POLICY DIALOGUE: EXAMINING SQUATTER
RESETTLEMENT IN FIJI

A case study of the Peceliema Community relocation in 2007 from the Suva Pony Club to Waila Housing City.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies at the University of the South Pacific.

I declare that this thesis is my own work, except for those sections explicitly acknowledged, and that the main content of the thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other university.

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The urban poor do, in equal measure with all other citizens, have a right to *planned settlement in the city*. Yet they are found protesting evacuation from city settlement areas, receiving R&R (Resettlement and Rehabilitation) on the outer-most urban fringes if they are lucky. This has been the experience of the Peceliema Community, relocated from the sea side in the Suva Urban Area to the Fiji Housing Authority ‘Waila Housing City’ on the urban periphery. It is a corruption issue, as much as it is a class issue and poverty issue, that the urban poor can be systematically denied urban citizenship.

"As earthmovers and hammers and chisels of 'development' redraw the maps that society and nature have drawn, R&R is meant to soften the blows...

Willingness to resettle slum dwellers has the flavour of a favour. It implies that the state is willing to condone slum dwellers for having encroached on land meant for other (others’?) purposes and even give them a puny place to live (though it may seem like 'rewarding a pickpocket')...

The Right to Resettlement that they are willing to bestow on slum dwellers in lieu of the very suspect Right to Stay [suspect because the Right to Stay does not replace the right to planned urban settlement in the first place] is thus founded on a distortion of facts. This distortion snowballs, like a growing carry-forward error, into distorted standards, sites, and priorities for resettlement."


This case study re-ignites the alarm that Fiji’s resettled urban poor stand to lose their newly acquired share in the product of ‘planned development’ if they cannot sustain livelihoods at the new site.
ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of squatter community relocation under the Fiji Government squatter relocation scheme, a nationwide strategy hinged on State provision of alternative housing. A critical aspect of the scheme is that settlement residents can apply for government subsidized land lot allocation in peri-urban areas through the Housing Authority. The research focuses on a case study of the Pony Club area (or Bai Ni Ose) informal community relocation which involved a unique dialogue process between the University of the South Pacific as landowner, the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare, and Housing, the Housing Authority, and the Community in 2005-2006. The undertaking was termed “the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project.” The relocation agreement reached finds 30 out of 40 households have conditionally obtained land lots and are currently re-establishing their community at the Waila 3B housing subdivision in Dauvuilevu near Nausori.

Beginning with a brief word about the current 'squatter discourse' in Fiji, this thesis introduces the public policy that guided the Bai Ni Ose area relocation and summarizes the motivation and structure of the research. It looks internationally at the links between urbanisation and squatter settlements in light of trends observed in the Pacific and Fijian context. Critical consideration is given to the origin and varied understandings for the concept of 'squatting'. A review of the literature on international public policy responses to informal settlement issues and some of the major theories upon which these are predicated is presented. This is followed by a discussion of the Fijian policy response to present, identifying the roles of key actors and influence of policy decisions. The case study research methodology and progression as well as the parameters of the study are elaborated to situate the researcher in relation to the Peceliema Community. The research findings show that critical aspects of the informal settlement relocation policy need to be revisited if it is to be sustainable in the long term both for relocated communities and for the Housing Authority as well as broadly for urban development in Fiji. This thesis concludes with an evaluation of the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project using the Asian Development Bank Handbook on involuntary resettlement as a benchmark for best practise. The thesis makes recommendations for action by the Housing Authority and the Ministry to reinforce the survival strategies and support the Community through these crucial initial years of adjustment to the new physical and economic situation of the Waila 3B subdivision. These constructive 'next-steps' include easing uncertainties surrounding the provision of solid waste management services, water meterage, and the permanence of the Peceliema Vou Church. By reigniting engagement with the Community to encourage restoration and rehabilitation at the new site, the Housing Authority and Ministry will be supporting community building and integration with the host community already settled at Waila while also creating a more responsive and hospitable climate for the relocation of other low-income communities in the future. With national elections slated for the first quarter of 2009, now is the time to learn from involuntary resettlement experience so that policy can be revamped and expediently placed before the new Parliament and Cabinet as the new leadership will strive to take Fiji forward.

1 Prior to the 2006 National Elections the Fiji Squatter Settlement Unit was overseen by the Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment; for the period that the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project was underway the overseeing Ministry was the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare, Poverty Alleviation and Housing. As of January 2008 the Squatter Settlement Unit reports to the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment, Local Government, Urban Development and Housing. Hereafter ‘the Ministry’ will refer to the Ministry overseeing the Squatter Settlement Unit, a key actor in the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project, unless otherwise stated.
2 This includes coerced agreement to resettle.
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Image: Adapted from Historical Map of Viti Levu, Rewa Coast, based on Lands and Survey Department map, 1939. This map was originally drawn around the time when the informal settlement at the Pony Club was established in the early 1940s (location shown by ). In 2007 this settlement Community was relocated from the Pony Club settlement site (also known as Bai Ni Ose) to Waila Housing City at Dauvuilevu (shown by ).

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas Library Online; www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/ (geographical markers inserted by author).
INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH AIMS

"Our people deserve access to decent, sturdy and affordable housing. With our growing urban and peri-urban population, the demand for proper and affordable housing has never been higher."

Fiji Interim Prime Minister Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama, quoted in Fiji Times, 4 February 2008, "Bainimarama Gets a Squatter Committee Set Up"

The announcement that the Fiji Interim Government will see to the establishment of a Committee on Squatter Housing (COSH) in February 2008 comes at a critical point for thousands in squatter settlements targeted for relocation. Many squatter communities have repeatedly come under threat of eviction or relocation as land developers, lease holders, neighbouring businesses and residential subdivisions seek their removal from marginal or undeveloped urban and peri-urban land. A 2004 Fiji Sun article disclosed that 3,000 squatter families, including 40 counted in "the Pony Club area," were slated for eviction but at that time no details were publicised about when the evictions would begin.3

In January 2007, with little disruption by the political upheaval of the December 5, 2006 Military Coup, and with very little media coverage, the Pony Club settlement area was vacant and the formerly inhabited area was fenced off. Minimal interaction was pursued by government agencies with the newly resettled community and no official reports were circulated documenting the status of adjustment in the new location.

Research Aims

This research paper seeks to redress this information gap using a case study approach, exploring the outcomes of the multi-sectoral policy dialogue process in 2005-2006 for the relocation of the Peceliema Community that lived beside the Pony Club. The research aims are:

(1) To provide an initial qualitative documentation of the Suva to Waila 3B relocation process and the resulting impacts for the Community according to the residents. It was the primary concern of the Peceliema Community leaders that Community member participation in this research would be as a contribution towards preserving the history of the Community for the younger generations, as well as a conduit for articulating concerns in an effort to influence public policy to meet the needs of resettled and informally settled populations.

(2) To critically consider the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project scheme against the Fiji public policy frameworks for approaching informal community resettlement.

(3) To evaluate the Peceliema Community resettlement using an international and institutionalised framework for involuntary resettlement as a benchmark for responsible practice. The Asian Development Bank policy framework for involuntary resettlement was selected because of its relevance for any Bank-financed development project, considering the Bank is a key provider of financial and technical assistance on a range of Fiji Government development projects.

(4) To formulate thoughtful recommendations for changes in policy approaches to resettlement of informal communities and to make a contribution to the literature on informal community resettlement in Fiji.

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The rational for this research is that, because no prior qualitative reports known to the author have documented the perspectives of a relocated informal settlement population in Fiji, this research can inform policy initiatives in the area of informal community resettlement and provide a historical record of the experience of the Peceliema Community members. The case study engaged community members using *Talanoa-style* methodology to grasp the reaction and adjustment of residents to relocation as at ten months after the move. Additionally, *talanoa* sessions were conducted with members of the government agencies and USP administration who were involved in drafting the Memorandum of Understanding and executing the relocation with the Community.

This research considers the factors that are relevant to families and the Community's ability to thrive as well as how the community members view the impact of the relocation. For instance, how do families weigh factors such as proximity to the sea, proximity to clan members, to major market places, schools, and employment as regards location of settlement or relocation site? How are these aspects of physical location weighed against the opportunity for security of land tenure or access to basic services such as electricity, water, a standard toilet and sewerage in every home? Are the conditions for obtaining a land title at Waila 3B - which include cash deposit on the land, specifications for housing construction standards and mandatory initial investment (or loan acceptance) - realistic in the short and medium term for relocated families? Do relocated families view the relocation as an improvement in livelihoods?

These questions are followed by a discussion of how the actual experience of the relocation, as described by the Peceliema Community, was aligned with the plans and objectives of the agreement in order to consider in what respects it was a success, and for whom, as well as whether it met the criteria it was set up to serve. The process and its outcomes to date for the Peceliema Community will be considered against a backdrop of major theories pertaining to squatter settlements and literature about relocation schemes in other parts of the world. This study concludes with a discussion of the adequacy of current public policy practises in Fiji pertaining to the resolution of squatter settlement issues with an outlook going into 2008-2009.

*Image:* Satellite photo of the Suva peninsula foreshore showing the location of the Bai Ni Ose area informal settlement (inset 1) and the neighbouring Korova Community (inset 2).
CHAPTER 1: Urbanisation and Squatting

This section explores the global and local historical contexts of squatting to critically consider how phenomena such as urban poverty and informal settlements are linked to processes of urbanisation. What is urbanisation and how do models of urbanisation contribute to our understanding of the growing informal housing sector? What relevance does international experience hold for Fiji and the Pacific? How is squatting defined in Fiji and what attributes of the Fiji situation are unique?

Urbanisation: Definition

The 2007 State of the World Population Report by the UN Population Fund, or UNFPA, describes urbanisation as a very broad process of “transition from rural to a more urban society” (UNFPA, 2008:6). Therefore, urban localities, as defined by national statistics authorities, account for a growing proportion of the population. This growth was in 1996 declared “the single largest influence on development in the 21st century” and the latest estimates suggest that this year, 2008, for the first time more than half of the world’s population (or 3.3 billion people) will reside in cities and towns (UNFPA, 2008:6). Models for studying urbanisation have changed the ways that urbanisation is conceptualised. For instance, many global institutions, such as the World Bank Group, have over the years stressed the positive relationship of urbanisation to increases in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This conception of urbanisation accentuated the 'developmental' benefits - that is, the broad improvement of economic circumstances and livelihoods through the 'trickle-down' or dissemination of economic surplus, technological advances and employment opportunities by industrialisation and other urbanisation processes. However, critics assert that these technological advances and the employment generated by industrialisation do not invariably lead to improvements for the lives of the working classes. The relationship between urbanisation and developmental benefits across society and across world regions has proven ambiguous; studies increasingly point to variables such as history, domestic law and natural resource endowment as influential in how urbanisation takes place and benefits nations and peoples (Gilbert & Gugler, 1982).

Urbanisation: Factors

Urban growth is bolstered by migration, often rural-urban migration occurring as “a response to uneven development, away from distant, remote [areas or] islands of limited social and economic opportunities,” but increasingly urban-urban migration and natural increase of urban population are factoring in urban growth (Connell, 2000:45; Drakakis-Smith, 1995). How we measure urbanisation is dependent on policy, and thus we must be cognizant that the representation of urbanisation in a particular context within defined parameters and the factors acknowledged to be driving urbanisation are likewise policy dependant. Policy-makers establish the meaning of "urban" as a legal construct, set and extend urban boundaries, designate governing bodies and determine governance structures for urban areas, establish procedures for planning, development, and investment management, and control migration. Policy also has less direct consequences for the population living within urban and peri-urban areas by determining the conditions of the urban environment: promoting employment, education, building infrastructure, establishing tax-free zones and trade agreements, and maintaining ports. The location of urban areas and degree of urbanisation in a particular area is often determined by geography, which for instance curtails urban sprawl or upward high-density construction when the relief of the land includes earthquake fault lines or flash flood zones, or otherwise does not allow for expansion or for sufficient access to markets.

Urbanisation: Global Trends and Implications

Urbanisation has been characterized on a global scale as taking place in two "waves": the first wave swept Europe and crashed on the shores of North America between 1750 and 1950. In two centuries the urban
population increased from 10 to 52 percent or from 15 to 423 million urban dwellers (UNFPA, 2008:8). The second wave concerns the Global South which will withstand roughly the same percentage change in urban population over 80 years, well under half the period of the first wave, between 1950 and 2030. This equates to an increase from 18 to 56 percent urban or 309 million urbanites up to 3.9 billion (UNFPA, 2008:9). The second wave saw urbanisation average 3.8 percent per annum between 1960 and 1993, in contrast to a mean urbanisation of 2.1 percent recorded "during peak Victorian growth years" in Europe (Davis, 2005:15). Urbanisation seems inevitable in the modern global marketplace as attempts to contain rural-urban migration have proven futile for most countries in the long term (Drakakis-Smith, 1995:660). Further, while it is a response to regional and class inequalities to migrate city-ward (Walsh, 1979a), urbanisation is also linked to widening disparities as urban elites have become richer and urban and rural poor are poorer in relative and absolute terms. Gilbert and Gugler (1982:35) explain that "regional disparities in less-developed nations are far wider than those in developed countries." They cite a survey by Williamson that found the average differential in per capita income was two-and-a-half times larger in the poorest countries than in developed nations in the 1950s.4

Unbalanced distribution of spatial concentrations of urbanisation is also more prominent in the Global South as urban growth is centralised or dominant in very restricted geographical areas. This phenomenon is known as ‘urban primacy.’ The emergence of a dominant city, or primate city, or of dual primacy where two cities dominate the national urban structure, is more prevalent in the Global South.

The relationship between urbanisation and worsened regional disparities including urban primacy can be explained using the model of peripheral urbanisation. This model links urbanisation to globalisation and the transmission of capitalist economic systems to "the peripheral countries of the world" (Gilbert & Gugler, 1982:42). Global capitalism expansion takes place in stages "characterised first by colonialism, then by capitalist commercial domination, and finally by monopoly capitalism" (Gilbert and Gugler, 1982:43). These stages concern the mode of surplus extraction, firstly through foreign political control, then by unequal trade agreements when nations achieve independence, and finally when multinational corporations assume control of manufacturing and agribusiness. Criticisms of the model include that it does not acknowledge the importance of context for social structures, cultural tradition and other factors which influence how populations respond to forces of capitalism, globalisation and urbanisation. Gilbert and Gugler (1982:46) note, for example, that while cityward migration is held as a key tenet of the model, there may also be evidence of circular migration patterns. Some studies in the Pacific region have observed return migration as populations move between rural settings where the family is based and urban settings where employment may be available (Connell and Lea, 1995). For instance in PNG migration patterns were set by single, adult male migrants of reproductive age (Walsh, 1987:177) and in Tanna, Vanuatu, circular migration was characterised by seasonal employment on plantations (World Bank, 2000:2). However, researchers are finding that circular migration is being replaced by more permanent migration to urban areas from the late 1970s forward and that the male/female ratio of migrants is more balanced, perhaps as more families are migrating as a unit (Walsh, 1987; World Bank, 2000). Gilbert and Gugler do not discuss how city-ward migration overseas, that is, to more metropolitan countries can be addressed by this model. Overseas emigration of urbanites is becoming a significant contemporary migration effect in many Pacific nations. This population outflow has actually left some Pacific nations with larger populations living overseas than in their home country (Connell and Lea, 1995).

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4 Robert Lucas Jr. (1990) discusses four hypotheses for the endurance of the wider per capita income differential in the Global South, identifying in particular the effect of monopoly control over trade in capital goods on capital-labour ratios both during and after the colonial age.
Gilbert and Gugler (1982) note that the strength and influence of social movements in countries on the capitalist periphery may also have consequences for urbanisation. The Labour movement in Fiji, viewed especially by opposing parties to primarily represent the sugar industry workers, was strong enough to win Federal elections in 1999. A major aspect of the Labour movement platform was to influence land use policies to make more native land available to agricultural workers, thereby promoting rural livelihoods. Due to the Coup of 2000 it is not clear how this social movement may have shaped urban change, the success of Fiji agribusiness, and the infiltration of global capitalism. Recognising, however, that urbanisation has not inherently brought benefits of development to the urban poor, international think-tanks are encouraging engagement with urbanisation processes among marginalised urban groups, looking for ways to enable the contribution of the urban poor to be more constructive within the framework of urban planning.

The extended title of the State of the World Population 2007 Report is evidence that major international organisations are shifting in philosophy and orientation towards urbanisation: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth. Repeated recommendations from experts have pushed in recent decades for policies to "shift from containing urban growth to guiding it" (Drakakis-Smith, 1995:660).

“The key conceptual and operational focus needs to shift from urban management to managing urbanisation” (Dr. Gerald Haberkorn, Manager of the Statistics and Demography Programme at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community). 5

Now researchers are highlighting opportunities for improving health within urbanisation populations and the need for informed, capable governance at city and municipal levels to realise these opportunities (Satterthwaite, 2000). The UNFPA is projecting a call for nations to be more proactive, to revise and found governance structures that acknowledge the pace and scale of change, to prepare for coming transformation of the urban landscape and to be in a position to shape it, indeed, to harness the potential of the transition via wider participatory means (UNFPA 2008). The report urges regional and local governing bodies to devise creative and contextually-informed strategies for multi-stakeholder/multi-sectoral action drawing especially on the participatory potential of urban poor communities.

Global trends show that the speed and scale of urbanisation is much higher than observed in the past, that national annual growth rates are steadily declining, and that there is a strong tendency towards primacy. The second wave of urbanisation progressed at a "breakneck pace" from the 1960s onwards, despite the realities of urban living including excessive unemployment, falling real wages, and rising prices throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Davis, 2005:14). Many economists expected that the contraction of urban economies in the Global South in times of recession would generate a decrease in the flow of ruralites to urban areas, but shocking levels of urban population growth persisted regardless (Davis, 2005:14). The World Bank (2000:5) study of urbanisation in the Pacific Islands found that rural-urban migrants are willing to risk even a prolonged period of unemployment in the big city because the incomes of indigenous urban households surpasses that of rural households by as much as 8.5 times!

The percent urban population of the world in 1950 was at 29.1, compared to only 18 percent in the Global South. By 2000 the percentage urban in less developed regions had risen brusquely to 40.2 percent, narrowing the margin with the world average at 46.6 percent urban. 6 Chandra (1996) notes that 61

5 In Pareti, S. (2007). Urban Crisis; Towns bursting with growing population and limited resources. Islands Business Magazine online, Cover story June 2007 issue. http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands_business/index_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleId=17439/overideSkinName=issueArticle-full.tpl

percent of urban dwellers globally are in nations of the Global South, however, substantial variation exists across countries and urban centres. In China from the late 1970s to the present an estimated 200 million ruralites moved to cities, transforming 193 cities in 1978 into 640 cities by 2005 (Davis, 2005:7, 11-12). This urban explosion saw 166 of China’s cities with populations exceeding 1 million and expected waves of rural-urban migration will bring a further 250 to 300 million migrants, inundating urban areas in the next decades (Davis, 2005:12).

The ‘least developed nations’7 show the highest urban annual growth rates between 1950 and 2015, hovering around five percent per annum (dropping gradually to an estimated 3.99 percent by 2015 and continuing downward) while the respective figure for ‘less developed nations’ is slightly lower, ranging from a peak in the decade ending 1965 at 4.15 percent down to 2.39 percent in 2015.8 Some cities essentially breach carrying capacity, that is, the ability to sustain the needs of a growing population, and struggle or fail to ‘absorb’ additional migrants “either in economic or social terms” (Drakakis-Smith, 1995:660). Slowing urban growth rates are associated with the gradual replacement rural-urban migration with urban-urban migration into other, smaller urban areas. In fact, smaller cities and towns are beginning to experience urban annual growth rates that supersede those of major cities. Amidst mega-cities and million cities,9 the small cities in ‘least developed countries’ are withstanding the harshest pressures of urban population growth, aggravating “the ability of urban and national authorities to cope with the economic, social and environmental consequences” (Drakakis-Smith, 1995:660).

Overall slowing rates of urbanisation in the Global South are also related to the choice of ruralites, especially those near larger centres, to remain engaged in agricultural or rural ‘off-farm’ activities such as manufacturing which directly cater to urban productivity. Unemployed urbanites may also seek employment in this sector, becoming urban-peri-urban/urban-rural migrants. This leads to urban agglomeration as urbanites relocate to urban villages or nearby rural districts.10 Importantly, agglomerations are blurring the distinction between rural and urban as peri-urban areas which formerly fringed the border between urban and rural are increasingly amassed and sandwiched between multiple urban areas. The UNFPA (2008:9) points out that the population outflow from some of the world’s mega cities, including Buenos Aires, Kolkata, Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Seoul, actually exceeds the inflow of new arrivals. The migration of urbanites to peri-urban areas or to other smaller urban areas curtails the urban growth in the world’s largest cities so substantially that few are close to the size that was predicted by trends in the 1970s (UNFPA, 2008:9). In fact, it seems that although larger cities will slowly continue to “increase their slice of the urban pie over time,” urban primacy may be slightly waning as urban growth predominates in smaller cities (UNFPA, 2008:9).

This vast urban expansion in developing countries has global implications. Cities are already the locus of nearly all major economic, social, demographic and environmental transformations. What happens in the cities of the less developed world in coming years will shape prospects for global economic growth, poverty alleviation, population stabilization, environmental sustainability and, ultimately, the exercise of human rights (UNFPA 2008:6).

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7 The United Nations General Assembly in 2003 advanced a definition of ‘least developed countries’ employed by the United Nations Population Division: “The group of least developed countries... comprises 50 countries, of which 34 are in Africa, 10 in Asia, 1 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 5 in Oceania... These countries are also included in the less developed regions.” The five countries in this group from Oceania are Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Kiribati. See Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Urbanization Prospects: the 2007 Revision, http://esa.un.org/unup/index.asp?panel=5#oceania.


9 Million cities’ are cities with populations exceeding 1 million (see Satterthwaite, 2000). “Mega cities’ is a term used interchangeably with ‘megalopolis’ referring to “a thickly populated region centering in a metropolis or embracing several metropolises” (Mirriam-Webster online).

10 Another word for urban village used in Pacific Asia is village-town or desakota (McGee, 1988 in Drakakis-Smith, 1995:660).
Urbanisation: Regional Trends

Connell (2000) explains that in the island nations of the South Pacific, urbanisation is a relatively recent phenomenon with no history in the region of indigenous urbanisation. Connell further suggests that encouragement of urbanisation by colonial administrations was sometimes a precursor to independence and nationhood, although this will have been mainly the controlled 'embourgeoisement' of colonial allies by regulated labour flows and ‘communal capitalism,’ exclusionary bank lending policies, and skills development along ethnic lines. He contends that urbanisation in the Pacific “was thus largely a history of alien intrusion on the periphery of the capitalist world – initially of beachcombers, missionaries, and administrators and belatedly of islanders, especially in Melanesia where 'urban apartheid' [or control/exclusion of Melanesians from urban localities] existed into the post-war period” (Connell, 2000:43). Colonisation, Christian conversion, cessation of indigenous warfare, expansion of trade and population growth in the South Pacific as well as employment opportunities within the Civil Service and the establishment of educational and health facilities in urban areas prompted internal migration patterns from smaller, outer islands to inner, larger islands, from highlands to coastal regions and from rural to urban areas especially national capitals (Connell & Lea, 1995; World Bank, 2000).

Country-to-country and regional variations in urbanisation trends are also discernible. Micronesia displays the highest degree of urbanisation, with Guam at 93 percent urban, followed by the Northern Mariana Islands at 90 percent and Palau at 77 percent (SPC, 2009). Not far behind are the Marshall Islands with 65 percent urban population. Population densities are very high in these cities, and urban primacy is of increasing concern. The World Bank (2000:2) notes the remarkable rate of outward emigration from the Marshall Islands in the last decade as population growth exceeds the capacity of the natural resource base

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11 As Plange (1986:20) notes in Fiji’s case, the colonial state departed “leaving behind it all the structures and instruments of colonisation and the supervision of the colonial economy to the local bourgeoisie of administration and commerce in conjunction with Euro-capital.”
and urban unemployment is on the increase. In Kiribati, with 44 percent urban population in 2005, the number of I-Kiribati concentrated in South Tarawa has exploded to an estimated at 50,000 and roughly two-thirds of this growth occurred since 2001 (Storey, 2006:8). Itaia (1997) explains that the economy in Kiribati can be understood as two-tiered: the subsistence economy and the cash economy. If I-Kiribati wish to participate in the cash economy, the constitutionally protected freedom of movement and improved transportation routes reaching South Tarawa make this destination one of the few, accessible places an outer islander can go for paid employment. Thus the primacy of South Tarawa is increasing despite a mid-1980s resettlement scheme and the massive shortfall of physical space and housing for new arrivals (Storey, 2006:8; Connell, 2000:49).

Melanesian country statistics suggest that urbanisation has progressed somewhat more slowly, for instance PNG, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands maintained less than 25 percent urban population in 2004 (Storey, 2006:5; Connell, 2000:44). Interestingly, however, Melanesia is experiencing the highest annual urban growth rates ranging from 1.5 percent in Fiji to 4.2 percent in Solomon Islands, and these figures should be considered conservative measures (SPC, 2009). Urban boundaries and large-scale resettlement schemes are partly to blame for the misleading urban population figures. In Vanuatu, for example, very densely populated informal settlements adjacent to the Port Vila town boundary were not classified as urban according to the national statistics authority (World Bank, 2000:2). However, including this population raises the total population classified as urban in Port Vila and Luganville from 21 percent (about 41,500 people) to 30 percent (some 55,000 people) of the total national population (Ibid.). Similarly, annual growth in informal settlements at Honiara is significantly higher than the national average, reaching 19 percent annual growth though the 1980s. By the mid-1990s informal residents comprised roughly 23 percent of Honiara’s population. Towns and cities in Melanesia are large and reveal significant primacy. Government-led resettlement schemes to address overcrowding have seen to the resettlement of more than 20,000 people in PNG (Mason & Hereniko, 1987:xiii).

In Polynesia the pace of urbanisation has been slowest, and urban areas (with the exception of Tuvalu) are smaller. Statistics before and after the most recent census in French Polynesia and Tonga show the percent urban population rose only slightly, by 0.7 and 0.5 percent respectively (SPC, 2009; Story, 2006). This trend is consistent with the previous intercensal period, and may be partly explained by Polynesian emigration to metropolitan countries, such as New Zealand, which depresses the measured rate of urbanisation (Bryant-Tokalau, 1994:80-82, cited in Connell, 2000:44; Storey, 2006:5). So significant is this process that Auckland has been dubbed the Polynesian capital of the world.12 ‘Samoan villages’ appeared on the Waianaw coast in New Zealand shortly after the post-war period (Pirie, 1966) and now Manukau City boasts a population composition including 27 percent identifying with Pacific Islander origin.13

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Table 1A: Pacific Urban and National Population Figures for Selected Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Last Population Census</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Urban Population at Last Census (%)</th>
<th>Annual Growth Rate (%)</th>
<th>Last Intercensal Annual Growth Rate (%)</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melanesia*</td>
<td>7,000,000*</td>
<td>20*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji Islands</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>827,900a</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>775,077</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>230,789</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>51,190,786b</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>409,042</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>186,678</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia</td>
<td>575,000*</td>
<td>69*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated States of Micronesia</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>107,008</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>154,805</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>92,533</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>50,840</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9,233</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Mariana Islands</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>69,221</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>19,907</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polynesia</td>
<td>669,000*</td>
<td>43*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>259,706</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>180,741</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>101,991</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: all estimates refer to de facto population  
b) The PNG 2000 census suffered from 4% underenumeration at the national level according to the post enumeration survey (PES) that covered 10% of the households, surveyed about three months after the census.  
c) 2007 figures from UNEPA (2008:86-90) where total population (2007 est.) and % urban (2007 est.) are displayed as indicators for monitoring the progress towards reaching International Conference on Population and Development Goals.

Urbanisation in Fiji: Local Trends

Urbanisation in Fiji has been on the rise since 1966 with the relaxation of 'Fijian Regulations' restricting movement from village to urban settings, with growth in the tourism industry, and with decentralisation in the political and economic arenas. For the first time a majority urban population, though only slight at 50.9 percent, was recorded in 2007 when total urban population reached 421,086 out of a national population of 827,900.  

The sharpest rise in urban population was observed in the 1996 census when the urban population was 46.4 percent up from 38.7 percent (1986). Formerly rural and peri-urban areas were incorporated into urban areas between 1986 and 1996, making boundary change and “a fairly high level of natural increase” more likely factors than rural-urban migration for this increase (Bakker, 1998:137; World

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The SPC 2009 Populations and Demographic Indicators can be retrieved online at http://www.spc.int/sdp/. Discussion and analysis of Pacific country population figures for the previous intercensal period can be found in Storey (2006) and World Bank (2000) Cities, Seas and Storms: Managing Change in Pacific Island Economies (http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPACIFICISLANDS/Resources/Chapter+1.pdf)  
The census period in Fiji is 10 years beginning 1946, although per Bakker (1998:29), prior to 1966 very little information was recorded during census taking to distinguish rural from urban data; 2007 Fiji Census data is available in the form of provisional results from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics online at http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/Census2007/census2007_releases.htm
The highest concentration of Fiji’s urban population since 1966 has been in the Central Division, ranging as a proportion of the total Fiji urban population from 57.6 percent (1966) to 63.2 percent (1986). The two most recent censuses recorded a slim decline from this 1986 peak to 59.7 percent (1996) and 58.7 (2007). The Western Division saw a minor increase in its stake of the total urban population from 30.9 (1996) to 31.8 percent (2007) in the Central Division.

The average rate of urban annual growth in Fiji reached a height of 5.13 percent between 1955 and 1965, in the decade and a half immediately preceding independence, and has been gradually decreasing from that point forward (UN Populations Division, 2008). (See Appendix A for a comparison of 1996 and 2007 urban population census data)

The high rate of urban growth over this period coincides with the expiry of a significant number of Colonial Sugar Refining land leases affecting some 549 Indo-Fijian tenants who were required to vacate lands, according to the National Congress of Fiji in 1964-65, and migrated to urban areas due to the absence of adequate resettlement programmes. Additionally, the Fijian Administration regulations limiting the movement of indigenous Fijians to urban areas were relaxed in 1966 facilitating their contribution to the development of the urban environment (Chandra, 1996:39). Indigenous Fijians were significantly less urbanised than Indo-Fijians in the early post-independence years, although the absolute increase in urban population for both ethnic groups was nearly matched in 1976 at 28,466 (Fijian) and 28,901 (Indo-Fijian) (Chandra, 1996:39). The 2007 census shows that the higher rate of urbanisation observed among indigenous Fijians in 1976 and 1986 persists – in fact urbanisation is now predominantly taking place among indigenous Fijians who now make up the largest proportion of urbanites in Fiji with an urban population amounting to 210,762 compared to Indo-Fijians at 177,516 out of the national urban population of 421,086 (2007). The increase in the urban population represented by indigenous Fijians in the most recent intercensal period is 49,427 individuals or 30.6 percent compared to 9,481 Indo-Fijian or 5.6 percent.

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17 A section of the report compiled by the National Congress of Fiji in 1964-65 dealing with the control of land is reproduced in the Journal of Contemporary Fijian Studies, Volume 2, online at http://www.fijianstudies.org/dload/vol1no2/national_congress_of_fiji.pdf
The total national increase in urban-dwellers measured at 61,591 between 1996 and 2007, of which 80.3 percent is accounted for by the indigenous Fijian ethnic group.\(^{18}\)

### Table 1 B: Urban Annual Growth Rate of Fiji and Melanesia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Annual National Growth Rate in percent (%)</th>
<th>Urban Annual Growth Rate in percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1955</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-1960</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1965</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-1970</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1975</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1980</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1985</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1990</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1995</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-2000</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2005</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2010</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The slowing national pace of urbanisation from the 1970s onward has been attributed to boundary changes and recognition of additional urban areas, to market conditions and to national policy. To some degree to the international recession of the 1980s, marked by significant unemployment, social issues, and lack of housing was accompanied by a slowed rural-urban migration pattern and shorter public housing waitlists, presumably as families returned to the village facing bleak urban prospects or made alternate arrangements for accommodation - such as at informal settlements (Chandra, 1996:28; Bryant, 1992). Regional planning and rural development programmes have also been instituted, attempting to reduce the rural-urban gap in living standards and earning potential, and to encourage ruralites to remain in the village setting to maintain custom. However, emigration from Fiji to countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America also plays a role in this pattern of slowing urbanisation. Between 1987 and 2004 some 91,000 Fiji Islanders officially emigrated, including significantly higher numbers of urban Indo-Fijians following the coups of 1987 and 2000 (Mohanty, 2006:5).\(^{19}\) This figure is considered to be a conservative estimate as firm emigration statistics, according to Bakker (1998:130), are not revealed by Fiji’s censuses because they do not record data on persons who left the country prior to census taking (Chandra, 1996:29). The Fiji 2007 census does, however, show a nationwide decrease of 27,227 Indo-Fijians since 1996.\(^{20}\) Mohanty (2006c:5) found that an independent study revised the number of emigrants from Fiji significantly upwards compared to government estimates, and points out that the annual average emigration rate more than doubled following the 1987 coup and equated to a loss of "over half of Fiji’s stock of middle to high level [i.e., higher educated/certified] workers. He cites push and pull factors as determining international emigration, the former including land insecurities, unemployment and political upheavals, and the latter consisting of higher pay and standard of...


\(^{19}\) The Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN) cited in Mohanty (2006c) states that 96% of all Fiji emigrants were absorbed by Australia, New Zealand, the USA, and Canada; see also Table 1: Declared Emigrants from Fiji 1973-1994 in Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN): Migration Issues in the Asia Pacific Issues Paper From Fiji [http://www.unesco.org/most/apmrnw6.htm](http://www.unesco.org/most/apmrnw6.htm).

living, better health and educational facilities in metropolitan cities abroad.

Urbanisation has been concentrated primarily in three provinces. Rewa and Naitisiri comprise the capital city, Suva, and its peri-urban areas on the east coast of Viti Levu, in the Central Division. Ba, the largest province which is located on the Viti Levu west coast in the Western Division comprises Fiji’s other city, Lautoka (Chandra, 1996:29; Walsh, 2006). Through the 1980s and 1990s Naitisiri province has drastically increased its share of the urban population with the majority of the Suva Urban Area peri-urban expansion along the Suva-Nausori corridor and the development of tax-free zones in Nasinu. Naitisiri province accounted for 16.3 percent of the total population of Fiji in 1996 and 19 percent in 2007, up from 6.9 percent in 1946 (Bakker, 1998; FBOS, 2007:4). The number of urban households in Naitisiri grew from 18,004 in 1996 to 27,241 in 2007, an increase of 50 percent or 9,237 households (30,321 individuals). (See Appendix B: Population of urban Areas in Fiji)

Nasinu obtained town status for the national population and housing census of 2007 and figures above the capital city as the most populous urban area with 86,770 persons compared Suva City, close behind at 86,170 persons. Suva was already decreasing its share in the national urban population with little room for in-migration in the 1976-1986 intercensal period. Suva’s peninsular location limits expansion, sandwiched between the Lami and the Nasinu-Nausori urban areas (Chandra, 1996:31; Bakker, 1998:33). The total number of urban households in Nasinu, including Nasinu town and peri-urban environs, was 18,071 in 2007. This number approaches the total Suva urban households recorded at 18,680 in 2007.

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**Figure 1D: Tikina Vou Boundaries by Province**


*Note: Tikinas are territorial units within Provinces; ‘vou’ is Fijian for “new,” referring to new tikina boundaries*

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The Suva growth rate was lower than the national average in 1986, 1996 (when the 1.1 percent growth rate was entirely ascribed to the incorporation of part of the Naitisiri Tikina, Tamavua into Suva City) and in 2007 when, despite a small increase in the number of households, the city actually experienced a decrease of 2,561 in population, from 77,786 (1996) to 75,225 (2007). This has been in part because of boundary changes which saw Lami, previously counted as part of the Suva urban area, declared a separate town (in 1977) for the 1986 census, and similarly, the expansion of Nausori town boundaries prior to the 1996 census, but most importantly the amalgamation of Nasinu town which was incorporated out of the peri-urban area of Suva for the 2007 census.

In Fiji’s urban hierarchy the dominance of the Greater Suva Area is clear. However, Suva City, with negligible space for growth, is fast becoming overshadowed in the hierarchy by Nasinu. Nasinu retains much greater industrial and residential development potential as well as employment prospects owing in part to tax free zones. Suva accounted for 51 percent of the total urban population in 1986 (Chandra, 1996:31). In 1996 and in 2007 the urban population of the Suva-Nausori Corridor held steady at 52 percent of the total Fiji urban population.24 The increase in the urban population of the Suva-Nasinu-Nausori conurbation between 1996 and 2007 measured at 32,208 individuals out of a total urban population change in Fiji of 61,591, demonstrating that the Greater Suva Area continues to absorb roughly 50 percent of the urban population change – although the bulk is absorbed in the Nasinu Town environs.25 Lautoka in 1986 accounted for only 14 percent of the national urban population, while in 1996 and 2007 this decreased slightly to 12 percent and 12.5 percent respectively.26 The Nadi-Lautoka-Ba corridor, comprising the sum of the total urban populations of each, amounts to 25 percent of the total national urban population, or 36 percent of the national urban growth.27

**Linking Urbanisation, Urban Poverty, and the concept of ‘Squatting’**

Walsh (1979a) emphasises that the proliferation of informal dwellings is more than a housing crisis as cities rupture, unable to reverse the acute housing shortage – informal settlements are first and foremost a poverty issue. The UNFPA stresses in the 2007 *State of the World Population* report a pertinent aspect of this transition in the current century: that urban growth will comprise principally of the poor (UNFPA 2008:6-7). Urban growth will reflect in particular growth by natural increase among the vast population of poor urban residents which has come to outweigh growth by rural-urban migration in many nations.

Urbanisation in the Brazilian Amazon reached rates of 16.4 percent per annum through the 1990s, with 80 percent of urban growth in unserviced informal settlements. This has lead urbanization to actually be equated with 'favelization' (Davis, 2005: 17) where ‘favela’ refers to informal settlements in Brazil. In 'developed' nations, slum/informal settlement residents make a meagre but notable six percent of city population. However, contrast this with 'least-developed' countries where the proportion is 78.2 percent, which amounts to one third of the urban population globally! (Davis, 2005:23). The relationship of squatters to the urban built environment is receiving generous attention as cities and mega-cities of the Global South exhibit unprecedented extremes of wealth and poverty. It is forecast that Black Africa will buttress 332 million slum-dwellers by 2015, and according to UNHABITAT (2003) Ethiopia and Chad maintain the world’s highest percentage of slum-dwellers, both at an astonishing 99.4 percent.28

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24 That is, the sum of the figures for the total Suva urban, the total Nasinu urban, and the total Nausori urban.
25 FBOS Press release No. 53, 2007, Provisional Results - 2007 Population and Housing Census page 5; the Greater Suva Area was recognised in the 1996 census as one urban agglomeration comprising the Urban Area Suva and the Urban Area Lami (FBOS, 1998:122).
Mumbai, India’s wealthiest metropolis and the global squatter capital, already counts well over 50 percent squatters (amounting to some 10 to 12 million people) and faces a formal housing deficit of 45,000 units annually (Davis, 2005:18, 23). Journalist Robert Neuwirth (2004:142) observes that contrary to perspectives abound in Mumbai local popular rhetoric, squatter settlements are not accurately portrayed as cities within cities, rather, he explains, “the middle class and wealthy neighbourhoods constitute the small, small, separatist enclave.”

The term 'urban crisis' has been used to characterise these same trends in the Pacific. The proportion of the urban poor to the total urban population is rising in most Pacific countries (Storey, 2006). Natural increase, particularly in Polynesia, has been observed to contribute gradually more to urban population growth than migration, indicating that the changing urban landscape is increasingly by permanent urban dwellers (Connell & Lea, 1995:5). Urban population growth in the South Pacific, especially in Melanesia where rates of international migration are lower, has led to extensive unmet demand for urban services, especially housing (Connell & Lea, 1995).

Connell and Lea (1995:6) typify four major concerns regarding urbanisation in the Pacific: rising urban unemployment, proliferation of informal settlements, rising crime rates and social problems, and inadequate urban service delivery. Reddy (2006:3) remarks problems associated with the rapid urban growth in Fiji include rise in sex workers and beggars and inadequate waste disposal. Further, land tenure issues in and around urban areas exacerbate the lag in public development, leading many new migrants to make customary arrangements for the use of peri-urban land outside the jurisdiction of municipalities “where squatting is most pronounced” (Connell & Lea, 1995: 7). Data recording changes in peri-urban and informal settlement population varies in scope and reliability by country, however researchers assert that that urban population growth is most prominent in these areas.

Studies in Fiji show informal settlement formation outpacing urbanisation and becoming dangerously crowded (Walsh, 1979a:2). Frightening examples of densely populated urban areas exist in South Tarawa, Kiribati, where the population density has reached 2,558 per square kilometre – in Betio, the port and commercial centre of South Tarawa, the density reaches 10,400 per square kilometre. Dr. Gerald Haberkorn, Manager of the Statistics and Demography Programme at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, estimates that the most densely populated area of the world may be Ebeye atoll in the Marshall Islands with estimated population density of 38,000 per square kilometre. A cover story of the Island Business magazine stated “80 to 90 percent of all new housing in the islands of the Pacific are built either informally or illegally.” For instance, the Black Sands area of Port Villa, Vanuatu, saw population grow by 47 percent in three years ending 2000, and the number of informal settlement dwellers in Fiji ballooned 78% in four years, ending 2003. In fact, the squatter contribution to national housing stock in Fiji was estimated at 35 percent of the total residential development financing for all of Fiji (Vuetibau, 1987:150).

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30 http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands_business/index_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=17439/overrideSkinName=issueArticle-full.tpl
31 Ibid., and Islands Business Magazine Cover Story: ‘Urban Crisis Around the Islands Region’
33 (Ibid.)
In addition to overcrowding, water supply and sanitation in dense informal settlements is usually very poor despite the availability of water connection and reticulated sewerage systems in metropolitan areas (Storey, 2006; Connell & Lea, 1995). For example, Connell and Lea (1995:64) found that while 90 to 96 percent of Fiji urban and peri-urban residents were serviced by piped metered water connections, the unserviced population represented those who were informally settled. Walsh (2001) asserted that although many Pacific policy-makers consider the scale of poverty to be relatively low in the region, many Pacific nations achieve poorly on human development indicators and appear not to be realising benefits of urbanisation that outweigh social costs.

### Table 1C: Asia Pacific Comparisons of Human Development Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Infant Mortality Rates/000</th>
<th>Safe Water (percent)</th>
<th>Safe Sanitation (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>88*</td>
<td>FSM 22</td>
<td>Viet Nam 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>65*</td>
<td>PNG 31</td>
<td>PNG 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Viet Nam 50</td>
<td>China 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanesia</td>
<td>56*</td>
<td>Solomon 64</td>
<td>Cambodia 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>China 65</td>
<td>Solomon 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Is.</td>
<td>32*</td>
<td>Cambodia 65</td>
<td>FSM 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>31*</td>
<td>Kiribati 75</td>
<td>Fiji 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Is.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Philippines 76</td>
<td>Kiribati 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>28*</td>
<td>Nth Mariana 80</td>
<td>Palau 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>26*</td>
<td>Thailand 80</td>
<td>Philippines 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia</td>
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<td>Thailand 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marshall Is.</td>
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<td>Marshall 82</td>
<td>Marshall 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>24*</td>
<td>Samoa 85</td>
<td>Tuvalu 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>23*</td>
<td>Vanuatu 87</td>
<td>Nth Mariana 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Malaysia 93</td>
<td>Tonga 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji Is.</td>
<td>20*</td>
<td>Australia 99</td>
<td>Vanuatu 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polynesia</td>
<td>17*</td>
<td>Tonga 100</td>
<td>Malaysia 98</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>Palau 100</td>
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<td>Australia 99</td>
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<td>Nauru 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tuvalu 100</td>
<td>Cook Is. 100</td>
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<td>Tuvalu 100</td>
<td>Cook Is. 100</td>
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<td>Northern Mariana Is.</td>
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<td>Tuvalu 100</td>
<td>Cook Is. 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>Tuvalu 100</td>
<td>Cook Is. 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Walsh, A.C. (2001:334), Table 27.1. Asia Pacific Comparisons in “Poverty in Fiji and the Pacific Islands”, paper delivered at the Asia Pacific Forum on Poverty: Reforming Politics and Institutions for Poverty Reduction at the Asian Development Bank, Manila, 5-9 February.  
* denotes figures from UNFPA (2008:86-90) where infant mortality is displayed as an indicator for monitoring International Conference on Population and Development Goals
Ethnic implications for urbanisation and informal settlement growth in Fiji

Urbanisation in Fiji, and Melanesia more broadly, is influenced by the rights or non-rights of population segments to customary land as well as historically to urban-citizenship rights – rights which are determined on an ethnic basis (Connell & Lea, 1993:1). This is linked to ethnic clustering of informal settlements and to the ethnic character of certain rural-urban migratory patterns. For instance, former Solomon Island plantation workers, also known as ‘Blackbirdes,’ and their descendants established a number of settlements on Viti Levu and Ovalau near the Suva and Levuka urban centres. Intermarriage is common, however because land is inherited through patrilineal lines, the marriage of a Solomons male plantation worker to a Fijian bride does not benefit from land rights inheritance. In some instances, permission from the customary landowner was sought and granted for settlement, as at Tamavua-i-wai in the early 1930s. Many Solomoni settlements in Fiji have been supported with land leases and advocacy by the Diocese of Polynesia, including New Town, Campbell Settlement, Patteson Settlement, Wailoku, Tacirua and Laqere (Halapua, 1987). However, the informal dimension of these settlements surfaces when land rights are contested or when leases expire. Tenure insecurity erupts when Solomoni settlements are forced to justify the extension of land leases, as at Matata near Lami, or to prove adherence to customary obligations to retain customary tenure arrangements as at Tamavua-i-wai, or to relocate the settlement upon lease expiry as occurred at Wailailai (Levuka) which was relocated to Wainaloka with the approval of the customary landowners (See Halapua, 1987).

A Government-sponsored resettlement scheme hatched in 1963 resulted in similar tenure insecurities for outer islanders brought to Viti Levu as part of the colonial administration’s endeavour to employ ‘local’ (i.e., ethnically Fijian) indentured labour for the cultivation of bananas. Some 400 tenant farmers, mostly Lauans enthusiastic at the prospect of cash incomes, were resettled under the scheme: 231 on registered native leases administered by the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) and the remainder on customary land under vakavanua agreements. By January 2008 roughly half of the NLTB administered leases had expired and Lomaivuna residents, many third and fourth generation residents, had become ‘sitting tenants’ in the absence of legal tenure status. Facing uncertainty about their futures at Lomaivuna, most refused to move from their location and chose instead to lobby government to facilitate lease renewals. The Interim Minister for Primary Industries concedes that if Lomaivuna settlers were to be evicted many would simply relocate to informal settlements in the urban centres.

Unresolved agricultural land tenure insecurities in the sugar cane belt are especially impacting the flux of rural-urban migration. Reddy (2006:9) found 66.4 percent of migrants to the urban area cited land lease expiry and the lack of affordable housing as the primary reason for migration, while lack of rural employment opportunities accounted for only 13.3 percent. The Minister Of State For Housing in June 2006, explained in her response to His Excellency the President’s address that "The main reason for the growth in squatter populations is the fast pace of urbanization and expiry of land leases commencing 2001." She continues: "I can not emphasise enough the [need for] resolution to Agricultural leases which has a direct impact and spiralling effect on the growth of squatter settlements. Every year this issue is not

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33 Historic and contemporary urban citizenship ‘rights’ and customary land use policies in Fiji will be discussed further in Chapter 3.
35 Fiji Times article of January 15, 2008: ‘Govt to facilitate renewal of expired leases at the Lomaivuna Agricultural Scheme’ retrieved online at http://www.fijitimes.com/publish/page_10961.shtml The term ‘vakavanua’ refers to the process or custom for requesting/negotiating land use that existed prior to the codification (instituition of legal framework for property rights based on English Common Law under colonial rule) which is a practise still very much in use today. The vakavanua agreement is elaborated further on page 26.
36 The study was conducted by questionnaire in informal settlements of the Greater Suva Area (GSA) which is viewed as the main destination of 70% of the rural-urban migrants, as well as in Labasa where approximately 70% of the migrants originate. Settlements targeted in the GSA were Sekoca, Jittu Estate, Narene and Vatuwaqa, and in Labasa the Seaqaqa, Dreketi and Wainikoro areas were surveyed. Completed questionnaires from urban respondents (having migrated from rural districts within 10 years) totalled 399; this figure was 94 for rural respondents.
resolved there is a growth of 10% of squatter population - some 10,000 people. It should be noted... by 2026, approximately 13,100 leases issued under the Agricultural Landlord Tenant Act [ALTA] will expire. The majority of these leases are on cane farms and if leases are not renewed than it is expected that there will be a continual flow to the greater Suva area.\textsuperscript{37}

Further to this, the Lome Convention, granting preferential pricing to Fijian sugar exports since 1975, nears termination which decreases the role and sustainability of Fiji sugar exports. The decision to renew cane farming land leases is thus less favourable from the perspective of farmers. This is a circular issue, however, because investment to pursue alternative crops on leased land is effectively discouraged by the perceived risk associated with the uncertainty of land tenure for the predominantly Indo-Fijian cane farmers.\textsuperscript{38} The anti-Indian sentiment aroused by fears of non-indigenous economic dominance, especially following the coups of 2000, leads some landowners to set unfair or unfavourable terms of renewal. Walsh explains "the dilemma for Government is to balance the demands of the Fijian owners who do not wish to renew leases, even at higher rentals, with the need to maintain the supply of sugar for processing and export" (2006:289). Less than half of all leases expiring between 1997 and 2002 were renewed (Walsh, 2006:289). In 2002 the National Advisory Council Cabinet Sub-Committee issued a report entitled \textit{Poverty in Indo-Fijian and Minority Communities} which describes the outcomes of lease expiry for farmers in the absence of adequate resettlement programmes:

The human costs are immense: break-up of family and community, social and cultural impoverishment, stress and emotional anguish and economic hardship... Forced evictions are even more traumatic... There is a sense of powerlessness and loss of faith in the legal and political system... Where homes and land have been taken over, the farmers are left without assets to begin a new life. Some are taken in by friends and relatives, thus increasing all-round impoverishment (CERD, 2007:60).

This description is much like an echo of the pains experienced and grievances raised by representatives of farming families upon Colonial Sugar Refinery lease expiry almost half a decade past.\textsuperscript{39} The sugar industry employs some 40,000 people, especially inland indigenous and rural Indo-Fijian men, amounting to about one quarter of the active labour force (Walsh, 2006:289).\textsuperscript{40} Additionally, as lease-holding families have grown over the last 30 years, each lease expiry may represent the loss of land tenure to five or more family units. Already strained urban infrastructure will be overwhelmed by "Displaced farmers and those dependent on them, like cane cutters... converging on the outskirts of town, overcrowding already overpopulated squatter areas, occupying marginal land (mangroves, swampy land, dumping areas), thus posing dangerous health and ecological problems, aggravating health related problems in poorly serviced squatter settlements" (National Advisory Council Cabinet Sub-Committee, 2002, in CERD, 2007:60).

The Interim Government in January 2008 requested soft loan assistance from the People's Republic of China to address the worsening squatter housing situation in Fiji. China, harbouring 193.8 million


\textsuperscript{38} This effect can be likened to the decline in sugar cane production on farms within three years of lease expiry, the result of farmers unable to justify costly farm inputs, such as fertilisers, equipment rental, upkeep and labour, pending looming ejection from the land (Prasad, 1984).

\textsuperscript{39} The 1960 Burns Commission Report made glaring recommendations to the administration of lands to ensure the livelihoods of Indo-Fijian farmers and the economic productivity of Fiji which relied heavily on sugar exports for survival (National Congress of Fiji, 1964/65). The Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act (ALTA) of 1966 addressed the expiry of Colonial Sugar Refining leases affecting largely Indo-Fijian tenants and reissued land leases to farmers for 10 year terms. Revisions made to the provisions under ALTA in 1977 extended this term to 30 years (CERD 2007, National Congress of Fiji 1964/65; Usman, 1984; Prasad, 1984; Tadulala, 1998).

\textsuperscript{40} The European Union and ACP nations including Fiji and 13 other Pacific Island Countries are in negotiations to set out Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs) to replace the Lome Convention preferential trade access. An address by Mahendra Chaudhry, Minister of Finance, Sugar Industry and National Planning to the 10th ACP Ministerial Conference in May 2007, at the Sheraton Fiji Resort, Denarau, Nadi is reproduced online by the Fiji Times at http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=61911.
dwellers of informal settlements – the largest slum population in the world - may have empathy for Fiji. With the implementation of neoliberal policies and against a backdrop of accelerating pressures of globalisation since 1970, the year of Fiji's independence, studies suggest that "slum growth everywhere in the South has outpaced urbanisation per se" (Davis, 2005:17). Even as Fiji's soft loan request is processed to support the new Committee on Squatter Housing, Beijing will see many of its estimated 200,000 influx of "floaters" (or unregistered rural migrants) pack into illegal settlements on the urban fringes (Davis, 2005:18).

Recent surveys and discussions of Fiji's squatter settlements are found in the 2007 Fiji submission to the UN Committee of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (abbreviated as CERD 2007), the 2007 New Zealand International Aid & Development Agency (NZAID) Informal Settlements Scoping Mission Report, and in the Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF) 2007 Housing and Social Exclusion Policy Dialogue Paper 1, by Father Kevin Barr 'Squatters in Fiji - Thieves or Victims?' Highest estimates indicate the number of informal settlement residents to be approximately 140,000, with some 730 new informal households expected each year (NZAID, 2007: ii). Storey (2006) urges greater dialogue on urbanisation and urban poverty in the Pacific, and academics, politicians, and community organisations are nursing the rhetoric of more participatory approaches to settlement issues championed by newspaper headlines: 'Stakeholders need to work together to solve squatter problem.' However, a 2005-2006 workshop series for members of government and community organisations on 'Enhancing Policy Dialogue around Squatter Settlement Issues' found that past committees are confounded by the ambiguity in Fiji about what constitutes a squatter.

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41 See Figure 6 in Davis (2005:24) for a table showing the top 20 largest national slum populations in the world by country.
42 CERD 2007 is the abbreviation used in lieu of the full title: SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION CONCERNING THE REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS, AUGUST 2007 which was endorsed by three Fiji Non-Government Organisations and funded by the European Union. The document is online at http://www.ecf.org/fj/conference/CCF%20CERD%20Final%20AY.pdf
43 This was "the conclusion drawn by a Fact Finding Mission to Bangkok, Thailand which was today presented at a one day workshop organized by the Ecumenical Centre for Research and Advocacy (ECREA), Women Action for Change (WAC) and the People's Community Network (PCN)" in Fiji Times article of July 11 2007: 'Stakeholders need to work together to solve squatter problem.'
CHAPTER 2: Uses versus Usefulness of a ‘Squatter’ Definition

The unease about how to define ‘squatter’ most effectively was cited as problematic for local action in Fiji at the ‘Enhancing Policy Dialogue around Squatter Settlement Issues’ workshop series hosted by the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance, USP, in 2005-2006. The workshop series first heard the call for semantic clarity from government officials and agency workers in 2005 and the concern was echoed by community organisations six months later at a separate event. Participants articulated how the current official definition excludes many of the urban poor to the detriment of programmes addressing urban poverty. The conceptual barriers associated with the terminology were seen to be limiting the success of holistic program design and implementation. This section explores the socio-cultural and psychological implications of ‘squatter classification’ and outlines the terms used in Fiji and their origins. What kinds of squatters exist in Fiji? How does the official ‘squatter’ definition act to frame so-called ‘squatter issues’ and what is the reaction of communities so classified?

The national approach grows out of an official definition

The official definition of the word ‘slum’ or ‘squatter settlement’ critically shapes a nation’s urban development and planning policies. Imparato and Ruster (2003:21) argue that terminology reveals “very real differences in perception that influence the formulation and implementation of projects.” This study will generally employ the broader term ‘informal settlements’ because it bears less connotation, is less divisive, and can recognise the variety in the conditions of land tenure and living standards experienced by settlement dwellers. However, official definitions devised by national authorities tend to be much more specific.

Establishing an official definition distinguishes who are the populations targeted by government policies and reflects what are the attitudes that guide the application of these definitions and policies. The official definitions can shift national understandings on housing issues, while the general public can direct public opinion on the national definition through feedback to local government representatives, by leading awareness campaigns, making submissions to the local newspaper and television stations, etc. Thus, as prevailing societal attitudes towards the urban poor change over time, so do the relevant definitions and national policies, albeit very slowly. The nomenclature of urban poverty can therefore be seen as a reflection of a nation or region’s approach to issues of urban poverty in a given time period. In the seminal UN-HABITAT Global Report on Human Settlements: The Challenge of Slums it is considered an initial and fundamental step towards devising “effective urban-poverty alleviation strategies "to resolve what “exactly constitutes a slum under local socio-economic conditions and under the municipal and/or national legislative system(s)” (UNHABITAT 2003: 196). Various kinds of informal housing, including 'slums proper,' are often distinguished on the basis of criteria such as "physical location and legality status of the built structure, urban zoning, land invasion and informal construction" (UN-HABITAT 2003: 197). The exercise of evaluating and reformulating key definitions is an opportunity for debate and re-orientation to urban poverty issues given the knowledge gained through experience over time and by reviewing the impact of past policies and definitions. This section explores the origin of the language used and stereotypes embedded therein when engaging in conventional discourses of urban poverty and how this is translated into national polices.

Many languages possess terms associated with urban poverty and landless urban-migrant peasants that are connoted with 'riffraff.' In English, 'slum' was first quoted as a slang word, referring to a 'bad' activity. The earliest publication of a definition for the word 'slum' was in 1812 in Vocabulary of the Flash Language written by James Hardy Vaux. The term was likened to "racket" or "criminal trade" and came to denote a "place of low goings on" in reference to the living quarters of the poor around the 1830s-1840s.
(Davis, 2005:21). Throughout the Victorian era, imagery of slums as an affliction on society fixed the meaning in the deviant morality of slum-dwellers. Slums became "characterized by an amalgam of dilapidated housing, overcrowding, disease, poverty, and vice... and above all envisioned as a place where an incorrigible and feral social 'residuum' rots in immoral and often riotous splendor" (Davis 2005:22).

These societal attitudes and a preoccupation with the spread of poor "morals" pervaded in the language of public policy well into the 20th Century. For instance, the Housing Bill of 1930 in the United Kingdom, dubbed the 'Slum Clearance Bill,' suggested the unfortunate urban 'sickness' of full-fledged slums can only be 'remedied' by sheer demolition and clearance (The Lancet, 1930:761). Similarly the United States Housing Act of 1937 reads: "The term 'slum' means any area where dwellings predominate which, by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors are detrimental to safety, health, or morals" (in Walker, 1938:4). Moral wellness is not seen by such policies to be evenly distributed throughout societal classes but concentrated (even guarded) away from poor housing districts and informal settlement areas. Moreover, distinctions between slum-types, like stages of disease progression, were also common, specifying "semi-slum" and "blighted" areas to be deteriorating steadily and necessarily infectious but not yet exhibiting the levels of squalor or criminality of slums proper. Economist Mabel Walker, in a 1938 examination of the factors contributing to the need for rehabilitation of so-called ‘blighted areas’ notes, that

Instead of being improved in an appropriate manner, buildings are allowed to rot and are let out to the most economically helpless of the city's inhabitants. Disease and crime fester and spread out from these sore centres, endangering the entire community and placing a heavy financial burden upon the taxpayers. The negligence of the city in permitting fire traps and disease incubators to be occupied as homes gives a certain value to the obsolete structures... if there are enough poor... they may be crowded so densely into buildings... (Walker 1938:7).

This dehumanizing depiction of the situation facing the urban poor, levelling criticism and disgust at families struggling desperately to survive falsely attributes economic disadvantage to intrinsic character flaw and reduces their plight to a "burden," even a threat to society. This has in the past, and arguably continues to exacerbate the circumstances for the urban poor as the definition often steers the policy focus towards protecting society from contamination by the masses of marginalized rather than seeking to address or even acknowledge the underlying factors of urban poverty.

Urban interventions that address the issues of slums are frequently triggered only by external factors, such as land development and speculation, and health and safety threats to the wealthy, and are therefore mostly reactive, rather than proactive (UN-HABITAT, 2003:198).

The push for government intervention did hardly extend beyond creating provisions for the disappearance of the infectious and therefore expendable populations. The bills that made it acceptable to society to undertake slum clearance and demolish the dwellings of the most vulnerable for decades in Western Europe included no provisions at all for the resulting homelessness or social problems these bills perpetrated, and later only loosely recommended arrangements for alternative shelter to the newly homeless. It is against this historical background that the term has become inextricably blended with negative undertone and inherent prejudice. Author and Journalist Robert Neuwirth acknowledges the endurance of this attitude to the present day:

By the dictionary, a slum is simply an overcrowded city neighbourhood with lousy housing. But the term is laden with emotional values: decay, dirt, and disease. Danger, despair, and degradation. Criminality, horror, abuse, and fear. Slum is a loaded term, and its horizon of emotion and judgment
comes from outside. To call a neighbourhood a slum immediately creates distance. A slum is the apotheosis of everything that people who do not live in a slum fear. To call a neighbourhood a slum establishes a set of values – a morality that people outside the slum share – and implies that inside those areas, people don’t share the same principles (Neuwirth, 2004:16-17).

Neuwirth consciously employs the word ‘squatter’ instead, which he argues is less "totalizing" or dismissing of diversity. In Neuwirth’s opinion, the term slum is associated with endogenous reasons for living therein, such as personal or familial difficulties, lack of education or motivation, moral or character deficits, or purposeful detachment or indifference towards responsible citizenship. Therefore, because slums are defined primarily on social characteristics of lower income populations, policymakers may tend to view slum-dwellers as choosing to live in sub-standard conditions and not taking enough initiative to improve their situation. Reasons leading families to squat, in contrast, are somewhat more accepted to be outside of the family’s control due to the more legalistic nature of the term.

The American word 'squatter' was first captured in writing in 1788, preceding the appearance of the term ‘slum.’ ‘Squatter’ is frequently understood to overlap the definition of 'slum' in its social dimensions, recognizing the prevalence of sub-standard housing, overcrowding, and poor sanitary conditions. However, the key difference is legalistic in that 'squatter' refers to individuals or families in occupation of land without legal consent from the landowner - which include wide range of living/housing standards. The legal emphasis underlines exogenous factors of squatting since the ability to obtain legal tenure of a land parcel may be determined by religion, ethnicity, income level, costly bureaucratic process, and other factors beyond the control of squatters. Neuwirth argues that the only difference between a squatter and a non-squatter is the essential deed – not ability, education, desire to work or participate in society. The acknowledgement of the resourcefulness of squatters to make shelter for themselves in the absence of affordable housing sparked a change in the policy approach to housing issues in the 1950s.

Abrams (1964), Mangin (1967), Turner (1968; 1982) and de Soto (2001) have conducted research and put forth theories and case studies which essentialise squatter industriousness and endeavour to guide policy to elicit the constructive and progressive possibilities of this quality alive in informal settlements. These works re-humanize informal community dwellers using narratives. Neuwirth (2004) follows this course by reinforcing the various talents and eccentricities squatters possess, making the testimonies of construction labourers, entrepreneurs, poets, lyricists, social activists and other community members the basis for his 2004 book Shadow Cities. He applies the term squatter broadly to tell the stories of pavement dwellers, political refugees, new immigrants, small and large business owners, civil servants, landlords and crime lords, families and individuals of all ages that inhabit homes on land they do not own. This is resonant with Abrams who in 1964 described squatting as a "conquest" of urban areas and whose study of housing problems in the Global South initiated an important shift from clearance to self-help policy orientations (Srinivas, n.d.; Ward, 1982). According to Abrams, this conquest was characterised by push and pull factors related to wide regional and rural-urban disparities and by the lack of plausible legal alternatives for urban shelter. The narratives of Fiji informal settlement dwellers are seeing similar treatment in publications by community activists and scholars centred on narratives of informal living.

The 2003 UN-HABITAT Challenge of the Slums reshaped the definition of the term 'slum' by aligning it very closely with what Neuwirth considers 'squatters,' ignoring those aspects of classical Victorian definition which misrepresented inhabitants and local conditions. The paper blatantly acknowledges qualitative aspects, for instance, that slums are "characterized by overcrowding, poor or informal housing,

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44 Indeed the UN found that in Karachi, Pakistan, "land legality issues are even the sole component of the slum definition" (UN-HABITAT, 2003:197).
45 See for example Barr (2007); Clery (2007); Suguta (1987); Chaudhary (1987); Vuetibau (1987); Halapua (1987) and CCF (2007) Video Production "Struggling For A Better Living: Squatters In Fiji" by the Regional media Centre, Suva.
inadequate access to safe water and sanitation, and insecurity of tenure." However, UN-HABITAT operationalised the definition in 2002 for the UN meeting in Nairobi, restricting it to “the physical and legal characteristics of a settlement.”

Subsequent studies rely on the new definition which was agreed upon through wide and which lends itself to cross-country comparisons and macro-analysis. The authoritative position of the UN-HABITAT as a guide in social action and international discourse, and the very grand scale of the studies involved will thus influence subsequent research to follow suit, similarly limiting the definition to aspects that are more ‘objectively’ measurable and statistically representable for policy-makers and researchers. However, this definition leads to a very conservative measure fraught with the same challenges of the official definition of ‘squatter’ in Fiji which similarly excludes the more difficult to quantify social dimensions (Davis 2005:23). Furthermore, the question remains about what this new operationalised definition improves for the people and communities accorded more statistically efficient classification. That is, other than helping decision makers in the government apparatus to quantify the problem. One of the issues explored in this paper is the importance of highlighting the qualitative aspects – the coping strategies, family priorities and specific intra-settlement efforts undertaken by the people living in ‘squatter’ communities – for grasping a more revealing framework from within which to understand the issues of informal settlements and the experience of the urban low-income sector.

**Inclusion or exclusion by definition**

**Slums or Squatter Settlements in Fiji?**

Conferring vocabulary and parameters to social categories has several important effects: this act defines the problem (i.e., the focus of concern) and establishes the criteria relevant in a particular context (i.e., considering local socio-political and economic conditions); it enables the population in question to be isolated (i.e., to generate estimates of the size of the population requiring policy attention); and it determines the approach and potential for success (i.e., influencing nature of engagement in light of available capital, human, and informational resources). In Fiji the political discourse rarely considers slum conditions generally but rather centres on squatter settlements as a particular section of the urban poor living in largely underserviced and overcrowded informal urban communities. The official definition of a ‘squatter’ is well cited in government documents: "a person who is in occupation of State, Freehold, or Native land illegally or without any form of security of tenure or without any consent from the [legal] landowner" (Lingam, 2004:4). According to this definition, illegal occupancy is the precondition for government attention.

Slum conditions, which have overtaken many of the early and now decrepit public housing estates, are generally not viewed with the same urgency where residents have legal occupancy. Perhaps this is due to the constraints imposed by ‘illegal’ settlements on town planning and development, prompting concerted squatter resettlement efforts in order to free up scarce freehold and crown lands enveloping urban areas. ‘Squatter resettlement’ efforts would be thus geared firstly to serving the interests of private developers and politicians, not to addressing poor or sub-standard (‘slum’) living conditions. The relative aspects of poverty may also be implicated as it may be difficult to move policy-makers to address cases of urban poverty where, although meeting statistically measurable standards to qualify as impoverished

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47 Prioritisation under resettlement schemes is typically driven by public or private development interests (as in the case of the Nasinu Land Development Company at Kilikiki settlement on Nepani Road, Suva outskirts) paying lip service only to improved living standards as the resettled ‘squatters’ are herded into housing loans for standard-meeting shelter and required to pay for installation of flush toilet facilities (Pers. Comm. Coalition for the PCN, 2007).

48 For example, by obtaining a low ranking for dwelling adequacy as accorded by census enumerators based on a photographic typology rank list, or by registering below the national poverty line on a Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HEIS).
living conditions may be considered somewhat akin to living standards in many isolated rural regions and village settings. In a context of a nation maintaining 49.1 percent of the population in the rural village setting where families are poorer on average than the urban population, substandard urban living may be viewed with less urgency than informal settlements which constrain municipal planning and development. Moreover, because indigenous Fijians are connected to a village by birthright to which they may, ideally, always return, there is the perception among some policy-makers and traditional leaders that families finding shelter in urban settlements choose, and therefore resign to, sub-standard conditions and need not be accorded the same policy attention as landless non-indigenous families. Furthermore, where slum conditions pervade public housing projects, politicians may be enticed away from improving the living standards of aging public housing structures and revitalising public housing estate communities - in essence allowing the buildings to decay until they are condemned and the inhabitants can be justifiably relocated, the area cleared and rezoned, making way for higher-income housing developments. Whatever the reason, the 'slum,' in contrast to a 'squatter settlement,' remains generally undefined by the local powers, although academics, international aid donors and local community organisations continue to document the living and income-earning conditions of the wider category of urban poor whether or not they maintain legal occupancy status.

**Ambiguity in the official definition: Defining 'the problem' in context**

**An official definition or a definition for officials?**

The narrow, legalistic definition of squatters in Fiji has been employed in particular by policy-makers for more than a decade, although other definitions are discussed and recommended by researchers and community workers in Fiji throughout this period. This definition frames solution-finding substantially both by equating 'squatters' to 'the problem' and positioning squatters as the source of the problem, thus inspiring government programmes with the mentality that 'squatters' need to be solved. The 'unlawfulness' of squatting acts as a distraction for the public eye from the responsibility of the government to address the abhorrent housing and living conditions and lack of access to land tenure faced by tens of thousands of urban (and rural) families. It lends to a framework of solving the 'squatter problem,' that is, the problem imposed on society by squatters, rather than solving the problems faced by or underlying the establishment of informal settlements. This trend can be gauged by observing public expenditures and resettlement programme implementation. Resettlement programmes and assistance for 'exited tenants' (i.e., those tenants leaving the land they formerly leased) affected by ALTA expiries are utterly insufficient according to the CERD 2007 report (See CERD 2007:42).

The emphasis on legal status of settlement in this definition is of further utility for authorities: It appears possible to determine relatively objectively and authoritatively which settlements are 'illegally' settled by consulting national land records to ascertain rightful ownership. Accordingly, the population to which the policy applies appears rather easily distinguishable. The institutions vested with holding and protecting these records, and it follows also the paramountcy of native land rights, are the Native Land Commission and the NLTB. The NLTB is separate from government which, when it was created, kept land

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49 That politicians are able to buy favour from constituents by promising improved services and retaining the ability to determine the allocation of tenured lots to landless squatters has been documented in Fiji and is a common feature of non-transparent public housing programmes elsewhere (Pers. Comm, Housing Authority, October 2007; see also Guttenstig,1998)

50 For instance, the legalistic official definition is quoted in government speeches, HANSARD records of Cabinet Debates, in the MLGHSSSE Squatter Situation Reports circulated by the former Director between 2003 and 2006, and in academic publications (see Mohanty, 2006). Little critical consideration of this definition appears alongside government use of the term, however critical analysis and exploration of broader terms and concepts appears in scholarly articles such as in CCF (2002; 2004) arguing that it leads to a conservative measure; Bryant (1990) whose definition recognises the more loose application of the term squatter in Fiji and the categories of informal settlement dwellers it can encompass; and Walsh (1997:9a-8) who refers to the Muslim Leaguers as 'sitting tenants' to distinguish informal communities with landowner permission for settlement from those without permission - Suguta (1987) also provides some detail about the Muslim League settlement and a more elaborated breakdown of squatter types in Fiji. These and other considerations are discussed throughout the chapter.
deals outside of colonial governance. However, the land records and histories with which they are connected have been frequently contested since the time of land registration as has the creation of the NLTB in the first instance (Baledrokadroka, 2003). Discussions are taking place in 2008 about the need for a new land ownership survey on the basis that the initial Native Land Commission which was completed in 1940 is flawed and was unjustly executed. This, in the wake of court rulings on land decisions affecting villages that were displaced to make room for colonial settlement (the village of Suvaou is one example) and the ruling for the return of Schedule A and B lands to the NLTB, only puts a megaphone to the controversy that has existed about land ownership ever since entrenchment of land boundaries and codification of land rights was instituted by Colonial powers and vested in the NLTB.

The legalistic emphasis and assertion of 'legal right' by municipal authorities, land owners and land developers to forcefully remove informal settlements from land areas, however, suggests a more clear delineation between 'squatters' and 'non-squatters' than exists in practice. The case of Fiji's particular contextual attributes arising from colonial land legislation and traditional systems operating in parallel invokes a lack of recognition of the scale of families living 'unregistered' and technically illegally – that is, living in an unregistered village area, living on land without permission from the land owner, or having obtained permission outside the legal framework for access to a land parcel. Such arrangements, thus, lack legal recourse or redress if their rights are abused, but are nonetheless pursued by families in spite of the de facto vulnerability associated with the inflexibility of the land legislation and the official definition of squatters. Unregistered villages in Fiji may even amount to some 25-30 percent of villages (Walsh, 2006). This tenure type is rarely discussed and Walsh (2006) could not discern whether lack of registration created any limitations for unregistered villagers considering that the application and protection provided under the land legislation as stated is for registered villages (and registered village members and their descendants).

**Legal and customary right and degrees of 'consent'**

The seeming objectivity of Fiji's definition of a 'squatter' permits very determinate statements to be made about the 'right' of State authorities and private landowners to take actions such as eviction, demolition of squatter homes, upgrading (or refusal to upgrade) and re-zoning of squatter areas, relocation, subsidisation, compensation of squatters. It also trivialises the complications of transposing colonial codification onto customary methods of administering land tenure. Aspects of this definition are under continuous debate and leave substantial room for interpretation, specifically with regards to the use of the word "consent" and in light of the imprecise way in which the definition is applied.

This semantic grey area can be illustrated by considering settlements that have established on freehold properties with the permission of the landlord, sometimes with regular and ongoing rent payments. Walsh (1979b:7) uses the term "sitting tenant" to refer to "those who paid rent and had some form of agreement to reside in the area." Such is the arrangement of the Muslim League settlement in Samabula, Suva. The 22-hectare settlement off Ratu Mara Road is named after the landowner, and comprised 178 households in 1986 (Bryant, 1990:90; Bryant, 1989). This community has been well documented in academic studies for over 30 years and may be one of the more studied settlements in Suva, but residents

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51 This was so on paper, however the leadership of the NLTB was given to Colonial allies (Chiefly elites, etc.) which thus did not tip the balance of power away from the State but retained it within the bourgeoisie under the guise of protecting it for the futures of all Fijians (Durutalo, 1986).
52 Unregistered in this case suggests that there may be no official record of these villages in the National Land Register or that area occupied by a village extends beyond the area that is registered in the National Land Register.
53 See Fiji Times 2005 March 2 ‘Heartless’ Fiji Council Rapped For Evictions’ online at http://archives.piren.org/archive/2005/march/03%2D03%2D11.htm; residents at Kilikiki have requested assistance similar to that which was provided to the relocated ‘squatter’ communities of Bai Ni Ose and Vuniviai, and as many of their homes were demolished in daytime hours, resistant families were rebuilding their homes in the wreckage: see Fiji Times 2008 December 4 ‘Bulldozers To Level Fiji Squatter Settlement’; see also contributions of Suva City Council Lawyer Tanya Waqanika page 53 and 55 in CCF (2004).
continue to feel insecure with regards to land tenure and lack access to basic services (Pers. Comm, settlement representative, 2007; see also Walsh, 1979a; 1979b; Bryant, 1990a; Bryant, 1990b; Bryant, 1992; Sami, 1990; Suguta, 1987). Unfortunately, "sitting tenants" may not have any greater security of tenure than other informal settlement dwellers. Although the responsibility for the resettlement of sitting tenants falls on the landowner according to a 1971 Cabinet decision, Walsh (1979b:7) notes there is great difficulty for sitting tenants to make claims against landlords, particularly because most agreements lack legal validity.

**Vakavanua Land Agreements**

Additionally related to the ambiguity of the word "consent" is the prevalence of customary or *vakavanua* arrangements for settling on designated land parcels. The term refers to the custom for requesting/negotiating land use prior to the codification of land under colonial rule which is a practise still very much in use today. 'Vakavanua' is an adjectival form of *vanua*; in this conjunction it means “traditional” or “in the way of the land” and typically describes that which is felt to be old, having been replicated over time, and is “marked as distinctively local, not foreign” (Tomlinson 2002:11; Ward in ADB, 2000:83-84). Suva City Council (SCC) lawyer Tanya M. Waqanika asserted that settlement by vakavanua is not squatting because, under the arrangement, permission is obtained from the landowner to occupy the land.

The Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment distinguished vakavanua arrangements from squatter settlements as a separate type of informal settlement in Fiji, the other two types being squatter settlements and urban villages (Lingam, 2004:5).

Vakavanua arrangements increasingly appear to be used as a substitute for obtaining formal allocation of tenure, with negotiations for customary tenure involving substantial monetary and 'in kind' payment by tenants to landlords. This sometimes includes a paper trail with records of the agreement and payments, although often agreements and amendments to the understood agreement are entirely verbal. Vakavanua arrangements are also employed to accommodate non-indigenous and mixed-origin families. Throughout the 1980s, a large proportion of the tobacco grown near Nadi and Sigatoka was farmed by Indo-Fijians on Native Land by negotiating agreements directly with Native Land owners. "Whereas it can be argued that vakavanua... arrangements are customary and possibly in accord with the ordinances when made between Fijians [i.e., they are legal under the Native Land Ordinance of 1912], such ordinances when made between Fijian landowners and non-Fijians are not legal. But they have become increasingly common" (Ward, 2000: 83-84, in ADB, 2000). Although it is often expected that such a decision would only be deliberated and granted by the head of the *mataqali* or landholding unit, studies have found that these are successfully negotiated with individual or family units at below mataqali level: "in some thousands of vakavanua arrangements of which [Eaton] has experience, none was negotiated on a mataqali basis and none came to grief due to [later] mataqali interference" (Eaton 1988:23-4 in ADB (Ward), 2000: 83-84).55 Thus, the exercise of practical authority in land matters exists today in productive and extensive circumstances in accord with customary methods dating to pre-codification. This is so in spite of discouragement and disapproval by the institutions created to protect the indigenous land interests such as the NLTB and Fijian Affairs Board (now the Ministry of Indigenous and Multi-Ethnic Affairs). Despite the risks, this continues to be a prominent way of accommodating migrant families within Fiji (not only to urban areas) and arguably is increasingly relied upon as formal channels are paperwork-laden, time consuming, and involve high fees paid to the administering body, the NLTB (Ward, 2000, in ADB, 2000).

Nevertheless, many poor families have been evicted or relocated from settlements established under the pretences of a vakavanua agreement. Examples include members of Jittu Estate, Muanivatu,

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55 The Fijian term *mataqali* is discussed further in Chapter 3.
Cunningham (park reserve), and the Bai Ni Ose communities, the latter being the case study of focus in this paper. This form of land tenure is considered insecure by some experts because it is not recognised within the national legal framework, and due to this unregulated operation, legal recourse for families suffering adverse consequences is extremely limited. However, cases of land areas being leased out from under communities settled by vakavanua arrangements exist, even when arrangements are documented and where settlements have been established for several generations. This occurred, for example, when the SCC obtained a 99-year lease in December 2004 to build a recreational park on a section of land in Vatuwaqa and swiftly issued eviction notices to some 300 households. The Tui Suva, Ratu Epeli Kanakana had received the sevusevu or respectful offering within the vakavanua framework from the parties wishing to make use of the land belonging to the ancestors and mataqali that he represented as chief. Later, Ratu Epeli Kanakana proclaimed to the newspapers that he had not even been consulted on the leasing of this land to the SCC which falls under his influence. Members of the Pony Club area settlement, the Peceliema community, also presented sevusevu to the Tui Suva to request land use by vakavanua – this specific case will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5 and 6.

Implications of definition for quantifying the issues

Dr. Jenny Bryant (1989, 1992) puts forth a definition of squatter for the Fijian context that acknowledges the wider application of the term to give a more accurate/inclusive representation of the squatter condition in Fiji: "The term 'squatter' is used loosely in Fiji to include all spontaneous or informal settlements which have substandard and unauthorized structures and a lack of basic services. It does not apply solely to those who have occupied land illegally" (Bryant, 1989:8-9). Michelle Brochu (2002) acknowledges the existence of both the official definition and Bryant's more comprehensive definition in the opening paragraphs of a Preliminary Paper to Assist Participants at the National Consultation on Eviction, Squatter Settlements and Housing Rights Workshop hosted in Fiji in 2002. She explains that Bryant's version "expands" the official, and "would include a much greater population... since many houses where the occupants are in legal possession of the land do not meet basic housing standards." However,
she concentrates in her discussion on the official definition, likely for reasons similar to the UNHABIT: for simplicity and consistency in application to government programs and policies and for ease of statistical analysis (Brochu, 2002, in CCF, 2004:74).

The NZAID Informal Settlements Scoping Mission Report in 2007 was undertaken to determine the most effective contribution it can make towards "a reduction in the poverty and hardship of people living in squatter settlements in Fiji" (NZAID, 2007: i). For the purposes of analysis, however, researchers opted to apply the term 'informal settlement' which can be roughly equated to Bryant's definition of squatter settlements. This was done to give better representation of urban and peri-urban housing poverty and to acknowledge the extent of these issues. In so doing, the Report makes no distinction between "people taking up occupancy at will on state or freehold land, often referred to as squatters, and people settling under customary (vakavanua) tenure on native land, often referred to as informal settlers," noting that "For both tenure is insecure, quality of housing is poor and level of infrastructure servicing less than adequate" (NZAID 2007: i).

The comparison of the most recent government statistics with those of the NZAID report illustrates how this decision can effectively redefine 'the problem.' Both data sets were reproduced in reports that were tabled in Cabinet, but the results of squatter vs. informal household quantification were starkly divergent owing to a difference in definitions and terms of reference. The State Minister of Housing summarized in late 2006 the findings of Department of Housing and Squatter Settlement Surveys stating that 184 squatter settlements have been registered nationwide, comprising a population exceeding 90,000.59 In contrast, the NZAID (2007) scoping mission estimated the Greater Suva Area alone to be home to some 90 informal settlements, constituting a significant proportion of the national population inhabiting informal settlements, some 140,000 persons. Against provisional national population figures from the May 2007 census, 140,000 informal settlement dwellers amounts to 16.9 percent of the national population of 827,900.60 Although government surveys recognise a doubling of the national 'squatter' population in the period 1999 to 2005, the absolute scale is minimised to such a degree under the current definition that government budget allocations and programs are stunted by the under-estimation, already outpaced dramatically by the weight of urban poverty pressures on overwrought infrastructure.

Bula Dredre: Hard Life

The Impediments of Attitudes and Heuristics

Societies globally struggle with the plethora of housing issues and homelessness, striving to understand the contributing factors that are themselves dynamic and changing the face of the struggle. It is possible, then, that the continued feeling of threat by settlement growth and the words attached to such circumstances reflect today what originally underpinned the coining of the terms: as long as the privileged classes control the 'officialising' of definitions, portrayals of the poor will reflect conceptions of the rich. Comments that get repeated in the media exemplify the stereotypes entrenched in legal and technical jargon by our choice of descriptive words. Simply attending to the discourse of national leaders as they grapple with the complexities of urban poverty, we can see how dominant attitudes shape identity which - has implications for civil agency at every level of society.

The definition of a 'squatter' in Fiji has amassed implicit assumptions and attitudinal approaches over time. Although global squatter discourses have made great advances in shifting focus from negative to positive contributions of informal settlements in urban districts, informal community members in Fiji continue to face marginalisation associated with their squatter status (Pers. Comm, Squatter Forum 2007). The term

60 Whereas using government figures would see this percentage scaled down to 10.9 percent: 140,000/827,900=16.91%; 90,000/827,900=10.87%
squatter as a label for informal communities can impose a challenge for the productive attitudes for policymakers, the general public, and settlement dwellers alike in addressing pertinent issues.

The title chosen by Father Kevin Barr for the CCF Housing and Social Exclusion Policy Dialogue Paper 1, ‘Squatters in Fiji - Thieves or victims? ’ illustrates the disparity that exists in understandings, and consequently, approaches to informal settlers in Fiji. In conjuring squatters as thieves, stealing access to land and housing, or averting the payment of rents, administrators and freehold lease-holders may not provide programmes and services to squatter populations deemed to be greedy and undeserving. Negatively and sterile heuristics emerge in the dialogue between administrators in the political arena, such as in legislative assemblies and Senate debates, and in public addresses by politicians for instance during elections campaigns and media interviews. Pigeonholing of squatters as lazy or greedy and wanting a steady stream of government handouts can lead to resentment against urban poor families. This pigeonholing may lead to reasoning, for example, that if settlement residents were not so lazy they could earn enough to afford a house or improve their lives which can affect how potential employers view the reliability of applicants and workers from settlements. Stereotypes arouse fear when, for instance, overcrowding and one room living which characterises settlements is said to "breed other social problems such as drugs and prostitution." Walsh (1979a:3) lists observations dating to 1976 in Raiwaqa, Suva, one of the oldest and largest public housing estates, that "vandalism, petrol sniffing by children, alcoholism by adults, gang behaviour and threatened violence against people who informed to the police were common, and that the various 'open areas' in the estate had become refuse dumps... 'no-man's lands.'"

Conversely, squatters may be understood as systematically marginalised, becoming victims of societal systems that disadvantage the poor and only striving to better their circumstances by residing in informal settlements. Many stories of living experiences in settlements have come forward in new ways, highlighting the drive for self-improvement and contributions of informal dwellers in quantitative terms (e.g., estimating financial contributions to the housing (Mason & Hereniko, 1987), labour and financial investment in the economy (Mohanty, 2006a,2006b)) and qualitative terms (e.g., Clery (2007) describes how community identity expressed though livelihood strategies within the informal community context can act to preserve and instil traditional knowledge and values). Such accounts force the discourse into more appropriate humanizing terms, however it remains difficult for such accounts to impact broadly on negative stereotypes since there is a tendency to view them as the exceptions rather than the norm. Perceptions are well established, related to hierarchical societal systems of stratification. Links to capitalist and fatalist mentalities of the colonial legacy linger in the subtext of reports and policy papers: that what happens is meant to happen or that enduring hardship exposes lack of motivation or engagement needed to pull oneself up by the ‘bootstrap.’ Terms applied to the poor in society are deeply engrained and are perpetuated by actors at all levels of society, if unintentionally, even by the poor themselves (Walsh, 1979a; Pers. Comm from Suvavou re: necessity of poverty in Fiji). Perhaps this is why, despite repeated proclamations such as in the Fiji Poverty Report that "poor housing is a cause of poverty and a reflection of institutional failure, not a symptom of individual failure" (UNDP, 1997:89), the terms applied continue to bear negative connotation.

Stereotypes and systematic marginalisation can both lead to the development of 'slum mentality' which impacts on the ability of informal settlement residents to act towards improving their circumstances (Walsh, 1979a:4). Slum mentality results from class and ethnic deprivation and can express itself in various

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61 Shailendra Sings in "Film review, documenting Disaster" published online in Island Business Magazine and the CERD 2007 quoted State Minister of Housing as comparing squatters to thieves that police should round up and remove. See also the same Minister’s 2007 Budget address online at http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/printer_7903.shtml
ways, for instance as a hardened attitude of residents towards the authorities, as in the 'hate-hate relationship' between Fiji Police officers and settlement communities described by Muanivatu settlement representative.\(^{63}\) Residents also articulated that incidents in settlements often go unreported to Fiji Police because in the past emergency calls have been poorly attended to, dismissed, or ignored.\(^{64}\) Residents may develop a learned helplessness as discouraged workers quit actively searching for employment and as perceptions that they deserve less or are incapable of making a 'better' living become internalised and translate into greater dependency on government handouts (such as welfare payments, rental subsidies, education subsidies, etc.). Although changing the words used will not itself improve the relationship between administrators, authorities and communities, taking a critical look at the historical and conventional applications of the term squatter can help bring the realities of informal settlement issues into perspective and help policy formulation to overcome the dated stumbling blocks of squatter myths.

**Self-definition as a key to understanding issues**

An important aspect of identity and self-definition is its capacity for empowering urban low-income groups to join the dialogue on settlement issues. As communities seek ways to overcome the ‘slum mentalities’ around them, community leaders are affirming community identities around positive endogenous attributes. The Korova community, for instance, sources community strength and identity from traditional knowledge and sharing skills and wisdom of crafts such as *masi* making, traditional canoe building and care, and navigation (Clery, 2007).

To me, they are all squatters. But their experiences reveal that there are many different types of squatters, with different needs, different incomes, different aspirations, different social standing, different stories (Neuwirth, 2004:14).

A significant movement in the Greater Suva area among settlements has shirked the definition which was handed down, rejecting the passive stance which leaves them first at the mercy of definition and second in a queue seeking action by the authorities. A catalytic meeting for Suva informal settlement communities in early 2007 displayed the diversity of pocket communities within larger settlement communities. Attendees represented settlements of various types of land tenure or land use arrangements, stating a multitude of reasons for settlement establishment, and describing differences in community history, composition, identity, cohesiveness, and experience in dealings with politicians, securing upgrades and creating community task forces (such as the Women’s Club at Lakena, the Crime prevention Committee in Muanivatu, and the Methodist Youth Fellowship at the Bai Ni Ose area settlement). They have united choosing a term – “Peoples Communities” – that, according to workshop attendees, emphasises their very essential humanness, a quality lacking in the Ministry’s definition.

A major recurring concern of the very young Peoples Community Network was to correct stereotypes that people who live in settlements are bad, have poor hygiene, are lazy, uneducated, criminal and came to the city for government handouts.\(^{65}\) The representatives at the forum agreed that being labelled 'squatters' was negative because it leads to a disregard of their hard work and sacrifice and can lead to discrimination against their children systematically because they cannot afford to pay for school materials or for transport to schools or directly by bullying or maltreatment by other students or staff. The


\(^{65}\) This concern about stereotypes was typed into a letter for presentation on the final day of the workshop to then Acting Director of the Squatter Resettlement Unit, Alec Fatiai in a bold, passionate oration that moved the audience who had collaborated in its preparation. Unfortunately a copy of the statement which appeared on the ECREA website for several months following could not be obtained for inclusion in this paper, but having personally put the spoken words to type, I felt it too important to omit on that account.
first objective of the Network is to secure land tenure, but processes integral to the blueprint for doing so include establishing community savings which would also be used for educating children, engaging with government on settlement issues as a unit, building resources to manage community affairs through educational opportunities, and establishing experiential bridges to strengthen ties within and between informal communities to improve community living conditions.
CHAPTER 3: Policy and Key Actors

Initiatives seeking to address issues in Fiji informal settlements are undertaken by actors at various levels of society. This chapter is concerned with government policy and how it has been shaped by history, by internal and external pressures, and how it is informed today. What was the Colonial administration approach to squatting and housing the urban poor? What conditions/actors are shaping contemporary approaches? How relevant are international theories about housing the urban poor for the Fiji situation?

What drives the formulation of policy to address the housing needs of the urban poor?

The impetus may lie with Government as Cabinet Ministers incorporate programmes reaching informal settlements into strategic plans in view of fulfilling aspects of the Millennium Development Goals and objectives associated with Agenda 21 and the Pacific Plan. Or it may be through public sector agencies such as the Fiji Police, the Housing Authority and the Public Rental Board that are confronted daily with the struggles of poor urban residents. Many initiatives also begin with the motivation of settlement residents themselves or by community or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). International NGOs and institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and international aid organisations such as the Australia Government Overseas Aid (Ausaid), and New Zealand International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID) may be solicited by, or may approach, Government or community organisations to intervene as funders or as consultants on issues of urban poverty.

Partnerships between local and international NGOs create an access route to private funds and high profile donors such as the Asian Development Bank and Ausaid which allow small community organisations to trial innovative projects. Where government approaches tend to adopt tested methodological applications following heavy consultation with experts, community projects may embody the creative freedom needed to conceive of new perspectives, approaches and methodologies.

Community-administered projects that realize positive results can come to signify methodological advances for addressing settlement issues. In order for the impact of these methodological advances to be felt on a wider scale, these community projects must draw government support in the long term to see innovations incorporated into policy (Imparato & Ruster, 2003:29). Verma’s (2003) account of the ‘slumming’ of India holds that by subverting government policy to execute social welfare programmes independently, community organisations and international aid agencies can only achieve limited success. Without involving the machinery for public welfare, such as city planners and cabinet ministries, these programmes operate with a de facto expiration occurring at the time that externally provided resources are extinguished. Official policy is needed to complement such programmes to ensure government commitment and public expectation of government to act on issues related to urban poverty and informal settlements. Verma (2001) cites examples of ‘slum’ hospitals and schools organised by NGOs as the norm and, perhaps counter intuitively, as detrimental to the improvement of slum districts in the long term. The external sourcing of health and educational services can, rationalises Verma, become a disincentive to governments to provide these services, to learn of and engage with the dearth of public services available to the urban poor, and because it is also a disincentive to the poor to demand more from their leaders. This chapter will look at how government and non-government initiatives can and have informed each other and how this is shaped by global policy discourses on informal urban settlements.

Basu (1988:140) makes a useful classification of Government policies towards squatter settlements in Delhi, India, which is relevant to cities in the Global South more broadly. His classification is of reactive policies, that is, government efforts to address squatter settlement issues once they are present in the cities (as opposed to pro-active policies which may seek to address issues by looking to where they root in inequitable distribution of wealth, discriminatory development and regional as well as rural-urban
disparities that contribute to the inflow of new migrants to cities etc.). Government efforts generally can be divided into two groups of methods, 'Preventative' and 'Curative', although governments may and often do use both simultaneously.

Preventative methods, according to Basu (1988), are those tactics employed to prevent the establishment of unauthorised construction and settlement, particularly on Government lands. Governments may designate a Ministerial branch or department team to identify the encroachment of unauthorised structures for earliest removal. In the mid 1980s a former Fiji Lands Department worker recalls the creation of a 'squatter patrol' that was assigned to prevent informal construction which, by his recollection, was particularly common on state land during the night (Pers. Comm, Jiten Singh, 2008). Several other government task forces have been instituted over the years with overlapping responsibility for controlling informal settlement growth including the Squatter Unit in the 1990s which had broad objectives that saw its role shift away from strictly policing and removing settlements to include environmental improvements at informal community sites and management of related issues as leadership and knowledge base of the Unit changed. Lingam (2006) described the main functions of the unit as administering and monitoring resettlement programmes (including sub-divisional planning, screening applications and coordinating with the Housing Authority, the PRB, HART, and municipal councils on resettlement projects), conducting topographic and socioeconomic surveys (prioritising squatter upgrading and resettlement areas and lands to be developed for subdivisions) and managing squatter settlement growth.

The Fiji Government proposed a 'squatter patrol unit' in 2005 that intended to involve informal settlement residents in the restriction of informal growth in their communities. This announcement was met with strong criticism from community organisations who were outraged with the additional announcement that complaints received by Suva City Council the high-income residential area of Suva Point were being answered with a bulldozer to neighbouring informal communities. However, governments are increasingly aware that squatter clearance is limited as a method of discouraging squatting and ineffective as a measure to address squatting in the medium and long term especially if it is the only approach. Pairing squatter clearance with the provision of alternative accommodation sites has become more common since the 1960s. The Suva City Council later in 2005 resolved that informal communities on state land would no longer be evicted without making arrangements for their resettlement.

Curative methods refer to tenure formalisation strategies which attempt to 'cure' the squatter condition by providing affordable land and formal housing units to squatter families. These methods are curative in that the low-income formal housing projects make dwelling occupation both legal and planned, that is, incorporated into the larger city zoning and infrastructure planning schemes.

From extensive research data Imparato and Ruster (2003) compiled a typology of urban low-income housing initiatives which are principally curative. Aspects of initiatives that allow for separation into categories include whether land, housing, or services (or all three) is provided; whether the land is a vacant lot or is occupied; the size of the development (number of units); the time frame (e.g., whether

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68 *Pacific Islands Report* article of March 14, 2005, 'Suva Squatters Get Reprieve' found online at [http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2005/march/03%2D4%2D09.htm](http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2005/march/03%2D4%2D09.htm)
69 In Fiji speculative squatters are referred to as people who squat out of greed (see Squatter Policy 1994, page 4).
improvements will be piecemeal over time or all at once); or whether the provision is mainly of technical assistance.

The Fiji Government has trialled a number of initiatives to address lack of low income housing and informal settlement issues from the 1950s to the present. Unfortunately no official reports on early initiatives were available through the Ministry of Housing or the Department of Town and Country Planning, therefore the design, implementation, and success of these initiatives is not clear. However, it appears that Suva has tended towards Sites and Services initiatives as well as Comprehensive Upgrading of existing settlements. Sites and Services Government initiatives, for which the Peceliema case study is an example, consist Low Cost Housing Schemes, in particular the Home Purchase Plans of the Housing Authority which operate by subsidising the cost of land and issuing a mortgage for the balance of land plus starter-home purchase. Comprehensive Upgrading may well include the strategy of replacing informally settled areas with Housing Authority Estates, for instance at the Raiwai/Raiwaqa and Howell road settlements (Vuetibau, 1987). Whether or not former informal settlers are guaranteed a unit or are given first priority on a unit in any of the instances of Estate construction is not known. A current example of this strategy concerns the Jittu Estate settlement situated on land that was freehold prior to being acquired by the State. As part of the Upgrading and Resettlement portfolio, the Ministry is undertaking a comprehensive ‘resettlement in situ’ that involves allocating land lots to current Jittu residents and the complete development of the subdivision to meet residential codes.
<table>
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<th>Type</th>
<th>Main Features</th>
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| Sites plus development plan (and gradual implementation of services) | Settlements are planned and surveyed, lots allocated and occupied, infrastructure gradually implemented | • Villa El Salvador, Lima  
• INETT land subdivision program, Tijuana  

| Sites and services                              | Mass production of serviced sites in large schemes for resettlement of urban squatters, usually in peripheral land in city outskirts; variant: sites and services with basic starter housing units | • Integrated Serviced Land Project, South Africa  
• Seaview Gardens, Kingston, Jamaica  

| Comprehensive upgrading of existing settlements | Wide range of improvements involving different types of infrastructure according to predefined area plan; this is integrated upgrading but undertaking in one go, usually in a two-year time frame | • Guarapiranga, Sao Paulo  
• Favela-Bairro, Rio  
• Alvorada, Belo Horizonte, Brazil  
• Novos Alagados, Salvador, Brazil  

| Piecemeal upgrading of existing settlements     | Improvements gradually added over long-term process but without an integrated area development plan | • Community upgrading programs, Tijuana  
• People’s Participation Law, Bolivia  

| Technical assistance and credit for home expansion and improvement | Organized support to self-help housing efforts; may be combined with upgrading programs | • Cooperative Housing Foundation, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico  
• Desco Densification Program, Villa El Salvador  

| Development of new housing in new settlement    | New infrastructure and housing units are built on empty land; variant: new housing on available land in existing serviced areas | • FUPROVI’s Habitat Popular Urbano, San Jose  
• Mutirao programs, Brazil  

| Redevelopment of degraded existing structures   | Agreement reached with landlords for building renovation | • Don’t Move, Improve program, the Bronx, New York  

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60 INETT is Baja California’s State Real Estate Board, which pursues an active policy of land delivery to the poor through subdivision of land located in the desert around Tijuana, Rosarito, Tecate, and other major cities. The plots are sold below market prices, the urban layout is well-defined, and infrastructure provision is gradual.

61 An ambitious undertaking to deliver serviced plots at sale on the outskirts of the country’s major cities in post-Apartheid South Africa, this initiative faced some of the same dilemmas as similar projects in other developing countries. Driven by the availability of inexpensive land, these projects have delivered serviced plots in locations that are generally not very desirable in terms of access to services and jobs. Their impact on poverty reduction is therefore questionable.

62 This is a large 1970s project built in Kingston’s western outskirts, close to the city’s main industrial area. Like some of its contemporary projects, it included started housing units.

63 The U.S.-based Cooperative Housing Foundation, which is present in many Latin American and African countries, supports the local NGO Habitat and Housing Foundation (FUNHAVI) in Ciudad Juarez in implementing the foundation’s trademark approach to home improvement in developing countries based on a combination of lending, technical assistance, and deals with materials suppliers to lower construction costs.

64 This type of program is common in industrialized countries, many of which have degraded inner cities with crumbling tenements (examples of the many developing country versions are the cortiços of Sao Paulo, the conventillos of Buenos Aires, and the casas de vecindad of Mexico City).

Beyond the tangible aspects of informal housing

Major theories have grown out of research in informal settlements and evaluation of initiatives worldwide. The most influential theorists for current discourses have challenged the conventional views in society about the urban poor, publishing case studies demonstrating that squatter construction can be “considered as the foundation upon which the more fortunate, better off, or more innovative [among the urban poor] sought a way out of their poverty” (Basu, 1988:31). Examples of such research is found in Mangin (1967) and Turner (1968, 1986), for instance, which gives an empirical basis for understanding why preventative and curative methods must look deeper to the roots of issues to be effective. Turner (1986) further calls attention to the “invisible” support structures, referring to the intangible structures reinforcing livelihoods that compliment the “visible” or physical structures of informal settlements. Informal structures exist when social, institutional, and economic conditions create an enabling environment for informal sector self-improvement. Mangin and Turner are often credited with providing the thrust for the Progressive Development/Self-help school. They examined the strategies employed by the poor and what are the priorities of the poor to understand more about why and how informal settlements exist. Turner identified a difference in the values for shelter between the poor and the middle classes: the poor value the opportunity contained in a location, especially the proximity to employment, above security of tenure or high standard shelter. Middle income households, according to Turner, were more likely to place greater value on high-quality standard shelter (and Turner remarks the link here to identity – presumably as housing can be a marker of social status), followed by security with proximity to employment ranked last. Theories advanced by Turner and Mangin have brought to the fore the rationality of the ‘squatter’ self-build phenomena, and have benefited from investigating the relationship between, and contribution of, the poor to the growth and development of cities. The pioneering Habitat I conference in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976 saw these findings and theories broadcast with the resounding recommendation that integrated state policies accept that the so-called ‘squatter condition’ can be a productive and lasting feature of modern cities (Neuwirth, 2004; see also UNHABITAT.org).

This ignited a change in government approach from protecting the city from squatters to concern for welfare of the urban poor, and lends to more productive attitudes towards addressing squatter issues (Davis, 2005; Basu, 1982). This research and policy applications arising from it began to take into account the importance of input by the poor. Some early curative programmes undertook surveys to collect nominal input from informal settlement dwellers, perhaps in the form of household incomes/expenditures and place of employment, for the purpose of facilitating the relocation of squatters to be both proximal to the work place and within affordability limits. Some countries have even changed the legal frameworks for land ownership to give the poor access to land title purchase for plots on which they settled illegally. The Self-help school encompasses much of those methodologies by supporting and maximizing the degree to which informal settlers are able to help themselves overcome poverty. For instance, policies support the incremental improvement in informal dwelling quality by informal settlers as their time and resources allow. Funding and encouraging informal settlement residents to embark on micro-business ventures and to begin community savings schemes to provide for families is another component. However, policy evolves ever towards more explicitly participative interventions as even programme design is now led by informal community residents in some cases.

Cultivating the notion of participation

An analysis by Schleuberg (1996) classifies participatory strategies into four categories considering various dimensions: what is the main objective, to what degree is the community involved; who is/are the instigator(s), manager(s) and the main actors; what component(s) of the project is/are outsourced; what is the scale of the project (Imparato & Ruster, 2003:32-33). “Community-based support strategies” seek to improve “the community’s capacity to manage development and operation of local infrastructure” where
community groups are involved primarily in small-scale projects as recipients of organisational and technical support. The level of community participation is similarly limited in “Area-based involvement strategies” where the state normally leads and manages projects, funding is sought from external sources, and community involvement is by providing “specific inputs to government-managed activities.”

“Functionally based collaboration strategies” and “Process-based decentralisation strategies” involve multi-stakeholder projects with responsibilities “unbundled” or “decentralised” and allocated to parties by function in the former and by process in the latter. The Orangi Pilot Project in Pakistan, an example of a functionally based collaboration strategy, makes settlement upgrades that the community determines are necessary by partnering the community with organisations whose function is concordant with the desired improvements – for instance, when residents decide that human waste disposal must be addressed, an organisation knowledgeable of low-cost sewerage and waste management is engaged to guide the planning and implementation of improvements with community input in design and labour. The ‘unbundling’ of responsibilities is referred to as “component-sharing” on the Orangi Pilot Project, which is self-funded, and government involvement is mainly to complement the work of the community with facilities such as water/sewerage treatment plants, tertiary education institutions, hospitals, etc. The notion of being ‘process-based’ involves a greater emphasis on ensuring that the execution of service provision on a project is with greater responsiveness and accountability and on a wider scale. These initiatives are taking over from the previous versions of self-help initiatives as participation has become the new emphasis, even the direction.

In Fiji the evolution of policy has been largely dictated by external actors. British law was imposed by the Crown administration and by indirect rule through the Fijian Administration. Baledrokadroka (2003) explores the Fijian concept of land ownership and property and submits that the institutions created to ‘decolonise’ or share administration with, and coordinate affairs for, the indigenous Fijians has failed to do so for lack of involvement of the people in the actual administration of their lands and lack of transparency. If the creation of the NLTB was as a trust to manage the administration of lands outside of the British government, that is to retain control of indigenous lands by indigenous peoples, then Baledrokadroka (2003) suggests that upon independence this function should have been returned to the people as the need for the trust was exhausted. With the withdrawal of the Colonial State in 1970, marking Fiji’s independence, external agencies such as the UN, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Ausaid, Nzaid, etc., have taken over where the British left off, determining policy by another form of indirect rule: conditional aid. The direction of policy by external agents has meant for Fiji that policies adopted have also largely been trialled in other countries of the British Empire or, more recently, the neo-liberalist empire of the West.

Historical ‘Squatting’ in Fiji

Colonial Squatting

The arrival of Europeans in Fiji, landing and taking shelter on her shores, was essentially as squatters. The period of intensified European contact prior to and immediately following Cession in the mid- to late-1800s has been described as “the grand stampede of restless whites,” which included squatters (1) among the arriving merchants and growers. Moreover, it can be said that the first working-class slums in Fiji appeared with construction of ‘lines’ or barracks to house indentured labourers brought to Fiji from India by the

75 See the Orangi Pilot Project website for more detail at http://www.oppinstitutions.org/.
76 Fijian Administration and institutions refers to the Great Council of Chiefs, the Fijian Affairs Board and the Fijian members of the legislature which are vested with the power to review bills for the effect they may have on Fijian social and economic circumstances before they are introduced. Provincial and district councils were also established under colonialism, as well as Fijian courts concerned with customary laws, while the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) manages native land since 1946. All of these entities are in the portfolio of the Ministry of Indigenous and Multi-Ethnic Affairs, formerly the Ministry of Fijian Affairs (see Ghai & Cottrell: 645). Durutalo (1986:17) refers to the Fijian Affairs Board as the “heart of the whole organ of indirect [British] rule.”
Colonial Administration. These were poorly ventilated “windowless cells” with dimensions of seven feet by ten feet, each housing adults and married couples with children (Naidu, 1980:32). This overcrowded housing was “shelter where even the cleanest could hardly maintain conditions of hygiene” (Ali, 1980:7). However, the illegality associated with squatting in Fiji originated with the pen of the colonisers: by the institution of legal property rights under English Law at cession, a dichotomy of settlements emerged according to legal or illegal status. Colonial plantation owners would benefit from this legal machinery, having frequently usurped land from the indigenous populations using coercion, unfair trading, intimidation and force. Land would also be ‘legally’ acquired where needed to establish towns, industry, and a national Capital. Policy determined that the term ‘squatter settlement’ would mark the illegality of settlements which infringed upon these new property rights, settlements overwhelmingly of indigenous and indentured Indian labour populations, and descendants of ‘Blackbirdes.”

Codifying Land and Early Urban Policy

Creating a legal landscape for exclusive urban privilege

The surveying and partitioning of lands by Colonial officials, including the Native Regulations Board (which later became the Fijian Affairs Board) under the Native Lands Commission and the entrenchment of boundaries replaced the more fluid borders and flexible customary land use for subsistence. The foreign system of registered land rights and ownership complicated the traditional practise of sharing land resources:

[The] present tenure system whereby the land which was once the domain of all the members of a Vanua under their chief, had been partitioned according to the ability of each claimant to convince the Native Land Commission that a particular area was rightly his, by occupation, conquest or other reason.

Rights of ownership to such areas were registered under the mataqali [or land owning unit] with the strongest claim to it (Ravuvu, 1988:127).  

78The Native Lands Commission began in 1880 (Walsh, 2006:406) and continued until 1940 (per Laisa Raratabu, Principal Technical Officer of the Research Unit – Lands & Surveys Department in the 2001 report: The Need For Land Survey In Fiji: The Silent Partner In The Development Of Fiji; retrieved online at http://www.lands.gov.fj/downloads/theneedforsurvey.pdf). Historical notes: The Deed of Cession Documents were signed in October 1874, and in September 1875 the Native Lands Transfer Prohibition Ordinance No. VI was passed by the Fiji Legislative Council to prohibit land transactions with Fijians. In 1876, Governor Gordon established a Lands Claims Commission, led by Victor Williamson, to investigate all claims to land made by Europeans in Fiji before annexation – valid titles amounted to some 340,000 hectares, roughly half of the 854,000 acres claimed by settlers (Campbell, 2003:202; NLTB online, n.d.). The Native Lands Ordinance No. XXI of 1880 stipulated that “the legal tenure of all native land was deemed to be customary as evidenced by usage and tradition” (Baledrokadroka, 2003:9). Lands thus became inalienable (except for a period between 1905 and 1908) although Government and Native leases were more easily obtained and for longer terms after 1921, when the Native Secretariat merged with the Colonial Secretary’s Office, and through policy reforms in the mid-1930s (Campbell, 2003:244). The lands codification process includes partitioning, surveying and mapping alienated lands (confirmed valid sales of native lands to non-natives) which were then registered according to the Torrens Title Registration System based on English Common Law, as well as partitioning, surveying and mapping traditionally held native lands which were then registered in the Registers of Native Lands. Land claims disputes continue to the present. Ratu Sukuna, Oxford-educated, senior public servant and first Fijian Native Lands Commissioner, was one of many Commissioners tasked with “investigating, defining and recording the boundaries of Fijian landholdings” after Cession (NLTB online, n.d.). Ratu Sukuna was not in favour of liberalising reforms emerging in the 1920s and 1930s and proposed the NLTB as an apparatus that would centralise the responsibility for protection (and reservation) of lands for indigenous Fijians as well as administration of Native land leases. Benefits touted to both landowners and tenants included the standardization of rates and procedures for leasing and facilitation of large lease areas for large-scale development. Ratu Sukuna personally lobbied for the creation of the NLTB by visiting villages in persistent efforts to convince traditional landowning units to turn over the control of their lands to the proposed central body. In 1940 the Bose Levu Vakaturaga (Great Council of Chiefs) accepted the proposal. Ratu Sukuna determined that reservation lands would be set aside for the exclusive use of indigenous Fijians in perpetuity, which included a proportion of leased lands (e.g. much of that leased to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR)) that reverted to reservation lands upon lease expiry. Non-reserve lands are administered by the NLTB which was entrusted to develop or lease lands for set terms, and which is also responsible for collection and distribution of rent on behalf of the landowning unit (Campbell, 2003:202; NLTB online, n.d.).

79Ravuvu (1988:127) gives an example of how this practise, known as kona veicurumaki among the people of Nakonsule, became more difficult and less common with the system of registration of land rights and ownership.

80The term mataqali, explains Ravuvu, was not a notion used for organising social structures everywhere in Fiji, with the society of Nakorosule being one example where the notion of mataqali did not exist prior to colonisation. It was invoked by colonists who claimed, after conducting a large scale study of Fijian societies, that land was allocated in Fijian societies at the level of mataqali, although this may be better represented in pre-colonial eastern (and at that time more powerful) Fijian societies such as in the Lau group. However, Baledrokadroka (2003:3-13-15) notes that “ability to name [one’s] mataqali...became an almost necessary for the admission of land claims” in the Native Lands Register, and that the legal status of the mataqali was interpreted in the proceedings of Timoci Bavadra v Native Land Trust Board (1986) Supreme Court of Fiji, Civil Action No. 421.
Land rights which were once equitably distributed and could be redistributed according to changing requirements, became permanently grafted onto a particular group and made more rigid. They no longer served the exigencies of village life (Ravuvu, 1988:129-30).

**Early Urban Policy**

A second major historical aspect of urban policy in Fiji is the very foundation of urban areas which often began as trading posts. Although Fijians were using trade stations and were trading with other Islanders and with merchants from Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and elsewhere long before Cession, no existing Fijian settlement had developed into a town naturally (Walsh 2006:74). Towns were seeded and evolved to support the Colonial apparatus and are characterized by primary function in the administration as either ‘company’ towns or ‘government’ towns (Walsh 2006: 74).

In Fiji and around the world, British Colonial administrators enforced policies which systematically denied “urban citizenship” to masses of the agrarian population (Davis, 2005:51). Examples in African Countries mirror the iniquitous protectionism in Fiji whereby access to urban land rights is withheld from native populations. Fearing detribalization and the eruption of anti-colonial solidarities, indigenous labour recruitment was effectively closed and the state controlled urban in-migration by imposing strict pass laws and vagrancy ordinances as well as penalties for informal market activities and labour (Davis, 2005:51; Durutalo, 1986:22; Campbell, 2003:201).

Indirect rule by the Crown over the indigenous population utilised the Fijian Chiefly system and Native Regulations Board to impose these policies. ‘Detribalisation,’ the distancing of indigenous Fijians from their communal village settings and systems of governance, would equate to a decrease in control over the population in the eyes of the Administrators. Campbell (2003:201) explains: “Fiji was divided into provinces and districts headed by salaried chiefs who had customary rights to such authority. District and provincial councils of chiefs were established, and superimposed on this structure there would be a Great Council of Chiefs to advise the governor... Accompanying it was a set of laws and regulations that prescribed in close detail many aspects of Fijian life: marriage, food production, obligations to chiefs, village maintenance and so on. Native magistrates enforced the regulations.” It was in the interest of the Colonial Administration and the Fijian Chiefly elites to reinforce communal obligations and traditional leadership as well as the ethnic division between the indigenous population and the ethnic Indian population. Fijian Sociologist Simione Durutalo explains that under this policy “potentially disruptive class elements would continue to be contained [by indirect rule] to ensure that there would be no landless proletariat and that the emerging indigenous Fijian peasantry would have great difficulty organising across ethnic barriers” (1986:22).

“Fijians were advised to stay close to traditional cultural roots,” writes Professor Brij Lal, while “Indians were actively pursuing higher education for their children” (2006:xliii). Traditional leaders, including Sir Ratu Sukuna, were reluctant “to encourage academic education for their people whose appropriate place, they felt, was in the villages” (Lal, 2006:xlvii). Affirmative Action policies many years later would be instated to address the resulting gap in educational attainment, although the need for this contentious policy action is not usually connected to the politics of Traditional Leaders.

Fijian Affairs Board regulations imposed a ‘commutation rate’ on individuals leaving the village and restrictions on “the number of Fijians who could be employed away from their homes” (Ravuvu, 1988:73). These policies were articulated in a positive light so as to be seen valuing and promoting village life, the promulgation of Fijian custom and ‘communal’ traditional farming practises. However, policies

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81 Native or Fijian Regulations were formalised in 1877, comprising much of the existing customary law, in order to govern and shelter the indigenous Fijian population; see Ravuvu 1988:40.
favouring village life were exercised as control measures by the Administration, for instance the application of a produce tax on the communal system of production. Labour was not used as a basis for taxation on the indigenous population, Governor Gordon taxed villages instead of individuals by making each province, district and village responsible for delivering a certain amount of produce (sugar cane, copra, etc.) to market. The taxation amount was deducted from revenues and the surplus was returned to the producing village. This system dissuaded workers from leaving the village setting since the village relied on the labour of its constituents to grow enough produce to cover the taxation amount. This had the benefit of preserving an indigenous “labour reservoir” by tying them more tightly to agricultural production in the village setting which ensured a stable labour force as Indian indentured labour faced abolition officially in 1916 – although it continued until 1920 (Durutalo, 1986:17).

**Figure 3A: Colonial Port Town Land Use Zones* and Suva Urban Settlements**

*Adapted from Walsh (2006:82) and Walsh (1977; cited in Walsh, 2006:75).

** Adapted from Walsh (2006:82) and unpublished resources from the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare, and Housing (2007).

**Bringing workers to the New Capital, Instating the Fiji Housing Authority**

The Second World War saw sea, air, and internal transportation and communication systems dramatically improved. The Fijian and Hindi media was established (the Fiji Times, printed in English, was established in 1869 and viewed then as a “mouthpiece” of the planters along with the institution of a radio station in the late 1940s, early 1950s (Lal, 2006:xliii). Thus the critical infrastructure for urbanisation and globalisation was in place to support the Colony’s war efforts. Also at this time, indigenous Fijians were permitted freer movement from villages to towns, although many had been moving between localities prior to this official permission (Lal, 2006:xliii). When labour was needed in the city, the British Fiji Colonial Administration tenement buildings were constructed near the Capital central district of Suva, but construction could not keep pace with demand. It was also during this time period that some of Suva’s older informal settlements were established. The Second World War brought many opportunities for employment and training which had not been the case during WWI when Fijians were banned from

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82 Although expected to pay taxes and perform other tasks for the efficient execution of colonial policy, the people of Colo [read: the interior or highlands of Viti Levu] were denied full involvement in the socio-economic life of the colony. They were denied full participation in the new political system, discouraged from being fully involved in the new market economy and insulated from being part of a new national identity” (Ravuvu 1988:185).

participation in war efforts and movement from village to town was more strictly regulated. Community members at the Jittu Estate settlement in Raiwaqa and at the Bai Ni Ose area settlement recall stories of migration to these Suva settlements during and shortly after the Second World War (Pers. Comm, Lesi Colata and Mesake Dakai).

Slum clearance policies which were common in London and the United States of America at the turn of the century were also prevalent in Fiji in the early 1950s. Clearance and eviction was favourable for city officials who saw revenue potential for the inner-city land, as well as for merchants and “owners of adjacent real estate who fear engulfment by slums” (Vuetibau, 1987:148). It was also a precursor to extending the Suva Town boundary in 1953 to include Muanikau, Tamavua and Samabula wards that the Health Department flattened 269 houses judged to be ‘unhealthy’ and ‘structurally deficient,’ affecting 448 families and some 2,340 individuals between 1951 and 1954 (Suguta, 1987:135). In 1955 slum demolition and squatter eviction “was deemed ineffective” and replaced by establishing a statutory body responsible for “housing accommodation for workers in the city of Suva, Lautoka and in any prescribed area” under the Housing Act, section 15. The low-income housing policy in Fiji has been implemented principally through programmes of a housing bank referred to as the Housing Authority.

The Housing Authority was thus tasked with addressing the severe housing shortage, maintaining economic viability while pursuing a social welfare mandate for the low-income housing sector in urban areas nationally. The functions and powers of the Authority as set out in section 15 stipulate that the Authority is vested with the power to acquire land and buildings in order to erect estates or make improvements on buildings acquired for worker housing, including the development and maintenance of gardens and recreational areas. Further, the Authority is vested with assisting workers to purchase dwelling units “by way of loan, guarantee or otherwise” as well as to “discharge a debt secured on a dwelling-house... upon such terms and conditions as the Authority may deem fit.” The Housing Act underscores what the Housing Authority now terms “social objectives” by emphasising responsibility to the low-income sector and explicitly separating the functions of the Authority from profit generation: “In selling or leasing houses or providing loans or other facilities to assist workers to purchase, lease, build or otherwise obtain houses, the object of the Authority shall not be to make a profit but to enable workers and their families to obtain accommodation suitable to their needs at the minimum cost without the Authority actually incurring a loss” (Housing Act [cap 267] Section 16 (1)). In 1958 the Housing Authority began operations, providing loans for home purchase and improvements. Resettlement schemes in the 1980s were at Kalabu, Narere, New Town, Waila and Lami in the Greater Suva Area, and in Vitigo-Drasa in the Western Division, many which are still in operation today (Chaudhary, 1987:156). The restructuring of the Housing Authority in the late 1980s and through the 1990s includes a significant shift in this orientation, especially in response to the enactment of the Public Enterprise Act of 1996 which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Housing Authority is responsible to the Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment, Local Government, Urban Development and Housing. The six-member Housing Authority Board is appointed by the Minister who is the Board Chairman. The Board sets the policies and broad strategies for

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84 Workers: ‘worker’ means "a person whose average income does not exceed $140* per week, or such other sum as the Minister may prescribe" (Amended by Ordinance 17 of 1958, s. 2; Legal Notice 112 of 1970); Prescribed area: ‘prescribed area’ means an area prescribed by the Minister, and in the Housing Act [cap 267] Subsection 2, a dated definition of ‘prescribed areas’ issued by notifications of the Governor between 1963 and 1970 indicates which urban areas were identified as requiring housing for workers: Ba town, Labassa, Tavua, Nadi, Suva, Lautoka, Sigatoka.

85 Jack Guttentag (1998:1), a visiting consultant assigned to the reorganisation of the Housing Authority in 1997, defines housing banks as “government backed home lending entities that usually have subsidised fund sources and usually lend at subsidised rates.”

86 Section 15 (1) (b) Housing Act [cap 267]. http://www.paclii.org/fj/legis/consol_act/ha107/

87 Interim Minister, Hon. Lekh Ram Vayeshnoi at the time of writing.
the organisation and channels the input and expectations of the Government to the Authority executives. The Chief Executive Officer of the Housing Authority, an ex-officio member of the Board, reports regularly to the Board on the performance of the organisation.

**Full-Package Serviced Sites Housing Initiatives**

The Housing Authority programmes for low-income earners are mainly of two types: subsidised Lot-plus-Home Purchase and Rental. According to the squatter housing initiative typology advanced by Imparto and Ruster (2003) these programmes may be considered a version of the ‘sites and services’ low-income housing initiative. Imparto and Ruster (2003:30) describe the defining features of a ‘sites and services’ initiative as follows: “Mass production of serviced sites in large schemes for resettlement of urban squatters [or low-income workers who would otherwise be squatters], usually in peripheral land in city outskirts.” The Housing Authority adaptation of this under the Home Purchase Plans is that relocated informal settlers and urban poor must be eligible to take on a housing loan to qualify for a subsidised lot sale and must construct a home meeting relatively high standards on the allocated serviced site. Incremental improvement of informal dwellings is not permitted. Critics have referred to this variant of ‘sites and services’ schemes, which includes starter-housing, as the “expensive full-package” option (read: site plus services plus high standards of housing). Critics point out that it is not usually viable in the long term as a result of demanding payment schedules and the fixed nature of liveable space and thus especially susceptible to speculation (Ward, 1982; Vuetibau, 1987; see also Imparato & Ruster, 2003). As of 1987 the Housing Authority had produced 8,300 serviced sites and financed 7,000 mortgages (Sharma & Lawrence, 2005:147).

The Home Purchase Plans are land and housing packages which include mixed development, that is, development of residential areas for high, middle, and low income housing. As part of its endeavour to be ‘self-supporting,’ the Authority issues long-term leases of better quality land to the middle- and higher-income brackets at rates above development costs. Profits are intended as funds for the Home Purchase Plan Scheme for low- and middle-income earners to enable the purchase of land lots at cost by cash payment or loan. The Fiji Government takes responsibility for the provision of land to the Housing Authority, which includes negotiation for long-term, namely 99-year residential leases with high probability of renewal through the NLTB.

House construction is overseen by the Housing Authority and is compliant with Town and Country Planning and the relevant municipal authority standards. Housing loan packages are intended to be commensurate with household income and offer competitive rates to finance house construction and lot purchase, arranged through the Housing Authority.

**Rental Flat Scheme**

The Housing Authority Rental Flat Scheme began in 1964 in response to the needs of low-income earners unable to afford the Home Purchase Plans. Eighty percent of Housing Authority applicants in 1973 could not afford the cheapest Home Purchase Plan (Walsh, 1979a: 3). The Rental Flats offer one or two bedroom units rented at 40 percent below cost in three or four story flats. Further subsidy was available to tenants if rents equated to more than 15 percent of their income (Walsh, 1979a:8). Rental was seen as a stepping stone to enable savings for use towards the Home Purchase Plans and was viewed as “temporary accommodation for workers unable to purchase houses” (Sharma & Lawrence, 2005:147). Rental estates were built at Raiwai and Raiwaqa in Suva, Natokowaqa in Lautoka, Draiba in Levuka and Bulileka and

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88 Housing Authority website retrieved online at http://www.housingfiji.com/aboutus.htm
89 Alipate Naiorosui (since 2003).
90 That is, earning under $16,500 per year; additional loan and interest rate subsidies for those earning below 6,500 per year, subject to Government grants.
Vunimoli in Labasa.91 The Raiwaqa Rental Estate is the oldest, built in 1970, and accommodating around 10,000 people (Walsh, 1979a).

Figure 3B: Suva Urban Informal Settlements Dispersion by Land Tenure* and Suva Peninsula Land Use**

*Adapted from Walsh (2006:28, based on Town and Country Planning Department 1976 maps) and Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Housing unpublished records obtained in 2007. Note: Crown Leases have changed with return of Schedule A & B Lands; the actual land area comprised by the Suva Urban Area changes with official boundary extensions and land reclamation practices (see Stabile, 2001:198).

**Adapted from Walsh (2006:78-85) and based on Census Enumeration Areas, 1996.

Demand exceeds Housing Authority Supply: Housing Deficit Persists

The Housing Authority made a substantial contribution to the urban housing market, housing some 17 percent of the Suva urban population or approximately 20,000 people from its inception until 1976 (Walsh, 1979a:2). However, Walsh (1979a) estimated that in 1976 another 20 percent of the Suva Urban Area population were ‘squatters,’ amounting to some 23,000 individuals impacted by the enduring shortage of affordable housing. Further, in the late 1970s the squatter population was increasing “at over twice the annual rate for the urban population as a whole” (Walsh, 1979a:2). Writing about housing demand Dr. Jenny Bryant (1990) notes that the Housing Authority waitlist in 1977 totalled 8,702 urban households, or 21 percent of total urban households. Lingam (2007) stated that the Housing Authority and the Public Rental Board waitlist is hovering around 9,000 applicants. The gap in supply and demand is visible considering the result of 953 applications received for the Housing Authority release of 150 lots at Caubati Stage 1 (Lingam, 2004). The Housing Authority is unable to meet accelerating demand in the low-income segment and the housing shortage persists for several reasons:

- **Bottleneck at the Housing Authority Rental Estates**
  A serious bottleneck in the state housing programme occurred within the Rental Flat Scheme because tenants were not keeping to regular rent payments and were not graduating from rental to the Home Purchase Plan. Studies by external agencies showed that the Rental Flat Scheme was seriously losing money for the Housing Authority (Sharma & Lawrence, 2005, in reference to World Bank and Asian Development Bank reports in the 1980s). Estimates for 1977 found that 60 percent of the Authority’s tenants, or around 2,000 families, faced eviction for failing behind in rent payments, costing the Authority F$250,000 (Walsh, 1979a: 3). Although the Government did subsidise a proportion of renters

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who were disadvantaged by old age, disability, and unemployment,\textsuperscript{92} for those families evicted from the rental flats there was no other State provided alternative for housing. These families would be again left to their own resources, often moving into (or returning to) informal settlements. Some have also relied on community organisations such as the church-based Housing Assistance Relief Trust (HART)\textsuperscript{93} and Habitat for Humanity which provide assistance to the most destitute of the urban poor.

Further exacerbating the Rental Scheme bottleneck, the regular rent-paying families often remained in the rental flats on more permanent basis than was anticipated. As such, vacancy rates could not accommodate the growing number of waitlisted households. Between 1980 and 1985 the Housing Authority reached only 28 percent of its Rental scheme provision target, 49.3 percent of its Home Purchase Plan target and 35 percent of its Rural Housing scheme target (Fiji Central Planning Office, 1985:128, as cited in Bryant, 1990:88 Self-Help in Fiji).

- **Budget Constraints**
  The stress of capital losses due to outstanding rental payments, etc., was added to existing budgetary constraints: The Housing Authority was given a Government grant of F$1 million but expected to be largely self-sufficient afterwards. However, the Government grant has been requested and provided almost annually until 2006. A 2005 Government press release noted that a Government grant would be used to consolidate the debt position of the Housing Authority estates at Matavolivoli, Natokowaqa, and Makasoi, and applied to home retention grants, capital works (such as the Waila Housing City subdivisions) and housing loan interest rate subsidy.

- **High Building Standards and High Costs**
  Walsh (1979a:4) explains that the Fiji Housing Authority programme imposes “Cut-down middle class standards” on “low-income tenants who have had no say… in the type of housing constructed.” The high level of these standards meant that many Housing Authority clients could not afford the dwellings that they were allocated (Bryant, 1990a: 88; Walsh, 1979a:3). The ideal maximum percentage of household income paid against the mortgage for the Authority accommodation was 25 percent (Walsh, 1979a:3). Considering findings in his own earlier study, Walsh (1979a) explains that the typical ‘squatter’ household expenditure on food will consume about 50 percent of the household income, after mortgage payment only one quarter of the household income would remain to meet all other expenses (in particular transportation costs and school fees for children). Putting this in context, he emphasises that in many Third World countries, studies show only the upper low-income workers can afford to put 25 percent of household income towards accommodation (Walsh, 1979a:3).

- **Detachment from needs, priorities, and coping strategies of the urban poor**
  In his research on the survival strategies of the urban poor Walsh (1979b) found that important differences existed between the indigenous and Indo-Fijian populations and that the composition of communities affects support networks and can influence the degree of success among low-income earners in government housing programmes. For instance, the Housing Authority’s efforts to integrate residents by “pepper-potting” them to avoid ethnic clustering may have acted to reduce the role of social networks and confound community building in Housing Authority programmes. It is worthy of

\textsuperscript{92} Sharma and Lawrence (2005:156) found that about 23 percent of all Rental Programme tenants with extremely low income or no income at all did not contribute any rent and were fully subsidised by the Government – until the institution of ‘economic rents’ in 1990 with the restructuring of the Housing Authority and the creation of a separate body to manage the Rental Programmes: The Public Rental Board, discussed later in this chapter.

\textsuperscript{93} According to Lingam (2006) The HART of Fiji was established in 1970 by the Fiji Council of Churches to build homes for the needy. The first homes were built in 1972 and by 2007 some 679 flats stood at 20 locations nationally, supporting around 600 families at a time. Funding for HART was initially obtained from ICCO, an overseas Church organization, which was terminated in 1994. Fiji Government annual grants to HART between 1997 and 2002 were constant at F$492,500; after 2002 this was increased to $1 million which was again increased to F$1.5 million in 2007. Tenancy which began before 1994 is charged at F$0.50 per week while post-1994 this rate is set at F$1.00.
note that in 1976 the construction of additional four-storey flats was discontinued, awaiting the results of enquiries as to whether they are appropriate for Fijians given their unique coping strategies (Walsh, 1979a:9). Basic single-family dwelling units have also been constructed as rental flats under the Rental Flat Scheme which, according to Walsh’s (1979b) study, accommodate better the coping strategies of indigenous Fijians who rely heavily on planting spaces.

The implementation of similar housing policy in Africa, Latin America and India has had comparable results with unaffordable state-subsidised housing and rampant rent and mortgage default. In Tunisia, extensive state-subsidised housing was 75 percent unaffordable by the poor (Davis, 2005:65) and in Rio de Janeiro 70 percent of conjuntos residents were behind or had given up making payments (Ward, 1982:2). In Tanzania, squatters have built houses for half the amount charged by the National Housing Corporation, the lowest-cost builder (Basu, 1988:250). In Delhi the estimated proportion of families unable to afford housing through Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the housing agency, rose from 4.4 percent in 1951 to 24.8 percent in 1981 (DDA, 1982:2, as cited in Basu, 1988:236). A survey of families whose household incomes afforded participation in DDA low-income housing schemes found these programmes often failed to meet objectives and neglected the importance of familial and community ties when allocating land plots or dwelling-units (Basu, 1988:223-225).

Basu (1988:231-242) suggests that governments and elites would benefit the national housing situation by placing greater emphasis on various forms of “self-reliant technology,” looking to informal shelter and communities for insights. This entails a change of attitude and approach to construction strategies that he argues, quoting Turner, is anecdotal to shifting the policy perspective from “housing” as a noun (thing) to “housing” as a verb (action) in order to accentuate the value of approaching housing as a dynamic process rather than as static and material. Basu contends that policies such as the Fiji Housing Authority Home Purchase Plan and Rental Flat schemes of the 1970s and 1980s represent a “contradiction between what a central body considers the desirable minimum and what the users consider desirable” (Basu, 1988:242). Aspects of these programmes giving evidence that they are ill suited to the urban poor include their reliance on regular repayment of loans or payment of rents by households characterised by irregular incomes, standards and infrastructure that often exceed what is needed and within affordable limits for clients, and the incongruities between the housing allocated and the livelihood/coping strategies of the poor (Ward, 1982; Walsh, 1979a; 1979b; Bryant, 1990; Sharma & Lawrence, 2005). Basu’s push for the incorporation of self-reliant technologies into housing policy is motivated by the view that reducing “the minimum standard to a level which the mass of the people, through their own effort can meet” provides an obvious solution (Basu, 1988:242). Walsh (1979a) and Bryant (1990) noted the positive potential of self-help programmes in Fiji.

\[94\] From Turner (1986: 25): 'When 'the problem' is quantified in terms of deficits of dwelling units to officially acceptable standards, the aim of policy is focused on the production of new standard dwellings; this generally counter-productive policy has often been made worse through the demolition of sub-standard dwellings because they are slums. This narrow view ignores the most important facts about housing or, rather, homes and neighbourhoods: that what matters most to people is what their dwellings and surroundings do for them, apart from what they are like, materially. In higher-income experience the difference between what one’s house is like and what it does for one may not be clear but it is for most of the poor: it is obvious to those whose livelihood depends on living in or very near the inner city, and who cannot afford the prices of standard accommodation without starving themselves, that a low-rent room in a slum is a far better home than a new house on the periphery, the direct and indirect costs of which will be higher, even if subsidised. In the inner-city slums, the income-earners have access to jobs without having to spend money, time and energy commuting; they can therefore work longer and stand better chances of acquiring skills and improving incomes so that they can afford better conditions in the future; because food and subsistence is cheaper in the inner city, the household can eat better as well as save more. If they were to be rehoused prematurely in a suburban location all these advantages would be lost, along with additional incomes that wives or children may contribute from jobs they can find in the inner city but not on the periphery. So the supposed “solution” of the officially defined “housing problem” will impoverish the household, destroying their hopes and threatening their health through undernourishment and depression far more than the insanitary conditions of the slum.
Self-Help Technologies in Fiji

Talks between the Fiji Housing Authority and the World Bank in the mid-1980s were rumoured to be exploring how “self-help building schemes” could be implemented for people earning less than F$75 per week (Bryant, 1990). Leading models for low-income housing in the Global South were transformed by research findings in Latin America that squatter settlements improve over time. A 1967 paper by Mangin refuted many of the negative stereotypes associated with squatting and cast squatter settlements of Latin America in a positive light as innovative, indeed as a ‘solution.’ This spurred research into the “productive” attributes of squatter settlements, that is, how squatters can and do help themselves (Ward, 1982:4). Turner documented the progression of housing improvements in a squatter colony on the outskirts of Lima, Peru. Findings were that as years passed, homes improved in free or underemployed time, and that life in the settlement where costs are minimal could actually promote upward economic mobility (Turner, 1968; Ward, 1982). Against failing government housing projects, relentless informal settlement growth and demand for low-income housing, policies reaching only a small proportion of the demand with fully-serviced expensive ‘package’ housing were exchanged for incremental interventions, or ‘elements,’ such as infrastructure, that have lower per capita production costs and therefore reach a wider population (Ward, 1982:6). Revolutionary “Land and Utility Projects” gained legislative support to enable the resettling of urban squatters “in situ” on both government and private land holdings.

Case studies from other parts of the world supported these findings and non-governmental agencies as well as international organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank eventually took hold. Davis (2005) stresses how self-help housing created space for the justification of social spending cuts advocated and imposed by the World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s through Structural Adjustment Programmes. State intervention such as subsidised public housing was being replaced by piecemeal or incremental upgrades increasingly at the expense of, and occurring as these could be afforded by, the urban poor (Davis, 2005: 58-76).

Walsh (1979a) found Turner’s theories had mixed applicability for the Fijian context. Referring to the “Progressive Development School” Walsh notes that the idea of “self-improving suburbs” was supported by Fiji data that “68 percent of squatters had built their house and 64 percent had made improvements since construction or occupation” (1979a:5). However, only 7 percent of the houses surveyed met five criteria for adequacy.95 Walsh (1979a) argues that self-help policy could be positive in that it would recognise the place (or as Davis termed it, ‘urban citizenship’) of the urban poor, the social costs and perpetuation of poverty under Housing Authority schemes, and the desperate need for more equitable distribution of wealth. He further suggested that a ‘site and service’ scheme with gradual improvements could only be successful in Fiji if income was acknowledged as the most important determinant of squatter housing self-improvement. Such a policy must therefore take into account the poorest inhabitants of informal settlements, renters and subtenants of informal dwellings for whom the costs of building informally is too high. With the backlog of the Rental Flat scheme, many of the urban poor choose to be ‘squatter tenants’ in well located settlements as a survival strategy. Bryant (1990a:89) found an “increasing incidence of letting and subletting in urban squatter settlements... [and] that while there was little evidence of exploitation by [squatter] ‘landlords’ of subtenants, the money earned was certainly assisting squatter landlords to live a slightly more comfortable life than would otherwise have been possible.” Lingam (2007:7) notes that tenants and subtenants as well as extended families cramming into informal dwellings are often waiting for possibilities of formal urban accommodation.

95The five criteria of housing adequacy are: shelter (durability, non-flammable material, raised foundation); size (at least 27.6 m²); occupancy density (5m² per occupant); water (piped within 100m); sanitation (flush or pour-flush toilet).
Is legal access to urban land the key to squatter self-improvement?

In the 1990s the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto became known as the “messiah of peoples’ capitalism” for an adaptation of capitalist principles to the squatter condition (Davis, 2005:80). Drawing on Turner’s theories of gradual self-improvement, de Soto advanced “micro-entrepreneurial solutions to urban poverty” (Davis, 2005:71) suggesting that regularising squatters will liberate “dead capital” (de Soto, 2001). ‘Dead capital’ refers to the unrecognised or unused potential of physical assets to generate capital.

Relating this to squatters, de Soto argues that extra-legally settled land is dead capital because it cannot be leveraged, and that legal options for land acquisition and access to capital obstruct the ‘self-improvement’ of the poor. The formal property systems of the Third World (which he views as the gateway to capital) are inaccessible to the poor, being bureaucratic, time-consuming and costly. The potential for land to generate capital for residents of informal settlements could, holds de Soto, be realised by giving squatters title deeds to land plots where they are settled, endowing them with an asset to leverage, access to credit and “a place in the market economy” (Neuwirth, 2004:20; see also de Soto, 2001).

The land registration system in Peru has undergone legal and procedural reform reflecting the theories of de Soto and effecting “the regularisation of tenure of 1.2 million urban plots through the COFOPRI96 scheme” (Imparato & Ruster, 2003:441). The adjusted legal framework permits the government to acquire land where squatters are settled from the owners compulsorily and to transfer the title to the squatters. This process is additionally advantageous in that the costs of re-housing squatter settlement dwellers are avoided, leaving them more of their own resources to “consolidate their position” (Basu, 1988:259-260). The World Bank became a major proponent of this strategy, and a ‘soft-imperialism’ emerged as lending was tied to the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes requiring public sector reform and public spending austerity, thus favouring these low-income housing initiatives for their minimal requirement of government cash infusions. Davis (2005:76) described the World Bank pressure as “taking captive” public housing agencies, local NGOs and other “grassroots organisations that are dependent on their funding.”

In Fiji, de Soto-esque policy applications in the form of titling in-situ have not become commonplace, however Lingam (2007: 3) notes that three settlements established prior to 2000 at “Narere, Wainibuku and Bangladesh were formalised with provisions for the supply of basic utilities and infrastructure at minimal cost.”97 The structure of the land tenure system in Fiji is prohibitive of such policies on wide scale on several counts:

- **Land and Legal Framework.** The vast majority of land in Fiji, some 87 percent, is communally held native land, administered by the (NLTB). Under the Native Land Trust Act [cap 134, 1985], Section 4, the NLTB is vested with control of all native land “for the benefit of the Fijian owners,” where ‘owners’ refers to customary landholding units called mataqali. Property rights and ownership rights are offered different protection and contingencies based on ethnicity. Persons of non-indigenous descent, of which the Indo-Fijian population is the overwhelming majority, then, are prevented from owning native land.98 “Re-thinking” land policy and governance structures according to Baledrokadroka (2003:23) “is necessary as with all institutions confronted with new imperatives including globalisation.” He even suggests that many Fiji Islanders increasingly do want to explore the capital possibilities of economically unproductive land – however he maintains that

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96 Comisión de Formalización de la Propiedad (Commission for the Formalization of Informal Property), Peru.
97 The decision benefited 40 families that would be charged F$2,000 each for the land they are now using; see also Pacific Islands Report article of August 20, 1998: Fiji Squatters Offered Land detailing the formalisation of the Narere settlement in Nasima available online at http://archives.pireport.org/archive/1998/august/09%20%20%20.htm.
98 Persons of non-indigenous ethnic origin in Fiji account for 42.7 percent of the total population of 827,900 as at the 2007 national census; Calculated from figures in Fiji Bureau of Statistics Table 1: Population by Province and Ethnicity 1996, 2007 in Press Release No. 53, 2007, Provisional Results – 2007 Population and Housing Census.
restructuring should retain Fijian paramountcy in any endeavour to make the capital value of land more accessible and malleable. 99

- **Customary Tenure Systems.** Extra-legal aspects of the tenure systems that may complicate in-situ titling of squatters include the co-existence of customary (vakavanua) systems of land and resource management as well as the prevalence of unregistered villages and the immensely contentious and ethnically divisive nature of land dealings and policy reforms. The Ministry of Fijian Affairs (now the Ministry of Indigenous and Multi-Ethnic Affairs) determined in 1995 that there are 488 unofficial settlements100 in rural Fiji equating to 29.5 percent of all Fijian rural villages and settlements (Walsh, 2006, 21). The interest of those inhabiting these lands through unofficial or traditional arrangements is an additional dimension of complexity to land claims that will have implications for the success of changes to land laws. Under vakavanua arrangements for land tenure, the landowner may grant use of land with the expectation that customary obligations be met by the requesting party for a period of time or for the duration of tenure. The NLTB strives to respect vakavanua arrangements, but a de Soto-esque titling initiative would run the risk of destabilising these customary systems by interfering with the autonomy of mataqali and village families as administrators of such arrangements.

However, there are cases of vakavanua converting to legal title in Fiji, as in the 2007 High Court ruling concerning the Solomoni settlement at Tamavua-i-wai. The Solomoni settlement obtained permission from the appropriate customary landowner in 1935 to be settled in perpetuity, has respected customary obligations to remain settled there to the present, and was effectively legalised by ruling of停滞s. However, this ruling was conditional. The ruling upheld the grant by Tui Tamavua for the use of the land along the Tamavua River with the right to remain extending only to “the original grantees of the chiefly permission to occupy and their direct descendants” on the following conditions: (a) continuity of occupation; (b) by the direct descendants of the original grantees; and (c) the due performance of the custom obligations. The right to remain would be negated should any of these conditions not be met.101

- **Cultural Grounds.** Critics of de Soto draw attention to the importance of culture for the applicability and implementation of de Soto’s policy formula, acknowledging that squatting, while it may be tied to issues of land and property, occurs within distinctive cultural and historical contexts. Fiji’s history of British Colonisation, indentured labour, ethnic division (engineered by intentionally divisive government policies according to Durutalo,(1986), Naidu (1980) and others) and ‘coup culture’ finds that the suggestion of policies, much less the introduction of policies, to facilitate more efficient, profitable and transparent land administration is often viewed as sympathizing with the Indo-Fijian interests. Strong opposition from the Fiji Indigenous Ownership Rights Association (FIORA) was voiced in response to the Interim Cabinet decision to the Committee on the Better Utilisation of Land (CBUL) in early 2008 to advise landowners and seek solutions to land lease issues and improve the economic productivity of native lands.102

Further, property is socially constructed and “property involves different issues depending on where you are in the world” (Neuwirth, 2004:19; see also Baledrokadroka, 2003:7). Samuelson (2001) affirms the value and meaning of individual property rights, an essential principle of capitalist philosophy, is culturally constructed and validated. De Soto (2001) speaks of “formal property [creating] individuals from masses” with individual accountability. This can undermine non-Western understandings of place and personhood, which Samuelson (2001) demonstrates with a quote from Etounga-Manguelle: “African thought rejects any view of the individual as an

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99 Baledrokadroka (2003) cites the July 2000 “Blueprint For The Protection Of Fijian & Rotuman Rights And Interests, And The Advancement Of Their Development” as an example of government efforts to advance land reform policies (for instance, by prioritising the need for a review of NLTA and ALTA policy) which maintain the paramountcy of indigenous interests – this document was presented by the 2000 Interim Regime and can be found online at [http://maorinews.com/karere/fiji/blueprint.htm](http://maorinews.com/karere/fiji/blueprint.htm)

100 Unofficial settlements are unregistered, that is, not registered with the Native Lands Commission, and may be (indigenous) Fijian villages and other rural multi-ethnic settlements (Walsh, 2006:21).

101 See the judgement in *Australian Conference Association Limited v Sela* [2007] FHC 62; Civil Action 0357 of 2005.

autonomous and responsible being. The African is vertically rooted in his family, in the vital ancestor, if not in God; horizontally, he is linked to his group, to society.”

- **Fijian Identity and the Vanua.** Personhood among indigenous Fijians is intimately tied to the *vanua*, to deep spiritual intertwining of land, place, and ancestry with communal and personal identity. “*Vanua* refers to both a social unit and to the territory it occupies” (Baledrokadroka, 2003:29). The inseparability of land and people and the supernatural is endemic to viewing the *vanua* as an extension of self. The relationship to *vanua* can be internalised with some variation across regions and circumstances in Fiji, however its centrality to the Fijian ethos is reflected in how the *vanua* is expressed as a metaphor for Fijian worldview (Nabobo-Baba, 2005; Ravuvu, 1983) and Fijian existence (Baledrokadroka, 2003).

  Baledrokadroka (2003:19-29) explains how this understanding of selfhood relates to the conceptualisation of property law: “Tenure... in the sense of English Real Property law was unknown at custom... In pre-European contact times boundaries were in a state of flux... As elsewhere in Melanesia, fishing rights areas (*qoliqoli*) are an integral part of a tribal land-sea ‘estate (*vanua*)’... Fijians are a place-based people who have profound spiritual, cultural, social and economic relationships to their total environment, which includes their lands, territories and resources. When Fiji was ceded to the British Crown in 1874, the question of customary resource rights was of major concern to the High Chiefs, most of who wanted to attach conditions regarding their land and fishing grounds before agreeing to the cession of the country.” To lease out land to the colony for economically productive purposes such as agriculture caused such anxiety in the early 1900s among native landowners, who wanted to protect and preserve the land for their people and future generations, that many set unreasonably short lease terms. The NLTB was essentially created to assume this function although anxiety erupting in boundary and ethnically charged disputes continues to characterise land politics (Baledrokadroka, 2003: 27).

  It must be noted, however, that migratory behaviour suggests that place-based identities are being practised in new forms and perhaps reconceptualised in some cases by migrant communities. Urban low-income settlement communities may find a comparable depth of attachment to a settlement land that enables their subsistence in the urban environment. Early settlements near the Suva core, Valenimanumanu (est. 1910), Walu Bay (est. 1941), and Nauluvatu (est.1952), were established by migrants from Ra province, and it is highly likely that many among the younger generations have never been to their villages in Ra (Vuetibau, 1987). Moreover, the migration of large numbers of Pacific Islanders to metropolitan countries has shifted the ways that traditional obligations to land/clans are approached: Islanders living away from their traditional lands tend to channel remittances to individual family members rather than to the village. Ogan (2005:11), citing a Samoan example, argues that remittances made in this fashion further weakens “a nexus that once linked land, *matai*, and larger kinship groups.” Especially interesting is the finding that Samoans, and this might be extended to other Pacific societies, “still subscribe to an ideology [about land] that reflects earlier rather than contemporary conditions... despite many changes affecting... land tenure” (Ogan, 2005:11).

- **Indigenous epistemologies.** The cultural argument goes beyond the conflict between Western and Fijian concepts of land and property as being individualisable and commodifiable versus innate, inextinguishable, communal, and inseparable from Fijian communities. Indigenous epistemologies more broadly highlight the inability of the Eurocentric view of culture to encapsulate indigenous knowledge just as indigenous knowledge is at odds with Eurocentric tendencies to compartmentalise in thought processes (Baledrokadroka, 2003:28). Where legal responsibility for the use of land is compartmentalised in the terms of a contract – who can use the land, within what boundaries, for what purposes, and for how long – the indigenous view of land as connecting and sustaining life extends obligations to land beyond contractual terms. Samuelson (2001) uses the term “cultural economics” to insist that although capitalist economic systems may spread, the adoption and expression of capitalist principles is culturally dependent whereby “Economic incentives and cultural imperatives are constantly interacting and colliding with each other.”
Thus it remains to be seen whether more explicit de Soto-esque policies will take root in Fiji. Still, as an actor in the global economy and member of the commonwealth, economic incentives infiltrate the institutions responsible for public policy making and Fiji’s public housing agency is no exception. Although the regularization of squatting through titling and self-help housing policy have not been implemented on a grand scale, elements of Turner’s and de Soto’s theories can be identified in the various layers of public policy relating to squatters in Fiji. Connell & Lea (1995:55) observed a shift from communal to individual orientation with regards to concepts of property and ownership which, along with emigration and wage employment have “disrupted ritual obligations and communal activities,” ultimately impacting kinship structures. In 1998 a new policy statement engaging with World Bank recommendations to achieve commercialisation for public enterprise reform was set forth, leading to the creation of the Public Rental Board.

The Creation of the Public Rental Board and Commercialisation of Public Entities

Does commercialisation of public entities impact public welfare?
The Housing Authority Rental Flat Scheme (all assets and liabilities) was designated to a separate body, the Public Rental Board (PRB), under the Housing (Amendment) Decree Number 12 of 1989. This was done under pressure from the World Bank to improve the financial solvency and transparency of the rental flat division (Sharma & Lawrence, 2005). According to interviews with managers and staff of the PRB who were employed with the Housing Authority at the time of separation, technical assistance and financial aid for low-income housing development by the Authority was contingent on this restructuring (Sharma & Lawrence, 2005). The restructuring included the adoption of a profit orientation, “the implementation of new management techniques borrowed from the private sector… [and] commercial principles such as economic rents” (Sharma & Lawrence, 2005:149). These changes can be collectively referred to as ‘commercialisation,’ for which the Housing Authority was awarded a loan through the World Bank and Asian Development Bank in 1991.

Economic rents were calculated to be competitive in the market and to consider the costs of PRB operations and commercialisation. All rent prices were therefore considerably scaled up as of July 1990. Rent was calculated at 20 percent of household income, six categories were devised with the upper income category reaching 300$ per week. Recall that Walsh (1979a) stresses only the ‘well off’ among the poor can afford a mortgage at 25 percent of income – thus rent will remain a severe pressure on low-income families at a rate of 20 percent income. According to a PRB survey, approximately 25 percent of the tenant population needed subsidy to afford rent at the new rates, and this was covered by Government. Dr. Mahendra Reddy (2001, cited in Lingam, 2006) found a higher proportion of PRB tenants with insufficient incomes to meet rental fee obligations, figuring at 35 percent (or 609 tenants). However, commercialisation of the PRB and the Housing Authority under the Public Enterprises Act of 1996 pushed Government to withdraw subsidies. Further, the PRB would contribute dividends to Government and be taxed at the corporate rate of 31 percent on profits. It was stated in the PRB Annual Report of 1998 that inability to make payments following arrest of Government subsidies could result in eviction of these most underprivileged tenants comprising “the old aged, the casually employed and unemployed welfare cases and single mothers” (Sharma & Lawrence, 2005).

Commercialisation continued with the Department of Public Enterprises becoming a separate Ministry of Public Enterprises and Public Sector Reform (abbreviated as MSE&PSR) in 1999. The key principles of public enterprise reform are stated as clarity of objectives, management autonomy and

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103 According to the ADB website: “Fiji’s Housing Authority is to be restructured with a stronger commercial orientation under a technical assistance grant of $450,000 from the Asian Development Bank…” Retrieved online at http://www.adb.org/Documents/News/1995/nr1995041.asp
104 Housing Authority website, Facts and History.
authority, strict accountability for performance and level business playing field (McMaster (2001:231)
Public Rental Board and Housing Authority are classified as commercial statutory authorities, as are the Fiji
Electricity Authority, the Maritime Ports Authority of Fiji, and the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (McMaster
(2001: 233). The PRB oversees 1,740 rental units in 23 rental estates located in Suva, Lautoka, Labasa,
Savusavu, Levuka, Namaka and Korolevu (Lingam, 2006).

Sharma and Lawrence (2005) conducted a case study on the PRB exploring whether this separation
equated to any improvement in efficiency and capacity to meet the needs of the Fijian people or whether it
was an action undertaken to give the impression required at the time of aid handouts from the World Bank
that every effort was made to satisfy Structural Adjustment demands and that accountability would be
reinforced in so doing. They found that the Housing Authority and later also the Public Rental Board were
coerced by the World Bank through pressure by Government Ministries to move away from the core of the
mandate to provide for the poor. Through adopting measures for increased profitability profits did go up
but the ability to service the poor did not improve (Sharma & Lawrence, 2005).

Contemporary Official Squatter Policy
Throughout the 1990s the ‘squatter’ population continued to grow. New settlements were establishing
and older settlements were assuming an “air of established suburbs with gardens, backyard industries and
sometimes service connections” (Bryant, 1990a:88). Mr. Dharam Lingam, former Director of Housing and
Squatter Settlement and Landfill explains in his 2007 paper Shantytowns of Fiji that squatter upgrading and
resettlement programs in Fiji began in 1992 with slow progress due to budgetary constraints and resistance
to relocation.

Squatter Policy was officially formulated and approved by Cabinet in 1994, acknowledging in the
preamble that “the informal housing sector must be treated as an integral part of the housing stock where
it is beneficial to adopt policies geared to environmental upgrading.” ‘Squatter Areas Upgrading’ as it was
termed, became a focus in designated areas of concentrated squatter housing, and was intended to
provide “flexible application of planning and infrastructure standards appropriate to the circumstances of
squatter areas” in consultation with the landowner. Guiding principles for planning and infrastructure
standards applicable to Residential Upgrading Areas include that new sites would be small (100m²) with
minimal yard space to maximise area and keep land costs affordable; minimal road construction in favour
of footpaths/emergency vehicle access routes to reduce development costs to be made available to all
subdivisions as well as metered Fiji Electrical Authority hook-up and improvement to supply. Sewerage
reticulation should be determined by maximising the opportunities of the actual site for sewerage system
connection with easement reserves designated at the planning stage.

The Policy called for a single coordinating agency, eliciting the creation of the Squatter Unit (an
earlier version of this task unit was known as the Squatter Control Unit under the Lands Department; the
Squatter Upgrading Unit and the Squatter Resettlement Unit are more recent variants). Measures to
prevent further squatting include surveying ‘squatter areas’ to locate and clear new squatter housing with
priority for resettlement going to older settlements, and long-time inhabitants of older settlements. The
Policy stressed the need to clarify enforcement procedures and the right of authorities (Fiji Police/ Rural
Local Authorities etc.) to demolish illegal structures and pursue eviction legal proceedings. Squatter
Resettlement is mentioned only under ‘Other Related Policies’ where the Policy states “Genuine squatters
who will be evicted from valuable sites and from eyesore squatter housing areas should, wherever possible,
be resettled.” There is no indication as to how re-settlement should take place other than to suggest
evictees could be directed to the appropriate agencies (HART, PRB, HA, NGOs) “for possible assistance” and that “Appropriate costs of resettlement should be borne by the squatters themselves” (ibid).

The Squatter Policy focus on upgrading is much like the “Land and Utilities” initiatives discussed in Ward (1982) where upgrades to informal settlements are essentially schemes for the in-situ resettlement of residents on the same land but with planning, service and housing upgrades to the living environment. A plan for upgrading the Jittu Estate informal settlement was made with six stages of implementation, the second stage being complete in 2004, with costs estimated to total F$5 million. At the completion of the proposed upgrades there will be a surplus of 600 families that will need to be accommodated elsewhere, likely at the Housing Authority Waila Housing City if they are eligible, because planning involves decreasing residential density.

The ambivalence with which the Squatter Policy has been applied and has guided government interventions reflects the imprecision of the policy itself. Although it has been taken as a guide for government to approach informal settlement issues, overlapping Ministerial responsibilities, fragmentation of interests in interventions, electoral cycles and political instabilities as well as external support agencies have exerted more influence on interventions than the Cabinet approved Policy.

The Policy lacks clarity about how, to whom, and for whom it should be applied. For instance, is Squatter Policy supposed to apply whenever development projects involve informal communities? Does eligibility vary for families that share houses in an informal settlement, and are ‘squatter tenants’ accounted for in the allocation of resettlement sites? What resources and Government bodies will see to the planning, funding, and implementation of this policy – to what degree are the capital and human resources drawn from Ministries serving social welfare mandates and how is this affected by fund infusions from international banking and aid organisations which may place conditions on loans and grants? This leaves the Policy open to politicisation, with politicians wielding the power to push for site allocation for their constituents, or advising informal sector constituents to accept or refuse resettlement offers as it benefits political backing (Pers. Comm, talanoa session Housing Authority, 2007). Although the Fiji Squatter Policy is commonly referred to, cited in newspaper and scholarly articles, government departmental reports and parliamentary debates, it is unfortunately interpreted and reinterpreted with every change of Ministerial leadership and reshuffle of Cabinet portfolios, and evaluated only on a pass/fail basis: Did informal community resettlement or upgrading taken place – yes or no? The implications (either positive or negative) for the communities uprooted and ‘replanted’ are effectively ignored and administering bodies such as Ministries, the Squatter Resettlement Unit, the Housing Authority and the NLTB will be hard pressed to improve policies and programmes since the absence of monitoring, evaluation, even basic levels of follow up diminishes learning possibilities from past projects.

Realising the challenges of these loosely defined parameters, there have been repeated calls for a more detailed inter-sectoral housing policy framework that would be the foundation of collaborative efforts to address urban poverty and housing issues. Such a framework would outline the responsibilities of the various Ministries, public agencies, local Councils, community-based and non-governmental organisations and communities.

A National Squatter Council comprising representatives from Government departments, the NLTB, the Housing Authority and PRB, Suva City Council, the Central Board of Health, the Methodist Church, and the Nasinu Land Purchase Cooperative Society Limited was assembled by the Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment shortly after introducing the Squatter Policy (Lingam, 105 Fiji Government Online News Brief for February 10, 2004, at http://www.fiji.gov.fj/cgi-bin/cms/exec/view.cgi/17/1929/printer)
The Council was to meet regularly to discuss “upgrading and policing work” however it became inoperational due to lack of funds (PIAS-DG, 2007) and likely also lack of coordinated motivation and commitment. It has been remarked by the former Director of Housing that the Town and Country Planning Act is outdated and impedes the relaxation of low-income housing standards as was intended by the Squatter Policy of 1994 (Lingam, 2007). Nevertheless, the Policy has promoted concerted efforts by Government to address issues in the informal sector, especially since 1999 when the government grant allocation was quadruled and in successive years as allocations increased following the 2000 Coup (Lingam, 2007).

The Government provides a grant of F$1 million to the Housing Authority to subsidize the home loan interest rate for low income earners (lowering it from 11.59 percent to 6% for low income earners). A Home Retention Policy is also possible for those with loans who are affected by job loss, medical emergency, old age or retirement with a grant of up to F$5,000. Additional funding to support home construction is by F$5,000 grant from the Poverty Alleviation fund administered by the Ministry of Health, Women and Social Welfare (formerly the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Housing). Finally, a F$5,000 housing grant is available to former prisoners when sentences are complete, and a value added tax (VAT) refund is accessible to first home buyers.

The PRB is given a government grant in order to subsidize rental rates for low-income earners, to undertake capital works and maintain PRB flats, and for the servicing of PRB debt. Non-government entities also receive grant monies to encourage the provision of shelter through these channels. The Housing Assistance and Relief Trust of Fiji (HART) receives F$1 million for construction of approximately 50 new homes per year as well as maintenance of existing homes with 15 percent of the grant going towards the organisation’s administrative costs. The Rotary Club and Habitat for Humanity also receive government funding for low-income housing projects.

Municipal councils are also funded by government grant to pursue upgrading projects in low-income informal settlements. Under Rural Housing schemes, a one-third financial contribution by the applicant will garner a two-third contribution from Government in addition to subsidised Fiji Electrical Authority connection to encourage rural electrification. A repatriation grant is also available to urban informal settlers who wish to relocate their house from the urban setting back to the village. Government grants of F$10,000 are allocated to displaced farmers for the purchase of a farm.

In 2005 it became de-facto policy that the Suva City Council would resettle squatters rather than evict them without any alternative accommodation arrangement. The Housing Authority negotiated land for resettlement with the NLTB in several locations, but the most elaborate plans are for the Waila Housing City in Dauvuilevu near Nausori. The blueprint is for mixed development of the 900 acre subdivision to accommodate 5,000 lots. Eligible families would be entitled to a 50 percent subsidy on the unimproved capital value (UCV) of the lot or 50 percent of the development cost of the lot, whichever is lesser on land lots at the Waila Housing City according to an April 2001 Cabinet decision. The cost of the physical relocation (e.g., transport of families and their belongings and the re-construction of shelter where

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106 The Methodist Church and the Nasinu Land Purchase Cooperative Society Limited own large sections of land on which informal settlements have established.

107 This was increased to F$1.5 million in 2007 according to the Fiji Government Online interview with Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Housing, Adi Laufatu Malani of My 16, 2007 in regards to ‘Squatters.’ Retrieved from [http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/page_8965.shtml](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/page_8965.shtml)

108 Negotiation for land to be converted to residential 99-year leasehold is often by ‘partnership schemes’ between Government and the NLTB. This process is supported by capital grant "for the construction, land subdivision works and payment of premiums to land owners for the acquisition of land" (Lingam, 2007:20).

necessary) is supposed to be the responsibility of families as per the Squatter Policy, although landowners and Government are beginning to offer financial support to this end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government Grant Allocation ($</th>
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<th>Informal sector population details</th>
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<td>Public Enterprises Act, 1996</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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<td>40 informal settlement families on state land in Narere, Nasinu, settle there permanently for a charge of F$2,000 each for the land parcels they occupied</td>
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<td>800,000</td>
<td>Cabinet Decision 2001: ‘Resettlement of Squatters: Formula for Setting Premium and Criteria for Allocation of Lots – 155/127’, Suva.</td>
<td>Survey finds total squatter population is 56,400 at the end of 2001; over 11,000 families (of this, 6,600 Indo-Fijian families)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
<td>Demand for services such as food rations and financial aid for school fees in the sugar cane belt triples the previous year’s figures due to poor economic conditions resulting in displaced families and high rates of rural-urban migrants and informal urban settlement</td>
<td>The ‘squatter population’ rose by 8,000 from 2001 with 39 percent living on less than $2 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>State offers workshops to welfare payment recipients regarding beginning a business</td>
<td>182 squatter settlements nation-wide; estimated population of 82,350 or 13,725 households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>• Eviction notices issued to 3,000 squatter families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Waila Housing City stage 3B, Nausori (466 lots)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Namosau, Ba (80 lots)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Naqere, Savusavu (40 lots)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tavua (220 lots)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
<td>• Waila Housing City, Phase 1 (mixed) (400 lots)</td>
<td>8908 families or approximately 54,000 people in Suva squatter areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bulileka, Labasa (200 lots)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tadrua East, Phase 1 (500 lots)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Waqadra, Nadi, Phase 1 &amp; 2 (500 lots)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Rakiraki (80 lots)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>Committee on the Better Utilization of Land instated</td>
<td>Informal settlement population 120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3B: Government Initiatives In The Informal Housing Sector 1992 To Present**

*Source: adapted from ‘Funding’ in Lingam (2007:7-8) and ‘Five Year Land Development Programme’ in Lingam (2007:15) and from media releases noted below.*

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118 To increase to 310,000 by 2020 according to NZAID (2007:5) predictions.
CHAPTER 4: Methodology

Research Direction and Early Beginnings

Introducing the researchers and research inspiration

My interest in housing rights in Fiji led to my attendance at a forum dubbed the 'squatter Forum' in early 2007. Within this forum, representatives of informal settlement communities met to share experiences and to discuss how to create a strong, unified collective voice from which to engage with government in order to shape the future for the people of their respective communities. I met my Research Partner Charlotte Hoyte through this forum. This event was partly inspired by a two-day workshop held four months earlier which I was fortunate to help organise and attend. This workshop, entitled "Enhancing Dialogue around Squatter settlement Issues in Fiji" was hosted by the Governance Department of the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies at USP in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. These catalytic events coupled with a growing recognition of what can be accomplished when communities become actively engaged in issues affecting them, constitute the early influences on the formation of the Peoples Community Network (PCN). The PCN combines strategies of empowerment to find voice with the establishment of community savings to encourage action amongst a growing number of member communities in the Lami-Suva-Nausori corridor - all of whom are regarded by the government of Fiji as 'squatters'. During this time of dynamic transition I provided some technical (typing and multimedia) support to the young PCN. I later took on the role of Secretary for the NGO Coalition for the PCN and provided administrative and organisational support especially to Ecumenical Centre for Research and Advocacy (ECREA), the convener of this coalition.

A major priority of the PCN is to shape 'squatter policy' in Fiji and expand the scope of possible solutions beyond the narrow emphasis of Government Squatter Settlement Upgrading and Resettlement Programmes. The thrust of government programmes has been to create the capacity to resettle the growing number of people living in settlement communities in the Suva-Nausori corridor to an area of land on the periphery of the Suva Urban Area. The Waila 3B subdivision in Dauvuilevu was identified and developed as accessible housing project for low-income earners. The Community at Bai Ni Ose who are the subject of the case study within this thesis were relocated to this site at the end of 2006.

Subsequent to the well publicised government execution of squatter resettlement projects, little information has circulated documenting the outcomes of the relocation. The news stories that reach the public about this instance and other 'squatter settlement' relocations frequently consist of mainly one-sided policy affirming examples of achievement and exposés of government dedication to helping 'squatters' break free from the 'shackles' of the poverty cycle. Many news articles are devoid of the communities' voices all together, lacking both feedback from relocated communities or any reference to an official evaluation of the policy implementation. For instance, in the Fiji Times articles of September 7, 2005 State to resettle Muanivatu Squatters and December 23, 2006, Squatters Move Out which report on the relocation of the Community at Bai Ni Ose, the images depict settlement residents but quotations cited

119 For instance, the Crime Prevention Committee at Muanivatu settlement and some of the community committees in the Jittu Estate settlement have been pivotal in negotiations with authorities about community issues.

120 ‘Squatter’ status according to the official Fiji definition is not strictly a requirement for membership in the PCN, as in the case of Wailoku which is a dedicated and very actively involved member community. Squatter status can also be challenged, as shown by the ruling of the High Court of Fiji case of January 31, 2007 granting the Kai Solomon i settlement at Tamavua-i-wai legal tenure of a portion of formerly freehold land on which they were settled since 1935 through vakavanua or customary arrangement with the Tui Tamavua. See the judgement Australian Conference Association Limited v Sela [2007] FJHC 62; Civil Action 0357 of 2005.

121 For instance, the State Minister for Housing was quoted in 2006 as saying “Decent housing will break the cycle of poverty” and “What we want to do is to get these people out of the shackles of poverty” in Government of Fiji Portal Online Speech Jun 13, 2006: Hon. Caucas - Response to H.E. the President’s Address http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/printer_6895.shtml and Press Release of Oct 2, 2003: State steps up poverty eradication at http://www.fijigov.fi/cgi-bin/cms/exec/view.cgi/12/1328 respectively.
The absence of voice and representation of relocated communities has stirred scepticism and resistance in PCN communities about relocation as a strategy for low-income housing needs and the increase in 'squatter' settlements. They argue that informal land tenure is replaced with mortgages and that unintended effects, such as lack of nearby schools at Waila 3B, result in worsening economic strain for relocated families as well as increased fragmentation of communities.

**Theoretical and Community Influences**

Research was needed to demystify and critique the efficacy of the government squat resettlement policy. Seeking feedback from families relocated from Bai Ni Ose to Waila 3B recorded and gave voice to their experience of the realities of resettlement. This thesis sought to determine the outcomes of the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project from the perspectives of administrators and policy-makers, but also from relocated community members in order to gain insight into the processes of the negotiations and effects of physical relocation on families. Ultimately the case study of the Peceliema Community relocation contributes to the greater body of low-income housing policy research as a basis for a critical evaluation of relocation as a public policy response to issues of urban informal settlements.

The path of this research was carved by initial dialogue with Mr. Lesi Colata, elected Community Chairperson/Headman and Vakatavata24 in the Community church. Lesi explained that the community functions much as a village in the rural, indigenous Fijian setting and discussed with me how the research might be structured to best suit and benefit the community. He emphasised the importance of meeting the community before beginning research and of conducting research in a less formal manner for community members to feel comfortable and participate. He also underlined the importance of the communal history of the community, highlighting events which he saw as catalysts of change, the most recent being the relocation to Waila 3B.

A methodology was sought that would provide a framework to this qualitative research while also accounting for the sensitive nature of seeking knowledge and opinion, as an outsider, in the context of a Fijian community. This study draws heavily from Vanua Research philosophy as presented by Dr. Unaisi Nabobo-Baba (2006) and Kaupapa Maori research principles as these relate to de-colonising methodologies in works by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999; 2000). The points raised by Lesi with regards to how the research should be initiated and progress, and how the outcomes could be of benefit to the community are primary considerations of Vanua Research and Kaupapa Maori Research. Nabobo-Baba explores how knowledge is

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122 In reporting on a government-led subdivision beautification initiative in early 2007 at Waila 3B the commentary of relocated community members of Bai Ni Ose and Vuniavai was absent despite their participation as benefactors and in labour for the initiative. When interviewed about this tree-planting initiative, the Interim Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Housing expressed the government’s concern “when we relocate squatters...that they are safe and that they appreciate the environment that they live in particular the children...There’s a lot of children from [Vuniavai] settlement and Pony Club [aka Bai Ni Ose] settlement” [see Fiji Times article of Jul 5, 2007: Minister assists in planting of trees online at http://www.fijitv.fj/publish/page_9475.shtml]. However it is not clear whether the newly relocated Waila 3B residents were consulted about which aspects of the new environment are of greatest concern: that their children play in the tree-less barren lands and recently bulldozed hills or that they walk over mounting piles of rotting rubbish in the drains and ravine due to lack of rubbish collection and disposal facilities at the new site. The Interim Government is proud to accept recognition for its part in seeing the Bai Ni Ose community relocation to completion in the month immediately following the December 2006 Goup, stating that “The squatter relocation programme is part of the Interim Government’s mandate to lift the living standards of the growing poor and underprivileged of our country” [statement from Building A Better Fiji Press Release of April 13, 2007 marking 100 days since the swearing in of the Interim Government by the President; found online at http://www.fiji.gov.fj/uploads/100days_supp.pdf]. The well publicised relocation, self-congratulation, and subsequent community outreach events such as tree-planting at the new low-income subdivisions have not been balanced with feedback to establish whether these initiatives in fact meet the mandate of lifting the standards of the poor. Without substantiating the success of the government’s programmes, it is unclear if the resettlement and beautification recognize the needs and priorities of the newly relocated or if they serve primarily as a platform for good public relations.

123 For the purposes of this paper, the community at the focal point of this case study will be referred to as the ’Peceliema Community’ or the ’Community’. ’Peceliema’ is a name that the Community gave to itself and invokes the Community’s bond to its Church, history, and to the land where the Community was established (Pers. Comm, Lesi Colata). Other common ways of referring to the Community, such as ’Bai Ni Ose’ or ’Pony Club’, are used frequently by non-residents to give the geographical location (this is discussed further in the Research Findings section). However, the Community identity is better represented in calling it Peceliema as community identity is a constant in the Community where geographical location is not. ’Bai Ni Ose’ will be employed to refer to the location of the settlement. The relocation of the Community was dubbed ’The Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project,’ and this project title is adopted in this study for references to the execution of the relocation.

124 Village or Lay Preacher – Talatala is a Minister of religion (Capell, 1991:214).
situated in social contexts and how belongingness and proper protocol are pivotal to accessing this knowledge. Further, her work emphasises *talanoa*, a central process of knowledge sharing in the Fijian context, as an essential data gathering research tool. These works informed the culturally appropriate positioning of myself in relation to the people from whom I sought knowledge, in particular through partnership with Charlotte, an indigenous researcher, and using *talanoa* in the place of 'western-style' interviews or focus groups as data-gathering techniques. The following sections detail how Charlotte, as a Research Assistant, Research Partner and 'cultural broker,' extended the parameters of this study beyond the boundaries of what would be accessible to me. That is, beyond what participants would be able to share about the relocation with me alone, as an outsider who is not linguistically or culturally fluent in the Fijian context. The participants in this study are then introduced in order to highlight characteristics of the Peceliema Community and the Non-Community research contexts as they relate to ethical considerations of the research approach. How this translated into practise in the study is presented in the final section which outlines the research procedure.

**Parameters of the Study**

**Belongingness and Protocol**

The parameters of the study can be understood as the limits on generalisability of the research findings based on the cultural competency of the research and the qualities of the researchers which determine how and what information was collected. In the Pacific knowledge is shared and transmitted based on relatedness and belonging. Thus research parameters are set by aspects inherent to who I am as a researcher and how I was situated as belonging in the research context. Genealogical parameters which influence the disclosure of information to me in the Fijian context include that I am a female, Caucasian graduate student from Canada.

My gender and my outsider status as a foreigner determine the types and depth of information that can be shared with me in the Fijian Community setting. Robinson and Robinson (2005) note that traditionally women were often excluded from attending or speaking at village meetings, although this is changing over time with women now taking more vocal roles. Also, Nabobo-Baba (2006:44) describes a dichotomy between *taukei*, "people who are of the land, own the land and therefore look after the land" and *vulagi* or visitors in the worldview of her people, the people of Vugalei. She explains that this dichotomous worldview is prevalent among Fijians and is even internalised by Fijians who, when they are living abroad, may understand themselves to be as visitors of that place, which has its own peoples, while remaining and forever belonging as *taukei* of Fiji. A strong separation can be felt, then, between a Caucasian person and members of a Fijian community. A Caucasian person is often referred to as a *kaivalagai*, from *kai Vavalagi* which is Fijian for 'European person' (Capell, 1991:78). This extra distinction is pertinent to my visitor status as it connotes a history of European colonialism, oppressive governance, trade, and research practises. What can be represented by the colour of my skin and how this is received in the community is a very delicate and significant matter since contemporary research can never sever its association with a legacy of dehumanizing and exploitative research encounters that accelerated under colonialism (Donnelly, 2007).

My ability to observe proper protocol in terms of what is expected and polite for a female *vulagi/kaivalagi* in the Peceliema community was critical to ethical research conduct and to accessing

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125 Translated into English, *talanoa* is "to chat, to tell stories...to relate something;" *I talanoa* is "a story, account legend" (Capell, 1991:215). The word *talanoa* is used as both a verb, as in 'to talk story' and as a subject, as in 'the talk' or 'the forum of discussion.' The meaning of *talanoa*, in particular how it is framed as a research technique, will be elaborated throughout this chapter.

126 Capell (1991:272) translates the word *vulagi* to "a stranger visitor, pilgrim." Although Nabobo-Baba (2006:44) uses 'visitors' as the translation of *vulagi* when writing of the Vugalei worldview, the word 'pilgrim' as Capell notes is relevant in the context of this research for its association with the arrival of Europeans in the Pacific and the term *kaivalagi* described above. This is discussed further in the research approach section below with reference to 'decolonising methodologies'.
stories (Nabobo-Baba, 2006). Charlotte's guidance for dressing appropriately, sitting in an acceptable place and speaking at appropriate times was critical. She used quick and tactful reflexes to keep a close eye on me and explain when my behaviour, although unintended, was not ideal or appropriate (such as standing just outside the doorway of a home but not entering). Charlotte's very presence as my Research Partner was paramount to my ability to build rapport in the community and to enable participants to be at ease to *talanoa* in the research situation.

The degree of my belongingness was achieved primarily through my relatedness to Charlotte. In order to gain access to people's opinions and experiences I had to situate myself in relationship to the Peceliema Community. Charlotte's ability to have the discussion of genealogy and establish relatedness and pathways of belonging allowed me, by association, to be rooted and in a position to receive information. On several occasions this process of introductions identified her as *i tau* to Peceliema community members, with whom a less formal manner of interaction ensued. An important dimension of Charlotte's insider status is as a resident in one of Suva's long standing informal settlements. Charlotte's interest in settlement issues, in particular those affecting the youth, and her ability to relate to these and to communicate her empathy and understanding in both Fijian and English language was invaluable in providing a gateway to information and understandings far beyond strictly meeting obvious needs for translation and interpretation.

**Cultural and Linguistic Interpretation**

The term "cultural broker" highlights the importance of Charlotte's contribution as an insider who, in addition to bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, teaches me about ways of knowing and understanding in order to derive the most insight from each research context (Fadiman, 1997:95). Charlotte's cultural interpretation helped me to recognise aspects of the relocation and adjustment to the new environment that are subtly communicated and may otherwise have been marginalised in my account. She also interpreted for the community when I spoke, and enabled discussions to be conducted in Fijian language. Although the families comprised in the Peceliema community represent various *vanua* of Fiji, and thus speak different Fijian dialects, all were able to understand Charlotte as she communicated comfortably in Fijian, interspersed with the occasional English word or clarification. Her ability to facilitate the *talanoa* sessions in the Fijian language with Peceliema community residents was particularly critical as it permitted for more natural discussion to take place, encouraged participation by assuring inclusive understanding and functioned as a passing of knowledge and experience with in situ validation as other community members in attendance hear the stories, learn the histories and lessons contained in the telling, and bear witness to this knowledge and its disclosure to Charlotte and myself. Moreover, the dialogue in Fijian encouraged greater enjoyment of the story-telling. Community members laughed and shared jokes stirred by the *talanoa*. By lifting the restrictions imposed by the English language, dialogue was not limited to speakers knowing and confident enough to engage in English and the expression of Fijian perspectives and thought processes was not constrained by the English vocabulary which is unrepresentative and inadequate for this purpose. Thus, the space created for engagement widens with the use of Fijian language in which more

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127 *I tau* denotes "a friend, one who is put beside another" (Capell, 1991:222) and also refers to understood relationships between people who have not met before but whose ancestry and village ties dictate that they have friendly, informal interaction. See Ravuvu (1983) *Vaka I Taukei The Fijian Way of Life* about how genealogical understandings, histories, and marriages structure the type of interaction that occurs between individuals and groups in the indigenous Fijian context.

128 Here, *vanua* can be read as geographical places in Fiji and the people intimately tied to these places. However, *vanua* a much broader Fijian concept that refers to "a people, their chief, their defined territory, their waterways or fishing grounds, their environment, their spirituality, their history, their epistemology and culture" (Nabobo-Baba, 2006:155). Dr. Ana Taufe'ulungaki, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Graduate Affairs, explains that this concept exists across the Pacific, even being understood using a linguistically similar word in some countries. It thus "symbolises the holistic nature of Pacific world views and cultures, and is inclusive of people, and their values, processes, institutions, practices, traditions, languages, ways of life, beliefs, and knowledge systems, etc.; land; sea; sky; underworld; and, the spirituality that underpins the connections of all its elements" (Taufe'ulungaki, 2007: 9). See, for instance, Nabobo-Baba (2006: 77-87) for an explanation of *vanua* as important knowledge for the Vugalei people of Fiji; Ravuvu (1983: 76-84) for identification of people according to *vanua* and manifestations of *vanua* in the Fijian Way of Life.
authentic and thorough responses are enabled. To try to ensure that information related to me by Charlotte had been correctly understood, I did meet with Lesi several times to go over the information and relate back to him the details I had gathered.

On the importance of both verbal and non-verbal aspects of language, Nabobo-Baba highlights that "A person is judged by their manner of speech, so knowledge of how to speak is essential" (2006: 116). In addition to communicating in Fijian language, there is the vital nature of "appropriate speech type, intonation and deportment when addressing different people and groups" (2006: 84). Charlotte’s awareness of the relationship between the right to speak and the vanua, that is, of our position as visitors (Charlotte and myself, and particularly of my visitor status as kaivalagi) and therefore as listeners in the community enabled her to facilitate the talanoa with knowledge of when we should be silent.

Charlotte was further able to engage with an awareness of what speech and intonation is appropriate, and to interpret the various textures of silence that filled spaces in the conversation and story-telling. Silences are not empty in Fijian communication, but have meaning and add layers and perspective to verbal exchanges, as well as showing respect (in ceremonial situations such as at church or an important gathering; or in ordinary dialogue as a younger person is expected to do in communication with an older person, or as a visitor should observe in communication with host community members) or disagreement. However, not being of the Peceliema community, Charlotte articulated that to some degree she was also learning and deciphering how best we should conduct ourselves. Charlotte did at times express when relating information to me that what she was recounting for me was her interpretation or best understanding. She revised understandings and interpretations with me as these were fleshed out over the course of the study. As such, Charlotte could not solve the problem of ‘outsider-ness’ in this research, however over the course of successive group and individual talanoa sessions with Community members, and through the process of relating back to Community members what we were learning about their experience, it was possible to improve the level of accuracy and confidence in the research findings.

Considerations of Societal Roles

Parameters also relate to my roles in Suva, where I lived for the duration of the study. As a USP student and volunteer associated with ECREA and the PCN, my involvement with actors in the current, broad ‘squatter policy dialogue’ in Suva brings many links and relationships of trust through which to gain access to knowledge and information. By virtue of relationships established with people and communities, this also places an additional responsibility on me in terms of using information in a careful and responsible way to honour the trust invested in me. Further, these relationships and roles also affect the disclosure of information to me and the framing of this information as it is shared with me. For instance there may be participants in this research who are not clear or comfortable or in agreement with the active and vocal stance of ECREA in the current ‘squatter policy dialogue’ and thus may prefer to withhold certain information or opinions from me in order to avoid conflict or bad relations. It will be important that future research building on this study will take in to consideration how, for instance, due to my active and ongoing association with ECREA and the USP, participants may have been reluctant to share negative experiences and perceptions of these entities, thus setting parameters on the generalisability of findings that are a direct consequence of my situatedness as an insider to the ‘squatter policy dialogue’ by association with ECREA, the PCN, or the USP.

129 Silence as a way of knowing, as well as a taxonomy of silence in the lives of the Vugalei Fijians is discussed in Nabobo-Baba (2006: 94-107).
130 This refers to the discussions or dialogues that relate to squatter policy in the capacity to inform, shape, reform, monitor, evaluate, promote, extend, criticise or to otherwise be engaged about ‘squatter policy.’ Many government, non-government, donor and community led initiatives using a variety of media have contributed to Fiji’s ‘squatter policy dialogue’ by speaking up and by listening. Through this process, concerned actors are forming networks, coalitions, partnerships and relationships.
In recognition of the power imbalance between researcher and researched and in efforts to redress this imbalance, community participants were invited by the Lesi, and by Charlotte and I to ask questions about me and/or Charlotte personally, as to our roles in this research, about the intended benefits of this paper for them. They were reminded at the beginning of every session that they did not need to provide any information or answer any questions with which they were not comfortable. Community members did choose not to offer elaboration about certain aspects of the Peceliema Community history, in particular around the topic of political involvement of Community members: more than one reference was made to Community members being persuaded (by financial incentive?) to campaign in the Community during the most recent election period, in addition to references that promises were made by political figures that the Community would not be relocated and to ignore threats of eviction. Although this information would have unearthed some of the many ways which this informal community was politicised throughout its history, by choosing not to elaborate and by choosing to emphasize other aspects of the Community history and resettlement experience, the Community members that participated in the research communicated which aspects of their story were the most relevant to them at the time the research was undertaken. It is especially important to also consider that decisions taken around what information to share with Charlotte and I in the context of this research would have been influenced by the post-Coup political climate and the associated economic instability which was a constant throughout the research period.

At the end of the session this reminder was again reiterated, and participants were assured that they can make corrections to any of their contributions at any time, that the information they provide will be reported back to them prior to submission as a thesis, and that if they choose they are welcome to contact me any time for clarification about any aspect of the research or to pursue further discussion. This was to ensure that information provided was voluntary and to re-establish informed consent on an ongoing basis with participants engaging with this research on the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project and related issues.

Before beginning research the procedure was discussed and restructured with Lesi so that it would be respectful of community values and protocols. Lesi also discussed this study with his community, advising them of the topic and introducing me initially before Charlotte and I came to the Community for the first time. This was more than giving notice to the community that I would come to request consent to do research so that they could be prepared. It was done to enable consensus within the community that so that the research could be welcomed and to allow the community to air concerns in my absence so that needed adjustments to the research plan could be made and desired omissions/information to be shared could be contemplated in preparation. Lesi did relate to me in the very early stages of setting up this research that it was important for him, and for me when I would come into the community, to explain the research in a fashion that outlined how it would be of benefit to the community.

Participants

Peceliema Community
Participants in this research all had a 'stake,' perhaps better understood as an interest, in the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project, in that the negotiations and planning, the logistical management, and/or the outcomes of this case of policy implementation either directly or indirectly impacted on them or concerned them. The ejection of the Peceliema Community from the Bai Ni Ose settlement site, land leased by the Suva City Council to the USP, was orchestrated such that all resident families were relocated with USP and government support to alternative sites. The majority of families (30 out of the 40 total) were resettled at the Housing Authority subdivision at Waila 3B near Nausori. The remaining families relocated to Kalabu (3), Housing Authority or Public Rental Board estates in the Greater Suva Area (3), Housing Assistance Relief Trust accommodation (1), back to the village or to stay with family members elsewhere (3).
It is helpful to consider the participants as forming two groups for the purposes of the research procedure, distinguished as 'Peceliema Community members' and 'Non-community participants'. The Peceliema Community members who participated were from thirty families that were relocated to the Waila 3B subdivision as well as three families that relocated to Kalabu and one family temporarily residing at Wailoku. Neither names, age related data, or an exact number of participants was tabulated and 'participant' here has loose contours and denotes those individuals and groups offering comments or simply being present to listen. Contributions were made by people of various ages and roles in the community. Some details describing the community will help to establish a basis from which to understand their perspectives and contributions and why the research methods and procedure were adjusted.

Community participants included primary school children and youth that were attending grade school or post-secondary institutions (Fiji Institute of Technology and USP (6)). Regular activities and roles of the older youth include tending plantations and paid/voluntary work, and helping with household tasks such as cleaning, building, and maintenance of their homes. Of the older youth not schooling, some were working regularly and some unemployed; several were hopeful to complete trade certificates in the near future. All youth engaged in sports and/or church related activities either through school, with friends in the community, through the Ministry of Youth programmes or through the community Peceliema Church in conjunction with the local Methodist Youth Fellowship. Fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, and very soon-to-be grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts in the community participated in the research. Many households in the community are linked through familial ties, a connection which brought them to settle together at the Bai Ni Ose location formerly. Families varied in size, some households included several extended family members (aunts, uncles, cousins), newly married couples, and grandchildren while others were more nuclear, and some families had five or seven children while others had only one or two. Occupations held by fathers that were discussed at length include army soldier, construction labour, and USP facilities maintenance staff.

Household incomes did vary, evidenced by the various sites to which families relocated as each of the Housing Assistance Relief Trust, Public Rental Board, Housing Authority Subdivision at Waila 3B have income level criteria associated. As well, the stratification by housing type at Waila 3B indicates which families either had the financial resources to build a new house or more likely the income level and regular employment required to obtain a loan for new high-standard Wingate brand house construction while other families opted for housing requiring substantially less investment. From the time of first establishment, the Community has largely comprised members from four vanua: Verata (Tailevu), Waitoga (Nairai), Matuku and Kabara (Lau).131 importantly it also includes members of Indo-Fijian, Rotuman, and Kai Solomon132 ancestries. For the purposes of this study, however, no Indo-Fijian or Rotuman community members were participants by making contributions or by attending any of the sessions. This constitutes a parameter in itself because of the insights they may have offered. The importance of these members to the composition of the community was discussed by others in describing the ethnic and geographical diversity of the community and the history of the community, which is elaborated in the Research Findings. Of the thirty families at Waila 3B, the great majority regularly attend the Peceliema Vou church,131 a

131 These are the four vanua, or more specifically the four tikina (units of a province or ‘yasana’) that were represented in 1991 at the time that the sevusevu was presented to the Tui Suva. As community members changed with families moving in and out of the Community at Bai Ni Ose, the vanua that were represented did fluctuate, but the idea that they should be represented in governing structures remained constant. In 2005/06 when the government wished to organise the community to engage in relocation negotiations they suggested a committee be set up to represent all of the vanua of the community. This committee would comprise 6 men with two elected by the community from each vanua.

132 Kai Solomon is a common term in Fiji for referring to people (kai) of Solomon Island ancestries.

133 These stables were converted into informal rental units and the Suva Pony Club has since used other buildings nearby. The larger common room that was part of the original stables was used as the community hall and on Sundays it was used for holding church service. The designation of the word ‘Vou’ (lit: new) in the church is to acknowledge and create a lasting reminder of the transformation of the church within the Community (and transformation of the Community itself) on January 5, 2005. Lesi explained to me: “On this particular day, no body will ever forget the event that took place. All the families at the settlement gave up their lives, land and church willingly to God to be its
The Methodist church which initially stood at Bai Ni Ose and has been rebuilt at the base of the cul-de-sac in Waila 3B where many of the community members obtained land plots. Lesi explained the name of the church, ‘Peceliema’ (lit: Bethlehem) was inspired by the spiritual association with the Bible Story and the nature of the church as a nurturing force in their community due to the ‘birth’ or earliest settlement of the Bai Ni Ose Community at the stables of a pony club in the mid-1900s. Community togetherness and community governance structures are understood within the community to depend and be strengthened by the lotu (spirituality, in association with the church). The three families at Kalabu also regularly attend church at a different location, as does the family temporarily in Wailoku. Nearly all of the community’s participation was in Fijian language, however there were instances when certain participants preferred to speak in English or when a speaker decided to share certain stories in English in addition to or in building upon stories told in Fijian.

Non-Community

Key research participants from outside the Bai Ni Ose community include:

- The USP Registrar
- The Senior Business Change Analyst, Registrar's Office – overseer of the logistical portion of the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project
- Director, Squatter Settlement Unit
- The General Managers, Customer Services Division, Fiji Housing Authority
- Current Lecturer at USP, Former CEO for the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare, and Poverty Alleviation

Additionally consulted for this work:

- Current and former Lands Department Officials
- The Chairman of the Peoples Community Network
- Field Coordinator of the Economic Justice Programme at ECREA

Approach and Ethics

This study follows a qualitative approach with emphasis on the social and contextual aspects of the relocation from the perspective of the relocated community and on views shared by informants in government Ministries, the Housing Authority, and at USP. A priority articulated very early by Lesi was that participation in this research should benefit other communities facing similar circumstances by sharing how relocation was experienced by the Peceliema Community. The research is action-based in orientation in that it seeks to inform concerned societal actors, including in particular informal communities slated for resettlement, of the impacts for the Peceliema Community of this policy and to create a channel for this relocated community to make a contribution to the current 'squatter policy dialogue.' Although not directly undertaken as a project of either the Coalition for the PCN or the PCN itself, this study was supported by members of both groups who offered their time and advice, facilitated meeting arrangements, the procuring of documents, and who are vested in the study and wish to be better informed about the Peceliema Community resettlement at Waila 3B.
Vanua Research philosophy
Vanua Research philosophy underpins this study which draws on data about, and engagement of people in issues regarding the *vanua* and therefore has "implications for the *vanua* and the welfare of its people" (Nabobo-Baba, 2006:25). Nabobo-Baba's Vanua Research framework is designed for insider research among people who belong to each other and to land. The Peceliema Community share a strong sense of belonging to each other and meaningful attachment to the land at Bai Ni Ose although they did not come together from one common place of origin and they are not all genealogically connected. The Community operates largely as a village, albeit in an urban setting. The composition of the community is predominantly indigenous Fijian, although some representation of the Indo-Fijian, Rotuman, and Kai Solomoni populations of Fiji is also found therein. The resemblance and conception of the community of its own similarities to a rural indigenous village, and the majority representation of indigenous Fijian lifestyle drove the adaptation of this study to the Vanua Research framework.

Characterising vanua in the Peceliema Community
For the Community, *vanua* is constituted by common history and attachment to the land and environment at Bai Ni Ose. The incorporation of a reciprocal view of the land as caring for the Community and the Community caring for the land is rendered into shared identity. The relationship of the people to the Church and of the Church to the land is a defining aspect of *vanua* for the Community. The Peceliema Vou Church is one of the founding shelters of the first residents at Bai Ni Ose, integral to the Community and its history as a symbol of the relationship between God, the Community, and the land where they settled at Bai Ni Ose as well as the new land at Waila 3B.

The Peceliema community has understood structures and protocols that represent its unique composition of families from various parts of Fiji (read: different *vanua*), such as the governance structures which call specifically on the contribution of the various *vanua* represented in the community - not combining these into one but accentuating the value of each opinion which reflects a distinct *vanua*. Protocols for respecting the *vanua* in the Peceliema Community are by presenting *sevusevu*¹³⁴ to request entrance to and engagement with the Community and acknowledging the internal leadership of elected representatives, Church representatives, and Community elders, principally *turaga* (lit: men) who are seen as holders of Community history and wisdom (Pers. Comm, Lesi Colata). The Community leadership structure was respected and research engagement was channelled appropriately through this structure. Every effort is made to respect the way that the community wished their views and priorities to be represented, especially that they are thankful for the opportunities presented by the relocation and wish to honour God for granting this gift (any issues the Community discussed should be understood from this perspective). Respectfully adhering to community protocols and gratefully accepting the invitation to attend evening church services before commencing research was foremost with the desire to build and value relationships.

Decolonising Research Methodology
Vanua Research and Kaupapa Maori Research hold that the involvement of the community should include participation in the formulation of the research design, that is, participation should begin at the outset of research. Lesi played a significant role in procedural review and refining, and in the formulation of the research output. This review prior to commencing research was necessary to 'decolonise' the methodologies that I was unconsciously gravitating towards in the initial research design. The concept of

¹³⁴ *Sevusevu* is the *yaqona* root (dried whole or pounded *piper methysticum*, also known as 'kava' root) presented by a visitor upon arrival at a home, village, or meeting which shows respect for the owners of the home, village, or function (Nabobo-Baba 2006:26). It may be presented as part of a ceremony where it "is accepted in the customary way" with an exchange of speeches and appreciation for the host and visitor, sometimes followed by mixing pounded *yaqona* with water to drink (Capell, 1991:192). The centrality of offering a *sevusevu* for Fijian social practises at all societal levels is an example of how "The philosophy of life of the Fijian is reflected in things ceremonial" (Nabobo-Baba, 2006:53).
'decolonising (or de-westernizing) research methodology' refers to a process of acknowledging how dominant groups (read: the colonizer) have left a legacy of research which dehumanizes indigenous peoples and maintains inequalities by privileging "Western ways of knowing" and "concepts of 'common sense'" that ignore the epistemological traditions and knowledge alive among indigenous populations (Smith, 1999:182-187; Smith, 2000, in Battiste, 2000; Papoutsaki, 2007).

Kaupapa Maori Research in New Zealand is an example of research methodology that is grounded in Maori identity and understandings of the world, and maintains the concept of whanau as one of several core principles (whanau connotes decent from a given ancestor from a given place; an extended family). It is similarly distinguished from Western research orientation by this foundation in whanau (an indigenous epistemological concept) as Vanua Research in Fiji is founded on the Fijian concept of the vanua. To pursue research with a Kaupapa Maouri orientation, one is not required to be Maori or speak the languages, however research pursued thus should use this orientation to structure assumptions, values, concepts and priorities which engage and respect indigenous ways of knowing while expressly sharing research benefits (see Smith, 1999). Vanua Research guidelines as put forth in Nabobo-Baba (2006:135-137) emphasise the importance of the primary researcher being of indigenous background with the ability to speak and facilitate research in Fijian. This has particular relevance for me, as an 'outsider' and the fundamental role of my Research Partner Charlotte. Implications of my 'outsider-ness,' which influence what information can be shared with me and how I come to understand information put before me based on frameworks I have internalised through socialization/formal education in the primary cultural context of my upbringing are discussed as 'parameters' of the study at the beginning of this chapter.

'Talanoa' for the Research Context

Vanua Research philosophy positions talanoa centrally as a tool for amassing data in a manner that recognises and respects the protocols for knowledge access and to allow the procedure and product of the study to be shaped by the vanua (Nabobo-Baba, 2006). Per Lesi, to talanoa is to have a substantial conversation. Within the framework of this study he uses talanoa to refer to the act/process of imparting information in a comprehensive way or "telling the history." He impressed on me that to use this word rather than a more foreign (read: English/Western) and technical sounding word such as 'interview' or 'focus group' would be better understood and received in the community (Pers. Comm, Lesi Colata). It was resolved with Lesi that loosely conducted one-on-one and group talanoa sessions would allow the opinions of respondents to be shared in a less threatening exchange on their own terms. The current study does not presume to meet all the requisites that have become understood as tenets of using talanoa as a research tool. Instead this study, though inevitably reflecting my personal research background in the social sciences, is a conscientious effort to uphold the values embedded in the use of talanoa: to acknowledge it as a term of shared meaning between the researchers and the community denoting a situation of storytelling and to place this process on a research platform that seeks to diminish unequal power structures that exist in the researcher-research subject relationship.135

Exploring Talanoa as a Research Tool

Talanoa is a word describing the process of dialogue between two or more people as well as a situation of storytelling "to an audience of people who are largely listeners" (Nabobo-Baba, 2006:27). Talanoa sessions can occur in formal or casual settings, as part of ceremonial proceedings or in spontaneous meetings. As Nabobo-Baba explains, informal talanoa sessions "are more light-hearted, with

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135 John Donnelly (2007:35) comments that "Fieldwork can expose the researched person to intimidation and exploitation due to power relationships that exist between the researcher and the subject" but that awareness of this inequality and more participatory methods coupled with shared benefits of the output can help to frame the research and the researchers relationship to the community to mediate this effect.
passers-by being called in to participate" with after-hours sessions often occurring "around the yaqona" (2006:27). Dr. Sitiveni Halapua (2003; 2007) relates talanoa to the concept he refers to as va, the Tongan word for space. He explains:

Talanoa helps build better understanding cooperation within and across our human relationships in va. It advances narrative understanding and knowledge about our social identities, our extended families, our villages, our ethnic and tribal communities, our values, beliefs, and relationships, and our moral, economic, and political interests. The narrative understanding and knowledge advanced by talanoa serves to reduce tension and conflict and thereby foster peace, stability, and complementarity in our relationships with one another over time and space (Halapua, 2003).

From this basis of understanding, the concept of talanoa has been developed as a "process consistent with Pacific cultures" for "bringing people together to share opposing views without predetermined expectations" for the outcomes (Robinson & Robinson, 2005). Halapua has been instrumental in formulating talanoa for implementation at the national and regional level among South Pacific Island countries, to pursue engagement between country leaders with the talanoa process itself acting as mediating force. Halapua describes talanoa: "frank expression without concealment in face-to-face storytelling. It embodies our understanding of the inner feeling and experience of the space of who we are, what we want, and what we do and share as members of different groups in life" (Halapua, 2003). The specific use of talanoa as a mediation process/research tool has come to assume certain procedural qualities, for instance it should involve a facilitator, take place through face-to-face interaction, where all participants can make contributions on what is important to them, in their first/preferred language, in a focussed context but without a predetermined agenda and without strict time constraints (Halapua in SGI Quarterly, 2007; Halapua, 2003). Considering that a strict agenda for meeting together in dialogue imposes a direction on the dialogue or presumes a desired outcome, an agenda-less talanoa intends to bring people together "to discuss issues that they feel are relevant to that time and place" (Robinson & Robinson, 2005:17). The facilitator should act as a ‘sounding board,’ extracting themes or points of emphasis from the dialogue and verbalising these back to the speaker to check that the ideas are being properly understood before they are recorded (Halapua in SGI, 2007). The facilitator can 'float' or 'weave' ideas into the discussion but does not steer the discussion (Robinson & Robinson, 2005; Nabobo-Baba, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

The ethical principles guiding the research design placed the well-being of relationships at the centre of research decisions. In a Working Draft Research Ethics Policy for USP, Dr. Ana Taufe’ulungaki explains that "Good relationships and the values and principles that promote and sustain them are central to ethical research conducts and practices in the Pacific...The common core values and principles that underpin ethical relationships in the Pacific are: respect, cultural competency, meaningful engagement, reciprocity, utility, rights, balance, protection, capacity building, and participation" (Taufe’ulungaki, 2007: 8). From this

136 A plant (Piper Mystemicum) of customary importance for its root which is dried and pounded to be made into a drink when mixed with water (Capell, 1991:287).
137 In 1993 at a meeting of the leaders of the Pacific in Honolulu, Dr. Sitiveni Halapua was tasked with resolving a holistic and Pacific-sensitive process of engagement on critical issues; "a way of incorporating all the differing points of view and opinions... [including] politics, economy, tradition, gender, religion and the environment" (Robinson & Robinson: 17). "Talking from the heart" is a central component of the talanoa process that Halapua puts forward. He explains that developing Talanoa in order to articulate it, learn from it, and make it accessible to non-Pacific Islanders takes place by "writing about it, as well as practising and implementing it [where] the theory follows the practical application (SGI Quarterly, 2007)." Halapua uses "the words 'frank expression without concealment' precisely because the meaning in talanoa is derived from two different yet related meanings in the languages of Austronesian-speaking people: talo meaning talking or telling stories and noa meaning 'zero or without concealment'. Talanoa embraces our worldviews of how we can and ought to live and work together collectively, and relate to one another in a good, relational way as different cultural members of society" (Halapua, 2003).
138 There is significant conceptual overlap here, of critical relevance for this research in the inter-relationships of vanua and ‘knowledge’ and ‘respect’ and ‘relationships.’ Lesi explained to me that the vanua gives knowledge and is knowledge, and that, as Nabobo-Baba (2006) affirms, any and all relationships must be anchored in respect for the vanua which itself is a show of respect for others. Thus, to take an ethical approach to research in an indigenous Fijian community is one in the same with applying vanua research philosophy.
ethical standpoint many of the ethical considerations advanced by universal declarations, including request for informed consent prior to participation, respect for participant/community integrity, privacy and confidentiality, and weighing of study benefits against potential harm, can be inherently accounted for (Nabobo-Baba, 2006; Ravuvu, 1983, Taufe'ulungaki, 2007). For instance, adhering to protocols that promote relationship building also forms the basis of obtaining informed consent, involving the community's participation and opportunity for learning and sharing in the research structure, and showing respect for the people and the place most concerned in the study.

Flexibility defines the procedure which incorporated ongoing adjustments as needed. As such the community was not just the 'object of study' but also determining the progression of the study. The participation of Lesi in this process ensured that a consistent focus on how the study be of use and benefit to the community, structured so as to respect the rights and reflect the values of the community, and include an avenue for ongoing feedback from the community through Lesi for the duration of the fieldwork. Lesi additionally arranged dates and times for research to take place in the community, structured the circumstances of introduction of the researchers and the research purpose to the community, and encouraged community members to ask questions of the researchers even as information was sought from them. Reinforcing the utility of this study and as a measure of reporting back to the Community, a translated summary of this research will remain with the Peceliema Community in addition to the preparation of the History Book with Lesi.

Sevusevu

According to community protocol, sevusevu was presented to the Bai Ni Ose community at Waila 3B and a small ceremony was held in the community church. However these were held on different nights: the small church ceremony which consisted mainly of initial introductions was held first and prior to any research. The sevusevu was presented on a later date because at the time that research was initiated, the community was not consuming yaqona due to a fast for the week in conjunction with church activities. Lesi began the presentation of the sevusevu, and then invited me to stand before the Community inside the Church to have an opportunity to thank the Community for welcoming Charlotte and I and for their time and participation. By the acceptance of the sevusevu the community granted us entry, welcomed us warmly, recognized and approved of the purpose of our research and visit, and acknowledged that additional visits for research purposes would follow (Pers. Comm, Lesi Colata). Subsequent visits did not involve sevusevu presentation, although every visit did involve a manner of re-negotiation our entry and being re-acquainted with the community: Every visit to the community began with attendance at the evening church service which closed with kind words of welcome and gratitude for our coming, and with the suggestion by the vakatawa that we take a moment to exchange greetings and shake hands with members of the congregation after the prayer.

Gifting

Gifting appropriately was and is an important aspect of acknowledging relationships and maintaining reciprocal relations as a show of appreciation for the community imparting wisdom, sharing experience and knowledge, welcoming Charlotte and myself into their community and homes, offices and meetings, sharing their food and time, and pardonning my cultural miscues (Nabobo-Baba, 2006). Gift giving, Ravuvu (1983: 11) explains, accompanies "A high proportion of significant social contact among Fijians... symbolic of the recognition and honour one pays the other person." Gifting, while simultaneously building and maintaining relationships, is a show of respect for the vanua. This system has been manipulated and misinterpreted by researchers. Unintended harmful consequences of offering, or 'trading' as it has been perceived in some outsider ethnographic accounts, inappropriate goods in exchange for information or access to communities for research purposes is documented throughout the past two centuries (Ferraro, 2001:168). According to Ravuvu (1983) and Nabobo-Baba (2006) what is deemed
appropriate in value and quantity will vary depending on the status of both the gifter and the recipient, as well as the length of time between visits and the relationship of the gifter to the community. To avoid projecting my values on to the community by selecting gifts myself, I sought counsel from Lesi, who (reluctantly) offered advice about what would both be appropriate and appreciated by the community. This was a hardcover Bible and Hymn book. In addition, food items, such as tea, milk, sugar, bread, cakes and yaqona, were brought to every research session, and Community members frequently and very generously contributed additional food items.

**Research Design, Re-Design and Review**

The initial conception of this study embodied a more positivist orientation, in the form of 'western-style' reporting of empirical research, employing an open-ended question-answer format. The originally proposed procedure sought to determine from responses to open-ended questions what themes and criteria emerge or can be inferred as indicators of the perceived effectiveness of the Fiji Government squatter resettlement policy and how these differ depending on whether the respondent was a resident who was personally relocated or, conversely, acted in the capacity of a policy administrator on behalf of the government, Housing Authority, or USP administration.

This approach, however, overlooked the structures governing the protection and sharing of knowledge and opinion that exist in the Peceliema community and have been established informally over more than half a century. Further, it naively presupposed that community members would be able to articulate which aspects of the relocation were seen to be successful and which were seen as challenges or imposing hardship, and that the meaning of 'success' and 'hardship' would be shared by researchers and respondents. This line of questioning falsely presumes that community members internalise and will reconstruct the experience in terms of a 'success versus non-success' dichotomy for the purposes of sharing with researchers within these boxed categories; it constrains the breadth of a response and all the details deemed important by the respondent (although perhaps not recognisable as such by the researcher) within this superficial structure. It further presumes that the meaning of 'success' in the context of community relocation is static and translatable into concise, English data. These 'western-style' academic methods and research tools were not adequate to achieve the research objectives in this predominantly indigenous Fijian community context. Respecting community history and protocols, as well as 'seeing' and 'hearing' when conducting research, required a *more* open, sensitive and informed approach in order to access and receive knowledge reflecting the perspectives of community members.

Discarding the procedure originally proposed and typical of the social sciences, the research was repositioned to be of greater benefit to the community itself which wished to establish a historical record of transformation in the community for its own purposes. The research, thus, does not include a lengthy profile of community attributes, that is, no household survey data was explicitly collected to record socio-economic conditions either before or after the relocation. Rather, personal, family, and community views and experiences form the crux of data sought and collected.

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139 This came to light in an early discussion with Lesi that took place in English. A colleague who was also present pardoned himself in order to clarify several points with the community headman in the Fijian language. In relating to me what had been discussed in Fijian language, my colleague explained that concerns about the outcomes of the relocation in our current discussion are not equated by Lesi with 'non-success' (where success/non-success or failure was viewed to be a static 'stamp' applied to an event). Rather, these are regarded as challenges to be overcome that may seem greater or smaller in the community's view depending what other concerns are held at a particular time. This highlighted the influence of word choice in determining interpretation of questions and determination of responses, as well as the reluctance to use words which embody determinate judgments on a contentious topic and preference for more dynamic descriptors in the context of opinion sharing.

140 See Nabobo-Baba’s (2006: 31-34) discussion of dominant academic measures assumed to be 'protecting' and/or 'respecting' communities and participants. The discussion considers how, when imposed uncritically into an indigenous context, such measures may not apply or are ineffective, potentially damaging, and may result in a framework for data synthesis leading to misinterpretation of information and furthering a legacy in 'Western-style' research of misrepresentation of indigenous communities and knowledge.
Primary and secondary research methods\textsuperscript{141} were used for procuring data in the course of this study. Secondary research was an integral part of preparing the research proposal and was the basis of the literature review and methodology development. Primary research methods included: (a) *talanoa* sessions in which to explore the discourses surrounding the community relocation as well as (b) participant observation which allowed for the exploration of contextual aspects of the same (Hassen, 2006).

**Secondary Research**

Secondary research formed the basis of the literature review which sought both to explore the methodologies that better represent the context for Pacific peoples and Pacific values as well as to gather a rich background in issues pertaining to land, housing, poverty, and relationships between them. For instance, legislation concerning land and housing in Fiji and the Pacific, urban planning, zoning, and the regulation of space, government programmes relating to housing and poverty issues (both rural and urban), government partnerships and reporting on issues of housing and poverty with international aid donors, perceptions of poverty and in particular perceptions of low-income and informal housing arrangements across different sectors of society, and processes such as urbanisation and globalisation which bear on issues of land, housing, and poverty. Secondary research thus focused on Government of Fiji press releases, Parliamentary address, Cabinet releases, Ministerial and Auditor General reports and academic works concerning poverty, housing, urbanisation, and informal settlement issues in Fiji (concentrating especially on works published since 1995). Online and USP Library searches, particularly in the Pacific Collection, were fruitful as were searches in the publications and private collections of the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), ECREA. Workshop publications of the Asian Development Bank, as well as reports of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and books providing ‘global’/international perspectives on urban poverty and informal settlements helped to situate the Fijian context of land/housing/poverty issues within the wider and increasingly studied international context.

Concerning the specific case of the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project and of ‘squatter relocation policy’ in Fiji, secondary analysis was ongoing throughout the entire research period, collecting documentation relating to the negotiation processes and outcomes of relocation. This includes grievances raised publicly with officials (Ministries, Police, and court officials) and recorded in meeting minutes and court proceedings or covered by journalists in the daily newspapers. Other relevant documents procured are meeting reports and progress notices, communications detailing concerns between actors in the relocation process, resettlement plan and logistics revisions, and minutes of the Community Komiti (lit: committee) proceedings which represented the residents of the settlement.

**Primary Research: Participant Observation**

Participant observation for the purposes of this study denotes that the researchers are observers engaged as participators in an activity or setting in order to gain shared meanings and to learn through doing (Ellen, 1984:217). This method was valuable for introducing the researchers to subtle knowledge that is conveyed through interaction, which is often non-verbal and that may not be possible or too inconspicuous in a situation unravelling as a *talanoa*. The researcher as participant observer rather than as a silent, disengaged observer is better able to understand how the community operates by participating in aspects of its ‘operation’ and to learn by doing with them what is important to them in the manoeuvrings of

\textsuperscript{141} Primary research methods are those which involve the collection of data that does not already exist, that is, the methods of data-gathering involved in the actual fieldwork of this study. Secondary research refers to the compilation of documents, records, and research analyses conducted to date by others so as to inform the current study and for the purpose of meta-analysis of the details contained therein. The source of primary research data is thus the field, whereas the source of secondary research data may include peer-reviewed journals, libraries, document retrieval in national archives or organisational record systems, and the Internet (Ferraro, 2001).
their in daily lives. Practising knowledge, that is, learning and sharing by doing, is emphasised as a channel for transmitting knowledge in Pacific Cultures.142

Participant observation took place primarily in two important contexts. Firstly, by invitation to community events and activities held by the Peceliema Community now living at Waila 3B: the Methodist Youth Fellowship Drama and later a soli,143 as well as by attendance at evening church service. These were all church related activities, which is fitting as the Peceliema Vou church is a central part of the community and events at the church make up a large proportion of community gatherings. This experience was important time for building relationships within the community, and at the soli it was a chance to sing and dance and pay respects to the church and its role in the Community. Additionally, because the research period overlapped with the preparation for the Methodist Youth Fellowship Drama during the first two weeks of research in the Community, Charlotte and I joined the evening mass at church prior to gathering with talanoa participants. In addition to participating by being present with the community for the church service and observing through this participation what dynamics surround this activity in the Peceliema community, this time and spiritual space was beneficial to Charlotte and myself as a moment to be peaceful and calm and contemplative. This offered to both of us a stillness to be spiritually moved, to clear our minds, and to appreciate for ourselves with the Community the significance of the Peceliema Vou Church to the lives and foundation of the Community. Feeling acquainted and having let the rush of the day subside, this allowed for a more natural and productive transition into the research context of a talanoa session as we (the researchers) moved together with community members physically and emotionally from a connected physical and emotional space in church to a family home for talanoa.

Primary Research: Talanoa Sessions

Non-Peceliema Community Participants

Talanoa sessions with non-community members were qualitatively different from those in the Community. Most were arranged by scheduling an appointment during regular working hours and then meeting with in offices at participants’ places of employment. Both the context of the working environment and the tight schedules of the working day contributed to the talanoa assuming qualities of a business meeting. Participants were cognizant of progressing through the session in a timely fashion, many requested example questions in advance of the session. Questions shared in advance of sessions were taken from a draft list of open-ended questions compiled prior to the procedural overhaul. This list was only referenced in talanoa sessions with non-community members in instances when a prompt was requested or to reignite the dialogue when discussion ceased by extended silence with time remaining in the session. The sessions took place without the support of a Research Partner and were conducted in English; none of the non-community participants had any concerns about this and when asked most responded that English was the language of their workplaces so it was seen as appropriate. However, it is worth noting that for the majority of non-community member participants, of various Pacific Islander ancestries, English was not their mother tongue. Discussions were vivid and included much description and story-telling by anecdote. In general long silences were accompanied by attentive body language seemingly in anticipation of feedback or response from myself. In some instances long silence preceded the participants’ asking if they were getting ‘too off topic’ to which I responded by urging them on or probing aspects of the story. In one instance that I am aware of I did not correctly read a long silence: when a very interesting session lasted, unbeknownst to me, beyond the time allotted I mistakenly probed the topic

142 Wood (2006) reviews findings that Pacific peoples learn overwhelmingly from observation and hands-on experience; “knowledge is meaningless unless practised” (Ayau &Tengan, 2002: 185, cited in Wood, 2006:44), suggesting that knowledge practise, that is doing, can be a means of understanding people in totality. Noting the reciprocal relationship between practise and knowledge as dimensions which inform each other, Wood (2006) examines the value of ‘practise-based research’ as a contemporary research approach in Oceania.

143 Soli (n.) is a gift or offering (Capell, 1991:200), in this case a financial contribution where the social gathering at which funds are collected is also referred to as a soli.
further rather than observing that the silence was a very politely attempt to bring the session to a close. In all sessions short notes were taken by hand.

**Peceliema Community**

Research sessions with Peceliema Community members at Waila 3B, Kalabu and Wailoku gathered details of the relocation process, the locations of residents since the site on Queen Elisabeth Drive was vacated, perceptions of current living locations and perceived changes in livelihoods arising in the accounts of Community members. The objective was to draw out the most accurate representation of viewpoints in the Community by encouraging a wide and honest expression of perspectives. The sessions at Waila 3B were all facilitated by Charlotte in the Fijian language and documented with short notes by pen and paper. At Kalabu the *talanoa* was assisted by two Peceliema youth who translated as appropriate and at Wailoku assistance was by family members. *Talanoa* sessions took place as groups rather than one-on-one. The group situation with freedom to come and go sought to reduce feelings of intimidation associated with one-on-one situations.

Holding separate *talanoa* sessions at Waila 3B aimed to gather a variety of views by providing narrative space for men, women, and youth apart to explore the possibility that the relocation had different consequences for each of these groups depending on their roles and responsibilities in the community and in their families. Also, the way in which communication takes place in the indigenous Fijian setting is influenced heavily by who else is present and varies by age and gender. Thus gathering men, women and young people in separate *talanoa* groups reduced the potential that research findings represent the contribution of one group to the exclusion of another and sought to encourage more candid expression by younger generations that might offer unique insights. *Talanoa* sessions with the turaga (men), marama (women), and youth were held on separate evenings. Participation was voluntary (though encouraged by Lesi during the Church service) and the 'sample' of community members that offered to share their experience was self-selected as they turned up and departed from the session whenever they wished. The flow of participants in and out of the *talanoa* group situation was entirely up to the community.

Lesi arranged for the first group *talanoa*, the maramas, to take place in the main room of one of the larger houses. He originally requested that women in the community take turns, coming to sit and *talanoa* a few at a time with Charlotte and I. However, most of the women came at once, with others coming and going, and passers-by also drifting in and out of the room. One reason that the women decided to be present in this way was that the session followed the evening church service and so the *talanoa* began at a late hour. Attendance all at once reduced the length of time involved in the session especially for the host family. As well, offering details and opinions in the presence of others and alongside the comments of others can be seen as a process of validation and consensus-building that acknowledges a communal basis from which opinion is formed in the Pacific. The turaga and youth *talanoa* sessions followed this assembly style as well. Lesi informed me ahead of time that the turaga session would be focusing on the history of the Community as it was among the turaga that this knowledge was preserved and customarily shared. Recording this history was a special priority of the study, and on Lesi’s request a digital recorder was used in this session. The use of the digital recorder had an important effect on the

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145 This was explained by Lesi when the session ended.
146 Kalolo (2007:258) illustrates this process using an analogy: “Tokelau as a whole and its separate villages are indeed often likened to a canoe. Tokelau functions collectively, arriving at decisions by consensus. In a planned voyage, all aspects of the planning are formulated and overseen by senior elders, who allocate specific tasks to others. This collectivity adds credibility and blessings to the whole endeavor.” Bleakley (2002) acknowledges an emphasis on consensus in Tonga and also points out that this emphasis can be problematic at times: “authority...has its roots in consensus, notwithstanding the fact that consensus can be engineered through cultural expectations and constraints.”
flow of the session: rather than proceeding in a discursive fashion, the *turaga* wanted stories to be recorded from start to finish without interruption. The *turaga* told stories one person after the other with the recorder paused in between. *Yaqona* was consumed throughout this session, and bowls were served between stories while the recorder was paused so as not to make any background noise on the recording and to preserve the integrity of the recorded story.

**Parameters arising structural aspects of the study**

The time of day that the *talanoa* session was held in the community setting effectively determined who was able to attend and for how long. Additionally, Saturdays are the main day for shopping and gardening and preparing for the week to follow and Sundays are largely given to Church related activities. Attendance of *turaga*, *maramas*, and youth would have been limited by availability in addition to willingness as in the evening women are putting their children to bed, older children are helping settle younger children and preparing for school the next day, it is a time for homework and preparing back packs and bathing, with the employed and schooling family members anticipating a very early departure on the public bus to work/school in the morning.

Additional parameters of the study include the condensed time period over which the research was conducted. Unfortunately this meant that only 34 families out of 40 that were relocated from Bai Ni Ose were contacted to share their views and experiences. The families missed from this study had all made alternative arrangements to the Waila 3B housing option and therefore would have offered useful insights and very different perspectives. It would have also been useful and relevant to meet with the Tui Suva, Ratu Epeli Kanakana, however due to limited timescale and busy schedules this meeting was not possible.
CHAPTER 5: Research Findings

The research findings are divided into three sections. First, several themes are noted which emerged over the course of successive talanoa sessions at Waila 3B. These are included here to complement the historical detail of the life at Bai Ni Ose and the feat of relocation and to represent this history and experience with the emotional voice of the community. Ultimately, these themes define how the Community articulates its views of the relocation from Bai Ni Ose to Waila 3B by incorporating them into story-telling, and as such they are intimately relevant to the ways the Community is coping with this change of place now. This is expanded with a brief description of the original location and living situation of the Community at Bai Ni Ose prior to relocation. Community history is interwoven here in order to understand the perspectives and context of this particular community as it faced relocation and as it now wades through the changes and opportunities of a new environment.

The next section is a profile of the relocation constructed from feedback obtained through group talanoa sessions with the Community and individual talanoa sessions with USP representatives, Housing Authority representatives and the Squatter Settlement Unit.147

The final section includes a description of the Waila 3B location and introduces the impressions of the Community regarding the outcomes of the relocation, that is, how the community evaluates the relocation and establishment in Dauvuilevu, and the sustainability of this arrangement. The themes discussed at the opening of the chapter are revisited in light of the salient issues and impacts of the relocation for the Community. The discussion in the subsequent chapter elaborates on selected issues in light of wider research as well as policy goals and considerations.

Themes emerging in Talanoa sessions at Waila 3B

Themes which acted to frame the telling of stories are courage, perseverance, and family. Courage is paired with (and attributed to) faith in God and often is apparent in tales recounting times of internal community conflict and uncertainty. Related to this is perseverance as community members reference ‘hardships’ as a constant for the Community, including struggles to access and maintain employment, to sustain livelihoods and to retain shelter. Family underpins the reasons for coming to the Bai Ni Ose settlement in the first place and for trying to remain there. Community members often came to Bai Ni Ose to be near employment in order to support family, to enable their children to access education, or to be closer to family. Many in the Peceliema Community are from outer islands and thus sought to be proximal to secondary schools and post-secondary institutions, and to earn money to send home to the village as remittances. Some households viewed other non-genealogically related families as extended family and together the Community operated much as a village.148

These themes grounded stories in talanoa sessions and express some of the philosophy shared in the community. Although implied rather than explicit, the themes are reinforced in the ways that talanoas unfolded and revolved around these aspects in the maramas, turaga and youth sessions, and in settings of participant observation. These themes, then, comprise a framework used by the community to communicate perspectives and experiences related to life at Bai Ni Ose, Waila 3B, and the relocation of their community.

147 The Squatter Settlement Unit has been transferred to a new Cabinet Minister portfolio as of the January 2008 Cabinet reshuffle, now affiliated with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment, Local Government, Urban Development and Housing. For a more lengthy community profile including a fuller history of the community as told by community members, see Appendix F.

The Bai Ni Ose community was situated adjacent to the Hyundai Fitness Centre and the National Stadium, on the north-west side of Queen Elisabeth Drive between Laucala Bay road and Muanikau Road just outside the main city limits of Suva. Houses dotted the mangrove area next to the Suva Pony Club where horses can be hired for leisure rides, inspiring the name 'Bai Ni Ose' which translates roughly into English as 'fenced area for horses.' On Suva City maps available from the Government Map Shop the area is marked with *tiri* (lit: mangrove) land symbols, and older, long-time residents recall the swampy character of the land they built upon. This land and much of the surrounding area in Laucala Bay was designated to the New Zealand Air Force as a base for Pacific Operations in the years just preceding WWII. The Civil Construction Unit, the Aerodrome Construction Squadron, and the Fijian Public Works Department in the early 1940s 'reclaimed' land from the sea for Aerodrome construction by filling in coastal mangrove areas in Lautoka and Laucala Bay, an undertaking that moved some 800,000 cubic yards (611,643.89 cubic meters) of earth, 20,000 tons (18,143,694.80 kg) of cement and 3.5 million super feet (8,258.10 cubic meters) of timber nationally. Sea planes landed at the site from the 1940s until November 1964 when it was returned to the Fiji Colonial Administration, later becoming part of the USP campus with former hangars still standing and in use by USP Marine Campus today (Lal, 2006:xxiv).

Behind the settlement site are several playing fields opening into the grounds of the Laucala Campus at the University of the South Pacific. The site faces, across the busy road, the seawall lined with a small section of mangroves; following the shoreline to the left past a gravel area of active land reclamation and behind the Fiji Institute of Technology Marine Campus there is another smaller community, Korova, nestled in the mangroves. Gazing seaward and to the right is a childrens’ playground and slightly further down is the Muanikau Police Post at the junction with Muanikau Road.

Before an unobstructed view of the ocean, this was the site where families of the Bai Ni Ose settlement built homes and a community. According to Lesi and a few of the Community *turaga* who shared pieces of the oral history, the Community’s roots date back more than 65 years in this location, many of the original founders have passed away. Lesi explained in a written statement that for 67 years the people of the settlement have co-existed and become a community; that the settlement was regarded as a village with respect and appreciation for the land and its resources which nurtured the community. The statement was composed for inclusion in a history book for the Peceliema Community about its origins, and by the detail offered and images created in his statement, the profound attachment Community members felt to this place can be glimpsed. Many of the ways of referring to the Community and its former location, Lesi writes, have been handed down by traditional leaders and contemporary administrators; which term is used depends on position of the speaker and the context of a discussion. He distinguishes these by breaking down the names into component words and rationalising their inspirations. 'Peceliema' identifies the community with its church and is, for some families, more dignified and acknowledging of the people and their investment in the community than other names which were more concerned with describing the geographical location. Excerpts below from this statement, which Charlotte translated to English, present how Lesi related the view of the Community as situated and in harmony with the landscape and how this is central to the Community identity.

149 Translated to me by the community Chairman, Lesi Colata. Although commonly referred to either as Bai Ni Ose (as in the records of the relocation) or the ‘Pony Club’ settlement, the community is known by several other names as discussed further below.
151 The vision of the history book about the Peceliema Community includes a list of memorials recognizing founding members of the Community, a component of special importance for its recognition of the struggles of Community forefathers so that future generations might prosper.
The name "Bai Ni Ose" is a contemporary name reflecting the use of the said land to indicate the location to those looking for the said settlement as the place was used by Europeans for raising horses and where they also established a Club House as their meeting place for relaxation after work everyday. Other names for the said settlement are: Muanivatu, Napoidi/Laucala, and Pecelima. (…)

Naisogoceva is another way of calling the land, using a word which refers to reserved land for the Tui Suva. The name reflects the sacredness of the place that protects the yavusa,\textsuperscript{152} land and religion.

The land was initially swampy with high water table hence the early settlers had to do a lot of earth moving and burying to establish the settlement. It faces the sea receiving South Easterly breezes with the two islands of Makuluva and Nukulau out in the horizon with Nukubuco surrounded by the coral reef up to the point of port entry into the harbour of Suva the capital. Further north of the settlement is the protected Laucala harbour reserved [in the past] for the New Zealand Air Force for Sea Plane landing with the Maritime Training School on shore. The National Stadium is adjacent to the settlement with the Government Residential Quarters at Muanikau to the right... the Catholic Mission Training is further up beside Corpus Christie Teachers Training School towards Nasese. Behind the settlement is the University of the South Pacific... and the South Pacific Forum Secretariat representing 11 Pacific countries.

The South East Trade Wind lashes its shores bringing unfavourable weather patterns at times, normally indicated by the islands on the horizon. A clear view of the island spells bad weather. (…)

This is the panorama of our movement to establish our settlement, to be relayed and retold to future generations.

\textit{Image:} Aerial view (panning North) of the University of the South Pacific Laucala Campus showing the location of the Community at Bai Ni Ose along Queen Elisabeth Drive facing the foreshore. (See Appendix C for images of the Bai Ni Ose area settlement)


\textsuperscript{152} ‘Yavusa’ is translated into English roughly as clan or tribe. Walsh (2006:xi) explains that yavusa normally comprise several mataqali and in some areas the yavusa is the landholding unit. The term refers to “Direct descendants of an ancestor (kalou vu).” See Walsh (2006:106) for detail about the vanua as it relates to social organisation in Fiji.
In 2006 the settlement consisted of 40 households, a Methodist church known as the Peceliema Vou, and was serviced by rubbish pick-up three times weekly. Three water taps were shared in the community and only five homes had electricity which was made available to others at a cost of F$5.00 per night (one home would share with many homes). Most homes used benzene lamps in the evening and supplemented grocery purchase at nearby markets by tending small plantations (largely root crops such as tavioka (cassava) and dalo (taro)), fishing, catching prawns in the mangroves and digging for clams on the seashore. Fish and prawns were sold at the roadside when the catch was abundant to supplement household incomes. Jobs held by community members were largely within walking distance or a short bus ride and include maintenance workers, casual construction labour, cleaners, and security guards among others, and several current and former members of the community are/have been employed at USP.

Relocation Processes

Prior efforts (late 1970s - 2005)
Several efforts have been made over the last half century to relocate the families that erected houses and took up residence on this wet land along Queen Elisabeth Drive, now backing onto the University of the South Pacific (USP) Campus which holds the lease for the land. Long time residents recall a major push for their removal by the USP shortly after it originally took up a lease of the neighbouring land just skirting the mangroves and the settlement along Queen Elisabeth Drive in 1978 for the main Laucala Campus. This land lease boundary extended from Laucala Bay Road to Muanikau Road but was diverted around the grounds of the National Stadium, the land where the Tattersal Leisure Centre now stands, the Hyundai Fitness Centre (formerly the Rabuka Gym), the Pony Club recreational area and the mangrove lands which line Queen Elisabeth Drive. The land parcel at the corner of Queen Elisabeth Drive and Laucala Bay Road was subsequently acquired and is now the premises of USP Maintenance Facilities and Management. The year when the very ground on which the Peceliema Community lived was leased to the USP was not clarified however an official in the Lands Department in October 2007 indicated it was after the original Laucala Campus USP lease and determined from the records in his holdings that the land had been zoned for recreational use and was Suva City Council land previously.
Several rounds of eviction intentions and notices were recalled through the 1980s and 1990s but exact dates, even estimates of the years when these were issued by USP and government authorities were very unclear in the story-telling of community members. The Operations Manager with the USP Maintenance Department in November 2007, who was integral in overseeing the logistical aspects of the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project, recalls that around 2002 that the number of households in Bai Ni Ose dropped significantly as many residents feared imminent eviction and sought shelter elsewhere. The USP in conjunction with government had previously offered to assist the transportation of residents from the Bai Ni Ose site to another location and many did take this opportunity. However, some families remained and between 2004 and 2006 a few new families joined the community.

Negotiations (July 2005- November 2006)
In July 2005 relocation discussions again picked up momentum, fuelled by the fact that USP was planning development of its leased lands along Queen Elisabeth Drive and because low-income housing relocation options were possible through partnerships between the NLTB and the MLHSSE and Squatter Resettlement with the Housing Authority at Veikoba and Waila 3B. The Ministry was already working with the Housing Authority to arrange for relocation of Bai Ni Ose residents to the Housing Authority Waila stage 3B subdivision near Nausori where the cost of deposit on the land lot could be subsidized by F$5,000 contribution from government. Assistant Minister Joji Banuve worked with the USP Registrar’s Office to establish additional incentives for the Bai Ni Ose families to relocate. The Office of the Registrar at USP decided to offer a flat sum of F$5,000 per household towards the land deposit for a lot at Waila 3B as well as offering four scholarships to USP annually for Bai Ni Ose residents and their descendants for a 25 year period. These terms were included the initial draft of the MOU. A major concern of the USP was that the relocation be done in good faith and without media interference.

The Acting Minister initiated contact with the Bai Ni Ose residents using the Church as a channel for communication. Banuve met with the Church Minister Jeremaia Luivuela of the Muanikau Methodist Circuit who brought the message on 3 July, 2005, to the Peceliema Vou Church in the Bai Ni Ose community. Luivuela relayed the information conveyed to him about the incentives for relocation and delivered a copy of the draft MOU. This document indicated that the relocation should be complete by October 2005, only three months later. The community was advised that the USP would contribute in total FJD F$200,000 towards the land deposit of the 40 households as well make a scholarship available to four students per year for 25 years, covering tuition costs for students meeting the entrance criteria to attend the University.

The people of Bai Ni Ose had hoped that they might one day have an opportunity to legally stay on the land, even contemplating an eventual purchase the plot. However, they were told that the USP had taken a 99 year lease for the parcel on which they were settled so the possibility became too remote. Mr. Lesi Colata, Chairman of the community, vakatawa at Peceliema Vou and employee at USP, agreed on behalf of the community that the MOU negotiation and eventual relocations should be done in good faith and not with any manipulation of the media.

A directive from Banuve was communicated by Reverend Luivuela, that the community should select a committee according to the vanua in Fiji, with two representatives from each of the three vanua.

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158 Here referring to regions of Fiji whose boundaries follow confederations of yavusa (often united by warfare) or along groupings of provinces.
represented in the community. Selection of the six representatives took place at the church hall where the community gathered together to make nominations. Lesi was among those nominated and he was subsequently selected to chair the committee. The community established a sub-committee mainly comprising elders to record the names of USP scholarship candidates and to be responsible for any necessary community inputs or concerns. Community organised sub-committees were also planned for overseeing land and housing acquisition concerns and for managing details of employment opportunities for community members throughout the process of the relocation. Some contact between USP administration and the Peceliema took place in the course of the newly restarted negotiations which resulted in some internal community conflict.

Banuve clarified with the community Chairman and with the USP Office of the Registrar that the Ministry sought to reduce direct negotiation between the community and USP. The government would act as mediator and be responsible for the coordination of the relocation. Internal conflict and disagreement about the negotiations for relocation present in the community led Banuve to set up a second community committee. On Sunday afternoon the 3rd of August, 2005 at 6.30pm, all the people in the community were gathered at the hall for a meeting. Banuve explained that the relocation completion target was revised to the end of December 2005 and that transportation of housing material and belongings would be arranged with costs covered by the USP. However the new committee was also cancelled three months later in October due to conflicting ideas about how the negotiations should progress and options for tenure for the soon-to-be relocated families. Within the Community there was some variation in incomes, housing and accrued possessions, and although no talanoa sessions made it explicit, it may be that for some families the provisions at Waila 3B would equate to a ‘down-grade’ in terms of lot and house size, and that potentially some families did not qualify for low-income Housing Authority schemes either because incomes were too high or too low. Therefore, while families find a sense of community in the shared struggles of informal land tenure at Bai Ni Ose, the negotiations for relocation and the eligibility criteria for Housing Authority programmes may have separated interests in the community since only those families who could meet the criteria for relocation to Waila 3B would see the full benefit of government subsidy. Families disqualified from land ownership at Waila 3B would only receive the inducements by the USP.

The internal conflict in the community relating to the relocation extended negotiations more than a year, until November 2006 whereupon an agreement was reached for all families to leave from Bai Ni Ose. The new CEO housing following a Cabinet reshuffle six months earlier had assumed responsibility for the ‘Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project’ for Banuve, and USP, after nearly 18 months in this most recent round of relocation negotiations applied pressure to see the project completed.

The meeting of November 20th, 2006 in the Bai Ni Ose community warned that the offer for relocation with incentives from USP would expire at the month end and urged those families still undecided to indicate their decisions. Present were the CEO Women, Social Welfare and Housing; CEO Housing Authority; Director for Housing and Squatter Settlement; the Divisional Manager [N] and a second official from the Housing Authority; two officials from the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Housing; the Community Committee and other residents. Two final days were given to residents to confirm their course of action. At that point seven families had already opted to go to the village and it was planned that they would be the first to be relocated, receiving F$5,000 disbursement each from USP upon dismantling of houses. Twenty five families qualified for housing loans through the Housing Authority and seven of these had accepted the Offer Letter for construction of houses on their lots at Waila 3B. Eight families did not qualify for housing loans and required assistance for relocation. All present were also told that the lots at Waila 3B are fully serviced for water, electricity and sewerage and that new residents would need to apply for water and Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) connections. A one [1] year 'grace period' would be given to
formalise building plans with authorities for families that choose to build their own homes on the lots at a later time. Residents had requested an extension of the relocation deadline to March 2007, to which the CEO MWSWH responded that in two days time when all families have indicated their relocation intentions a contract would be drawn and signed, and only then the topic of relocation extension would be brought before the USP. The following day five families confirmed intentions and Consent Letters were prepared by the MWSWH to be taken to urban villages Wailoku and Kalabu for presentation to landowners to ensure that relocation to these communities was accepted. One resident took a consent letter to HART and another was accepted into Cunningham Stage II residence in Suva.

**Relocation Agreement (end November 2006)**

On November 24th, 2006 it was understood that the community of 40 families would be relocated, 31 would pursue the Housing Authority option at Waila 3B (pending approval of housing loans) and nine would move to other locations. The total number of families to be relocated was later revised to 42, and then again back to 40, and the number that pursued the Waila 3B arrangement reduced to 30. USP clarified its role in the relocation to (1) the dismantling of homes, (2) the transfer of belongings, and (3) erection of homes at the nominated sites where necessary. USP would fund two trips by carrier per family for the transportation of housing materials and belongings, with additional transfers at the discretion and expense of families. Labour funded by USP included, as part of the (re)construction of homes, the labour for utility set up (electrical wiring and water) and bathroom construction with standard flush toilet installation which were requisite to the Waila 3B scheme. Families moving elsewhere would still receive the same benefits from USP: rather than a deposit of F$5,000 towards the land title, this was paid out by cash cheque, and eligibility for USP scholarship would be unaffected, as long as applicants meet the USP entrance criteria. The government contribution, however, was only for those going to Waila 3B. The Housing Authority would provide the plumbers to lead the work on the toilets. Cost of materials needed for these undertakings and for improvements on homes or to housing materials (including levelling of ground for some) was the responsibility of relocated families.

General conditions for relocation to the Waila 3B Housing Authority subdivision:

- a standard toilet with connection to sewerage must immediately be installed at the expense of the new owner;
- water connection and electricity connection and meter installation to be done immediately at the expense of the new owner;
- within one year the construction plans for a house meeting Council standards must be approved by an engineer (it must be approved 'structurally sound') and by the Town and Country Planning Department
- within two years the planned house must be constructed that would meet the Nausori Rural Authority as well as Town and Country Planning standards.

A F$3,000 loan from the Housing Authority was available for these upfront expenses, in addition to loans extended where necessary to cover any land balance of deposit remaining after the USP and government allocations, and loans extended to qualifying households for construction of new homes to Council standards (of which the WINGATE design is one option; see Appendix D). The Housing Authority, using government grant monies, subsidized interest at 2% below the current variable interest rate for eligible applicants. Under the Housing Authority relocation scheme to Waila 3B families also could access their Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) funds which some families used to cover the balance of land cost. Only one lot was permitted to be allocated per family, and although the lot sizes to do vary somewhat by

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block location in the designated area, these are not negotiable, thus placing some restriction on the size of
the house. The average land lot size is about 350 m$^2$. Even while none of the talanoa sessions made
reference to administrative fees, it can be assumed that costs incurred to meet the general conditions
above are in addition to application fees (F$30 for loan), consent fees (for land purchase, variable
depending on landowner from F$33-110), service fees (F$10 monthly per account), FNPF transfer fee (F$75
in addition to FNPF charges), building contract documentation (F$50 per contract) and variable mortgage
contract fees (F$50-200 depending on the sum approved).$^{161}$

Physical Relocation (4 December 2006 – 26 January 2007)
The Status Report of the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project as at January 8 2007 recorded the sites for relocation
of the 10 families to places other than Waila 3B as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Families</th>
<th>Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tovata/Kalabu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Urban Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wailoku</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Urban Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suvavou</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Urban Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waimalua District, Tavelevu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>With family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautoka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>With family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HART Homes, at Wainibuku, Nasinu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Housing for very low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunningham Road</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howell Road</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public Housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six men in the community were hired as labourers for the period of the physical relocation as per the
agreement reached in late November 2006. In total some 44 workers including carpenters were involved,
including 25 casual staff employed specifically for the Relocation Project by the USP Maintenance
Department. Initial forecasting of the relocation assumed the Project would be underway by November 23,
2006 and would be completed by December 22, 2006, taking a total of 22 working days. USP planning
support for the logistics of the relocation divided the 40 families into two groups:

Group 1 - Families relocating to other sites (6 days)

Group 2 – Families relocating to the Housing Authority assigned site at Waila 3B (19 days)

The second group was further divided according to those who wanted to rebuild the same house from Bai
Ni Ose at Waila 3B and those who wanted to finance the construction of a new house from Housing
Authority. Relocation began with Group 1.

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$^{161}$ Housing Authority Fees and Charges available online at [http://www.housingfiji.com/fees.htm](http://www.housingfiji.com/fees.htm); see also loan procurement procedures, documentation, and fees at [http://www.housingfiji.com/products/loantopurc.html](http://www.housingfiji.com/products/loantopurc.html)
Lesi recalls that it was on the last Friday of the month, which would be 24th November, 2006, that the USP workers assigned to the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project came to the community to begin work. However, work was put on hold until arrangements were in place that families to be moved first, those not moving to Waila 3B, would receive the F$5,000 from USP upfront rather than on completion of the relocation project. As such, the cash cheques were signed over to families when all of their belongings were loaded onto the carriers. Also on that Friday a presentation was made to the community by the USP maintenance workers assigned to the Project for entry to the community where they set up a workers camp for the duration of the project. Relocation work officially began on Monday December 4, 2006, with completion slated for January 19th 2007 and later extended to January 26th, 2007. The last structure to be dismantled and transported to Waila 3B was the Peceliema Vou, as the church was used throughout the relocation for families to sleep and store their belongings while their homes were dismantled, transported and rebuilt.
Images: The rebuilt Peceliema Vou Methodist Church at Waila 3B exterior (left) and interior (right) November 2007. Photographer: Ereni Colata

Image: Waila Residential Subdivision Stage 3B Scheme Plan Layout showing where most of the resettled Peceliema Community members selected sites.

Source: Housing Authority of Fiji, Valelevu Centre, Nasinu.
Impressions of Outcomes

Most families reported that they are happy, though struggling, living where they are now following the relocation. They are adamant that they will persevere through the ‘hard times’ as they have always done. A constant in Community coping strategies has been to focus on the good fortune of the Community through the difficult times, on what can be accomplished if all remain committed to each other and find courage in the structures that keep the Community together. While relocation was and continues to be a major and challenging life event especially for those who have lived at Bai Ni Ose all their lives, Lesi is thankful for the community’s togetherness. "Moving is a part of life - but most of us, we come together in one place and move together to another." The interesting thing about Waila, Lesi maintains, is that it is not noisy: its quiet. It is different and it can present many opportunities. "When you are here, it’s a difficult experience, but the difficulty is only in the mouth; its quiet, the house is yours, so the only thing is to advise [our] children to work hard.” Referring to the value of stable tenure in house and lot ownership he notes that the value of such assets endures after parents pass as it can be passed down to children. What makes it worthwhile to suffer the hardships is the positive outlook these assets and the opportunity for university education represent for the futures of families.

Image: Composite photo taken from Laqio Road looking over Waila 3B area, November 2007. The bare red soil meeting the horizon line in the right of the photo is the ‘wasteland’ that the youth use for recreation.

Acknowledging that there have been some challenges for families through the relocation and now with their adjustment at Waila 3B, Lesi shared his view that this was learning the value of hard work there, again casting it in a positive light. He reflected what some had voiced in the group talanoa sessions: that it was easier to 'get by' or 'survive' at Bai Ni Ose because life there tended to resemble 'the life back at the village.' However, even the younger generation believed that they were learning the meaning of hard work and seemingly taking this as an important lesson to learn, particularly if they are to take advantage of the USP scholarships. In this light it appears that there is a shared motivation to let the relocation signal a change in the control and responsibility that individuals were willing to take for breaking the ‘cycle of poverty’ and achieving a better level of livelihood security.

However, many feel that certain concerns are being dismissed or are not receiving appropriate attention from government now that the government has turned its focus to other informal settlements (these are discussed in detail below). Many comparisons of life at Bai Ni Ose to ‘village life’ emerged in conversations during talanoa sessions, suggesting that there was more leisure time, and food was always available, families could 'get by.' Required purchases and expenditures were far less before the relocation and now families worry and negotiate what they 'will have to do to survive.' All families expressed sadness
to have moved so far from the seashore, detailing the many ways that the sea offered foods to eat and milder weather at Bai Ni Ose. At Waila 3B they profess to eating more dhal as dry food items which can be purchased in large quantity and keep a long time are replacing fresh produce and fresh fish and sea foods that were consumed at Bai Ni Ose. ‘Maramas’ and ‘Youth’ grieved the loss of water plants such as rourou (dalo leaves) and selling prawns in the morning that were caught the night before by children. Several families operate small-scale businesses from their homes at Waila 3B in the same manner as was done at Bai Ni Ose, to supplement incomes with tailoring, pounding and selling yagona, and small canteen operations. Small plantations also line the hillsides behind the Stage 3B development where young cassava and pawpaw (papaya) trees and dalo grow.

The ‘Youth’ talanoa group generally felt that life was better at Bai Ni Ose, casually agreeing that the only aspect which has improved is that they now have electricity in all homes. They regretted not being able to walk to schools any longer or easily access public transport and cheaper bus fare. All the secondary school students maintained their attendance in the same schools, namely Dudley, Laucala Bay, and Suva Grammar. With the exception of two primary school students who quit going to school ‘for the time being’ due to costs, all primary students that were attending school prior to the relocation were still attending. An example was given that in order to be at Laucala Bay Secondary School on time students leave from Waila as early as 5:15 am, and to be at Suva Grammar Secondary School they leave at 6am. With the additional time it takes for transportation to schools, there is less time to be with friends especially for girls who are encouraged to avoid staying at school or in town and travelling the long distance home after nightfall. There are six post-secondary students in the community, four attending the Fiji Institute of Technology and two attending USP. The Bai Ni Ose Scholarship to USP eligibility criteria was understood to be a minimum of 250+, Form 7, for up to four students per year for 25 years. There was no other condition, no minimum amount of time living at Bai Ni Ose was required to qualify - it is for families and their direct descendant relocated in the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project who meets the criteria, and all talanoa sessions including those at Kalabu Village commented that this was a very good opportunity.

In discussing the living environment at Waila 3B the topic of playing grounds for children to use caused everyone to laugh. Youth talanoa participants motioned outside with their hands while saying 'wasteland, the wasteland there.' The area was certainly not intended as finished recreational grounds, rather the 'wasteland' is a site of future sub-division development. It is an area that has been cleared and roughly levelled but which is not flat or packed. It is bare, dry red soil bearing the deep imprints of heavy development machinery, with rocks embedded, and with no better nearby options within several kilometres radius, rugby is played as it always is on any slice of open land. Playing fields are in the master plans for Waila Housing City near the main road through the sub-division but have not begun to be established to date.

At Waila 3B the community has continued to support youth activities and community togetherness through the relocated Peceliema Vou, now standing at the end of the Sea Sea road cul-de-sac. Visits from the Ministry of Youth advised the community that a goal of the Ministry's 20 year plan is to organise youth groups and that this initiative is supported by funding allocations. The Ministry can also supply funding for the Community’s Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) so youth can choose which programme to participate in.

The Community expected that they would soon be joined by families from the Vunivaivai and Kilikali settlements. Little was known about when to expect new arrivals, but a salient aspect of the Kilikali community was that it comprises mixed-ethnic residents (indigenous Fijian, Indo-Fijian and Rotuman) and that Kilikali is the name of the Church in the settlement. It was thought that the vacant lots on Sea Sea and Lulu roads would accommodate Vunivaivai households. The PRB houses at the intersection of Laqio and
Adi Davila Ganilau Road roads had electrical connections and upon completion of water connection families of the Raiwaqa Four-Story condemned tenement buildings on Grantham Road were expected to take up residence. The Community Chairman was keen to see the community grow but acknowledged that communities bringing different structures, expectations, and experiences will only blend gradually: "It will take time to form a good neighbour[hoods]."

Regarding the impact of legal housing at Waila 3B on personal identity, some of the Youth chimed up that it has improved identity to know that they are no longer 'squatters.' What it means to be squatters was not elaborated, and in the course of the talanoa session it was not possible to facilitate more conversation on the topic as it was not a valued topic for the talanoa participants. Neither the Maramas or Turaga contributed perspectives about change in personal identity, although they did both express a feeling of relief and pride to be able to leave a plot of land to their children. One of the Turaga from Matuku was already looking forward to returning to the village and in telling the story of his arrival at Bai Ni Ose he confessed that he was only waiting for his eldest child to finish school and get a job. He expects that his child will have to work in Suva City and eventually take over the ownership of the Waila 3B house because this is where her education will benefit her most.

One participant described a change in the feeling of community among the former Bai Ni Ose residents now at Waila 3B. He explained that when living at Bai Ni Ose all of the community was on the same level. In relocating to the 'other side' the Housing Authority and USP have donated the same amount into each family pocket, 'fair and square,' but any surplus needed for water hook up, standard-meeting house construction, or extra carrier transport of materials, and especially for any special house add-ons which some families decided to make, this is paid for out of family savings. Therefore the community was on the same level in terms of obtaining lots (though they do vary in size somewhat and thus accordingly in price as well) but as one resident put it "what you build on top of it shows the money in your pocket. So if you build a lean-to and most of these people there build a house, they will look down." It was quite a change of lifestyle for some. "You light candles... now you press a button" he said concisely, referring to all the change and the universal access to electricity at Waila. Although it wasn’t explicit, this was interpreted by the author to be because they were all labelled (judged) the same, as 'squatters.' The importance of this concept to the speaker was how identity lent itself to 'caring and sharing' in the community. He quipped that before, "If you don’t have salt, you borrow." At Waila, in contrast, "It’s a competition because when you move to the other side, what is in your pocket is what you build." Now, it is hoped that in bringing together the Community Youth for the MYF group at Waila 3B, young people are encouraged not to change this aspect of their attitude and lifestyle, but to build on this 'caring and sharing' attribute fostered at Bai Ni Ose.

In all talanoa sessions the question was woven into the discussion: "What would you change about the agreement and process of relocation?" One of the more vocal participants in the Youth session responded that, with unforeseen costs springing up upon arrival at the Waila 3B site, F$5,000 was not enough when the costs of displacement are considered, and greater subsidy from government or financial support towards re-establishment from USP would have made a great difference. As well, the desirability of longer standing agreements for employment associated with the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project was voiced using multiple examples. For instance, one of the Turaga suggested that there could have been a contract with trades people to employ them to build houses at Waila as families will need to upgrade dwellings not currently meeting Nausori Rural Council standards. The usefulness of educational support for trades was also raised as the practical benefit of the USP scholarship for improving overall employability of the Community’s youth was seen as limited for some residents. This was explained giving the example of the Korova community of Moce Island, (Lau) ancestry, stating: "The trade, they have it – it is not there
to the head, it is here (motioning to forearm veins) in their flesh and blood from their ancestors."
This was a reference to the traditional endowment of carpentry skills of the Korova community as Moce Islanders, separating this from "book" or "academic" skill or smarts. Thus, in some ways a USP scholarship has less applicability for some on a genealogical basis because according to ancestry they are adept to trades work and thus vocational programs such as at FIT or TPAF rather than at USP in a degree program. It would in a sense be unnatural and going against a commonly accepted life path and intuitive aptitude to try to force oneself into a degree programme or to even be able to achieve the minimum entrance requirements for access to the Bai Ni Ose scholarship and degree programme.

Rumours had been circulating that some of the families relocated to Waila 3B were unhappy and that they had abandoned their plots and returned to Suva, resuming 'squatter' status in a different settlement. No information obtained in the course of this research supports this, and according to the Community Chairman who now lives at Waila 3B, all those families who took up residence at Waila 3B are still there.

Families at Kalabu likewise indicated satisfaction with the relocation and assimilation into the new community and village life. They noted supportive aspects of the adjustment include attending church in the area and the fact that children will be joining the nearby Kalabu Primary School. Families did not all have electricity, although hook up was available. Benzene was used for lighting, however, whether or not houses had electrical hook up which one person joked is done to save money. One of the families indicated that Waila did not suit them for the size of their house was made bigger to support extended family. Kalabu is closer to Suva, and while families still experienced less frequent bus schedules the public transport is more accessible according to some Kalabu residents. Also, there are nearby schools, and there is more freedom in house construction. Taxes such as ground rental at Waila are not applicable at Kalabu, however families may be expected to make in kind contributions to the village according to customary obligations.

Relocation and Resettlement Issues
It is important to note at the outset of this section that all of the community members who shared their experiences in this research articulated a great deal of gratitude and appreciation towards the MWSWH, the Housing Authority, and in particular the USP which was viewed as making strides in the relocation process to ensure that families were supported through this difficult transition and received compensation that would benefit the community in the long term in the form of post-secondary education. It was not easy, especially early in the research, to obtain responses from community members to indicate areas of concern related to the relocation. However, over time and as rapport was established in the community several themes were apparent and individuals became more comfortable reporting troubling aspects of the relocation.

The most important issue is the higher cost of living at Waila 3B compared to living at Bai Ni Ose. Factors contributing directly to increased living costs are discussed separately below and include in particular: the distance from Suva City to Waila 3B, loan service agreements, and unexpected additional costs of establishment at the new location. (See Appendix E: Case Study Results Summary Table) This should not be considered an exhaustive list of issues: more than likely residents only raised those issues which were the most salient and commonly discussed in the neighbourhood and many aspects which are

162 The Cabinet portfolio reorganization of January 2008 finds the Ministry for Housing now the responsibility of Mr. Lekh Ram Vayeshnoi, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment, Local Government, Urban Development and Housing. The Permanent Secretary for Local Government, Urban Development and Housing is Mrs. Litia Mawi; Departments overseen by Ms. Mawi and Mr. Vayeshnoi include: Department of Local Government (Act Cap.125), Department of Town and Country Planning (Acts Cap.139 and Cap.140), the National Fire Authority and the Squatter Resettlement Unit (undertaking 'squatter' upgrading projects at Jittu Estate, Waila, Lakena No. 1 & 2, Navutu, Cuvu, Godcrott Street, Waidra). See Fiji Government Online Portal http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/m_labour.shtml
unique to particular families or financial circumstances or which may have been seen as redundant were not aired.

Resettlement Issue: Distance from Suva City to Waila 3B at Dauvuilevu

Aside from the general rise in living costs, the most often cited concern among families relocated to Waila 3B is the distance to town. From Laucala Bay in Suva City the journey is approximately 21 kilometres. Both the costs associated with the long crossing for school attendance, employment and shopping in Suva, and bus schedules have impacted on the ease of movement. In the 'Maramas' talanoa session a considerable discussion ensued about the burden of transportation costs on the family budget. For instance, for a family of five or more with several children attending schools in Suva and at least one parent/adult offspring working in Suva, the burden of bus fare on the household is between F$40 to F$60 dollars per week.163 This is a new expense as the location in Laucala Bay offered the advantage sought after by most urban informal settlers: close proximity to amenities – much was in walking distance from Bai Ni Ose.

The increased time it takes for students and workers to travel to Suva requires most families to wake one to two hours earlier, or between 0400hrs and 0500hrs, with mothers often waking the earliest to begin the day’s preparations. School children and income-earners must catch the bus around 0600hrs, allowing a time cushion in the event that there is a traffic jam en route. The bus ride to town takes 45 minutes to an hour in good traffic conditions. In the event of road construction or reduced lanes during peak traffic hour when the Kings road between Suva City and Nausori Town becomes extremely congested it can take up to two hours.

Compounding the transportation woes is the comparably infrequent public bus schedule servicing Dauvuilevu. Children who miss the bus on weekdays will usually be kept home from school, and after school they must catch the bus immediately after the bell rings because missing the bus means missing dinner. On weekends the bus service is limited, particularly on Sundays when there may be only one or two complete round trips. For those able-bodied members of the Community, especially the youth, it is quite common to walk from the Stage 3B development to the junction at Adi Davila Ganilau Road and Kings Road where there are more frequent busses travelling to and from Suva. Cars and minibuses travel very

163 Note: As of January 7 2008 bus fares were to increase by 10%. The last fare increase was in June 2005, which affected only the price of adult fares. Children’s fares have been fixed until now for the last 6 years. See Fiji Times article January 05, 2008 “Finding the right balance” http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=77890; also an archive of related news releases can be found on The Rotten State of Fiji Roads Blog at http://thefijiroads.blogspot.com/
fast along this stretch of road, erratically dodging potholes and passing slow moving vehicles which can make this a dangerous walk for pedestrians, especially primary school aged. A white wooden cross already marks the spot of a traffic accident resulting in death along Adi Davila Ganilau Road. It is a fair distance to walk for more aged persons, and several entrepreneurs in the area have begun offering taxi service along Adi Davila Ganilau Road, shuttling people willing to pay a small price to travel between the junction at the main road where small market stalls have been set in the corner of the Southpoint supermarket parking lot and the more inland Waila housing areas.

**Resettlement Issue: Waste Management (Waila 3B)**

No waste management was in place at Waila 3B when the Bai Ni Ose community was relocated there, and none was arranged before the end of 2007. The 'Maramas' talanoa session articulated substantial concern for the negative impact this is having on children, citing itchy skin and scabies are symptoms they observe. In the absence of rubbish collection, households "dispose their rubbish at a place that is applicable to them." We are worried that this might bring about sicknesses or diseases to our families here at 'Waila'' explained Lesi, "[rubbish collection] used to be three times per week at Bai Ni Ose." According to the community it was USP who was paying for the thrice weekly rubbish collection along Queen Elisabeth Drive.

Now at Waila 3B, 'a place that is applicable' means throwing refuse in the bush, into the drain, or down into the deep ravine around the community. The community described how the heavy rain cleanses the area, washing the rubbish through the open drain all the way into the Rewa River. This is a very serious problem for health of the community and the environment.

Nausori rural local authority is understood to be the municipal authority responsible for collecting rates and implementing waste management in the area. The Housing Authority in November 2007 was trying to set up a user-pay scheme for waste management in the area, and estimated that the cost per month per household would be F$3.00, a cost comparable to municipal services. No rates were being collected for waste management from the Community at the time of research, according to the Housing Authority.

The Community explained that prior to families taking up residence at Waila 3B, the area in the ditch on the north-western corner of the Adi Davila Ganilau Road and Laqio intersection was being used as a rubbish dump by the Waila residents living across the street. This indicates that lack of rubbish collection is an enduring problem of the Waila Housing City to date.

**Resettlement Issue: Infrastructure at Waila 3B**

- **Water connection and meterage.** The water connection and meter installation both involved unexpected costs to households in the Community. Firstly, it was the opinion of some residents that water meters were not all correctly installed at Waila 3B. They explained, troubled, that the same meter classification (i.e., KF) that was used at Bai Ni Ose was transported to Waila 3B where the meter zone is different, so meters at Waila read KF instead of KN. The concern about the meter zone was voiced because the Community speculated that they may not be billed appropriately as a result and possibly they were being overcharged. Discussions in the community had resulted in the understanding that the Housing Authority had a deal with the Public Works Department (PWD; which oversees the activities of the Department of Water and Sewerage). The Housing Authority was to

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give money to the PWD to connect water mains up to Waila 3B in order that the subdivision be 'fully serviced.' When that work was completed and Bai Ni Ose residents agreed to be relocated, the Community was under the impression that USP came in to connect water meters which were transported from Bai Ni Ose to Waila 3B and installed by USP technicians. This concern, when brought to the PWD, was not acted upon and the Community interpreted the reason to be that PWD will not accept responsibility for problems arising due to incorrect meter number and readings because it was a third party (i.e., USP) who brought the meters to Waila 3B for connection.

- Secondly, considerable apprehension surrounds the water bill quotes in the community. At the 'Maramas' talanoa session this topic dominated the later part of the conversation with passers-by stopping in to listen and contribute. Residents quoted bills varying between F$240.00 and F$342.00. They did not specify the billing period, and generally water bills will cover periods of several months, however to put this in context, the Asian Development bank estimates the typical monthly rate of F$8.58 based on usage of 20 m$^{3}$/month. The Community is still trying to find out why the bill is so expensive, there is a common sentiment that something is wrong which they describe as possibly "criminal" or charging under "false pretences." They even mentioned that a petition was filed with FICAC but that they have not received any response and that they are starting to feel desperate for the government to attend this matter.

- **Flush Toilets.** The Community was not prepared to bear the costs associated with the new water connection and sewerage and the labour and materials expenses they incurred in order to have the toilet installation completed in line with the Housing Authority sub-division requirements. It was known to the Community that lots at Waila 3B would be fully serviced, but it was perhaps due to the wording or misplaced emphasis or that not enough questions were asked of this in the course of negotiations that residents were surprised at the costs they were levied: They may have expected that accepting a fully serviced lot in fact denotes that the services (i.e., water, electricity, sewerage) will already be in place with the FEA and Department of Water and Sewerage when they move in.

  One community member explained that she thought the USP was funding the labour required for the toilet installation and that she expected therefore that there would not incur any material costs to her family for this work. In fact this understanding was reflected in meeting minutes taken by community members when negotiations were still ongoing. Instead, upon arrival residents incurred the costs of water connection which was estimated at F$21.00, as well as labour and materials for the toilet and bathroom bringing cost estimates to F$360.00 per family. USP was able to confirm that labour was provided for the toilet and bathroom construction, however, plumbers were also contracted through the Housing Authority and thus it may have been the wages of the plumbers which families were required to pay. For many families this is more than the household take-home income for three weeks.

- **Soft loans were given by the Housing Authority to individual households to build toilets and/or for maintenance work on houses in the amount of F$3,000 total – with F$2,000 actually given to the households and F$1,000 retained by the Housing Authority to cover expenses incurred for connecting the water main, labour and materials. The entire amount should be repaid with interest, although the amount residents will actually have to pay back depends on the house they build, the amount of construction work required at Waila 3B and how much can be deducted by putting Fiji National Provident Funds (FNPF) accounts towards the costs. This was not clarified first before the relocation.**

- **Religious Site.** At Waila 3B where the Community was relocated there was no designated religious site in the plans. The sentiment of the Chairman and the Turaga was very decisive about the Church: "This is the only thing that can keep us together" (See Appendix F which refers to the history of the community and the centrality of the church). According to the Community Chairman, the normal procedure would involve a site to be designated and then put to tender, whereby the various faith communities could submit proposals for the erection of buildings such as churches. However, when

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the Community expressed the importance of the church to the Housing Authority, CEO agreed that the church could be erected. As the Community Chairman recalls, the CEO said: "My tau, you will build a church here" referring to Waila 3B. Lesi continued "They allowed us to choose the religious site and I said I choose here, this is a good place," and on the spot chosen the Peceliema Vou now stands. The Community Chairman then wrote a letter on behalf of the Methodist Church to request confirmation in writing and is expecting that it should take a month before the lot can be registered and a title made available for this. The Community expects that a better constructed church will be erected on the same site when the deed is formalised. As at Bai Ni Ose, the church has had a powerful presence in the community which "acted to bind the community together even though the families are from different villages and provinces – the job of the church makes the community one."

During the transition period and adjustment and through the struggles of the new 'hard life' many describe the church’s function as seeing the community through the hard times and keeping them strong and united.

- **Street lights.** The Waila 3B subdivision lacks streetlights. Although this does not have the same urgency according to the Community as other issues raised, they did convey concern that generally bus service is less frequent after dark, thus moving around by foot after dark is quite common. Parents fear for the safety of their children walking along the roads at night, and girls are sometimes not allowed to go out unless they are accompanied by a group of people. The Housing Authority reportedly said that these details are the responsibility of Nasinu Town/Nausori Rural authorities.

**Resettlement Issue: Housing Materials Transfer**

Some of the families who did not relocate to Waila 3B articulated disappointment that some of the materials which were transferred to their nominated sites by USP organised transport disappeared in transit. They explained that they had to pay to replace these materials in order to rebuild houses properly.

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**Image:** A closer view of the forest behind the row of housing on Sea Sea road, showing rubbish accumulating in the ditch and the new, young plantations on the hillside. November 2007.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion

This chapter reflects on the findings of the Bai Ni Ose area Community relocation to Waila Housing City in light of an institutionalised framework for involuntary resettlement designed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). 168 The aim of this chapter is to evaluate the Peceliema Community resettlement using the ADB resettlement handbook as a guideline for responsible and sustainable resettlement standards. Using the ADB guideline here should not suggest that the ADB provides the best framework for resettlement, nor that this framework should unquestioningly be adopted in any country context – the best scenario would be for Fiji policy-makers, using extensive multi-sectoral consultation, to establish a detailed policy for resettlement tailored to the nation’s particular needs as part of a wider urban development strategy. In the absence of a detailed national resettlement policy, the significant involvement of the ADB in providing financial and technical assistance for rural and urban development undertakings by the Fiji Government implies this model is relevant in the Fijian context. A tenet of the ADB model is that assistance and compensation for those displaced be provided regardless of formal title to land in order to secure any degree of Bank funding. 169

The prevailing expectations for modern programs of informal community resettlement are that families are assisted and/or compensated for their displacement from a coveted portion of land. The Suva City Council decision in 2005 to provide alternative accommodation for communities facing ejection from informally settled state land 170 is part of a trend that Basu (1988) and Neuwiirth (2004) observed in India and Africa, Walker (1938) describes in England and the U.S.A, and which Imparato and Ruster (2003) studied in Latin America. This trend, whereby the state provides resettlement options, has become institutionalised through incorporation into the lending policies of development Banks. This set a precedent by formalising resettlement measures into policy while also pressuring governments to adhere to a prescribed standard. The ADB divides the resettlement project cycle into three broad stages:

- Planning, budgeting and consultation (including drafting the Resettlement Plan, broad and key stakeholder identification and consideration of resettlement effects and replacement rates) 171
- Implementation (with appropriate grievance channels, ongoing monitoring, budget and time allocation targets)
- Evaluation and rehabilitation which is a supported process of ongoing contact (suggested to continue beyond the period of ADB involvement) to ensure that resettled populations do not just survive the relocation but actually thrive. The ADB notes that compensation in the form of land rather than in cash is more likely to have a long term positive effect on upward societal mobility for vulnerable groups.


169 For example, ADB policy covers “share croppers or tenant farmers losing their rights; users depending on customary land use by without formal land title; seasonal migrants; and squatters... where people affected lose access to hitherto unregulated resources such as forests, waterways, or grazing lands” (ADB, 1998:5).

170 See Pacific Islands Report of March 13, 2005 Suva Squatters Get Reprieve found online at http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2005/march/03%2D14%2D09.htm

171 Replacement rates: “Cost of replacing lost assets and incomes, including cost of transactions”; Resettlement effect: “Loss of physical and non-physical assets, including homes, communities, productive land, income-earning assets and sources, subsistence, resources, cultural sites, social structures, networks and ties, cultural identity, and mutual help mechanisms” (ADB, 1998: vi). (See Appendix G for a sample Resettlement Plan outline)
Planning, budgeting and consultation

**Becoming acquainted with the community**

Devising the Resettlement Plan requires Executing Agencies\(^{172}\) to become acquainted with the community slated for resettlement. The Resettlement Plan is a "time-bound action plan with budget setting out resettlement strategy, objectives, entitlement, actions, responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation" (ADB, 1998: v). The depth and length of the Resettlement Plan is dependent upon the "significance" (read: severity) of the resettlement, where a 'significant' resettlement is one in which "100 people or more who are experiencing resettlement effects are indigenous people or vulnerable as defined in the policy" (ADB, 1998:11). The Peceliema Community resettlement affected 42 households; if households are estimated at six members (the same number used for population estimates by the Fiji Squatter Resettlement Unit) then the resulting estimated population of 252 affected persons would qualify as a significant resettlement according to ADB policy.

Additional measures of resettlement significance include loss of productive and other assets, including housing, community structures, systems, services, incomes, livelihoods, and household/community resources such as habitat sites (ADB, 1998:13). Here also the Peceliema Community resettlement qualifies as significant due to loss of access to resources of the sea (household/community resources), community fragmentation (which may impact on community cooperation, leadership, and organisational systems) and reduced net incomes (which is primarily due to increased living expenses at Waila 3B) as a result of relocation. ADB policy stipulates that compensation should meet replacement costs for these losses,\(^{173}\) and include substitution of assets and incomes for the period of physical transfer including planned assistance for physical transfer and relocation, as well as income and living standards restoration measures post-resettlement. Moreover, for vulnerable groups a 'social preparation' phase is required to reduce tension surrounding the resettlement and to foster cooperation. Social preparation is "a process of consultation with affected people undertaken before key resettlement decisions are made" which also builds capacity of communities to cope with resettlement (ADB, 1998: vi).

USP and the Ministry of Housing, in conjunction with the Squatter Resettlement Unit and the Fiji Housing Authority undertook the Peceliema Community Relocation with extensive planning. A community survey was completed to determine the number of households that would be relocated. Eligibility for government subsidised housing, based principally on household income and expenditure figures, effectively provided a rudimentary socio-economic survey. Time-bound targets were set identifying time allocations to various tasks in the project cycle using Gantt Charts; budget forecasting and initial approval was in place. The strategy employed was one of partnership between the landowner, in this case USP, and government agencies to find alternative accommodation, to provide funding for transfer and re-establishment assistance, and to offer incentives to Peceliema families to agree to be relocated. Further, appropriate channels were followed to bring the draft Memorandum of Understanding to the Community through established community structures, namely the Church, and by the establishment of Community Committees in order to achieve objectives of a relocation that would take place in good faith. Situational factors such as internal conflict in the Community, as well as the local and national political climate at the

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\(^{172}\) The USP as landowner and the Government agencies as broker and resettlement apparatus comprise the "Executing Agencies" in the Project, whereas the residents of the Peceliema Community low-income informal settlement are the "Affected Persons." These terms are used in ADB policy to distinguish roles and responsibilities in involuntary resettlement and hint at the unequal power relationship between these key stakeholders. The 'executing' agencies are the 'doers' and, while the 'affected' persons may also engage as 'doers,' they are principally the recipients of the 'doing.'

\(^{173}\) Replacement costs are the costs of replacing lost assets and incomes, including cost of transactions (ADB, 1998: vi).
time interfered with negotiations for relocation, however when an agreement was reached in November 2006 all households had agreed to be relocated either to Waila 3B or another site.

The planning phase of the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project did not include any provisions for the monitoring and evaluation of the resettlement. Confusion about financial responsibilities, especially as relates to costs of relocation, suggests that at the planning stage there lacked a delineation of responsibilities between actors. In particular, confusion about which party should cover the installation costs for flush toilets, water, sewerage, and electricity connection resulted in the costs being covered upfront by USP, then transferred to the Housing Authority. These costs were then transferred back to the Peceliema families at Waila 3B by increasing loaned monies by F$3,000 per household, a portion of which was automatically deducted by the Housing Authority to cover these installation costs, and the remainder of which could be used at households' discretion (Pers. Comm, talanoa session, Waila 3B, 2007; Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project progress notes, 2006). Relocated families were surprised firstly that they were expected to contribute financially towards these costs and were understandably concerned that the process for charging these costs to them was unclear.

The budget for logistical costs of the relocation, prepared by the USP in line with the USP's responsibility for planning and execution of the logistical aspects, was exceeded by a factor of one-third. Although spending in excess of budgeted funding was not remarked specifically as an issue by any of the talanoa participants representing USP in this study, unforeseen costs were material suggesting that planning did not adequately consider the breadth of costs at the outset, including replacement costs. The USP contributed over and above the planned transfer costs of two trips by carrier per family with dismantling and rebuilding of shelter. This was mainly due to unplanned costs of replacing various housing materials that were dilapidated and unsuitable for use in reconstruction, and covering additional contract labour costs associated with deadline extensions.

It may have been possible to mitigate the confusion about the costs incurred to relocated families and to USP if greater consultation had taken place at the outset as recommended by the ADB. Consultation provides the opportunity for planners to become familiar with the population to be displaced, including their living environment and resources, and to enable planners to anticipate, interpret and respond better to resettlement effects. This would include loss of plantations, access to fruit bearing trees, resources of the mangrove area and of the sea, and reciprocal community support mechanisms existing with nearby Korova Community; community fragmentation and strain on community structures. For budgetary purposes these are put into financial terms by determining the replacement costs, as an essential component of total development costs. Had this step been thoroughly addressed by key actors in the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project it may have been possible to assess the viability of reconstructing the same homes at a new site and to estimate the costs of new materials that would be required to do so. A greater level of consultation may also have revealed the importance of the Church to the community to enable planners to incorporate the location of the Church formally into the new community layout at Waila 3B. This would have avoided the insecurities that the Community is now facing, unsure of whether they will be challenged at a later date about the inclusion of the Church in the development of their community in and around the Sea Sea road cul-de-sac. Many individuals articulated that they had not known what to expect at the Waila 3B site prior to the actual relocation, they had only been reassured that it was fully-serviced.

174 A national government election was held in May 2006. Concerns about the validity of electoral results in view of allegations of corruption, as well as political tensions surrounding controversial bills to be placed before Parliament by the new elected government, culminated in the December 6 2006 Military Coup and the instatement of an Interim Regime headed by Army Commander and now Interim Prime Minister Commodore Frank Bainimarama.

175 Resettlement effects are defined as "[l]oss of physical and non-physical assets, including homes, communities, productive land, income-earning assets and sources, subsistence, resources, cultural sites, social structures, networks and ties, cultural identity, and mutual help mechanisms" (ADB, 1998:vi). Types of resettlement effects are discussed for various scenarios on page 3 in ADB (1998).
Finally, as part of "social preparation" the Community may have benefited from a visit to the Waila 3B location prior to being relocated. This may have helped Community members to visualise future living environments, to interpret dimensions and locations of lots relative to each other, to reduce anxiety, internal community conflict, and the impact of rumours about what relocation to Waila 3B would entail.

Consulting relevant legislation and policy
In parallel to consultation and preparation of affected communities, the ADB (1998:23) recommends that a review of domestic land laws and resettlement policies be undertaken to determine what can be expected from Government as a matter of internal policy, and where ADB policy may have additional prescriptions. The relocation of the Peceliema Community appears to diverge even from Fiji’s current national Squatter Upgrading and Resettlement Policy in several areas.

- **Size of land lot.** The Policy stipulates that in upgrading and resettlement areas the size of plot should be small, making it more appropriately affordable at a recommended 100m². The low-income housing subdivision lots at Waila 3B are on average up to three-times this size, and lots purchased by Peceliema Community members vary between 215-320m².

- **Standards of infrastructure.** The Policy suggests that capital-intensive infrastructure should be minimized to reflect the difference in needs of low-income residents as compared to areas zoned for middle- and high-income residential purposes. Thus, roads, in particular because most informal settlement dwellers do not own vehicles (no Peceliema Community members relocated to Waila 3B owned vehicles at the time of research), should be minimized “in favour of footpaths/emergency vehicular access” with the minimum permissible road width stated at six metres. The standard at Waila 3B is much higher than this recommended guideline. The main roads through the neighbourhood where the Community is resettled are double this minimum. These are Laqio road (12m wide) and Lulu road (12m wide), although the Sea Sea road cul-de-sac where the majority of Peceliema Community members selected lots is less, at 9m wide.

- **Standards of house construction.** Officials in Government Ministries and independent studies of house construction standards have noted that the legislation guiding construction is outdated and standards fail to reflect the difference in needs and incomes in the Fiji public and private housing markets (NZaid, 2007; Lingam, 2006; Lingam, 2002). Although housing loans have been made available with subsidised interest rates to low-income families, seven Peceliema families that relocated to Waila 3B could not qualify for housing loans. This is may be due to insufficient and unstable incomes which characterises employment for residents of informal settlements who are often part of the casual labour force.

These three points unnecessarily raise resettlement costs and inhibit creative strategies for reducing financial impacts of resettlement, such as incremental improvement to dwellings which would permit families to finance smaller loans (Turner, 1986). Approximately one quarter of Peceliema households did not go to Waila 3B, either because they did not qualify for land and housing loans, because they did not want to enter into debt, or because the Waila 3B option did not provide a balance of opportunities for families that, in the opinion of these families, outweighed the associated costs.

Comments emanating from Fiji informal settlements seem to confirm Turner’s theory that proximity to work and schools may be more highly valued than formal tenure (Pers. Comm, PCN 2007). In the case of a settlement of ethnic Fijian residents, such as Valenimanumanu and its extensions established by migrants from Ra province, and the Peceliema and Korova Communities, this point is particularly strong considering that indigenous Fijians inherit land rights in the village setting that are protected under the constitution. Therefore, where ethnic Fijian families leave the security of tenure of the village setting for urban life, land is passed down through generations on patrilineal lines, therefore mixed-ethnicity families having an indigenous Fijian father will also see the benefit of constitutionally protected land inheritance. However, many informal settlements throughout Fiji have established because land rights are not accorded, as in the examples of Matata and Tamavua-i-wai settlements of largely Solomonii residents (see Halapua, W. (1987). ‘Matata: Solomonis in town,’ pages 41-55, in In Search of a Home, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific: Suva, Fiji.) and as affects the Indo-Fijian population where land leases are not tenable or accessible.

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educational prospects and urban employment, only to take up informally residence at their urban destination, they may be demonstrating a preference for informal living with urban opportunities over more stable, formal rural tenure. This does not change the fact that security of tenure does impact the quality of housing and services and investments that families make towards their living environment. However, a boisterous proportion of informal settlement residents in the Suva area are fighting to remain in their current locations despite possibilities for relocation to Waila 3B which is judged to be too far and therefore too costly - to the point of potentially inhibiting the continued study of post-secondary students whose families would not be able to support the resultant spike in transit expenditures. A shorter distance between home and work/school/markets keeps living costs low. It is possible that more Peceliema families would have resettled at Waila 3B if costs were lower, and therefore the size of loans and minimum annual-income level criteria could be reduced. This could have reduced community fragmentation and protected the mutual-help mechanisms that had developed at Bai Ni Ose over time.

**Implementation**

*Communication and grievance channels, monitoring, and time and budget allocations*

Communication channels, especially through the Community Chairman, enabled the logistical team to accommodate those families whose houses were under construction at Waila 3B to remain at the Bai Ni Ose site until construction was completed. USP disbursements were recorded at the time they were made, and thorough records document the implementation process. In these instances, as the ADB recommends, grievance channels and methods for monitoring payments were in place. However, with regards to the issues of water meterage, lack of solid waste management (rubbish collection) and street lighting, and concerns regarding formal confirmation of Church permanence at Waila 3B, residents lack a responsive channel for submitted grievances. Families who stated that belongings went amiss during the relocation likewise felt that there was no one designated to take feedback about the missing items and that when this issue was raised it was ignored.

Periodic Project reviews appear void of input by Community members – here again the lack of consultation is observable. Progress reports record the logistical advancements (such as changes to timelines, budgets, and tasks completed) from beginning to completion only. The ADB (1998) suggests that experts in resettlement, sociology and social anthropology might be called upon to support the project review process. The USP would have been in the best position to organise or contract experts for this role from within the University. Experts may have been able to recommend changes to procedures for moving, packing and unpacking belongings that would have prevented the loss of additional items. Expert involvement may also have widened the scope of the review to include details of how the community was coping at various stages of the resettlement, how adjustment to a new locality impacts on a vulnerable community and whether time and budgetary targets influence Community wellbeing.

Time and budget targets required multiple revisions even after implementation of the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project was underway. The project completion date was revised in order to be sensitive to the fact that the December 5, 2006 military coup could affect incomes. The depressed economy saw many workers with reduced hours or losing jobs, and the risk is that repayment default will affect credit ratings and make it more difficult in the future for families to access loans (Fiji Times January 7, 2007). This was an opportunity for households to review their borrowing decisions and terms for resettlement at Waila 3B, however the resettlement scheme for these low-income families was not itself reviewed - that is, the financing options were not altered to reflect the volatile economic and political climate which has the hardest impact on families with little savings, the low-income sector. As the resettlement options

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remained unchanged, families all decided to go ahead with plans as they were regarding chosen sites for relocation although some families decided to take less expensive housing options.

Implementation, it has been communicated by all parties, was done with diligence and respect, by the USP Maintenance crew offering sevusevu and following customary protocols for engagement within the Peceliema Community where an onsite work-camp was hosted, by employing community members and developing amicable working relationships for the duration of the Project. The former Operations Manager for Maintenance Department remarked that upon the completion of the Project, after having onsite work-camps at Bai Ni Ose and also at Waila 3B, workers and the Community had positive comments to share about the experience. He further remarked that it would have been nice to have gathered workers and the Community together some months following the resettlement to visit and see how the resettlement had evolved. No such event had been organised, however the Operations Manager was hopeful that it may take place in the future.

Evaluation and Rehabilitation
The ADB (1995; 1998) considers monitoring to assess the Community’s adjustment during relocation and recovery following displacement as an integral extension to implementation. This generates an assessment of 'executing agency' performance as well as a basis from which to learn how best to approach resettlement in the Fijian context in the future. No specific benchmarks or Key Performance Indicators (KPI) were established for the Project. However, with the Ministry of Housing acting as the mediator between USP and the Peceliema Community and overseeing the involvement of the Housing Authority and the Squatter Settlement Unit, the Ministry was best positioned to set KPI and could endeavour to do so in future Projects. Ministry involvement, unlike other actors, permeated all aspects of the Project. The separation of responsibilities on the Project seemed to reduce accountability and transparency since key actors managed most reporting internally and progress reports pertain rather strictly to logistical detail.

Neither USP nor any of the Government agencies involved in the Project have maintained regular contact with the Community in view of Project evaluation post-completion and rehabilitation of the Community. The USP was clear about the boundaries of its involvement in the Project, stating responsibilities for logistics of the physical relocation and to the supply of aforementioned inducements but no further commitments. Sustained contact with the Community was not intended by the USP. The Government responsibility to the Community is undefined; there are no stipulations in the national Squatter Policy that Government should remain involved, for how long or until what level of restoration is achieved. While Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Women programmes at Waila 3B continue to 'reach-out' to the Peceliema Community, no specific assistance was provided to aid community integration and adjustment – there are no rehabilitation schemes. The Housing Authority, through continuing business relationships with community members, remains the most actively in contact and abreast of Community coping. Any monitoring or evaluation of Peceliema Community livelihoods, then, is tied primarily to this relationship. However, as no formal evaluation and rehabilitation measures are incorporated into the resettlement scheme, the degree to which issues raised by the resettled Community are heard and can be addressed is severely limited.

The Housing Authority seeks to address issues of families in resettlement programmes on a family by family basis. This enables the Authority to cater to specific needs and cases, but also has the effect of quieting the community voice and pacifying unrest about community wide issues such as those articulated

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179 ‘Executing Agency’ or EA is an ADB term denoting the agency or agencies that instigate a resettlement and which are usually the loan applicants/borrowers of Bank funds on the condition that the Bank’s policy on involuntary resettlement is met. In the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project the EA would be the USP, supported by the Ministry of Housing, the Housing Authority, and the Squatter Settlement Unit.
in *talanoa* sessions throughout this study. Issues such as absence of solid waste management are deflected by pressures to meet loan and housing construction obligations, and no entity is designated to explore how the Community and the host environment (that is, previously settled areas of Waila 3B) are adjusting or to support the strengthening of community structures.

### Changing policy for the future

- **Instate participatory targets for community involvement in planning, execution, and evaluation.**
  Consultation with the affected community must be incorporated into all stages of the Project, including Project design. This could be coordinated by a designated branch of the 'executing agency.' In the planning stages objectives should include becoming familiar with community structures, identity, and support networks to promote resettlement planning that is congruent with community attributes and input. This involves determining what social preparation might be needed, what alternatives exist to physical resettlement, how the community can be involved in the process of joint solution-finding, how resettlement can be geared to reduce negative impact on community survival strategies, what the community may value or view as beneficial by engagement with the relocation process, and how the community may wish to be physically involved in the resettlement process. For instance, the Peceliema Community cited the potential of sweat equity as a valuable process of 'learning by doing' to provide skills training to settlement residents in addition to contributing towards the reduction of reconstruction/resettlement costs levied to resettled families. Consultation is the key to determining what technical assistance is required at various stages of the project cycle and to execute the resettlement with the most positive impact.

  An evaluation of current State community outreach programmes reaching populations slated for resettlement could also act to situate informal community resettlement programmes within the broader programming for poverty alleviation and social welfare in Fiji, forging bridges between programmes where relevant. This would ensure that planners and evaluators of low-income public housing programmes come to understand the needs, priorities, and resettlement effects of the target population and that this learning would be shared with other Government agencies and stakeholders as well. This evaluation and the consultation generated around it would lead to improved programme design which could reduce fragmentation of community and both preserve and reinforce the invisible structures.

- **Identify, build and reinforce invisible structures.** In low-income housing projects, such as the Waila 3B resettlement scheme, Turner (1986: 15) identifies a frequent "lack of positive encouragement for building the invisible structures of community." The findings of the Peceliema case study agree with Turner that freehold ownership and mortgage financing can weaken invisible community support structures: as Lesi notes, the daily struggles which may have involved more inter-reliance of families at Bai Ni Ose have become systematically individualised under these circumstances. Protecting and preserving existing invisible structures requires that these first be identified (largely through consultation in planning stages) however these may not be obvious structures. For instance, mutual-help relationships may depend on the various roles that families have in a community or on roles of neighbouring communities, such as providing root crops, sea foods, baking, access to electricity, lodging, canteen items (*yagona*, cigarettes, chewing gum, lollies, stationary), traditional crafts, carpentry skills, access to boat or fish nets, access to a car etc. It may be difficult to observe these relationships or for families/communities to articulate them clearly. Invisible structures in the Peceliema Community at Bai Ni Ose include those based in relationships with the neighbouring Muanikau Police Post and the Korova Community, members of staff at nearby facilities such as the USP and the Hyundai Fitness Centre, and the Muanikau Methodist circuit. Additional intangible survival mechanisms are the community governance and cooperation systems (that is, systems for sharing and trading skills and resources) that have been established and fluctuate over the generations. Communal identity and livelihood strategies which, although varied over time depending on the settlement population in- and out-flows, have emphasised the Peceliema Vou Church as a central figure in this case study. With electricity available to

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180 The ADB (1998: 66) cites six methods for pursuing constant participatory strategies in the resettlement project cycle, including (1) key informant interviews, (2) focus group discussion, (3) community public meetings, (4) structured direct observations, (5) informal surveys/interviews, and (6) in-depth case studies.
all families upon resettlement at a fully-serviced site, and where access to the ocean and plantations is remote, Peceliema families that previously contributed to the community by providing electricity access and crop produce/sea foods may face additional challenges of resettlement especially when it comes to ‘in-kind’ transactions within the community.

Building and reinforcing invisible structures may be incorporated into resettlement policy by organising community building activities181 and workshops on empowerment, employment, small business, hygiene, marginalised groups, community savings, sport and youth engagement, pre-schools and day-cares, community banking, agriculture, waste disposal, healthy diets, early childhood education, community survey and mapping, etc. Government and other resettlement Executing Agencies could explore partnerships with NGOs and community-based organisations such as the Peoples Community Network in the Greater Suva Area for ideas on how best to reach out to communities and what programme focus would most benefit the particular affected informal community. As NZAID (2007:87) states, for these programmes to result in benefits that justify the costs of their administration, it is important that the community has a say in what will be learned, how structures are reinforced, and how they are engaged and directing their own community building and knowledge/skill building. In order to reinforce invisible structures, it will be important that Executing Agencies approach communities with the understanding that specific qualities and needs necessitate specific sensitivities and assistance.

- **Reframe approach for engagement with communities.** This will involve training of the administrators to enable them to work with communities and to approach the issues of housing from a viewpoint that is open to and shaped by the varying needs and perspectives of affected communities. For instance, the ethnic composition of a community may determine coping strategies (Walsh, 1979b), or invisible structures may be driven by community identity, as in the Korova Community (Clery, 2007). Smaller tightly knit pocket communities within larger informal settlement communities as well as womens’ clubs, such as the multi-ethnic women’s association at the Lakena settlement in Nausori, and youth groups may prove to be valuable partners in restoring and strengthening the community after resettlement in order to propel the youth towards healthy aspirations for the future.

As key administrators of resettlement projects, Government Agencies including relevant Ministries, the Housing Authority, PRB, and the Squatter Settlement Unit would benefit from briefings about the outcome of completed resettlement projects and how these relate to wider theories of low-income housing. For instance, resettlement programmes in Fiji should be better informed by evidence that proximity to work is most important to the low-income residential sector and that policies for resettlement of informal communities at fully-serviced sites on the urban periphery come into contradiction with the drives of the urban poor towards to live at informal settlements182. Training of the administrators should pursue the objective of attitudinal change towards the low-income and informal urban communities and promote openness to creative methodologies for approaching issues to enable policy-makers to further the alignment of the goals of the informal sector with goals of upgrading and resettlement programmes.

- **Stakeholder identification and involvement.** The stakeholders in dialogues of informal settlement issues and the resettlement of informally settled communities are broad, spanning societal sectors. This includes Government agencies and private sector entities involved in the provision of land, housing, physical infrastructure and basic services (health and education services, water, sewerage, solid waste disposal, drainage, electricity, and transport) as well civil society organisations and the general concerned public which may be involved in the capacity of advocacy groups, through provision of

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181 For instance, the tree-planting initiative at Waila 3B may be seen as building community and reinforcing relations between the host community (those already residing at Waila) and the newly resettled communities. Fiji Government Online Press Release July 5, 2007: Minister assists in planting of trees, found online at http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/page_9475.shtml

182 Turner (1986:25) explains these contradictions: “In higher income experience, the difference between what one’s house is like and what it does for one may not be clear but it is for most of the poor: it is obvious to those whose livelihood depends on living in or very near the inner city, and who cannot afford the prices of standard accommodation without starving themselves, that a low-rent room in a slum is a far better home than a new house on the periphery, the direct and indirect costs of which will be higher, even if subsidised. In the inner-city slums, the income-earners have access to jobs without having to spend money, time and energy commuting; they can therefore work longer and stand better chances of acquiring skills and improving incomes so that they can afford better conditions in the future; because food and subsistence is cheaper in the inner city, the household can eat better as well as save more. If they were to be rehoused prematurely in a suburban location all these advantages would be lost, along with additional incomes that wives or children may contribute from jobs they can find in the inner city but not on the periphery. So the supposed “solution” of the officially defined “housing problem” will impoverish the household, destroying their hopes and threatening their health through undernourishment and depression far more than the insanitary condition of the slum.”
support or emergency services, by contract or voluntary provision of technical assistance including research, or as affected persons and family/friends of affected persons. However, the stakeholders involved in the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project were very restricted, and intentionally so, to the USP, the Ministry of Housing, Housing Authority, and Squatter Settlement Unit, and the Peceliema Community itself. A modest number of stakeholders is seen as more manageable and efficient for negotiation, coordination, and execution of tasks. The downside is that innovation, perspective, and integration are sacrificed. Alternatively, clearly and explicitly defining the roles of stakeholders from various sectors of society will help to avoid the indecision and inefficiencies in time management that can occur with the wider involvement of multiple societal actors in the resettlement process.

The third workshop on 'Enhancing Policy Dialogue for Solutions to Squatter Settlements in Fiji' in 2006 recommended that broad stakeholder identification and partnerships between stakeholder groups be the foundation of addressing issues of informal settlements in order to promote cooperation, information sharing, joint learning and solution-finding (PIAS-DG, 2006). The case study of the Peceliema Community finds that community-based organisations and NGOs can play an important role in informal community resettlement schemes, and that participation of these civil society organisations should be explicitly considered and defined. NZAID (2007) and Turner (1986) agree that NGOs and community-based organisations have an important place as ‘facilitating agencies,’ and the ADB (1998:41) specifically states that where community-based organisations and NGOs "have experience and skills in designing and implementing projects for economic development, particularly involving vulnerable groups," these agencies may be engaged to "foster self-help, participation, and skill development in sustainable programs" or by operating "training courses for [affected persons] in new income-generating activities and [fostering] community management of common property resources (for example, forests)."

However, defining the role of these agencies in resettlement schemes is needed to avoid the bleeding of this role into the roles and relationships that belong to the affected persons, the public, and their Government. The positioning of NGOs as mediator between the people and their government, Verma (2001) warns, can result in the co-opting of the plights of the people by these agencies, encouraging dependency of the people upon such agencies in order to take action or approach Government. Verma likewise cautions that policymaking should be left to elected officials and should not become tied to, or directed by, or otherwise dependent on, these organisations. The bounds within which civil society organisations can provide support to policy maker and to affected communities must be shaped to enhance the roles of Executing Agencies and affected persons and to facilitate dialogues between all actors by providing forums where informal and resettled communities raise their own voices. Referencing Citizen Participation theory and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) models, NZAID (2007:86-89) points out the importance for sustainable solution-finding of encouraging the urban poor and informally settled "to pursue their own interests in establishing secure shelter, within the constraints of appropriate planning that allows them to create neither health nor safety hazards for themselves and neighbours, negotiate secure tenure relationships with land owners and NLTB, and achieve a fully acknowledged place on Local Council maps."

- **Reconsider financing methods.** Here, Turner suggests that housing loans, especially mortgage financing, comes between previously informally settled families and what is typically their most valued asset: a home of their own. Turner (1986:15) states "mortgage financing, demanding the use of the property as collateral, undermines the single most powerful motive for low-income investment [which is] security of tenure." Communities like the Peceliema Community which are economically insecure and prioritise tenure security highly are more likely to accept loans guaranteed by their property when they suspect that the government, or in this case the Housing Authority, is unlikely to foreclose (Turner, 1986:24). Turner offers examples of alternative financing instruments including "short-term unsecured loans for incremental improvements" which lend well to the progressive development school and are administered successfully by self-managed cooperatives and credit unions which factor well in the Fiji context. NZAID (2007) suggests that changes to financing methods within supportive policy frameworks could explore various possibilities for both reducing costs and piloting implementation methods to find the combinations that are most sustainable, and sweat equity as a component of financing could also be used, as well as 'in kind' payments where it may be possible for skills and labour to be contributed by low-income communities towards other public works projects. Fully-serviced sites are contrasted
against hypothetical low-income residential developments designed to increase urban density, to include incremental service development, and employing relaxed standards of service such as narrower road are tabled with cost estimates in the NZAID Report of the Fiji Informal Settlements Scoping Mission (2007:95). Guttenrath (1998) suggests that housing development land/dwelling unit trusts be trialled in Fiji as a means for low-income and informal communities to contribute towards, and become invested in, housing developments. Informal communities would thereby create community savings accounts that would be invested in the trust and which the Government would also contribute towards. The Peoples Community Network is exploring the benefits and challenges of housing trusts through familiarisation with the CODI model used in Thailand which involved a community-Government partnership housing trust and subsequently low-income housing development and estate management.\(^{183}\)

- **Generate and reinforce partnerships in policy frameworks.** NZAID (2007:53) discusses a policy framework submitted but not passed by Cabinet in 2001 which proposed “joint consultations with individual landowners, NGOs and community-based organisations.” The NZAID analysis proposes that such a policy framework will enable a more effective, sustainable, and financially feasible approach to issues of low-income housing and urban informal settlements. So doing would require that a general assessment be made to determine what each of these actors can offer, and NZAID (2007:90) has done a preliminary assessment to this effect setting out which NGOs and community organisations are currently active in the field of informal and low-income housing in Fiji.

  Partnerships involving the private sector are surfacing as relocation negotiations with landowners have become more common, and landowners are extending resources for the provision of transport to alternative sites (e.g., USP in respect of Bai Ni Ose area settlers in 2006-07, Nasinu Land Purchase Cooperative Limited in respect of the Kilikali settlement in 2008, and the Australasian Conference Association in respect of the Tamavua-i-wai settlement in 2004 although in this latter example the offer was not accepted by the Tamavua-i-wai residents). Other forms of cooperation could be explored with the private sector, for instance with residential developers who could be enticed to build low-income housing by policy inducements.\(^{184}\) More consistent policy and frameworks for partnership have the potential to reduce the politicisation of informal communities because responsibilities of Executing Agencies and entitlements of Affected Persons under law and policy would be clarified, more transparent and predictable.

- **Review and re-define housing standards.** The former Director of Housing and representatives of the Housing Authority agree that housing standards set by the Department of Town and Country Planning, a department of the Ministry of Housing, are overdue for review. However, in addition to formally adjusting the housing standards for low-income residential developments, there is a need for standards to extend to housing designs that are accessible to persons with disability and reduced mobility. Currently there are no standards requiring that structures be 'disability friendly.'\(^{185}\)

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\(^{184}\) This strategy is employed in Mumbai, India, where permits for high income residential developments are offered at a discount in exchange for the construction of low-income units (Neuwirth, 2004). Although such policy inducements have much to offer in the way of encouraging the private sector to pursue developments for the low-income and informal sectors, fluctuations in the local economy, and issues of transparency, accountability, and meeting suitable standards of construction for low-income developments were found to be problematic in Mumbai and controls would need to be in place within a policy framework that seeks to use this strategy in Fiji.

\(^{185}\) Pers. Comm, October 2007, Customer Services Division of the Fiji Housing Authority.
CHAPTER 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

Differing visions of success: Executing Agencies vs. Affected Persons

The position of the Government agencies and the USP relative to the position of the Community as actors in the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project resulted in a divide in attitudes and perceptions in approaching the resettlement as well as in judging the success of the Project. Whereas completing the physical relocation of the Peceliema Community is sufficient result for Executing Agencies to judge the project as successful, the newly resettled Peceliema families’ ability to sustain livelihoods with a level of comfort at least comparable to that at Bai Ni Ose will be the determinant of success for the Affected Persons. A substantial amount of work/coordination is still required for the Project to become truly successful by this standard. Success should be measured by the impact of resettlement schemes, not just activity! Two aspects of the Project underpin this shortcoming: the power dynamic between the Executing Agencies and the Affected Persons disabled the participatory potential of the Peceliema Community, and the Project lacked a policy framework for harnessing the energies of the Community and gauging joint success.

The Peceliema Community resettlement strays both from internally established Squatter Upgrading and Resettlement Policy in Fiji and from ADB involuntary resettlement policy. The dichotomy between executing agencies and the affected persons in the Peceliema Community resettlement is heightened by lack of consultation at all stages of the Project cycle, lack of open two-way communication channels, and absence of evaluation and monitoring procedures. Thus the goals of the executing agencies and the goals of the Community were not aligned, even with the use of incentives by the USP. With no follow up documentation or continued engagement, the benefits of learning from this resettlement Project are hampered. The outlook for the Peceliema families now living at Waila 3B appears shaky to withstand the pressures of the economic downturn. Likely, benefits from the opportunity for formal tenure at Waila 3B and from scholarships to USP will be realised only if government is prepared to support the rehabilitation and restoration of the Community at this new peri-urban location.

Project undercurrents: Unequal power relations

In the Peceliema Community case study, Community participation was largely as recipients of disseminated information, channelled through the Church, through Community Committees, or meetings led by Executing Agencies, but in all of these situations the flow of discussion is primarily in a top-down direction. The limited institutional, legal and political power of the Community in relation to actors from Government and the USP created a dichotomy when entering into discussions between Executing Agencies and Affected Persons in the Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project. This negatively affected the aligning of goals for the Project and is symptomatic of unequal power relations. The dichotomy also precludes the Community’s ability to engage about decisions concerning their collective wellbeing, signifying to the community, Project supporters and onlookers that community input would be of little value to the success of the Project. Stereotypes of the urban poor may be linked to the reluctance of Executing Agencies to seek their input, for instance perceptions that lack of education, skill, or experience leaves them ill-equipped to

186 The Executing Agencies held meetings in the Community Hall to inform the Community of resettlement plans and arrangements, to detail the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding and clarify logistical details, to take questions from the Community about the logistics of the resettlement and eligibility requirements for a land lot at Waila 3B, and to encourage Community cooperation and responsiveness. Participation was not intended to foster a process of joint-solution finding but instead was sought primarily in the form of responses to forced-choice options:

- The Community was to elect, under executing agency pressure, either to unanimously accept the terms of relocation agreement as per the Memorandum of Understanding or, if even one family was adamant in their refusal to accept the terms and to remain at Bai Ni Ose, to lose the offer of inducements and potentially face legal action for eviction.
- Peceliema families were presented three possible relocation options and tasked with choosing from (1) relocating to Waila 3B with or without current dwelling reconstruction, (2) relocating to an alternative site with or without current dwelling reconstruction, or (3) relocation to a HART or PRB unit.
- Families relocating to Waila 3B could choose whether to purchase land only or apply for land and housing loan packages.
participate in policy dialogue. Executing Agencies as the primary decision-makers thus view their decisions uncritically by narrowing the scope of input and feedback. Alternatives to community resettlement and resettlement program/policy adjustments are severely limited. Politicians even proudly view themselves as "the ones who are really pulling [urban informal communities] out of that poverty," however, in the absence of evaluative procedures they remain unaware of whether actions they take in fact result in poverty reduction at all.\(^{187}\)

The Bai Ni Ose Relocation Project study finds current low-income housing programmes do not provide an enabling environment for informal communities to make incremental improvements in-situ or upon government-aided relocation, nor does programming explore what informal communities can do for themselves so that policy can be supportive of internally motivated initiatives. A Local Government official states with certainty that the Waila 3B resettlement programme is "improving the sanitation in the [low-income] housing sector by giving them housing lots, proper sewerage, waste disposal,"\(^{188}\) despite the persistent issue of sanitation and waste disposal at Waila 3B in reality. Government agencies appear so confident in their methods that they do not see a need to pursue an official evaluation of the Project. These attitudes and beliefs are embedded in the terms of the relocation agreement and the actions taken by Government agencies to see the Project through to completion.

Regrettably, the outcomes of the Waila Housing City resettlement scheme demonstrate that dangerous assumptions are unnoticed or unquestioned in the absence of input from Affected Persons. There is a glaring need for an official evaluation of development projects involving population displacement. Fundamental and destructive assumptions implicit to the Waila Housing City resettlement scheme include that a singular resettlement program will suit all informally settled communities, that housing standards comparable to those of middle-income neighbourhoods should be enforced for resettled low-income communities, and that mortgage financing arrangements are satisfactorily suited for low-income families. In essence, little other than Government subsidy helps to curtail Housing Authority programmes specifically for the low-income sector.

**When is the time for policy change?**

An indication that low-income housing issues have come to a critical point is explicitly stated by Housing Authority officials identifying a need for a "special programme of low-income housing" when the very instatement of the Housing Authority was, indeed, to address the societal need for low-income/worker housing.\(^{189}\) If, as Sharma and Lawrence (2005) conclude, the corporate changes to the Housing Authority and the PRB have not improved service provision to the poor, and if the Housing Authority itself is so distanced from this initial mandate now by commercialisation, the State urgently needs to re-examine the priorities of these agencies. The restructure of the Housing Authority and PRB that took place just over a decade ago is looking at reversal as the Interim Regime considers the re-merger of these commercial statutory entities. The undertaking of a re-merger would be an opportune time to tie the merged body into a broader inter-sectoral policy of urban development and low-income, affordable housing. According to press releases, the re-merger could take place before the end of 2008. As national elections are planned for the first quarter of 2009, the re-merged entity would be poised for revamping with the appointment of new elected leaders. Adaptation of planning and policy in the housing sector to reflect the real needs of the urban population is one critical puzzle-piece that leaders in Fiji must take to strengthen local government and the institutions overseeing the delivery of urban services.


\(^{189}\) Presentation of the Fiji Housing Authority to a delegation in Tokyo, Japan in October 2007 (coverage by the Embassy of Fiji - Japan & Korea can be found online at [http://www.fijembassy.jp/news/07/20071028.html](http://www.fijembassy.jp/news/07/20071028.html)).
Looking urban development anarchy in the face

Ensuring space for the 'little people,' as Verma (2001) puts it, is the key: physical space in city planning, literally within city limits as well as in the plans for development of expanded urban areas, and space the in dialogues concerning already established urban master plans. It is not necessary to expend time, resources, and layers upon layers of community, politician, media and public energies debating and creating an altogether new action plan. Effort is better concentrated on clarifying roles and responsibilities of the public, private, and non-profit sectors within the current Urban Sector Strategy, and designing a framework for coordination of collaborative urban development. Proposals for Squatter Upgrading and Development works can be presented in a public forum to hear discussion and objection from the intended beneficiaries (Verma, 2001). The result will be improved accountability and transparency in municipal development spending, reduced 'electoral blackmail' with promises of 'hand-outs' in exchange for votes, and worthwhile feedback will be obtained while simultaneously addressing concerns. The provision of workshops for micro-business entrepreneurship and 'walking out of poverty' programmes already offered by the Ministry of Social Welfare could continue offering life skills training as a component of a new, broader resettlement programmes at particular stages in the planning, implementation, and rehabilitation/restoration process. However, workshops made accessible to marginalised communities must not be confused with opportunities for community participation in the urban informal settlement and informal housing dialogues. Input from the community should be part of the drive behind upgrades and decisions regarding community resettlement. More multi-focused, ongoing engagement is needed at implementation and post-completion stages of upgrading and resettlement projects. Community-based organisations such as the PCN or the Lakena Women's Club, where settlement residents assemble to represent themselves in dialogue about societal machinery, service provision to the poor, and the evolution of the urban policy agenda, could become more prominent actors and an important source of information.

Peceliema Community at Waila 3B: Next steps for the near term

Many of the issues raised by Peceliema Community members relating to challenges of living at Waila 3B cannot be easily addressed. The hardships of distance to schools, jobs and services from Dauvuilevu are well known in Suva area informal communities that are facing eviction, and these hardships are commonly cited as reasons for refusing to relocate to Waila Housing City. For the time being and until the population of the Waila Housing City is high enough to make it economically feasible, the construction of public facilities and implementation of public services at the Housing City can expect delays. Public facilities, services, and commercial strips will take root at Waila overtime. The distance travelled by Waila 3B residents from home at Waila 3B to work and school in Suva and the infrequency of public transit will slowly be overcome by schooling and employment opportunities that will establish nearby and as transport companies are lured to service the Waila Housing City when the increased population and economic activity makes it more profitable. What remains to be seen, however, is whether the newly relocated Peceliema families can withstand the hardships of getting children to school, keeping employment in Suva, and meeting housing construction obligations and loan financing requirements with the Housing Authority until then. Thus it is important to address issues that can be dealt with immediately relating to improvements of the living environment: instating waste management, inspecting water meters to ensure they are charging appropriately and are installed properly, providing confirmation and dialogue about the permanence of the current religious site on Sea Sea road, and wiring streetlights.


The Ministry of Housing could do so by designating a branch of the Squatter Settlement Unit specifically to work with the Peceliema Community through the important stage of rehabilitation at Waila 3B. The same branch would support other resettled populations for a period of time pre- and post- resettlement to become acquainted with and reinforce coping mechanisms. The human resources of the Squatter Resettlement Unit will need to be expanded and training will be required for the said designated branch, which I will refer to here, hypothetically, as the 'Community Resettlement Support Unit'. This new entity could be responsible for hearing Community concerns, liaising with relevant public works and government machinery to address concerns, as well as connecting the Community to relevant NGOs and community organisations to access additional resources. The Community Resettlement Support Unit could offer and coordinate education and training programmes directed to informal settlements in conjunction with Ministries (i.e., Ministry of Women, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Health) to enable Government outreach to be more evenly spread over time rather than concentrated around election periods. The role of this body could, finally, include observing and evaluating Community adjustment overtime, learning from the Peceliema resettlement experience so as to be better equipped to assist in future resettlement projects, providing social preparation in planning stages, conducting community surveys with informal settlements to determine priorities, and to forge communication channels between the people of the low-income sector and Government. This body would be imperative to aligning goals and priorities of Government agencies with the citizenry in future low-income public housing and informal community resettlement schemes. It is imperative that the Government demonstrate commitment to its own resettlement schemes by collaborating with resettled communities and other stakeholders to promote restoration of livelihoods at the new site. The Government has a responsibility to learn all that can be learned from resettlement experience so that resettlement schemes evolve and include checkpoints to ensure they are conscientious of the target population and the host community and the wider blueprint for urban development.

**Reality Check**

In January 2008, practically on the one year anniversary of the Peceliema relocation, the residents of Kilikali settlement on the edge of Suva along Nepani Road faced bulldozers and the forced dismantling of their homes to make way for a Nasinu Land Purchase Co-operative Society housing development. As with the Peceliema relocation, residents of Kilikali were eligible to apply for government subsidized land lots and loans for relocation to Waila 3B. Unfortunately, the Government had not yet investigated whether the relocation scheme should continue unchanged, be amended, or whether a complete re-evaluation of the scheme was needed. The value of such an evaluation became clear as rushed pre-planning led to confusion about the exact number of Kilikali families that would be affected. Uncertainty about the number of families that would be displaced and require alternate accommodation or face homelessness was anxiously voiced by officials and settlement residents even while heavy machinery razed the land. The media closely covered the Kilikali story, and discrepancies in the planning and preparation as well as grievances of affected families were aired.

In response, an emergency meeting between the Ministry, the Housing Authority, the Nasinu Land Purchase & Housing Co-Operative Ltd and the informal settlers of Kilakali called for a socio-economic survey to confirm the affected number of households and take feedback from the community. However, these problems may have been avoided if the Government policy firstly required that landowners permitting the establishment of informal settlements, and in many cases deriving income from the rent of land to informal settlers, were bound to collaborate with government in the event of intended population

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displacement for land development purposes. Secondly, the frantic and disheartening panic about continued basic survival from Kilikali residents may have been mediated if landowners and Government had been proactive in seeking community input and mobilising re-housing strategies at an earlier stage. These lessons mark only a snippet of what stands to be learned from the experience of informal communities such as Peceliema that underwent earlier relocations. Ultimately this diligence will see Government better equipped to intervene and respond to housing concerns of the low-income sector, and to bring Fiji closer to meeting the targets for poverty reduction in the Pacific Plan and the Millennium Development Goals. As Connell and Lea (1993:44) have said, the way ahead is to “draw on the full complement of human energy in cities.”

Image: Housing Authority sign at the entrance to the Waila 3B Housing Subdivision at the junction of Adi Davila Ganilau Road and Kings Road. November 2007
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