Tourism in Fiji:
Native Land Owner Attitude and Involvement

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Abstract: The paper looks at the relationship between tourism and land ownership, particularly land ownership in the traditional context. While a substantial number of tourist accommodations are located on native land, no in depth study has been undertaken to assess the attitudes and involvement of the native land owners in the tourism sector.

Native land makes up about 83% of Fiji's total land area and tourism has been the country's leading income earner for the last decade. Land is a resource held very dearly in the hearts of the indigenous Fijians. They will go to great lengths to see that ownership of this resource remains in their hands. Unfortunately, it is the use to which the Fijians put this resource which seems suspect. Tourism is seen as a way, wherever possible, to put this resource to its highest and best use.

The land manager has a duty to the landowners and the country at large in seeing that the landowners and the country get the maximum benefit for the use of this resource.

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Introduction:

This paper sets out to consider the literature and examine the attitudes and involvement of the native landowners in the accommodation sector of the tourism industry in Fiji. A substantial number of tourist accommodation in the country is situated on native land (as opposed to State or Freehold land) and almost all of these accommodations are on leased properties. An insignificant number of these accommodations are on lands not leased.

Studies undertaken on the tourism industry in Fiji have looked at the economic, marketing and the social and cultural aspects of the business. (Britton, 1979; King, 1995; Prasad and Tisdell, 1998 and Burns, 1996). To the best of the author's knowledge no in depth study has been undertaken to assess the relationship between tourism development and land ownership, particularly land ownership in the traditional Fijian context. This study will thoroughly examine the attitude and involvement of the native landowners in the accommodation sector in three different settings. First, the case where one of the native landowners, by virtue of his traditional right as a landowner, utilises a portion of his owning unit's holding to establish a tourist resort. Second, two brothers and a sister, landowners of a partial of land over which a company leases and operates a tourist destination, are also shareholders to the company. Third, a land owning unit, owners of an island over which a tourist destination is located are mere beneficiaries of the terms of the lease. The three settings represent the typical types of involvement of the native landowners in the accommodation sector of the tourism industry in Fiji. For comparison purposes, a tourist accommodation situated on freehold land is also the subject of this study.

It is envisaged that the levels of attitude and involvement of the native landowners will differ in the three different settings. In the case where one of the landowners, by virtue of being a landowner utilises a portion of the owning unit's land as a tourist destination the following situations may arise:

1. Money: Provided the owner of the business shares some monetary gains derived from the business or contributes significantly to the land owning unit's social obligations, there is bound to be opposition or even feelings of hatred to the extent of jealousy towards him by his fellow members.
2. Employment: As to the level of participation in the business that it would be interesting to see from where the owner draws members of his work force. From a business point of view, the owner has a free hand to choose the best person for the job. Being a privately owned and comparatively small enterprise, the owner may be obliged to employ members of his household first. If the owner wants to keep the solidarity and unity of the landowning unit and if the business is expanding, the owner might draw members of the workforce from the various households comprising the land owning unit. If, on the other hand, there are informal or splinter groups existing within the land owning unit that leaning heavily towards members to the splinter group to which the owner belongs is likely to form the bulk of members of his work force.

In the case where the landowners are also shareholders in the operation that the following situations can be expected:

1. As for landowners attitude towards the business, provided the business is expanding and the landowners see or foresee some tangible benefits and returns to their investment, there is still bound to be some negative attitudes and reactions against the operation.
2. As shareholders in the business and provided there are sufficiently qualified members of the landowning unit, it is envisaged that they will hold some key positions to the operation. There would undeniably be a large number of people from the landowning unit employed in the business. It is expected that one or two members from the landowning unit sit as Board members.

The case of landowners benefiting from the terms of the lease is bound to create a variety of attitudinal responses.

1. First is the attitude of the landowners towards the operations. If the terms and conditions of the lease have been fully observed by the lessee especially in the areas of rental to be derived from the operation and employment to the landowners, a sympathetic attitude towards the operation is expected from the landowners. The business owner's management style is a critical factor. If the owner observes some degree of protocol in his dealings with the landowners then a positive attitude towards the operation is more likely.
2. The degree of involvement of the landowners in the business is a thorny issue. It is the researcher's experience that landowners' participation, especially in employment, has been the one major area of dispute between business owners and landowners. While the term of the lease state that landowners are given first preference over jobs they are capable of doing, it has been the experience in a lot of cases that landowners want to be considered for all types of jobs, from the post of manager to the garden boy, even in the absence of appropriate qualifications.

The freehold property being introduced as a comparison raises a number of important issues, particularly in relation to recent developments where indigenous Fijians have laid claims to and even forcefully took control of such properties. The attitude of villagers living in close proximity to the property (and who may have some historic claims to the land, although these claims are not considered legally binding on the freehold owners) , should be taken heed of for the sake of creating an atmosphere of goodwill in the neighbourhood. Further, the Native Land Trust Board, acting on behalf of the native landowners, has instituted legal action against Government over two freehold properties namely, the city of Lautoka and the island of Vulagi in Sabeto, Nadi. These are test cases and if the NLTB succeeds, then similar freehold property owners are in for big trouble.

Being both owners of 83.5% of the country's total land area and also owners of land over which a substantial number of tourist destinations are located, it is considered that the native landowners' attitude and involvement in the industry has to be properly understood. The long-term stability and sustainability of the industry in the country is, to some extent, dependant on the goodwill of the native landowners. This will only be realised if their attitude and level of involvement is thoroughly understood with the view to addressing any real or perceptual shortcomings.

The Tourism Industry:

Travel and tourism is the world's largest creator of jobs in most countries, providing employment for over 100 million people worldwide (World Tourism Organisation, (WTO) (1997), p. 212). There is, however, disagreement amongst professionals and economists about the economic impact of tourism as pointed out by Sutcliffe, 1985 and Fletcher, 1989. There is, nevertheless, the consensus amongst commentators that tourism contributes significantly to foreign exchange, to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment (Harrison, 1997). In the Pacific, international tourism experienced accelerated growth during the 1960s and the mid 1970s. The consequences of the industry's growth on island communities became of a serious concern for social scientists, tourist industry professionals and the islanders (Deburlo, 1984; Farrell, 1977; Fox 1975; and Parr 1975). There is also disagreement whether tourism is an effective agent for economic change given the island states' sizes and the nature of their small economies (Varley. 1978, p. 100; WTO, 1999, p.4).

Fiji entered the field of formal tourism earlier than most South Pacific island countries. Although the first formal national tourism programme was not drawn up until 1973 (Belt and Collins, 1973), tourism development in Fiji started on an ad hoc basis in the early 1900s with the establishment of

the Melbourne Hotel, Club Hotel Viti House and a few boarding houses (Plange, 1996, p. 205). One of the country's landmarks, the Grand Pacific Hotel, which was later proclaimed as an heritage site by the National Trust of Fiji was built around that time. The second tourism master plan was completed in 1989 (Coppers and Lybrand, 1989) and the third in 1997 (Deloitte and Touche, 1997). In 1982, tourism surpassed sugar as Fiji's main source of foreign exchange. As an immediate effect of the May 1987 military coups, tourist arrivals declined and earnings fell sharply; sugar was once again more important as an earner. In 1989, tourism regained the ascendancy and maintained it for the next decade. This trend was disrupted by the military coup of May 19, 2000, which has adversely affected the industry (*The Fiji Times*, June 24, 2000, p.p. 3).

The Problem of Utilising Native Land

Native landowners' participation in the commercial and business sector has always been a concern of past and present governments. It is generally believed that landowners' lack of participation in this area was due to a number of reasons including their lack of interest or a negative attitude to business. Part of the problem lies in the ownership and the use of their land.

Native lands are owned on a communal basis by native Fijians. Fijians are a distinct ethnic group who speak a separate and distinct language and share a common culture. They comprise about 55% of the population of Fiji. As descendants of Fiji's original settlers they are registered at birth with the Native Lands Commission, thereby being assured of their rights as landowners (Nayacakalou, 1975, p.1). The ownership of native land varies across the country. A piece of land may belong to the entire village or to a *yavusa* (largest kinship grouping). In most cases, land is owned by *mataqali* (social unit, division of a *yavusa*) groups. Ownership of land may be also by *tokatoka* (social unit, subdivision of *mataqali)* groups (Nayacakalou, 1971, p. 3). In a few cases where individuals own a particular piece of land, they do so not in a private capacity but on the basis of the position they hold. In such instances land ownership tends to be described as follows:
"Ownership of…….(name of land) rests with whoever for the time being holds the title of……(Title one holds)".

Although ownership of these lands rest with the Fijian landowners, control of these lands are vested with the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB), a statutory property management organisation established in 1940.

In theory a member of a land owning unit, by virtue of being a member, is at liberty to use a portion of his landowning unit's holding. In practice, this is not straightforward or a simple matter as there are protocol and practices that have to be observed. A person living in the village, for example, because he takes part in the landowning unit's social obligations, can justifiably use a portion of his landowning unit's land. On the other hand, an absentee landowner, because he does not take part in the land owning unit's social obligations, by his own "guilty conscience", finds its difficult to use part of his land owning unit's holding. The absentee landowner will first have to prove his worth before he is readily accepted into the unit.

In some instances, a member, because he wants to secure financial assistance to either start or broaden his business, would require to lease a portion of his owning unit's land. The person would have to procure the written consent of the majority of those land owners over the age of 21 years before this can be lodged with the NLTB for consideration. The process of gathering people together for a meeting in which to discuss the intention on the part of one of them is cumbersome. The process is even more difficult if some of the members work or reside in other parts of Fiji or abroad. In the event that a lease is granted by the NLTB, the land so leased will be used as collateral security for a loan from either the Fiji Development Bank or one of the commercial banks. A person

from outside of the landowning unit will have to go through the same process if the person requires a lease.

The uncertainties surrounding the renewal of leases is a cause for concern to tenants. After having invested substantial amounts of money to improve properties, tenants find that at the expiry of these leases they either have to leave or pay large amounts, variously termed "goodwill" or "premium" to have these leases renewed.

Even with the security of tenure purportedly being provided for under the terms of the lease, people leasing native land are still insecure in so far as their occupation and use of these lands are concerned. The increasing number of illegal take over of leased lands, including tourist resorts by the native landowners is testimony to this fact (*The Fiji Times*, 9/9/92, p.p. 6; Lea, 1996, p.p. 133; *The Fiji Times*, 3/9/99, p.p. 3). The sense of patriotism being initiated by the perpetrators of the 1987 and 2000 military coups have created a false impression in the minds of some indigenous Fijians about the taking of laws into their hands. This has also resulted in the illegal take over of leasehold lands including tourist resorts on freehold properties (*The Fiji Times*, July 12, 2000, p.p. 3).

Prasad and Tisdell (1998, p.180) suggest that the real issue facing the tourism industry and potential investors is the conflict between the role of the NLTB, the land owning units and the individuals. While the landowners may have their own plans for tourism development, the plan itself is dependent on the acceptance by the NLTB and the statutory planning authorities. On the other hand while the NLTB has its own plans, this is dependent on the acceptance by the landowners. According to Ward (1995), there is a conflict between the practice, custom and the law regarding native land in Fiji.

The Fijian Administration and Traditional Leadership

A knowledge of the Fijian social and administrative systems is considered important in understanding the relationship between the people and their land. The knowledge gained in understanding the relationship between people and the land is then used to deal with a very large and complex industry like tourism. Fijians are subject to both laws of the Central Government and to the laws and regulations of the separate Fijian Administration. The latter requires them to pay provincial rates and in some provinces, to pay land rates (Fijian Affairs Act, 1978 Edition).

The Fijian Administration is divided into three levels. At the highest are 14 *yasana* or provinces. These are subdivided into *tikina* or districts and these districts are further subdivided into *koro* or villages. A number of villages form a *vanua*. The first subdivision within a village is generally known as the *yavusa* which may be made up of several *mataqali*. The structure is not uniform through out Fiji. In some areas, the *mataqali* is further subdivided into *tokatoka*.

Nayacakalou (1975, p. 31) has stated that traditional leader is the person who occupies the customary office of chief of the group and has a right, subject to conditions, to make decisions on all matters affecting the group. Nayacakalou further stated that most matters are group concerns known as *ka vakavanua* (matters of the land).

In recent times, however, there have been an increasing number of disputes involving traditional paramount leaders' titles. In many chiefly disputes of the modern age the underlying factor is greed. Chiefs of major landowning units are paid a large percentage of lease monies (*The Fiji Times*, Editorial, April 3, 2000).

Spirituality and the Land

The concept of *vanua* is closely associated with Fijian traditional leadership. It has more than one meaning, though *vanua* typically consists of several villages whose allegiance rests with one chief or overlord. Weaver (1991) has stated that the concept of *vanua* takes into account resources such as people, forest, soil and vegetation and that it encompasses peoples' past, present and future spiritual and genealogical relationship with their surroundings.

The Christian faith, to which most Fijians subscribe, places great reverence to the land. God, according to Christians, created man from the land (earth/soil) and gave him the breath of life (*The Holy Bible*, (1997, p.2). When man dies his body decays and returns to the ground from where it had come, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. (*The Holy Bible* (1997, p.727).

The Fijian views the land with sacredness and spirituality. Scarr (1983) has stated that there is an inner connection between the land as actual turf and land as a religious symbol for the Fijian. Speaking on this subject, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna said:

> He regarded it as something of divine ordination, something that was created to control him through life, something he must explicitly serve: but something also that would help him in his difficulties, care for him in his troubles and protect him in danger (p. 76).

Tuwere (1992, pp. 20) stated that the literal meaning of *vanua* is land. In very broad terms, it encompasses many things and includes earthly turf, flora and fauna, forest, rivers and mountains and people. Tuwere further stated that *vanua* is a social fact which, for the Fijian people, holds life together and gives it its meaning. To be cast out from ones *vanua* is to be cut off from one's source of life.

The word "*vanua*" is similar and has parallel meaning in a number of Pacific island languages; *fanua* in Samoa, *fonua* in Tonga, *fenua* in Tahiti and *whenua* in Maori. It is a reference to the basis of life on earth. Waqaisavou (1997) stated that the connection between place and people is a physical one referring not only to ones piece of land for gardening, it is also shown by the planting of a tree (normally a coconut) on the spot where the child's umbilical cord was buried. The belief is that the child will be connected to the basis of life on earth through out his life.

The Land Tenure System

The concept of land tenure relates to the rules whereby a society defines the access people have to land and the uses to which people put the land, including the economic benefits generated therefrom.

There are three (3) forms of land tenure in Fiji. These are:

(i) State land
(ii) Freehold land
(i) Native land

State lands are lands administered by the State and constitute about 10% of the total land area. Freehold lands are lands individually owned and these constitute about 7% of the total land area while Native lands are those lands owned by the native Fijians and constitute 83% of the country's total land area.

When something is owned on a communal basis and there is no delineation of responsibilities, there is the possibility that a large number of co- owners do not take a responsible attitude to the manner in which such matters are used. In addition, it is always difficult to have all the co-owners' unanimous agreement to have matters altered and in the end there are constant disputes and problems arising amongst the co-owners about the ownership of such matters. This is true in the context of land owned by native Fijians.

The nature of ownership of native land is perceived as a barrier to development and progress because unless native land is leased and thus a formal title is available, no lending institution will be in a position to grant financial assistance to develop such lands. The problem is compounded by the difficulty in having all the co-owners agree to having their lands leased.

The Indigenous People

The Fijian people, like all indigenous peoples, are identifiable groups with common histories, cultures and forms of sovereignty – long predate nation-states and their systems of laws. Nevertheless, state laws and politics have historically been used to subsume, defeat, and subjugate these peoples. The United States history, for example, shows that the sovereignty of indigenous peoples was subsumed within nation-state sovereignty through military enforcement of U.S. legal doctrines that denied full international status to indigenous peoples (http://www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/indig-intersections.html , pp. 1-3)

Australia, for example, have drawn criticism from the international community on the matter relating to its amendments to the Native Title Act which the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination have found to be discriminatory against the Aboriginal community. http://www.caa.org.au/campaigns/urgent/cerd11.html pp. 1-4). Watson (2000, p1) has lamented that the Aborigines have struggled to regain some of their losses in law, language, and culture and are now in a process of reviving and healing in the aftermath of the holocaust – colonialism and genocide.

In Aotearoa or New Zealand, the indigenous people, the Maori, have protested against the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi, a treaty between Britain and the Maori tribes. The Maori people have protested about land and fishing losses, the destruction of their tribal ways and the failure to provide for their culture and the status of the Treaty was continued without barely a pause. (http://io.knowledge-basket.co.nz/waitangi/press/90cmwlth.HTM, pp. 1-6). In the same context, the present Fijian generation is complaining about the Deed of Cession of 1874. They have stated that whereas the sovereignty of their land was given to Queen Victoria by the Fijian chiefs, the British monarchy should have receiptrocated when Fiji gained independence in 1970 (Deed of Sovereignity (2000), Native Land Trust Board, Suva.

The global political-economy is a major arena of conflict and struggle for indigenous peoples. Economic "development" is a hallmark of international discourse. Development theory, critiqued as biased toward western interpretations of "progress", has been incorporated into theories of economic "globalization" and "free trade". These theories and the international market politics which surround them put indigenous peoples at risk. The Prime Minister of Fiji has encouraged the newly formed Fiji Indigenous Business Council to exchange ideas and connect with established employers' group and chambers of commerce in the country. He said

> We want to remove imbalances in the economy, which weigh heavily against Fijians. We are concerned here with the inclusion, basic economic rights and fair division and opportunity for and protect the rights of, an indigenous community which is under represented, disadvantaged or marginalised in key areas of the economy (p.1) .

(http://209.162.176/news/news.php3?art=20/20m.html (21/10/2000), pp.1-2).

The United Nations Sustainable Development's High Level Segment heard in its proceedings on indigenous people on 26 April 2000 that the Maori people of New Zealand are attempting to build a participatory economy founded on sustainable economic growth. The proceeding also heard that globalisation was having a negative impact on the indigenous people of Peru in that development programs in the area, such as intensive agricultural production, growing tourism, and over-use of natural resources are largely at the expense of the local indigenous communities.

The proceeding also heard that American Indian lands are often un-developed or under-developed making them prime for development projects. However, these projects are often unresponsive and abusive of natural, cultural and spiritual values of indigenous American Indians. (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mgipdaypan1.htm, pp. 1-2).

Managing Stakeholders' Interests

Tourism literature and research output point to the need for increased collaboration in managing stakeholders' interests (Jamal and Getz 1995; Keogh 1990). Jamal and Getz (1995) have suggested that although some people try to present a definitive argument as to the impact of tourism on community development (i.e. promotes or destroys the overall quality of life),.the crux of the argument presented in much of the literature is the need for more active involvement of all people affected by the proposed development. This, they have suggested, is similar to the underlying premise of "stakeholder theory". In the Fijian context, the native landowners' views and desire should be paramount consideration.

There are several stakeholders whose interests have to be taken care of and harnessed in the tourism industry based on native land. Freeman (1984) states that "a stakeholder in an organisation is, by definition, any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organisation' objectives" (1984:46). By the same token, the stakeholder can also affect or be affected by the failure of the organisation. A group qualifies as a stakeholder if it has a legitimate interest in aspects of the organisation's activities.

First amongst the stakeholders are the native landowners who, between them, have varying and differing levels of rights over the land (Stanfield, 1997). Their interest lies, first and foremost, in the benefits they receive for the use of their land. There is another interest which they should be concerned about but which has been left almost entirely with the NLTB; this is in regards to the sustainability of activities undertaken on their land. In addition, the carrying capacity of the land has to be observed. Landowners also expect reasonable rent or income from tenants for the use of their land.

There is, of course, the tenant's interests which has to be accommodated. The tenant would like an undisturbed and fulsome enjoyment for the use of the land. He will be after a good return of his investment on the land and, at expiry of his lease that he would seek a renewal. Disagreement amongst the native landowners on the issue of renewal can see tenants' leases not being renewed and their having to vacate the land (*The Fiji Times*, October 4, 2000, p.1)

The NLTB's interest in the land is many fold. First, it has to ensure that land is administered in the best possible way for the benefit of the landowners (Native Land Trust Act, 1940). In addition that the NLTB has an obligation to the nation in seeing that lands not required by the landowners are made available for leasing to other people. It has to ensure, too, that it makes sufficient income to be able to pay for its administrative costs now that poundage has been reduced from 25% to 20%

and the fact that Government has stopped grants it used to enjoy. There is, lastly, Government's interest in the tourism industry. Government has to balance things to ensure that while there is the economic benefits to be realised (Sautter and Leisen, 1999), the social/cultural (WTO, 1997, p. 232) and environmental considerations (Weaver and King, 1996, p. 127-144) are also taken care of.

The tourism industry has been recognised as a powerful economic force in the development of both community-based and global markets This is particularly true for Fiji where income derived from tourism has been the country's leading income earner since 1989 (Bureau of Statistics, 1997).

Tourism activities comprise the world's largest industry with over three trillion US dollars in revenue produced. Despite its economic significance, debate continues as to whether or not tourism truly benefits all stakeholders involved. According to Lea (1988), at a most basic level, two schools of thought exist regarding its role in community and/or market development. He has stated that for the political economy, tourism has been viewed as an exploitative force which "emanates from the desire of affluent middle classes in metropolitan countries". There is the other view that poor and less developed countries take on tourism in the belief that this form of economic activity will address their economic problems.

Tourism and Host Community Attitudes

The attitude and participation of the local community must be sought if there is to be any hope of a successful tourism enterprise being established and operated in a particular destination.

A number of the early research work on tourism related activities on host communities have focussed solely on economic impacts (Pizam 1978). More recently there has been an increase in the number of studies which have also focused on social considerations (Ap 1990). According to some studies undertaken, community residents' attitudes towards tourism are directly related to the number of tourist present in the community (Cooke 1982; Haywood 1986; Williams 1979). It has been argued by Doxey (1975) that there is a change from welcome to hatred between the host community and tourists from a development stage to that of full tourism development. According to Long, Perdue and Kieselbach (1990) negative perceptions of the community towards tourists increase as the level of tourism development increases.

Although there is a degree of negativity in the host community perception towards tourists, there is the feeling amongst them that more tourists should be attracted as this leads to higher quality of life.

King, Pizam and Milan (King et al, 1993) have stated that there is the difference between the community's and that of the individual's dependence on tourism and this should be distinguished. He argues that individuals who personally benefit from tourism perceive greater economic benefits and fewer negative social and environmental impacts from its development than others who did not benefit to the same extent.

Perceptions of Host Communities towards Tourism

The continued success or failure of the tourism industry depends to a large extent on the attitude and perception of the host community. If the host community has a positive attitude to, and perception of tourists, an atmosphere of understanding and goodwill may arise between them and their guests. If an atmosphere of animosity prevails, friction may arise which will affect the industry adversely.

Butler's examination of the destination life cycle has proposed that as tourist destination grows and matures the change associated with tourism become more noticeable and adverse. A change in attitude of residents from approval to opposition is associated with each stage of the cycle (1980). Allen, Long, Perdue and Kieselbach (1993) argue that residents' attitudes towards tourism may be directly related to the degree or stage of development.

A study of Nadi, Fiji, concluded that tourism industry employees tended to show more liking and affection for tourists (King, Pizan and Milan, 1993). Host perceptions towards tourists and tourism were generally found to be favourable.

Ap and Crompton (1993) formulated four strategies base on a continuum of responses to various tourism impacts namely: embaracement, tolerance, adjustment and withdrawal. According to the authors, embaracement described those residents who eagerly welcomed tourists and were the direct beneficiaries of the tourism industry. The group exhibited embracement through their unqualified, effusive praise, an attitude usually accompanied by enthusiasm for more visitors:

> Bring more tourists. We love the tourists; send them here (p. 48).

The term tolerance may be applied to those residents who exhibited a degree of ambivalence towards tourists, highlighted by the fact that there were many parts they disliked. They endured tourism to the extent that they had the capacity to bear some of its unpleasant aspects without resentment since they recognised its contribution to the community's economic vitality. Typical comments from this group were:

> In my opinion, tourism is a necessary evil for the local economy. It is an important source of peoples' income and livelihood and therefore I will tolerate the hassles that come along with it. (p. 49).

The third strategy, adjustment to tourism, meant that residents had to reschedule their activities so as not to clash with tourist activities.

> Is tourism negative to the point you leave Mission? No, but you accustom your lifestyle to when Winter Texans are in. For example, my wife re-orients her grocery shopping and avoids the shopping crowd (p. 49).

The fourth category, which can be classified as being the most extreme and negative strategy, withdrawal, meant that residents removed themselves temporarily from the community.

Host Perceptions of Sociocultural Impacts

According to Burns (1996), the Fijian community's sociocultural ways of living have been affected both beneficially and detrimentally by tourism. Krippendorf (1987) has mentioned that the social effect of tourism is of such significant importance that it should be studied and documented before any work on tourism development is undertaken. Mathieson and Wall (1982) have stated that more research should be directed in determining the perceptions and attitudes of the host population towards the presence and behaviour of tourists. They have stated that unless local inhabitants' views are sought prior to development, any subsequent significant change may not be possible to identify.

According to Krippendorf (1987), the psychology of tourism has been largely concerned with the tourists' views and behaviour. There have been studies undertaken recently on residents attitudes and tourism development (Johnson, Snepenger and Akis 1994; Lea, Kemp and Willetts 1994; McCool and Martin 1994 and Schroeder 1996). Murphy (1985) has stated that priority has been placed on the convenience of tourists and any local needs and requirements with the industry has been given less emphasis.

It is considered important that the social and cultural impacts of tourism should be considered throughout the planning process. To this end it is important that communities' and residents' views are taken into account in the planning process. This should ensure minimum negative impact on the development (McIntyre, Hetherington and Inskeep 1993). According to Ap (1992) and Lankford (1994) the perceptions and attitudes of residents towards the impacts of tourism are likely to be an important planning and policy consideration for the successful development, marketing, and operation of existing and future programmes.

Conclusion

To the native Fijian land and the associated *vanua* forms an integral part of himself. There is an element of interconnectedness between the native Fijian, land and *vanua*. The native Fijians are owners of 83% of the country's total land area on whose land the bulk of the country's tourist destinations are located.

The literature discussed in this paper paints an important backdrop for further research. Such research needs to adopt a Pacific approach of sensitivity to traditional values within a predominantly westernised industry, that of tourism. Further research needs to be undertaken to fully understand the synergy between the *vanua* and the impact of tourism on native land. Such an anthropological journey into land and tourism is the focus on the authors progressive research.

The critical question to be asked is whether the native owners' attitude to the industry is a positive one. It is a positive one if he sees that his involvement in this economic sector is a meaningful one. If it is not, then there is bound to be repetition of the incidents with which native land ownership is has unfortunately been notorious: road blocks, resort and island forcible occupation, or even worse recurrence of the political unrest which manifested as the coups of 1987 and 2000. By evolving this critical research, it is hoped that all the players, most notably the *vanua* and tourism stakeholders will ultimately be better educated as to all the dynamics that are manifest in the clash of cultures and values that tourism can represent to indigenous people.

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