waka kuaka

The Journal of the Polynesian Society

VOLUME 132 Nos 1 & 2,
MARCH & JUNE 2023 Double Issue

SPECIAL ISSUE:
RE-VISIONING PACIFIC
RESEARCH METHOD/OLOGIES

The Polynesian Society
The University of Auckland, New Zealand

REFLECTIONS ON APPLYING THE FIJIAN VANUA RESEARCH FRAMEWORK IN INDIGENOUS ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT: In my dissertation research completed in 2020 on the Levuka World Heritage Site, I applied Unaisi Nabobo-Baba's Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF) as a methodological and analytical framework, alongside deploying the disciplinary conventions of anthropology such as fieldwork, participant observation and the semi-structured interview. In this paper, I discuss how my positionality as a transnational mixed-race Pacific Islander, with maternal links to Fiji and an inherited anthropological path, informed my use of FVRF and my practice of Indigenous anthropology. I explain the essential aspects and principles of FVRF that I drew upon to guide my research, despite having initial reservations about potential limitations of FVRF. I describe how I practically applied FVRF to carry out research in three Fijian villages, and some successes and failures I had in trying to uphold FVRF principles. Carasala (to open the way) was a recurring theme throughout my research experience, as it was the subject of an ethnographic film that my American anthropologist father and Fijian mother produced when I was six months old. The film documented several days of ceremonies to reinstate severed kinship ties between my mother's village and their ancestral village, which they broke away from during the colonial period. While conducting fieldwork, I shared the film back with the next generation in the village as a reciprocal contribution, where I drew on FVRF to remind me of the importance of carasala as Indigenous Fijian knowledge.

Keywords: Pacific anthropology, Fijian anthropology, Pacific research methodology, Fijian research methodology, positionality, carasala

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When I embarked upon my graduate research in anthropology at the University of Hawai'i, I came across Unaisi Nabobo-Baba's Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF) (2006, 2008) through my Indigenous anthropology and research methodology courses. FVRF made sense to me as a Fijian researcher carrying out research in Fiji. However, I admit I was sceptical at first and wondered if FVRF was too prescriptive, and might limit diverse voices and findings in my research on local responses to Levuka's UNESCO World Heritage designation. Having been in Fiji during two coups d'état, I was also suspicious of any approaches that might validate

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Okotai, Nanise J. Young, 2022. Reflections on applying the Fijian Vanua Research Framework in Indigenous anthropological practice. *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 132 (1/2): 111–128. https://doi.org/10.15286/jps.132.1.111-128

or perpetuate iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian—I use the terms interchangeably) ethnonationalist agendas that featured in Fiji's four post-independence coups d'état. I was also grappling with my identity and positionality as a "part-Indigenous" Fijian and "part-anthropologist", and understanding the extent to which I could say what I was doing was Indigenous research or anthropological research if I failed to meet all of the criteria for both. For these reasons, I thought I would keep FVRF in my back pocket when I embarked on my research, but soon found that by the nature of Fijian relationality and the protocols required of anyone doing research in Fijian villages—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—I was naturally following FVRF. In this paper I outline the aspects and principles of FVRF, discuss the importance of positionality in Indigenous Pacific research and describe how I practically applied FVRF to carry out research in three Fijian villages (two of which I was genealogically connected to) and some successes and shortcomings in trying to uphold FVRF principles.

THE FIJIAN VANUA RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

FVRF is a research methodology proposed by iTaukei academic Unaisi Nabobo-Baba (2006, 2008). Nabobo-Baba (2008) notes that FVRF draws ideas and inspiration from other Indigenous and Pacific research methodologies, namely Kaupapa Māori (Smith 1999) and the Tongan Kakala methodology (Thaman 1997, 2006). FVRF incorporates key cultural pillars and protocols for Indigenous Fijian research as well as principles of Indigenous and Pacific research methodology such as taking into account Indigenous values and protocols, ensuring accountability to the community, advocating for Indigenous researchers as principal investigators and obtaining permission from chiefs to carry out research.

Echoing Smith (1999), Nabobo-Baba (2006) proposes an approach to Indigenous Fijian research that is framed around Indigenous self-determination and valuing Indigenous knowledge. FVRF advocates for Fijian research that is "based and embedded (as well as framed) in Vanua identities, cultures, languages and ways and philosophies of knowledge" (Nabobo-Baba 2008: 143). Nabobo-Baba proposes that all research must recognise and be grounded in the four primary epistemological categories of vanua (land and place), lotu (spirituality, both Christian and Indigenous), i tovo vakavanua (custom) and veiwekani (kinship relationships). As described under FVRF, vanua refers to land and place and "everything on it and in it and include[s] all fauna and flora as well as waterways, oceans, mountains and forests … Land is of physical, social and spiritual significance to people" (Nabobo-Baba 2006: 81). Lotu, meaning spirituality and worship, includes the Christianity that is widespread in Fiji, but also "the Indigenous elements of spirituality that are not publicly discussed" (p. 87). I tovo vakavanua

describes the proper customs and behaviours associated with maintaining a system of kinship and life principles: "Appropriate behaviour is based on the tenet that the spiritual and the material worlds are interconnected; respect for people, resources, the ancestors, and God, governs all important behaviours and values" (p. 88). Veiwekani refers to kinship relationships and also to customary vanua relationships. Nabobo-Baba says, "Veiwekani is important because the Fijian is essentially a communal person. … When people neglect their veiwekani they lose the respect of others" (pp. 89–90). Of course, these concepts of vanua, lotu, i tovo vakavanua and veiwekani are all interrelated and dialogically reinforce each other.

Talanoa (lit. talking story) is also a key Fijian practice and methodological tool outlined in FVRF. Nabobo-Baba (2006, 2008) describes different types and levels of talanoa and associated protocol. Nabobo-Baba and other Pacific scholars have explored in depth the dimensions of talanoa as a relational method of collecting stories in Pacific research (Fa'avae *et al*. 2016; Farelly and Nabobo-Baba 2014; Tunufa'i 2016; Vaioleti 2006), and I will not discuss it extensively here. In my research, I used talanoa as a tool and method where applicable, in addition to set questions for semi-structured interviews. I mainly engaged in talanoa in participant observation settings while having kava during more formal meetings or informal after-hours socialising.

Nabobo-Baba (2008: 146–48) also outlines the particular steps involved in vanua research, which include na navunavuci (conception), na vakavakarau (preparation and planning), na i curucuru/na i sevusevu (entry), na talanoa/veitalanoa (multilogue, dialogue, monologue, story collection), na i tukutuku (reporting, analysis, writing), na vakavinavinaka (gifting, thank yous), i tatau (departure), vakarogotaki lesu tale/taleva lesu (reporting back, revisiting site for the purposes of presentation/informing chiefs and those involved of completion) and me vakilai/me na i vurevure ni veisau se na vei ka e vou ka na kauta mai na bula e sautu (transformative processes/change as a result of research reports). The research steps are carried out applying the following eight principles:

1) Research that is carried out on Fijians needs to benefit people, especially the researched community.
2) It should focus on indigenous peoples' needs and must take into account indigenous cultural values, protocols, knowledge processes and philosophies, especially those related to knowledge access, legitimation, processes of ethics, indigenous Fijian sanctions and clan "limits or boundary", all of which influence knowledge and related issues.
3) The researcher should be fluent in the Fijian Language and or dialect of the researched community. This recognises the importance of language in understanding, critiquing and verifying indigenous concepts, and in documenting aspects of their lives appropriately.

4) The use of indigenous persons in the research team as principal researcher(s) in team research situations. …
5) Respect and reciprocity: researchers need to acknowledge and affirm existing elders and Vanua structures and protocols. In terms of reciprocity, researchers must ensure there is sufficient means to show appreciation to people so that people's love, support, time, resources and knowledge freely given are duly reciprocated. Fijian gifting is appropriate here.
6) Researchers need to ensure as far as possible that local people in the research setting are co-opted as members of the research team. This is a means of building local capacity and ensures benefits in multiple ways to the research community.
7) Researchers need to build accountability into their research procedures through meaningful reporting and meaningful feedback to the relevant people and community.
8) Vanua chiefs, as well as village chiefs and elders at all levels, must give permission to all "researches" (research) done in the Vanua. (Nabobo-Baba 2008: 144–45)

FVRF provides a comprehensive guide for how to engage in Fijian research, although looking back, I think it was useful to approach FVRF with some scepticism, if only to avoid the pressure of trying to conform to the "proper" customary protocols that Nabobo-Baba (2006) describes, given that I did not live or grow up in the village or speak Fijian fluently. I would be required to follow Fijian protocol anyway to enter and move freely around the villages to carry out research. This is required of any researcher from inside or outside of Fiji. What FVRF provided was a named and packaged methodology, which espouses the values and principles that aligned well with how I wanted to approach research and anthropology.

GENEALOGIES AND POSITIONALITY IN PACIFIC INDIGENOUS ANTHROPOLOGY

In order to describe my research experience with FVRF and my approach to Indigenous anthropological research it is important to understand my positionality, or "where I am coming from". This relates to the key concept of veiwekani in FVRF. For Fijians and Pacific Island peoples, genealogy is central to how many of us narrate ourselves and position ourselves in relation to each other, across our countries and our islands (see Powell 2021 for a Cook Islands example). Tengan *et al*. (2010) affirm that for many Indigenous anthropologists from Oceania, referencing one's genealogy is "critical in gauging what one's identity is in relation to vā [space, place]" (p. 156). They explain the significance of genealogy for Indigenous anthropology within Oceania as an "index of articulation" that allows further insight into how

Native/Indigenous anthropologists interact with their particular field site or community. They add, "Genealogy is also inextricably bound with sense of place; the vā or space/place inherently determines or shapes what then becomes manifested in one's fieldwork and ethnographic data" (p. 156). Several Fijian and Pacific anthropologists have discussed their experiences navigating genealogy and the insider/outsider dichotomy in relation to one's fieldwork (Fifita 2016; Tabe 2015; Teaiwa 2004; Tengan 2005; Uperesa 2010; Vunidilo 2015).

Traditionally, in anthropology (and the academy generally) researchers did not include their own voice in the research in order to uphold a sense of scientific objectivity, nor was it considered how the researcher may influence findings through their identity, ideological biases and colonial supremacy. Consideration of one's positionality, or being "reflexive", gained traction in anthropology in the 1980s–1990s postmodern turn in the discipline (see Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus 1994; Marcus and Fischer 1986), introduced in the 1960s and 1970s by the French poststructuralists and also heavily influenced by feminist anthropology/Third World feminism (Mohanty *et al*. 1991; Moore 1988; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). Reflexivity has been important in the context of decolonising the social sciences, and anthropology in particular (Sinha 2021). Following this trend, many western anthropologists exercise reflexivity in their research to some extent (how effective they are at it is a question for another time).

In terms of my own positionality, I tend to describe myself as a transnational mixed-race Fijian or a multiethnic Pacific Islander. My mother is Fijian with maternal connections to Ovalau Island in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Indo-Fijian migrants from Nepal, and my father is American of Scottish and English descent. Officially, I am not considered iTaukei because my father and grandfather are not iTaukei, and therefore my mother, sister and I could not be recorded in the vola-ni-kawabula (record of patrilineal descendants), the official registry of Indigenous Fijians established by the British during the colonial period as a record to determine land ownership rights (Rokolekutu 2017). However, we are afforded some rights as vasu—a male's sister's children—a status not institutionalised like the vola-ni-kawabula (Toren and Pauwels 2015: 143–65).

At the time that I carried out my research, I could not comfortably claim that I was an Indigenous Fijian researcher/anthropologist because views of indigeneity in Fiji have been so highly influenced by colonial patriarchy. I have had Fijians tell me that I am not really Fijian because my father is not Fijian. I don't know if or when I will arrive at a place where I am entirely comfortable in my Indigenous identity, but I like David Gegeo's (2001) view of place and identity as it relates to indigeneity. Based on Solomon Islands Kwara'ae epistemology, Gegeo argues for the portability of identity and place

in resolving tensions between Native and Indigenous and non-Native in the context of Native Pacific cultural studies. The conception of place as portable

> would remove the test of one's Nativeness or Indigenousness based on where one is living, and would instead recognize the unity of Islanders wherever they are. The increasing hybridity of identity and ethnicity in the Pacific and worldwide should not prevent us from being able to make claims about parts of our identity if we feel them to be central to who we are. (Gegeo 2001: 502)

Gegeo goes on to say that arguments over degrees of ethnicity and indigeneity are "metropolitan battles that have been imported into Pacific cultures" (p. 502), implying that these approaches foster discrimination and divisiveness. The cliché holds true that "we need to recognize and celebrate rather than try to root out the diversity among us" (p. 502).

In line with Gegeo's sentiment, a conversation happened during one of my research visits to the village. An uncle told me that someone in the village hall saw me pass by during a meeting and said, "Ocei na kaivalagi ike ya?" (Who is that white person over there?). My uncle replied, "Okoya sega ni kaivalagi. Okoya na marmama ni Viti, mai Nasinu. O sega ni kila? Keitou madaga na kawani drodrolagi" (She's not a white person, she is a Fijian from this village. Don't you know our family is like a rainbow?).

To complicate my positionality even further, my father is an anthropologist, which also informs my academic genealogy, including its role in colonialism and anthropology's label as the "colonial handmaiden" (Asad 1979; Asch 2015; Sinha 2021). I choose to study anthropology in the hope of contributing to decolonising the discipline. I often say facetiously that my mother was my dad's "native informant", though that was not really the case. They were married before my dad decided to do research in Fiji. At one point during my fieldwork a family member in the village said, "Oh, so you're doing what your father did?" People remember him fondly as the anthropologist uncle from the USA. I responded yes, to keep things simple. He also did research on Ovalau (Young 1984), making my anthropological path somewhat inherited, I think mostly by osmosis, as growing up I thought anthropology was the last thing I wanted to do.

My father trained at Stanford in the 1960s and subscribed to a more positivist view of research and anthropological practice, believing that scientific objectivity can be achieved in anthropology well enough to be able to identify cultural truths. He rejected the postmodern turn that emerged in the 1980s as navel-gazing and believed anthropologists should apply their cross-cultural skills to effect positive change in the world. This position has influenced my approach to anthropology, in that I think anthropologists should always look to contribute in practical and positive ways to the people and communities they work with. His favourite *Far Side* cartoon, posted for

many years to his office door in the Oregon State University anthropology department, depicted an Indigenous person in headdress and grass skirt telling the anthropologist in his pith helmet and safari suit, "Enough about you, let's talk about me". Excessive reflexivity may detract from the goal, and it has its place in different types of anthropological approaches. But as a researcher and anthropologist with Indigenous genealogy, the findings generated by my research are inextricably influenced by positionality, so it is important that I acknowledge the lenses through which I am doing research.

My positionality as both an Indigenous person and anthropologist I think shares some characteristics with that of Indigenous Pacific anthropologist Katerina Teaiwa in her research experience. In Teaiwa's (2004) discussion of Visweswaran's (1994) notion of "homework" as a theoretical approach to research in the context of Native and Indigenous anthropology, it becomes apparent that the anthropological convention of "fieldwork" can reinforce ideas about an outsider/insider dichotomy between the researcher and the researched and the privilege wielded by academics to represent Indigenous people and reproduce colonial power relations (Smith 1999: 2; White and Tengan 2001: 389). Teaiwa says that navigating her role as a "Banaban anthropologist" while not growing up in Kiribati or speaking the language was a deeply troubling experience, as she was neither an insider nor an outsider: "I was constantly learning and unlearning what it meant to be a good Banaban and a good anthropologist, and I usually felt like I failed at both", and this led her to a sense of "homelessness" (2004: 217). Like Teaiwa, I am not an insider, nor am I a total outsider. I am not proficient in or necessarily good at navigating my indigeneity or my inherited path of anthropology. Indeed, doing anthropology as an Indigenous person, or anyone with an Indigenous background, underscores the blurred boundaries between native and non-native, insider and outsider, home and "the field", and can create conceptual dilemmas (White and Tengan 2001: 389, 397).

Epeli Hau'ofa (2008) pointed out that anthropology's othering effect and historical portrayal of Pacific people as static, transactional and without feelings deters Pacific Islanders from taking up the discipline. Commenting on the relationship between Pacific Islanders and the field of anthropology in 1975, Hau'ofa bemoaned that "after so many years of involvement, we have produced only one native anthropologist, the late Dr. Rusiate Nayacakalou", with himself as a "poor second" (Hau'ofa 2008: 8). White and Tengan (2001) expanded upon this view, saying that "[a]nthropology's valorization of outsiderness as a strategy for culture learning, seen as a core value from inside the discipline, is often seen by others as evidence of separation and detachment, of separate values and interests. Given the palpable legacy of power differentials between natives and non-natives in a region with a long and present colonial history, it should not be surprising that 'separate'

is often read as divergent and conflicting", and in a decolonial context, " 'separate' easily implies 'antagonistic' " (pp. 395–96). My opinions and relationship with anthropology may always remain mixed and complex, and I cannot totally snub the discipline or disregard its conventions because it is also a part of my genealogy and I recognise its important contributions and methodological influences across disciplines.

FVRF ON THE GROUND

For my PhD project, I carried out research in the town of Levuka and three different villages on Ovalau, Fiji: Nasinu, Levuka Vakaviti and Lovoni. Considering my positionality as an anthropologist with Indigenous genealogy, or as an Indigenous person with an anthropological genealogy, the question of who I am doing research for and why is central. It is not merely a matter of looking at a map and deciding that a place looks like a suitable research site based on its geography. You think about your community, your family, their needs and aspirations. It may be a backwards approach to anthropological research, but it aligned well with FVRF—I first chose Levuka and Ovalau as a research site because of my connections to the place, then identified World Heritage as a major activity on the island that might affect people's lives, rather than the more orthodox method of trying to discover or test anthropological theory in a place that fits particular research parameters and serves individual academic interests.

Kanaka ʻŌiwi (Indigenous Hawaiian) anthropologist Ty Tengan discusses the importance of kuleana (rights and responsibilities) for Indigenous anthropologists, saying that rather than ethnographic research being curiosity-driven, "genealogy and *kuleana* are perhaps even more salient driving factors for Indigenous ethnographers" (2005: 248). This is also true of my research journey. My pull towards Fiji and Levuka is strengthened through my yaca (namesake) relationship with my iTaukei grandmother, Nanise Baba Daunaqaqa. Tuwere (2002: 21) explains that naming a child after someone within kin groups or clans was one way that early Fijians transmitted oral tradition. It helps to ensure continuity of the vanua, with a connection maintained through the yaca relationship. Nabobo-Baba (2006: 56) describes the significance of naming in her district of Fiji: "The cyclical concept of time is indicated by the way names are given to people and the way alternate generations are called 'tako' and 'lavo'. Loosely defined, this links the first and the third generations as being, for example, like brothers." It is common to ask who a person takes after/replaces, "who are you named after, who do you reflect?" I cannot say for sure if similar language is common in Ovalau, but the sentiment around naming is similar. A yaca relationship also comes with i tavi (like kuleana—responsibility/obligation). Namesakes can be close or distant relatives, and might be expected to have a close relationship ("like

brothers", as Nabobo-Baba says) and serve each other through reciprocal gifting or acts of service. Tengan's description of his grandmother bestowing him with kuleana resonates with my experience of a yaca relationship. He says, "*Kuleana* also chooses us rather than the other way around, and it comes as a gift from our *kūpuna* (ancestors both living and deceased)" (2005: 252). Essentially, my genealogical ties and sense of responsibility are strengthened, both consciously and subconsciously, since I carry my grandmother's name. During a research follow-up visit to the village (which ended up focusing more on family obligations) the aunt I was staying with said to me, "It must be your name. That is why you keep coming back."

Asking Permission and I Tovo Vakavanua

When I wanted to begin interviews and informal talks in the villages, according to Fijian protocol I first asked permission from the relevant chiefs of respective villages to carry out my research by making a sevusevu (offering) of a kava plant (yaqona). I was requesting permission from village chiefs and vanua chiefs to move freely around the village and speak to anyone willing to participate. I began interviews with village chiefs after obtaining permission through sevusevu to interview others in the village, and ensured that I also gathered views of village elders and women.

Nabobo-Baba points out that "[a] relation of the researcher from the matanivanua (herald) clan of the researcher's village, or a male relative of the researcher, attends as spokesman and presents the yaqona" (2006: 30). My research consultant (I chose to use the term "consultant" rather than "assistant") was a male second cousin (Nereo Lowa Cika, or Lowa), and he acted as my liaison and spokesperson. My research was not team research by university standards, but I considered my research consultant to be my guide on protocol and take the lead in establishing rapport when visiting villages and conducting interviews. I also paid him for his time and effort in supporting my project.

When asking permission from the village chief in our own village of Nasinu (we do not have a vanua chief in the village), my mother also attended. The chief at the time was her cousin—my grandmother's brother's son. When visiting Levuka Vakaviti, a village we are not connected with, with a different vanua chief, the former village chief of our village (my grandmother's other brother's son) presented the sevusevu and spoke for us. When visiting Lovoni, a village where we have strong genealogical ties, Lowa's brother-in-law, who is from Lovoni and lives there, accompanied us to the two chiefs' houses and spoke for us during the sevusevu. The Lovoni chief and others in the village knew my grandmother who had since passed away and recognised my yaca relationship to her, as well as the ancestral ties of our Nasinu clan to Lovoni, and were very welcoming.

Being familiar with Fijian culture and protocols, I knew that I needed a spokesman and liaison for village research, but it was an unusual dynamic where I was still restricted as a visitor moving about the village where all spaces are demarcated and have meaning. Male relatives accompanied me during interviews, and even when moving around the village to visit others informally, at least a child or two was sent to deliver me from one place to the next. In this context, being unable to move around independently, I felt that I was being cast as a real outsider. However, providing me with escorts and spokesmen was also a show of respect and hospitality.

I relied on my male relatives to facilitate as well as enact sevusevu ceremonies for me to ask permission, as it was not appropriate for me to try to do it myself, and I would have little idea of what to do anyway. At the same time, I held some limited economic power as well as power as a researcher to access people's time and knowledge (granted by chiefs through senior males speaking for me). I also had my mother with me not only to help nurture veiwekani and i tovo vakavanua but also to help look after my daughter, who was a baby at the time I was doing all of this. Vanua research, if done properly, takes time and money, and relationships and reciprocity are key.

Respecting Vanua Structure and Veiwekani

Since my daughter accompanied me on a few research trips to Levuka, I followed Fijian protocol to formally present the eldest child to village elders in a (simple in our case) kaumata ni gone ceremony to gain acknowledgement and acceptance of her genealogical ties to the village. After the ceremony, with formalised language and presentation of kava and other goods, it was then appropriate for her to come and go from the village. This was a way of respecting vanua and of respecting and acknowledging the status of elders in the village.

Nabobo-Baba also recognises that "[r]espectful language, appropriate choice of words, gestures, correct gifting and respectful deportment are particularly important in *vanua* research. For me to be *vakamarama* (to behave like a lady at all times) was important" (2006: 27). It is important to dress with legs and shoulders covered, and better to wear sulu jaba, formal Fijian muumuu attire that extends down the ankles. Both men and women are expected to cover their legs in the village. "Acting like a lady" sounds antithetical to gender equality, but for the purpose of visiting and gathering information, following village protocol such as this is important. It signals respect for iTaukei values, and though it could be argued these are purely colonial, I didn't feel it would be productive to agitate for feminist revolution while I was trying to establish some trust to get people to talanoa with me.

Recognising that Pacific methodologies were not addressing dimensions of gender, Naepi (2019b) developed masi (or tapa, Fijian barkcloth) methodology as a metaphor that points to the importance of the knowledge that Pacific

women hold "that will be useful for generations to come, that research is a collaborative process, and that information shared by Pacific women is sacred" (Naepi 2019a: 12). Masi methodology had not yet been proposed when I did my research, but I was aware that FVRF did not provide guidance related to access to knowledge and navigating gender dynamics during research to include women's voices. However, as a woman with awareness of gender equality issues, I was deliberate in seeking out women's perspectives. This enriched my findings in that the views and experiences of women in Levuka's World Heritage programme who were given ongoing opportunities to participate in handicraft revival were notably different from those of the men, who did not have equivalent engagement with the programme.

My mother and grandmother (before she passed away) were also important in facilitating vanua research, as things can sometimes get tricky with veiwekani and vanua politics. When travelling alone to Levuka, I am always given specific instructions to visit particular people with particular gifts, and avoid others that might be currently involved in a dispute with allied family members that I might otherwise be unaware of. I have also been warned to stay away from certain areas of the village where black magic might be practised. I listened to these warnings, and also applied my own judgement taking into account what I already knew of village dynamics. In this respect, navigating veiwekani and the insider/outsider positionality meant it was sometimes easier to stay at a lodge in town and only stop in for short visits with family. It was also difficult to write field notes and have space for reflection when staying with relatives, particularly when they hosted kava sessions in your honour and you might be expected to at least be present until the early hours of the morning; but it might be impossible to sleep anyway while the party carried on all night.

Vosa Vakaviti (Language and Translation)

Though most people interviewed could speak basic conversational English, village interviews were conducted mostly in Fijian, and interviews with non-Fijian townspeople were conducted in English. I am not fluent in Fijian but have been exposed to the language since childhood, spoke fluently as a young child and took formal lessons as an adult. Lowa assisted with simultaneous interpretation between English and Fijian, though I understood most of the Fijian and also asked the interview questions in Fijian, picking up the phrasing and rhythm of questioning after a few interviews. Later, during transcribing, I used my mother's strong Fijian–English bilingual ability to assist with translations where I was uncertain or identified comments that had not been translated during the interviews. I was glad I did this before the university requirement to have certified translators for second-language interviews came into effect.

Since the interviews were in a mix of Fijian and English, and for the purpose of recalling impressions during particular interviews and while reading interview notes, I transcribed all 55 of my village interviews myself, 74 in total including interviews with townspeople and officials. Some translations were worked out through discussion in order to come to the most appropriate translation. We sometimes called those interviewed in our own village to clarify comments, as those people could be approached informally. So the voices that came through in my research were conveyed not only by me but also through Lowa and my mother. All of this meant that I took even longer to complete my dissertation, but as a Fijian researcher intimately connected to the people and places in my research, I felt this was the best way to approach bilingual interpretation.

Vakarogotaki Lesu Tale (Reporting Back)
From the beginning of my research, I factored in time and money to return to Levuka after completing a draft of my dissertation to present my observations, collect feedback and obtain permission to publish comments from "key informants". In the early stages of my research, I shared conference papers and my research proposal with Fiji's Department of Heritage and Arts, whose staff I had been interviewing and consulting with at the time, to obtain feedback and approval to proceed from an official standpoint (I have Fijian citizenship so I did not need to obtain a research permit). I presented my findings to chiefs and interlocutors in the three villages and held a public presentation in Levuka attended by the town CEO, other town leaders and residents, generating meaningful discussion and feedback that I included in my dissertation.

Na Navunavuci (Conception), Na Vakavakarau (Preparation and Planning), Benefits to Vanua and Transformation
I did not obtain initial approval from the vanua for my overall project or work as collaboratively as I would have liked with local stakeholders to help inform my research focus and ensure it would be useful for them. This was a difficult balance as a graduate student overseas, again with not many resources, trying to complete a project that was feasible academically as well as personally while also trying to make my work relevant locally. I am not sure if my research has benefited the vanua directly or resulted in significant transformation. This principle seems to assume that it is only the researchers that are building local capacity and not the other way around. Young researchers in particular, I feel, only remotely know what they are doing, have so much to learn from the vanua and need capacity building themselves. I certainly did.

I admit that I feel like I failed to contribute more during my research, as I was unable to live on the island for an extended period of time to do research (a rite of passage in anthropology), making several visits instead. On a graduate researcher's budget, I also did not have much cash to contribute to village soli (fundraising) or other expected cash contributions. My hope was that my research could be a tool for advocacy and information, or at least as a record of conditions and sentiment at a particular moment in time, and put me in a position to contribute more into the future.

FVRF with Qualitative Methods

While FVRF was an important foundation and guide for me, alongside FVRF I needed other research tools to collect and analyse my data. These included semi-structured interviews, field notes based on participant observation, thematic analysis, domain analysis and a mix of purposive and snowball sampling to ensure a balance of gender, age and geographic location, while applying Bernard's (2006) guide to anthropological methods. To manage my interview data I used a basic transcription software, Express Scribe; qualitative analysis software like NVivo was another piece of technology to navigate that I didn't think was necessary, so I chose to keep it simple and stick with Excel for my database. While I applied FVRF principles to my research approach, I still needed the other tools of anthropology and qualitative methodology to collect and analyse my data.

Na Vakavinavinaka (Reciprocity/Gifting)

To show appreciation and reciprocity, at every visit I distributed gifts to the appropriate people, mainly in the form of food and clothing. To contribute to village livelihoods, I also made sure to purchase items from the village canteen (operated by my great-uncle), buy fish from my cousins and purchase other food grown in village gardens to take back to Suva. One important material item that I was able to contribute to my family's village was digitised copies of an ethnographic film my anthropologist father made in 1978, *Carasala Ki Lovoni* (Opening the Way to Lovoni). My father and mother narrate the video, which documents a ceremony to mark the return of the Nasinu people to reestablish lost ties to their ancestral village of Lovoni. The act of carasala in this context consisted of elaborate ceremonies that included performances of songs and dances and where items of cultural value were exchanged, such as kava, root crops, woven mats, fabric and other valuable items such as kerosene for cooking. I appear in the film as a baby and my sister as a toddler, documenting our participation in this important ceremony.

The film was filed away on 8 mm film and VHS after many years of screening in my father's Pacific Islands anthropology courses. It wasn't

until my own return to Nasinu as an adult that I resurrected, reformatted and redistributed the film on DVD to a new generation in Nasinu and Lovoni. Because I was overseas, it took about one year to finish digitisation of the VHS tape, copied over from 8 mm film in the 1990s. Within a couple of hours of the first screening of the DVD at my aunt's house where I stayed, people began appearing at the house to request copies for various families who appeared in the film 40 years ago. The younger generation of cousins who first viewed the video were eager to see their parents as children, grandparents who had passed on and great-grandparents they were named after but had never met. They watched the ceremony preparations with interest, noting the techniques the past generation used for activities such as harvesting kava and preparing pigs for the lovo (earth oven). The older generation also noted the ceremonial style of the time and expressed nostalgia over the music and singing performed after formalities were completed. Days after I left the village, I even received requests via Facebook from other relatives who heard about the DVD and wanted a copy. It is rare that family history/vanua history would be documented on film, in addition to documentation of techniques that are no longer practised. American anthropology students had viewed the film for a decade or more and my grandmother had kept a VHS copy tucked away since the 1990s; now it was distributed to most families who took part in the ceremony 40 years ago. As the film aged, it became a rare and important source of knowledge of our vanua, veiwekani and i tovo vakavanua, as well as lotu. Later, I also presented the film to the Lovoni chief (sauturanga) and the Levuka Museum for archival purposes.

Carasala and Valuing Indigenous Knowledge through FVRF

The importance of returning to carasala, or reestablish lost ties, became a recurrent theme in my research journey, and one that represented both my anthropological and Indigenous connections to Levuka. I was reluctant to extrapolate and play with this concept as a research frame, being aware of the recent proliferation in applying Indigenous concepts and metaphor to naming systems and practices, perhaps inappropriately in some cases (Sanga and Reynolds 2017). But FVRF reminded me not to dismiss the importance of carasala to the work that I was doing, not only because carasala-ki-Lovoni was likely the most significant event in Nasinu's vanua history since colonisation but also because it is an aspect of Fijian Indigenous knowledge that I have been familiar with, and because I participated in its continuity as a baby with my parents and the village. Now as an adult, I was able to gift the film back to the next generation in the village as a reciprocal contribution, this gift in a way also serving as an act of carasala to open the way for reestablishing and maintaining our genealogical connections through applying FVRF in practice.

CONCLUSION

In reflecting on my research experience, I found that information I gathered, and the act of research itself, became inevitably organised around key cultural pillars outlined in FVRF. There were aspects of FVRF that came together for me almost subconsciously and as a matter of common sense for doing village research. While I was sceptical of how FVRF would work in practice, when I began my research in Fiji I soon found that as an Indigenous person who wanted to respect relationality, genealogy and associated protocols, I was applying FVRF anyway. It was affirming, in a way, to find that these cultural sensibilities preceded me even though I was uneasy about my Indigenous Fijian/anthropologist positionality and how I could apply FVRF.

With that said, I faced various limitations and feel that I did not perfectly execute all aspects of FVRF's prescribed approach, nor of that of anthropological methods. But I am frequently reminded in continuing interactions with relatives involved in my research that the journey does not end with a completed research project. Our ongoing relationships, reciprocity and upholding of carasala carried on from the research experience continue to play out. "Home" and "the field" are blurred for Indigenous Pacific anthropologists. We cannot disentangle the two, and most of us (most of the time) don't want to. Referring back to my aunt's comment highlighting the importance of veiwekani, or genealogical connections, and the significance of a yaca relationship, I do in fact have to keep returning because I have my grandmother's name.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Fijian unless otherwise stated.

carasala	open the way, reestablish lost ties
kaumata ni gone	formal presentation of eldest child to village elders
kūpuna	ancestors both living and deceased (Hawaiian)
i tatau	departure
i tavi	responsibility; obligation
i tovo vakavanua	custom
kuleana	rights and responsibilities (Hawaiian)
lotu	spirituality, both Christian and Indigenous
lovo	earth oven
masi	barkcloth
me vakilai/me na i vurevure ni veisau se na vei ka e vou ka na kauta mai na bula e sautu	transformative processes/change as a result of research reports

na i curucuru/na i sevusevu	entry
na i tukutuku	reporting; analysis; writing
na navunavuci	conception
na talanoa/veitalanoa	multilogue; dialogue; monologue; story collection
na vakavakarau	preparation and planning
na vakavinavinaka	reciprocity; gifting
sauturanga	chief
sevusevu	offering
soli	fundraising
sulu jaba	formal Fijian muumuu attire that extends down the ankles
talanoa	talking story as a way to establish and nurture relationships between people
vā	space; place
vakamarama	to behave like a lady at all times
vakarogotaki lesu tale/taleva lesu	reporting back
vanua	land and place
vasu	male's sister's child
veiwekani	kinship relationships
vola-ni-kawabula	record of patrilineal descendants
vosa vakaviti	language and translation
yaca	namesake
yaqona	kava plant

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