religious affiliation, which sometimes militates against multiculturalism (Tavola 1992:117). The situation is much more complex than a mere mixing of people.

What leaders expressed in this study resonates with issues that have featured in Fiji’s history since the days of colonial rule. Like the issue of traditional attitudes towards youth and their participation in decision-making, the issue of equality between the races is likely to change slowly over generations. However, until real opportunities presented by education and land ownership equalise, it seems certain that greater equality, sustained stability and a more accelerated rate of development will not occur. The disparity between income levels of subsistence workers, who predominantly are indigenous Fijians and formal sector workers, a greater proportion of whom are Indo-Fijians (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2009:17), is very compartmentalised by race. This fact continues to breed discontent and tends to racialise politics and national development. It is perhaps not merely the fact that the races are assigned to particular economic functions (as Durutalo criticised of Fisk1986:4). Rather, as mentioned earlier, it is likely that the comparative factor has heightened differences between the groups: the rapid progression of the Indo-Fijian

33 George Speight led a nationalist coup though he himself attended a multiethnic school in Suva and there are probably many who attended single-race schools who would embrace multiethnicity today.
population to owners of property and enterprise, while the position of Fijians has remained comparatively static (Narayan 1976:102).

4.3.3. The Influence of Tradition and Custom

Leaders have been influenced by informal and traditional attitudes, which has contributed to the way they have fulfilled their roles as leaders in formal governance structures. For many leaders, Fijian traditional protocol, attitudes and practices overwhelm other determinants that may affect leaders fulfilling their role. The majority of leaders interviewed were indigenous Fijians, not because of any preference, but because indigenous Fijians held the leadership positions that were relevant to this study. Consequently the discussion on traditional influences was focused on Fijian tradition, though some comparisons were made to Indo-Fijians and other ethnic groups neither Fijian nor Indo-Fijian. However, respondents of the ‘Indo-Fijian’ and ‘Other’ categories also commented on the Fijian tradition, suggesting that the Fijian tradition contained the most significant factors that had had impact on the development of young people. Indeed the issue of land (ownership and utilisation) emerged as a highly significant concern throughout the interviews, and was whittled down to race and tradition as the underlying motivations causing problems for both Indo-Fijian and Fijian communities.

Respondents raised issues that were studied by Nayacakalou in the 1950s and 60s, which still remain relevant today. Some respondents, familiar with the work of Nayacakalou within the Fijian Administration, made reference and critiqued his objectives. These provide important learning for moving forward with hindsight. Half a century on from Nayacakalou’s studies, Fiji is much more commercial than previously, reliance on cash economies is a greater concern for the majority of people in Fiji. Nevertheless the issue of needing to preserve an indigenous Fijian identity and way of life is more, if not, at least as much of an issue as it was fifty years ago. As one respondent remarked:

When you realise there are only 400,000 Fijians in the world today, it would be very sad if all the rich traditions of the Fijian people were lost because of

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34 This reflects the predominant ethnicity of the previous SDL-led government and the predominant ethnicity of the military-led government. In addition, the representative of the Fiji Council of Churches is a Fijian, as are traditional leaders.
Western development and young people coming to the urban areas living according to Westerner ways and forgetting about their traditions…There’s not really an incentive for young people to maintain their ties.

The following factors describe issues in the Fijian traditional realm that impact on the attitudes, knowledge and practices of leaders in Fiji, and consequently are factors that determine the citizenship status and role of young people. It is acknowledged that ‘tradition’ is not a static institution. It evolves by relinquishing some values and practices and adopting and adapting new ones. There is, however, in this study a notion that ‘Fijian tradition’ is rather static, perhaps deriving from protocols and policies put in place by the Fijian Administration. On the contrary, there is also some suggestion that indicates that tradition is evolving. The factors that contribute to both traditional evolution and inertia and are explored and discussed in the following four subsections.

1. The oppression of Fijian neo-traditional protocol

Although there is some change to be noted, the Fijian traditional protocols that enforce respect and authority upon the position of leaders and that favour males and elders are still the most influential factors determining the status and wellbeing of community members. While these are strongest in rural and village environments, they are also evident in classrooms and schools, churches and institutions. There is still an expectation amongst many indigenous Fijians that women, children and young people are positioned as passive recipients in decision-making at the community and at the household level. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the leaders in this study comprised, for the majority, males over 50 years, for those that were Fijian. Fijian protocol encourages an unquestioning acceptance of leaders’ rulings, to the point that it is said to breed apathy amongst young people towards governance and development issues, at both the local and national levels. As discussed in section 3.4.3 on ‘British Colonial Divide and Rule’, such conservatism was essentially a means for preserving power in the hands of a few, in this case, eastern chiefs.

Respondents mentioned cases of failed initiatives of development agencies that did not follow protocols properly and had directly targeted segments of the village community, without gaining approval from the chief. Examples of successful
initiatives or successful participation of young people in village meetings were reported to happen when village protocols were respected. Traditional leaders evidently can veto initiatives that do not comply with village protocols. Another example of this, cited a few times, was the difficulty of obtaining approval for discussing matters relating to sexual health, relationships or other issues considered to be taboo (by customary or church values) and that were commonly associated with youth issues. Thus young people can be left facing risk and vulnerability simply because of traditional censures on information dissemination. When asked how leaders’ roles affected young people, it was only leaders working in rights-based non-government organisations that felt that informing young people of development issues was important to their leadership roles. Government and traditional leaders did not share this view.

Traditional leaders’ (chiefs) influence on facilitating and hearing young people’s voices was by far, the issue of most concern for respondents. Even when structures are in place that theoretically allocate space for the representative voice of young people, the traditional protocols and customs can weigh so heavily that youth representatives can be intimidated to speak openly about their needs and challenges. Respondents citing this issue often said young people were not welcome in village meetings, other than to mix the yaqona. One referred to the chief in his village who called the young people ‘lazy good-for-nothings’, and so young people stay away from these meetings out of their own choice.

The repression of children and young people’s voices in familial and community domains was said to be linked to a passiveness in indigenous Fijian children. Children who ask a lot of questions and make uncalled for observations are often negatively branded as siosio (excessively curious and cheeky) (Tavola 1992:136). Several respondents remarked on the difficulties children with an unquestioning mind have faced in the education system. Children are challenged from the first education exposure to tertiary education, impacting on the development of their confidence and positive social relationships and ultimately academic achievement. One leader of mixed heritage in the ‘Other’ category spoke of the experience of his daughter’s teacher misdiagnosing leadership skills for deficiencies in her personality and character. What had been construed as bossiness and talking too much was in
fact self-confidence, communication and organisational skills. His daughter now works as an events organiser and a media personality.

For children and young people brought up in Fijian traditional settings, negotiating the conflicting values between tradition and those espoused by educational institutions presents great challenge for them, affecting the development of a clear identity that can rationalise both traditional and educational settings. One male respondent highlighted the issue as more detrimental and disempowering for some Fijian males, who are accorded more authority in traditional settings, particularly over females, and perhaps are taught conflicting principles of equality at schools. When living in an urban setting, away from the traditional context, Fijian males can feel unsure about developing relationships with females, personally and professionally. This particular respondent referred to Nayacakalou on this issue, saying:

...when [our fathers] grew up they knew exactly what their role was in the villages and all that. Now it’s all mixed, simply because ... somewhere along the line ... they began to lose touch with the basics of our traditional Fijian society. I’m not saying that traditional Fijian society is good, but at least for the Fijian it gave them a fabric or something they could rely on, because we Fijians need to have some sort of order all the time. When they said democracy was good they didn’t teach the Fijians as a whole that with democracy came responsibilities. This is where Dr Nayacakalou and his crew made a fundamental mistake, in trying to change Fijian society.

Conversely, an Indo-Fijian leader remarked on gender relations in the Hindu custom and spoke of the problem that Indo-Fijian men continue to domineer over females, even when they are in non-traditional situations which can lead to depression, family breakdown and suicide.

Children and young people of Indian ethnicity generally display different attitudes in education systems, and tend to be on average better achievers academically. The reasons for their higher value placed on education are the same as they have been since colonial rule when they struggled for access to education as a means to progress, in the absence of owning land. Perhaps of difference today is where they want to progress to. The early 20th Century Indians fought for education for their
children as part of their choice of opting to settle in Fiji for better opportunities. Today’s Indo-Fijians, according to respondents, value education as a means to leave Fiji for less-discriminatory shores (having endured nationalist uprising over the last twenty years) and better opportunities. So keen is their drive to seek greater justice for Indo-Fijians that many young Indo-Fijians are encouraged to participate actively in political decision-making. (The fact that Fijians are also leaving Fiji’s shores for more stable ground and better opportunities was also highlighted by several respondents.) One of the examples of active participation in governance and decision-making was that of an Indo-Fijian who became a Member of Parliament at age 27. On the other hand, a leader of a Fijian-dominated political party expressed dissatisfaction at not being able to find a suitable and active youth candidate for their youth wing.

2. Preferential ownership of land to indigenous Fijians

Contestation over land utilisation featured as a topical issue amongst leaders interviewed, including the young people interviewed. While discussing the opportunities for young people’s livelihood in the rural and agricultural sector, leaders of all ethnicities agreed fairly unanimously that land needed to be better utilised. Respondents highlighted the need for traditional landowners to consider beneficial economic initiatives, leaving the issue of race aside. The issue of land presents complexities for people of all ethnicities. In as much as Indo-Fijians are challenged by their lack of land ownership, it is easily overlooked that there are difficulties concerning the use of land for capitalist development by indigenous Fijian individuals in communal situations. Furthermore, not all Fijians own land. Young people are further challenged by their lack of influence in village governing structures to advocate individual agricultural enterprises within the clan-based traditional system. One interview respondent mentioned the issue that young villagers do not recognise farming as an honourable profession and attributes this partly to the fact that government does not readily provide market and business support for village-based agriculture. Another reason may be the fact that many educated young people who may disregard farming have moved to urban centres for better education and health services or work opportunities, and may not live near their land. Another respondent remarks:
...there’s something fundamentally wrong if you have a situation where the Fijian landowners who own 90% of the land, are among the poorest in the country. That doesn’t make sense. That doesn’t add up. ... Someone’s been short-changed here – that’s number 1. Number 2, when the Fijian people themselves leave their pristine wonderful locations, and they come in and they squat - why? To give their kids an education, to give them a job and to be close to medical services.

Making decisions on how to utilise land requires landowners to confront and tackle these challenging and multi-faceted issues that can be seen to oppose their traditional communal values and practices, in favour of Western principles. There is also the added issue of the Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB) and the Native Lands Commission, which remain in some ways bastions of the colonial government. The administration of NLTB has often been reported to contradict the interests of landowners and many have disputed land titles as recorded by the Native Lands Commission. The administration related to land utilisation can be overly cumbersome for many traditional leaders, who may opt instead to let the land revert to bush.

However, the level of reliance on cash for basic commodities, even for Fijians in remote villages, is such that consideration of entrepreneurial initiatives for individuals in communal settings was often recommended by leaders interviewed. Land utilisation issues can sometimes be large-scale, including infrastructure and marketing issues, all of which add further challenges for traditional leaders. Race and politics inevitably become intertwined in land issues and can distract from the actual issue. The fact also that traditional leaders are appointed by virtue of inherited lineage, rather than by merit and possession of leadership potential and educational qualification, was said by a few respondents to deny ‘good leaders’ from reaching positions of influence in Fiji’s leadership, and has created capacity issues relating to traditional leaders’ ability to manage progressive development in their communities.

3. The obligations of communalism

The development of young people includes the development of self-confidence and individual capacities to think critically and make decisions related to personal welfare. Yet many young people are limited by communal regulations and practices,
which can challenge the development of individual capacities. Communal lifestyles, accentuated by colonial government, emphasise a hierarchical form of governance and determine role and status in the community for community members. These communal regulations were recognised as constraints to such freedoms prompting many families and young people to opt for life-styles in urban centres where they can enjoy their independence. In traditional settings, the community as a whole is organised into what is recognised as a busy schedule of activities, involving much time spent drinking yaqona, ceremonial or otherwise, and preparing for expensive ceremonies for both church and village functions. Young people are expected to undertake the hard labour for such activities, though their contributions often go unrecognised. The frequency of traditional and church activities was said to limit parents’ time and money spent on their children, time that could or should be utilised for children’s education, developing relationships, and giving advice and guidance on development issues. One respondent equated the lack of guidance by parents and the church to the problems of academic failure, school drop-outs, crime and other youth problems.

Ravuvu had noted in Development of Dependence: The Pattern of Change in a Fijian Village that the larger the communal unit the less important and meaningful it is to people directly involved in the satisfaction of their everyday needs. The smaller the unit the closer the relationship, the stronger and the more immediate the cooperation and support one receives from the group members and the greater the importance and recognition of the unit (1988:84). The observation could very well apply in this analysis – the obligations of communalism, perhaps the larger units, denying important attention and support to young people.

There were far fewer positive comments made on the impact of tradition on young people’s lives although some, including a young person, felt that tradition was an important aspect of young people’s identity and stability, and that skills from village living, building houses, planting in gardens etc. were important life-skills that would benefit young urban people. However, these skills and values need to be consciously transferred to young people. Importantly, these comments highlighted the need to integrate traditional values and skills into modern lives – tradition should not be considered as ‘old-fashioned’ or exclusive to modernity. Neither the formal education system nor the information system was seen to be adequate in equipping
young people with sufficient life-skills and self-esteem to negotiate peer pressures and resist involvement or over-indulging in risky activities.

4. Agents of change

Several respondents spoke of a gradual change underway with regard to Fijian communal contexts and principles of the more industrialised world. Some knew of traditional leaders who were indeed consciously encouraging participation of young people in village decision-making and who were providing opportunities for young people to develop traditional skills and values by implementing their own activities within the traditional environment. So while there was a general sentiment of contradiction between Fijian tradition and development – one respondent captured this as, “we have become prisoners of our own bureaucracy” (referring to the Fijian traditional bureaucracy) – there was a definite acknowledgement that change, though slow coming as attitudinal change is by nature, was certainly evident in several traditional communities.

The few leaders of mixed (‘other’) ethnicity spoke about the need to preserve but not to ‘over-protect’ the Fijian culture. One spoke almost enviously about the Fijian culture, noting how inter-marriage would probably jeopardise cultures by becoming kailoma (mixed-race) like himself. He then suggested a means of preserving an aspect of Fijian tradition, by paring down community and ceremonial obligations, specifically by inflating the value of the traditional currency that is so burdensome on people’s affordability, the example given for a high-ranking chief’s funeral: “1 tabua, 2 mats, 2 drums of kerosene and 25 kilos of yapa could have the same significance of 10 tabua, 50 mats, 40 drums of kerosene and x,y,z...”

Several factors were cited as significantly influencing the level of bias towards traditional or modern values. The capacity of traditional leaders to negotiate the balance between modernity and tradition was frequently highlighted as vital. Education was deemed an important influencing factor – not only the level of education, but the type of education as well. While this may suggest an elitist strategy to employ, it was seen by respondents to address the capacity issues discussed. These included the ability of traditional leaders to understand and manage social and economic dimensions within traditional contexts. It also responded to the fact that access to quality education is unequally distributed, therefore many
traditional leaders in rural areas were said to have not had the benefits of such. A few respondents spoke fervently about the need for multiethnic schools to foster greater unity between ethnic groups. This would nurture future leaders that may see past issues of race and harness development opportunities for the benefit of all people, preserving the elements of tradition that enable and enhance development in the process.

The resolution, however, is easy to say and evidently harder to implement, for the fact is that many children from traditional communities who do achieve academically, move with their families to urban centres for better education and tertiary education and generally stay in urban centres to take up employment. Few return to rural areas because traditional lifestyles do not easily support the comforts and lifestyle that young urbanites quickly become accustomed to. The common causal factor underlying urban drift and preventing return to rural areas is the poor quality of or poor access to services in those areas. So the unequal distribution of development, services and benefits, the attraction of modern comforts and sheer cost of basic commodities are further critical factors that can prompt change amongst the attitudes and outlook of traditional leaders. Those that are cognisant of these factors and who pay due attention to the position, welfare and futures of young people in traditional contexts, are described as ‘vibrant’ and ‘liberal’. So despite the emphasis on traditional contradictions with modernity, there is evidence that the two can be rationalised, if certain provisos are in place, that focus on the capacity of the traditional leader.
5.0 Conclusions: Facilitating a greater citizenship role for youth in Fiji

This thesis is about relationships and power. It has determined the position of young people in Fiji as marginalised, disempowered and passive because of their dysfunctional relationship with those in power. Perhaps the young person in pre-capitalist Fiji would have been less marginalised – their physical strength would have been a valued resource in the functioning of the community. The god-chief however, with his mana, ultimately held prerogative power. Christian mission conceivably allowed for a little more self-empowerment as the power of chiefs was weakened by the new faith in God. Under colonial rule, some may have seen greater freedoms for self-empowerment and an active role in the industrialised economy, while others under the established structures of the Fijian Administration, would have been assigned to a determined role and status. Both, however, were subservient to the ultimate power of Britain. Constitutional independence may have promoted greater equality amongst people in theory, but the progressive claim to power of those previously oppressed has seen Fiji’s development oscillate with increasing extremes of greater equality and oppression. The role of young people within these power struggles, indeed over the course of history, does not feature significantly in terms of determining the course of the future for communities or the nation. Their position has been peripheral to the course of Fiji’s history to date.

The regional distinctions that have featured significantly in Fiji’s history have been cloaked under a veil of colonially-imposed ‘Fijian tradition’, said to have been used to secure the dominant and elite ranks in positions of power and the benefits that come with it (See, for example, Durutalo 1986:6; Bainimarama 2009). The notion, however, may be teleological in that it provides good reason to understand the shortcomings of development initiatives to date. Let us consider the paradox of this current government that promotes the cause of equality for all people, eradication of ethno-nationalism, corruption and greed (Bainimarama 2009), yet remains unwilling to relinquish power and oppresses dissent in the same way as those who have come before. Power by oppression has historically been seen as elitism.
The concept of elite circulation...gives the impression that those who get to the top deserve to be there. There is an implicit idea that the elite knows best and it is only right for the rest to follow. It also impresses upon the masses that the elite is altruistic rather than exploitative...


This thesis discusses the elitism of adults in positions of power, over youth, when it comes to leadership, governance and development. Perhaps it is an elitism without intent. However, adults in power are in no hurry to share power with those who contribute to the basis of the economy, which to a large extent benefits from the labour of young people. To explain, this analysis identifies neither ethnicity nor class as significant variables that determine levels of leaders’ acceptance of youth citizenship. Certainly ethnicity and class distinctions are issues to be addressed but political justice in these areas is not the ‘one and only answer’ to Fiji’s problems. Leaders from all political objectives shared common levels of acceptance / rejection. Leaders from this current government shared perspectives with leaders from the previous government and institutions, shared perspectives with non-government and traditional and faith-based leaders. What did emerge more notably as variables were age and leader’s knowledge of youth issues and youth significance. The more ‘detached’ leaders were from young people and from understanding the youth situation and potential, the more exclusive their sphere of work was to addressing youth issues. Consequently, the delivery of development initiatives excluded focus on youth. Even the initiatives that are focused on aspects of youth development often have been disconnected from the realities of young people’s lives, because of a tunnel-visioned approach, rather than a comprehensive understanding of youth potential and a lack of input from young people themselves. Contributing factors such as the ineffective systems of government that are carried from government to government, education systems and the confines of Fijian neo-tradition are significant.

The fact that very few leaders are connected to youth or consider youth in their spheres of work, and subsequently focus very little development attention on youth development or on considering youth in mainstream development, increases the
susceptibility to a range of significant and potentially devastating problems. ‘Youth problems’ that result from the lack of development attention are the ‘elephant in the room’. Rising youth crime rates, increasing HIV infection in the youth population and levels of youth unemployment that no current employment generation initiative can absorb are huge burdens to bear and possibly too burdensome to the current momentum of Fiji’s development. The limitations on young people to act as protagonists to influence positive trends in their future outlooks casts a further bleakness on Fiji’s future development. The problems associated with youth need to be understood as symptoms of a nation that is not harnessing its resource potential adequately.

The elitism of adults in power over youth is a dangerous scenario. We may do away with racial structures and biased policies, corruption and greed etc. We may bring all the ethnic groups together and alleviate regional distinctions, but if we fail to acknowledge the large cohort of people within ethnic and regional communities and classes who do not have a seat at the decision-making table, we create widespread discontent. As Narayan cautions, “...if Fiji’s history is any guide, oppressive conditions have always erupted in conflicts among opposing interests” (1976:236). The caution was made well before the last five coups! Anticipating any widespread confrontation from an angry and large population of marginalised young people, against the powers that currently be, an armed military, is likely to be hostile.

This investigation was initiated on the premise that a greater citizenship role is required of young people in Fiji and that that role is for the main part, a greater role in decision-making concerning their welfare. In the Pacific youth survey, young Pacific Islanders said they preferred an active participation role – to participate while ‘doing’ rather than by ‘sitting in dialogue’. This may be justified by the fact that few development outcomes for young people have been realised from participatory initiatives such as youth parliaments. However, it emphasises a citizenship role that responds directly to their situation. Perhaps the most critical issue facing youth is their employment in both the formal and informal sectors, for both skilled and unskilled young people. Young people want to do more than just talk about development issues, they want to be ‘doing’ development, supporting families and themselves, feeling valued and useful.
Youth employment is intrinsically linked to economic development, yet youth are only little more than barely visible in Fiji’s economic strategies. Rural based and unskilled young people are significantly more disadvantaged than those with skills, though many with skills facing underemployment, opt instead to move to greener pastures overseas. Fiji has hardly departed from an urban-based industry and a foreign investor-led development path of dependence on global capital. While self-sufficiency may be considered by some as utopian – the more worldly-wise may consider it dystopian – this thesis points to the need to promote a greater self-sufficiency in Fiji’s economy, to provide purpose and reward for the large numbers of unemployed and underemployed young people. A key recommendation deriving from this analysis is the need to reconsider development priorities and restrategise economic development, in line with where the resource base is in Fiji, and having relevance to both rural and urban areas.

The question of bridging the disconnect between Fiji’s human resource development strategy and economic strategies clearly points to the need to focus on individual potential, which in turn benefits the nation and the economy. When individual capacities are innovative, productive and resilient, independence is nurtured. A critical area requiring a sharper focus is the transition from school to work or livelihood. Expanding opportunities to move the unskilled and unemployed from positions of passive recipients of service delivery or ‘burdens’ hindering the growth of the nation, to active economic, social and political participants, would include greater options for skills development together with corresponding development of innovative industries. Implicit is the need for coordination of multiple sectors including at least the Ministry of Education and other industry-related ministries, the private sector and non-government organisations.

In reconsidering development priorities and economic strategies that capitalise on the skills and capacities of young people, it would be essential to involve those associated with the resource base. A greater economic role for young people is the most tangible ‘gap’ in term of their citizenship role, though it does in fact translate to increased social status and political role. The governance principle of participation holds much value. Firstly youth citizens raise leaders’ awareness to their situation and needs and secondly, they can influence and contribute to targeted economic resolutions that enable their labour participation to more properly represent their
proportion of the population. In doing so, the systems of accountability are strengthened. Participatory mechanisms should be supported by ongoing activities at community, provincial and institutional levels using a range of participatory methodology. Practical outcomes of participation need to be realised by the majority of youth citizens, rather than a few select youth representatives.

Long-term economic security is founded on the sustainability of investing in people and environments to increase resilience to external shocks to the economy. As such, the investments required for youth development as part of the continuum of human resource development and the scope of investments for utilising human resources need to be considered as national investments with the capacity to reap very significant returns for sustainable and long-term economic and social security. In an era of global crises and national scenarios of social and political tensions and instability, these returns are critically important.

Whether turning Fiji’s development path around is a conceivable concept or not was discussed at length with leaders. The process of investigation proved to employ constructivist principles in that many leaders, having stated their lack of knowledge and distance from youth issues, progressed through discussion to realise the significance and value of youth potential. The simple calculation to consider value and returns from youth citizenship that would benefit the nation against the costs of investment was an exercise that ‘spoke’ to economists, budget planners and industry developers in cost–benefit terms they understood. Without considering the significance of financial and social returns to the nation, it is unlikely that the relevance of youth development will be considered integrally with economic development strategies.

The enthusiastic response to the speculative returns from investing in youth employment was encouraging and signalled a keenness to explore alternative development priorities. Some leaders recognised the need to iron out inefficiencies in current systems to redirect and reprioritise investment, instead of considering additional investment. A former political leader referred to a previous cross-sectoral approach to poverty alleviation, which could be applicable to addressing the cross-sectoral nature of youth. This leader believed that similarly, through inter-departmental coordination, the required investment could be made. A simple formula
was applied to speculate what size of investment may be needed for the $235,000,000 returns and calculated a sum of 20% of the total returns – $47 million, which was less than what was invested for poverty alleviation through the cross-sectoral coordinated approach. Furthermore, in addition to the increased economic potential, there was also recognition of making cost savings on preventing inevitable problems that arise from a lack of investment in youth development, such as youth crime and teenage pregnancy, as mentioned above.

Responses from leaders interviewed identified the following options for possible investment targeted at unemployed young people, including both skilled and unskilled young people in both urban and rural areas: support for small and micro-enterprise schemes for small businesses, including village- and community-based businesses; specialised training for career development in both formal and informal sectors, including sports; locating agricultural careers in rural areas for young farmers, including supporting farm establishment and development for new graduates and managing marketing of agricultural produce; initiating, developing and promoting new media-based and creative industries; facilitating opportunities for youth internships and apprenticeships in the formal employment sector; providing life-skills training for youth in traditional settings; and expanding the National Youth Service Scheme.

The implications for these investments are of course huge ranging across: addressing traditional values and attitudes of leaders and adults; integrating all citizens including indigenous Fijians into representative structures; continuing education curriculum reform; establishing coordinating mechanisms for government administration of cross-sectoral youth issues; facilitating participation of young people in decision-making from community to institutional and national levels; information dissemination; youth empowerment – the list goes on. In summary, the following broad steps would be proposed for Fiji for a more effective and systematic harnessing of youth citizenship potential to foster greater development outcomes, for both young people and the community and nation as a whole.

1. Generate information on the youth situation (using in part, participatory structures) and coordinate the utilisation of information across sectors for the
development of sector policies, strategic responses and the targeted delivery of services.

2. Establish a national economic and social development strategy based on giving every young person access to resources for economic development. Such a strategy should be informed by the needs of communities and should specifically address the needs of young people. The strategy should take into account the need to accord development focus on rural and agricultural development including village-based economies, technical and vocational livelihoods, support for small and micro-enterprise schemes and development of new industries to capitalise on natural talent and skills of young people.

3. Reassign youth as a cross-sectoral human resource development issue: Mandate executive authority and accountability for cross-sectoral youth policy and coordination of implementation of services and programs for youth engagement and youth development across all sectors of government, to a ministry responsible for youth.

4. Comprehensive human resource development: that extends beyond school-age to support the transition to employment or livelihood and independence; that embraces traditional and cultural assets; that embodies multi-culturalism; that strives for leadership and equity; and that builds on the foundation of young people’s talents and skills.

5. Social engagement of young people in decision-making and consultation, acknowledging the significance of their daily work and current contributions to development, through establishment and strengthening of representative participatory structures, from traditional and community level through to provincial, institutional and policy level.

These strategic and administrative changes would work towards young people contributing to decision-making processes, determining the national development strategy, providing information on the situation of youth, to be channelled to the appropriate ministry or department. Leaders would have a greater awareness of the youth situation, a greater accountability to respond to active and engaged young people, which would prompt a greater commitment to youth development. As a
result of these, it would be expected that the nation would garner more developmental support from its young citizens exercising a significant social, political and economic role. The notion that youth are the ‘leaders of tomorrow’ is relocated to present-day relevance where youth are partners with today’s leaders. Once again, reflecting on history, we see how peripheral societies have formed alliances with those who wield state power, because their survival has depended on them doing so (Sutherland 1984:457. In Naidu 1991:38). In a similar way, there is a necessity for young people and those who wield state power to form partnerships, because the futures of young people – future generations and Fiji as a nation and society – depends on these for their advancement.

The challenge is indeed considerable for it is not easy to induce the status quo to change and start engaging with young people when entrenched perceptions of young people are of incompetence and delinquency. Socrates remarked of young people in Athens:

>Youth today love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, no respect for older people and talk nonsense when they should work. Young people do not stand up any longer when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, talk too much in company, guzzle their food, lay their legs on the table and tyrannise their elders.

Socrates (Circa. 500 B.C.)

Perception of the young rejecting the conservatism of adults is not just a feature of the ‘modern’ age, it is simply that their developmental profile is youthful and dynamic and ‘grown ups’ simply have graduated from this stage of conduct. One of the benefits of Fijian tradition is the practice of respect, which can be reciprocated to young people when respect is shown of elders, through sincere engagement. This research revealed positive examples of traditional communities according young people their participation rights in village decision-making and authority. The need then is the deferential introduction of practices of engaging young people to address the youth situation and other issues that affect their welfare and status.

Understanding that a minimised citizenship role for young people can be detrimental to Fiji’s development and that maximising on the role of young people can advance
and accelerate Fiji’s growth and development, the question of whether a greater citizenship role for youth is feasible is only an academic construct. Yes, a greater role is feasible if the steps outlined above are carried out or worked towards incrementally. These, however, are large strides implying a change of mindset, indeed of inherent attitudes and values, across Fiji’s leadership or at least for those at the most influential of positions at traditional, institutional and senior government levels. The question instead is whether the evidence is convincing enough to persuade or motivate Fiji’s leadership to take a dynamic plunge into relatively uncharted territory.

Given the current political climate and quest for peace and equality, Fiji can be said to be breaking new ground in any case. Fiji has disengaged in many ways from its path dependence. The global economic crisis adds a further prompt in the direction of social equity and self-sustainability. This point in history could be the most advantageous one for looking more intently at investing in youth citizenship to make significant inroads into where our greatest challenges lie in Fiji.

The result remains to be seen.
6.0 References


UNCRC. 2006. General Comment No.8: The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (articles 19, 28(2) and 37, inter alia). United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Geneva, Switzerland.


6.1. References not cited


Lal, B.V. 2007. ‘*This Process of Political Readjustment’: Aftermath of the 2006 Fiji Coup.* Discussion Paper, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.


of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI), Regional Secretariat, Suva, Fiji


7.0 Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire – In-depth Interview

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Role of Young People in Development:
A Feasibility Study for Fiji

This research is being conducted to determine the potential role of young people in Fiji’s national development. The study adopts an objective approach to assessing the feasibility and ‘added value’ of working in partnership with young people. The research draws on information gained from a previous study conducted with young people in the Pacific by UNICEF Pacific.

Interviews using in-depth and semi-structured questionnaires are targeted at members of Fiji’s national leadership, and will be conducted by the researcher. Your answers will be treated with confidentiality. The researcher will seek your prior approval for use of any referenced citations.

The findings from this research will be relevant for future national planning and budgeting processes. The research will also provide useful information and recommendations on key interventions to address critical youth issues that impact the national development of Fiji.

The research is part of the final thesis of the researcher’s Master’s degree. It will not be used for any political purposes, rather if possible, for the purposes of development for children and young people with UNICEF Pacific and/or the Government of Fiji. The interview will be recorded only for the purposes of capturing all the information for transcription.

Your participation and honesty are appreciated.

Vinaka vaka levu!

Dhannivad!
PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Gender: Male

Female

2. Age category: Under 30 yrs (please specify)

30-39 yrs
40-49 yrs
50-59 yrs
60-69 yrs
Over 70 yrs

PART 2: UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION OF FIJI’S YOUNG PEOPLE

1) What are Fiji’s current priority development issues generally?

Defining ‘young people’

This research refers to young people as those in the second and third decade of life who are transitioning between childhood and independence, negotiating particular challenges that are different from those of young children or those of adults. These are in general young people aged between 16 and 24 years, but can include those who are younger and those who are a little older.
2) How are any of these priority development issues related in any way to young people’s lives?

3) How does your role as [position] relate or have any effect on the situation of young people?

4) In your role as [position] are you provided with information on the situation of young people?
   a) If so, where from?
   b) Who prepares and provides the information?
   c) If not, do you need information on the situation of young people for your role as a leader? Please explain:

5) What do you see as the main difficulties (obstacles / constraints) facing the development of young people in Fiji?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth issues</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment opportunities for youth</strong> – generating jobs and support for employment and business initiatives, specifically aimed at youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth crime</strong> – preventing juveniles from turning to crime and providing rehabilitation programs to reform behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth capacity needs</strong> – building life skills that can be used for employment / livelihood &amp; independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Non-formal</em> – for informal sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>School &amp; tertiary</em> - for formal sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent sexual &amp; reproductive health</strong> – influencing youth behaviour to address important health issues such as HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing access to information</strong> – For leaders and their effective and efficient planning and decision making; As well as providing youth related information for the general public, in particular, children and young people, parents and those who work with and for children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth participation in decision-making and in development</strong> – enabling young people to contribute to development through decision-making processes and implementing development initiatives at community through to national levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional and customary practices of raising children and youth</strong> – addressing influences at traditional level that determine children and young people’s status and development, to allow for greater realisation of gender equality, freedom of expression etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth substance abuse</strong> – reducing numbers of young people who indulge and abuse substances such as alcohol, tobacco, kava (yaqona) and drugs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6) The issues are interrelated – addressing one issue impacts others. Which would you highlight as the most important to address first and that will have the greatest impact on the other issues? Please explain:

7) Are there any other youth issues that are important to address that have not been mentioned here? Please explain:

8) How should the issue(s) (selected as the most important) be addressed? Are there any current Government strategies addressing the issue(s)?
   a) If so, are they effective in achieving results?

9) [Ask if not answered above] How should the issue of youth unemployment be addressed? Are there any Government strategies in place? And if so, are they effective in achieving results?

10) How do you think Fiji’s traditions and customs affect the status and development of young people?

PART 3: IS THERE A ROLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEVELOPMENT?

1) Building on the idea that the participation of stakeholders (i.e. the general public) is a key factor in development through, for example, public inquiries, consultations, referendums etc, in what ways could the participation of young people be factored or maximised in development – particularly for issues directly or indirectly affecting their lives? e.g. education, town planning etc.?

What young people say…

- That there is little focus on building appropriate skills and capacity in young people who do not have tertiary education or formal sector skills – and few opportunities to support young people in small and micro-enterprise development and for livelihood in the informal sector or careers in sports.

- That young people in rural areas need greater attention and focus so that they can remain in their villages and be productive.

- That the specific needs and challenges of young people are not known by leaders at community and national level, thus their specific needs are not being met.
That a greater investment in this area would assist in developing young people to a greater potential, thus giving them more opportunity to contribute to individual, communal and national economic and social development.

[See handout on youth recommendations]

2) What is your response to these statements? What do they illustrate?

3) Are these ideas different from the ideas of adults / civil servants / leaders? If so, how are they different?

4) Youth say that their specific needs and challenges are not known by leaders. Should information on young people’s lives – their particular situation and the challenges they face – be provided in part from young people themselves? Please explain your answer:

5) What are the reasons for not investing more resources in the area of youth development – particularly for unskilled and marginalised youth?

Testing the feasibility of one of the youth suggestions:

**Speculative earnings of unemployed youth**

The unemployment rate in 2001 for 15-64 year olds was 12.1%. In most PICs, the unemployment rate amongst youth aged 16-24 years is more or less double that of the entire workforce. Therefore we can estimate that in Fiji, around 24% of young people aged 16-24 years are unemployed. The youth population aged 15-24 years is estimated to be 163,368. If roughly 24% of those are unemployed, that is equal to 39,209 people. If those people were earning F$6,000 per annum, the gross earnings would be F$235,254,000.

6) This is just indicative of the kind of returns from investing in the skills of young people for employment.

   a) What size of investment would we be looking at to generate this result?
b) Is the cost of investment within Government’s reach?

c) What would be the social and economic implications and benefits of making an investment with this result?

d) Do you feel that there would be enough development gains in economic and social benefits to outweigh the costs of this investment?

7) What would be some of the challenges in investing in youth development such as this?

8) Do you know of any good examples of how youth have contributed to a positive or better outcome in a significant event?

9) Is there a way to raise the status of young people in development without imposing on our traditions and customs?

PART 4: SETTING UP PARTICIPATORY SYSTEMS \(\textit{THEORETICAL}\)

1) \textit{If} it could be shown that the contributions from young people lead to better decisions and address critical development issues effectively, \textit{which} youth should have the opportunity to have their voice heard in decision-making processes to allow for fair representation?

a) Why these youth?

b) Which systems could be utilised?

c) What about Fijian / Indo-Fijian young people? Marginalised young people? Young people in urban cities, peri-urban squatter settlements?

2) What are your views on the youth parliament mechanism where representatives are chosen from each constituency? What should it be doing?

3) What would be the cost implications of setting up the systems for participation?

4) To what extent could you argue the cost benefits of this investment? Ie. What is needed to convince the budget planners?

5) Is there anything else that you would like to add? Or any questions to myself?
Annex 2: Analytical Framework

Part 1: Determining the potential role of young people in Fiji’s development
Leaders’ opinions on whether there is a role for youth or not, are dependent on a range of probable factors. The first stage of analysis below identifies leaders’ access to and level of understanding of information about young people. Comparison with ‘what youth say’ derived from the researcher’s previous study on *The Role of Young People in Governance* shall serve to validate or measure leaders’ actual level of understanding. The second stage of analysis shall search for any association between leaders’ actual level of understanding and their opinions on whether a role for young people exists or not. This stage also looks at other tendencies amongst leaders that enlighten us as to the character of leader that would favour youth participation or not.

Stage 1: Examination of leaders’ knowledge of youth issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code for analysis</th>
<th>Reference to questionnaire</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[111] Leaders’ access to information on youth</td>
<td>[QP24a, QP24b, QP24c]</td>
<td>The system in which leaders operate and which influences their worldview of young people. Where leaders get their information from and who provides / prepares this information. How many leaders need information on young people in their leadership position?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor knowledge of youth issues</th>
<th>Good knowledge of youth issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of leaders who score less than 25/50 points on level of understanding of youth issues</td>
<td>% of leaders who score more than 25/50 points on level of understanding of youth issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of leaders who indicated a need for more information on more than half the issues</td>
<td>% of leaders who respond in alignment with young people on the most important issue to address and how issues should be addressed (thus indicating a good knowledge of youth issues from young leaders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of leaders who use information on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much do leaders understand of youth issues in general?
| [113] Comparison with what youth say for response actions - Even if leaders say that they have enough information, do they prioritise the issues in the same ways as young people? And do they respond to issues in the same way? [QP25, QP27, QP28, QP29, QP219a, QP210] | youth in their role as a leader, but who also indicated a need for more information on youth issues. | people’s perspectives); |
| [QP25, QP27, QP28, QP29, QP219a, QP210] | % of leaders who do not select the same issue as youth on obstacles and constraints or most important issue to address first (indicating less familiarity with issues from youth perspective). | % of leaders who select the same issue as youth on most important to address first (indicating familiarity with what youth say). |
| [QP25, QP27, QP28, QP29, QP219a, QP210] | What % are those who had poor knowledge above? | What % are those who had good knowledge above? |
| % of leaders who do not respond in alignment with young people as to how they would address the issue of unemployment (showing the difference between leaders and young people) | % of leaders who respond in alignment with young people as to how they would address the issue of unemployment (indicating familiarity with youth perspective). | % of leaders who indicate a good knowledge above but then highlighted priority issue different from what young people say (showing that despite the ‘good knowledge’ they profess to have, they still think differently from young people); |
| What % are those who had poor knowledge above? | What % are those who had good knowledge above? | % of these leaders who then cannot show that Government strategies to address youth issues are effective (showing that their knowledge has not contributed to effective strategies). |
| % of leaders who indicated a good knowledge above but then highlighted priority issue different from what young people say (showing that despite the ‘good knowledge’ they profess to have, they still think differently from young people); | % of leaders who do not respond in alignment with young people as to how they would address the issue of unemployment and can show effective government strategies are already addressing the issue (showing perhaps a better understanding of how to address youth issues)? | Are youth contributions different from those of leaders? |
| Can leaders who choose different strategies show that the Government strategies are effective? | Is there any association between level of knowledge as first indicated and their response against what youth say? | How does this change the level of knowledge that leaders’ said they had? |
| What is the actual level of knowledge? | Are youth contributions different from those of leaders? | Were there any consistent differences between what leaders said and what young people said? |
| | Do leaders who say they understand youth issues then show different responses to what youth say as to their obstacles and constraints or their most important youth issue to address and ways to address youth issues? | Can leaders who choose different strategies show that the Government strategies are effective? |
| | Is there any association between level of knowledge as first indicated and their response against what youth say? | How does this change the level of knowledge that leaders’ said they had? |
| | What is the actual level of knowledge? | What is the actual level of knowledge? |
## Stage 2: Potential role for youth in development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code for analysis</th>
<th>Role for youth</th>
<th>No role for youth</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[120] Leaders’ opinions on how the role of youth could be operationalised for young people to participate. [Theoretical]</td>
<td>Leaders’ thoughts on how the role of youth could be maximised in development</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP41]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Which youth should have the opportunity to have their voice heard in decision-making processes to allow for fair representation? Why these youth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Which systems could be utilised?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What about youth parliament mechanism where representatives are chosen from each constituency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[121] Recognition of the impact of development issues on young people</td>
<td>% of leaders who recognise that development issues impact upon young people (which could justify a role for young people as a development stakeholder)</td>
<td>% of leaders who do not recognise that development issues impact upon young people (which would not indicate a role for young people)</td>
<td>Do leaders recognise that development issues impact on young people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP21, QP22, QP23]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[122] Leaders’ thoughts on how the role of youth could be maximised in development</td>
<td>% of leaders who have positive ideas about the role of youth</td>
<td>% of leaders who have negative ideas about the role of youth</td>
<td>Do leaders believe there is a role for youth in development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP31]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Why do they think so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is this role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[123] Leaders’ opinions on whether it is worth investing in a strategy suggested by youth</td>
<td>% of leaders who recognised the potential benefits demonstrated by the ‘gross earnings’ example. % of leaders who said that the example youth strategy was worth investing in. Did any leaders change their mind upon learning the example?</td>
<td>% of leaders who did not recognise the potential benefits demonstrated by the ‘gross earnings’ example. % of leaders who did not think that the example youth strategy was worth investing in.</td>
<td>Do leaders see value in investing in the strategy suggested by youth – in comparison to current government strategies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP36a–d, QP37]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Did the example help leaders in understanding the feasibility of youth investment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[124] Leaders’ opinions on whether youth should provide information on their situation</td>
<td>% of leaders who think young people should in part provide information on their situation. Did these leaders indicate a need for a greater knowledge on youth situation?</td>
<td>% of leaders who do not think youth should provide information on their situation.</td>
<td>What percentage of leaders thought information should in part be provided by young people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP34]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[125] Examples of meaningful participation</td>
<td>Examples of meaningful participation</td>
<td>Examples of tokenistic participation</td>
<td>Have leaders experienced meaningful participation of young people in development – either at decision-making level or as contributing to national economy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP38]</td>
<td>% of leaders who know of good examples of youth participation and who believe there is a role for youth, and ‘value added’.</td>
<td>% of leaders who do not know of examples of youth participation who also do not feel there is a role for youth, or any ‘value added’ to contribute.</td>
<td>Types of participation examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Understanding factors that contribute to leaders’ opinions on potential role.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[126] Youth role in traditional context</td>
<td>% of leaders who believe the status of youth in development can work without imposing on culture and traditions.</td>
<td>% of leaders who do not believe the status of youth in development can work without imposing on culture and traditions.</td>
<td>How do leaders feel Fiji’s traditions and cultures affect the status and development of young people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP39]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do leaders think there is a role for youth that can work in Fiji’s cultural and traditional context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>How much agreement is there on whether youth have a role to play in development? Are there any other patterns or associations? Do the leaders display the same positive tendencies? Ie. Were the leaders who believed there was a role for youth, the same leaders</td>
<td>How much disagreement is there on youth having a role to play in development? Are there any other patterns or associations? Do leaders display the same negative tendencies? Were the leaders who did not believe there was a role for youth, the same leaders who had a poor knowledge of</td>
<td>What was the mean age of leaders who saw a role for youth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>What was the mean age of leaders who did not see a role of youth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Is there any association between the age of the leader and their views on whether youth have a role to play in development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the characteristics of leaders that could determine their acceptance of youth participation?</td>
<td>youth issues and poor familiarity with youth perspectives? Or otherwise?</td>
<td>who had a good knowledge of youth issues and good familiarity with youth perspectives? Or otherwise?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| If each case (leader) gave positive responses on all of the following:  
  a) how the role of youth could be maximised;  
  b) youth providing information in part on youth situation;  
  c) recognising the positive role that youth already have;  
  d) and youth participation in development working in traditional context;  
  then it can be said that the case would positively see a role for young people in development. | % of leaders who scored either more/less than 25/50 on knowledge of youth issues and who do not believe there is a potential role for young people in development | % of leaders who scored either more/less than 25/50 on knowledge of youth issues and who do not believe there is a potential role for young people in development. |
Part 2: What is the value of the role of youth in development?

In determining this, the first stage of this part of the analysis explores in greater depth the potential role of young people in development. It seeks to determine the need if any, to involve young people in development, what difference the role of youth would bring and how this compares to the effectiveness of government strategies. The second stage attempts to discuss both qualitatively and quantitatively, the benefits, costs and actual feasibility of investing in youth development and the establishment of participatory structures for young people. A speculative example of potential returns from investing in youth development is presented to leaders to facilitate this discussion.

Stage 1: Is there added value in what youth say in the process of development?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code for analysis</th>
<th>Value added</th>
<th>No value added</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[QP32, QP33]</td>
<td>% of leaders who made positive comments</td>
<td>% of leaders who made negative comments</td>
<td>Do leaders believe there is value in young people’s comments? In what ways?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP24c, QP26-table]</td>
<td>% of leaders who score less than 25/50 points on level of understanding of youth issues (so would benefit from more information); % of leaders who indicated a need for more information on more than half the issues (possibly could be provided by young people); % of leaders using information on youth who say they need more information.</td>
<td>% of leaders who score more than 25/50 points on level of understanding of youth issues (indicating no need for further information from young people); % of leaders who respond in alignment with young people on the most important issue to address and how issues should be addressed (thus indicating no added value in what youth say);</td>
<td>Does government need more information on youth issues? Do leaders understand the situation of youth in general? Or do they need more information? Do leaders request additional information on youth? Of the leaders who said they use information on youth, what % said that they needed more information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP26]</td>
<td>% of leaders who do not select the same issue as youth on obstacles &amp; constraints, most important issue to address first (indicating less familiarity with issues from youth perspective).</td>
<td>% of leaders who select the same issue as youth on obstacles and constraints, most important to address first (indicating familiarity with what youth say).</td>
<td>Are youth contributions different from those of leaders? Were there any consistent differences between what leaders said and what young people said?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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people? And do they respond to issues in the same way?

[QP27, QP28, QP29, QP29a, QP210]

What % are those who had poor knowledge above?

% of leaders who do not respond in alignment with young people as to how they would address the issue of unemployment (showing the difference between leaders and young people)

What % are those who had poor knowledge above?

% of leaders who indicated a good knowledge above but then highlighted priority issue different from what young people say (showing that despite the ‘good knowledge’ they profess to have, they still think differently from young people);

% of these leaders who then cannot show that government strategies to address youth issues are effective (showing that their knowledge has not contributed to effective strategies).

What % are those who had good knowledge above?

% of leaders who respond in alignment with young people as to how they would address the issue of unemployment (indicating familiarity with youth perspective).

What % are those who had good knowledge above?

% of leaders who do not respond in alignment with young people as to how they would address the issue of unemployment and can show effective government strategies are already addressing the issue (showing perhaps a better understanding of how to address youth issues)?

Do leaders who say they understand youth issues then show different responses from what youth say as to obstacles and constraints, most important youth issue to address and ways to address youth issues?

Is there any association between level of knowledge as first indicated and their response against what youth say?

Can leaders who choose different strategies show that the government strategies are effective?

How does this change the level of knowledge that leaders’ said they had?

What is the actual level of knowledge?

[213] Current government strategies

[QP29a, QP35]

Government strategies that are not effective in addressing youth unemployment.

% of leaders who admit that current government strategies are not effectively addressing the problem (thus showing a need for better strategies).

Effective government strategies for addressing youth unemployment

% of leaders who say that government strategies are in place and can show that they are being effective (this showing no need for any other strategies).

Does government need new / different development strategies?

How effective are current government strategies in addressing youth issues?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Leaders’ opinions on whether youth should provide information on their situation | Does government need a greater familiarity with youth issues and perspectives from young people themselves?  
What % of leaders thought more information was needed?  
What % of these leaders thought information should in part be provided by young people? |
| Leader’s opinions on the potential role for youth                     | Is there a sufficient role that can be fulfilled by young people?  
Is there a greater or lesser % of leaders who affirmed a potential role for young people? |
| Understanding of example: speculative gross earnings of unemployed youth | Are the benefits and costs of investing in the example youth strategy recognised by leaders?  
What % of leaders recognised the potential benefits in the example youth strategy?  
What are the reasons why more resources are not invested in the area of youth development?  
What % of leaders felt that investment should be made? |
| Analysis                                                              | What is the total ‘added value’ of youth participating in development?  
What is the total ‘no value’ of youth participating in development – in comparison to the total added value? |
### Stage 2: Analysing the costs and benefits of investment in an example strategy suggested by youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Costs and implications (quantitative and qualitative)</th>
<th>Cost–benefit analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[221] Investing in youth development</td>
<td>Potential social benefits</td>
<td>Costs and implications (quantitative and qualitative)</td>
<td>Cost–benefit analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP36a–d, QP37]</td>
<td>Potential economic benefits</td>
<td>Costs and implications (quantitative and qualitative)</td>
<td>Cost–benefit analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[222] Setting up participatory structures</td>
<td>The ways the role of young people could be maximised in development</td>
<td>Costs and implications (quantitative and qualitative)</td>
<td>Cost–benefit analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QP41a, QP41b, QP42, QP43, QP44]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total investment in setting up participatory structures and investing in youth development for employment</td>
<td>Total benefits</td>
<td>Total costs (quantitative and qualitative)</td>
<td>Total cost–benefit analysis and actual feasibility of investing in participatory structures and in youth development for employment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3: National Youth Advisory Board Consultative Structure