Being Fijian in the Global System of Professional Rugby Union: Articulating Multiple Values Through Mobile Bodies

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

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Abstract:

A global rugby system has emerged which both motivates and facilitates the movement of large numbers of highly skilled professional athletes, and their swift integration into the dense social relations of professional clubs. Crucially, the global rugby system has become an articulation between the many localized values and practices of rugby and the professional codes of globally-oriented coaches and managers. This thesis uses an ethnographic approach to reveal the development of professionalism as a specific body culture produced at particular nodes, which has expanded to connect rugby union globally. In particular this theses focusses on the experiences of some of the several hundred indigenous Fijian professional rugby migrants playing overseas during the last fifteen years, and the several thousand aspiring young men working to do the same. This case study of mobility highlights the importance of the social, cultural and gendered contexts of specific mobility projects. Furthermore, the sometimes obvious cultural tensions that these men experience in the global system reveal the processes and power dynamics which create and define each local node and the global system as a whole. For these men rugby represents a unique opportunity to pursue both immediate social recognition in Fiji, fulfil familial expectations, gain the much coveted international mobility, and pursue an highly enjoyed activity. Individual and collective “rugby dreams” emerge in Fiji and motivate the collective production of rugby players willing to go overseas. To attain and retain professional contracts Fijians must abandon some of their own cultural system and meet the particular expectations of the clubs they play for. Those who successfully negotiate the transitions develop alternative Fijian professionalisms, combining the essence of their Fijian identity with the requirements of their adopted club. This articulation

produces and manages the mobility of players, allowing skills and motivations developed in families and clubs of Fiji to be used by clubs on the other side of the globe. The ethnographic study of professional body culture as it emerges and is experienced in multiple locations within an interconnected global system is an innovative and particularly anthropological approach to understanding the social organisation of global sport. This approach contributes to the existing anthropological literature on mobility, globalisation and sport by highlighting the cultural tensions at different locations within this professionalised global system, revealing the multiple levels of frictions and power dynamics encountered by the mobile men within it.

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Fijian Language Terms

Bati- warrior. The bati were one clan (*mataqali*) within each lineage (*Yavusa*).

Bati Leka- warriors charged with protection of paramount chief

Itokatoka- subclan. Consisting of households headed by brothers, or other close kin.

Lotu- Church/Christianity

Mataqali- Clan, consists of several *itokatoka*. Each *mataqali* will have a different function within the lineage.

Matanitu- Fijian state. Also term for pre-colonial confederacies.

Ratu- title acknowledging high social status.

Turaga- Chief.

Vanua- Word which means land. Also can be used to refer to people of the land, which can both be the common people, as opposed to the chief, or the village as a whole. Also can be used to describe traditional culture, which is based in strong associations to the land.

Vu- Spirit, ancestoral spirit.

Yavusa- Lineage or Phatry. Largest level of organisation. Will contain several *mataqali* sometimes spread between several villages.

Yagona-Traditional drink made from Kava Root. Mild narcotic.

Note on Pronunciation.

Fijian is pronounced phonetically. The following represent the differences with English.

b sounds like *mb* (as in reme*mb*er)

c sounds like *th* (as in *th*at)

d sounds like *nd* (as in Su*nd*ay)

g sounds like *ng* (as in si*ng*er)

q sounds like *ng* + *g* (as in fi*ng*er)

Chapter 0: Introduction - Fijian Athletes as Highly Mobile Men

Figure 0.1: Radike Samo accelerates out of an attempted tackle by a New Zealand player. Source: http://v1.sport360.com/article/australia-26-19-wallabies-edge-past-boks-perth-thriller. Accessed 10/4/2014.

On the 24th of October, 2011 in a crowded Auckland auditorium filled with the past and present stars of rugby[1], Radike Samo was awarded the International Rugby Board's "Try of the Year". That the try itself was acknowledged is not remarkable. After good team play Samo received the ball 50m from the try-line. With speed and subtlety he created confusion between two players to create a small amount

[1] Rugby refers to the sport of rugby union, as opposed to the similar, but distinct sport of rugby league.

of space, which he ran into by overpowering the larger of the two players with a show of immense upper body strength, before outrunning several opponents to score a try under the posts. At this ceremony, clips of the play were shown repeatedly, and Samo came forward amidst applause to collect his award. What is remarkable is that Radike Samo had a career in professional rugby which was both highly mobile and also deeply embedded in the identities and social ties of several places. Born and raised in Fiji, and after a career spanning 15 years and contracts in five countries, he ended up representing Australia in this match. On the night that he scored his try he was aged 35 years and 49 days, the oldest player to ever represent Australia in a match against New Zealand. As part of this nationalistic entertainment spectacle he then produced a play so valuable as to move him out of the specificities of that match or nation, and be recognized by global rugby culture. The try he scored was instrumental in winning that match, and the Tri-nations tournament, the most important annual tournament for the Australian rugby players and fans. The award was an acknowledgement of about 10 seconds of work by one man – seen by the audience as a few moments of brilliance created by his athleticism and skill. In it we can see the fruition of an intricate system of global rugby development, bringing a highly skilled professional, gendered and raised in Fijian values, into an arena where he is visible to millions world-wide. Events such as this awards ceremony are important tools for constructing a global rugby culture and audience. They bring people together, celebrating specific values, constructing the sense of a global sport.

This thesis is about the globality of sport. It is about how a global system develops linking locations, products and people, sometimes with very distinct practices and values. It is about how the resultant tensions emerge, are repressed, and

accommodated within an uneven global system. Sport played for pleasure becomes first a political project, and then an economic venture. Rugby serves as a tool through which identities are marked, values are maintained and status asserted and contested. In the context of a widespread lack of meaningful employment in impoverished nations, professional sports provide young men with a rare opportunity for socially meaningful action and the associated masculinity. Yet, there is an ambiguity in the value of young men as they circulate through global sports industries which is difficult to reconcile with diverse concepts of masculinity, body and mobility.

The confluence of Fijian social and economic desires and the availability of contracts for the best athletes at overseas clubs has resulted in several hundred Fijian professional rugby migrants over the last fifteen years adapting to and being adopted into the very different cultures of their host clubs. These players, their skills and their desires are being produced within Fiji but not in style immediately transposable to other rugby societies. What appears as a simple shift in geography actually places these young men in vastly different professional settings, in which their indigenous ways might not be viable. Accumulating value in this new context usually requires the learning of new behavior, but often precipitates the reconstruction of an individual’s relationships, identity and personhood. Using this insight this global labour regime appears less as a universal system shifting pre-made talent according to market principles, and more as the ongoing pursuit of locally constituted value, which sees socially produced people shifting between localities in which they are constantly made and remade. Their experience in professional rugby challenges the values behind these young men's dreams even as it provides them with a pathway to their realisation.

A large part of what allowed Radike Samo his level of mobility is the availability of playing contracts around the world. In 1995 it was ruled by the Rugby Union's international governing body that the sport would no longer be strictly amateur. That, where permitted by the local union, clubs and national teams would be allowed to pay their players. In a sport that had sometimes claimed amateurism as a defining value, this represented a marked change in position and outlook. Professionalism changed rugby's social, cultural and financial structures and meanings; clubs, venues and competitions were restructured, created, renamed after sponsors, or closed due to bankruptcy; a global market for rugby now links the different rugby playing countries through player, coach, media and financial mobility; players' relationships with team mates and clubs have shifted in ethos.

The creation of the contemporary global system of professional rugby has involved concurrent and interrelated processes of marketization and professionalization. Marketisation is the process of introducing market logics into the governance of international and national rugby, as well as clubs. Players, their labour, matches and other parts of rugby culture are imagined as products, and dealt with as commodities to be marketed and sold. A shift to professionalism in the wealthy rugby union nations (including Australia and New Zealand) has corresponded to a desire to use financial resources to develop and recruit the most talented players possible. Professionalisation is the ongoing production of orthodoxy and orthopraxy within the industry. It has created new links between the various parts of the rugby world. However, this has also translated discrepancies in financial power into an almost unidirectional movement of players from the rugby playing countries of the global south towards those clubs of the global north.

The competition for talent exists in tension with the desire to retain a team structure and environment. Coaches want the most talented players, but need to be able to bring the best out of these players and meld them together into a team. It is this tension which defines the parameters of the recruitment process, and builds a (constantly shifting) topography of professional rugby. By topography I mean the social geography which links different social spaces, allowing and restricting movement of people between different systems of value. The underlying principle which produces this topography is social capital. Certain social spaces become easier or more difficult to enter into, and people are evaluated differently in each social space. Ultimately, Radike Samo's value in most of the rugby world is determined by the expert coaches, agents, marketers and commentators of the Global North, rather than those in Fiji. This thesis will examine where such value comes from, and how it is converted into money. It will ask why some players are worth more than others and who makes these decisions, when and where. How are Fijians understood in these logics, and what opportunities does this give them?

The basic direction of player recruitment around the world is fairly clear. Rugby's premier tournament, the World Cup, sees the best twenty national teams competing. However, if we look at the location of players' current professional playing contracts we see that overwhelmingly these top players are currently contracted to clubs in the Global North, within countries like France, England, and (perhaps unique to rugby union) New Zealand. Figure 0.2 shows this clearly, with 134 of the 600 players selected into the 20 2011 world cup squads playing for clubs in France, 97 in England and 46 in New Zealand. This situation is made even clearer when compared with the locations of players from other squads.

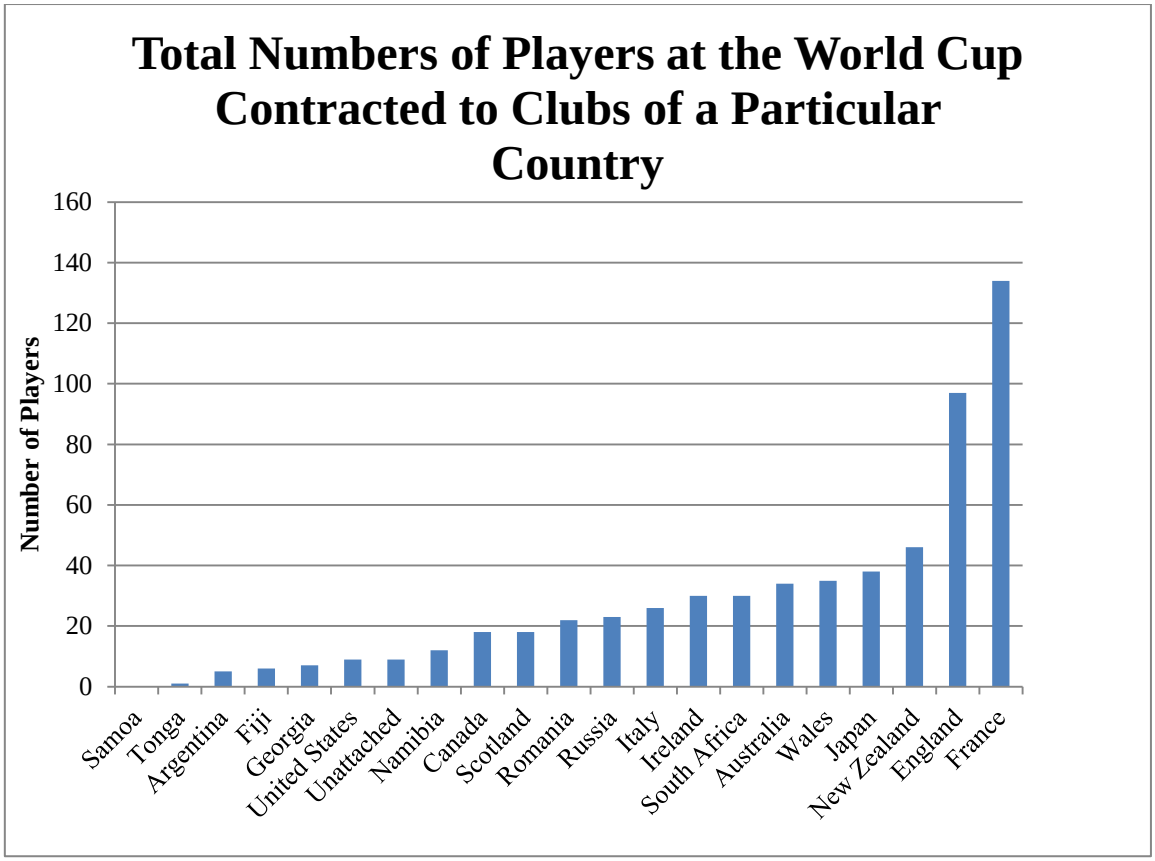

Figure 0.2: Number of players from all world cup squads currently contracted to clubs within each world cup nation.

Whilst over twenty players were born in each of Argentina, Fiji, Georgia, and Tonga, almost none of these players is currently contracted to clubs within these nations. These are some of the sending nations of the rugby world. Ultimately there are more international players playing in the clubs of France, the UK and Ireland than anywhere else. There are hundreds of players from the various nations of the Pacific playing in the different competitions of these countries. In contrast there are no foreign players playing in any of the competitions of the Pacific Islands. This represents a clear core-periphery relationship. It is a direction that is barely contested, and rarely resisted in world rugby.

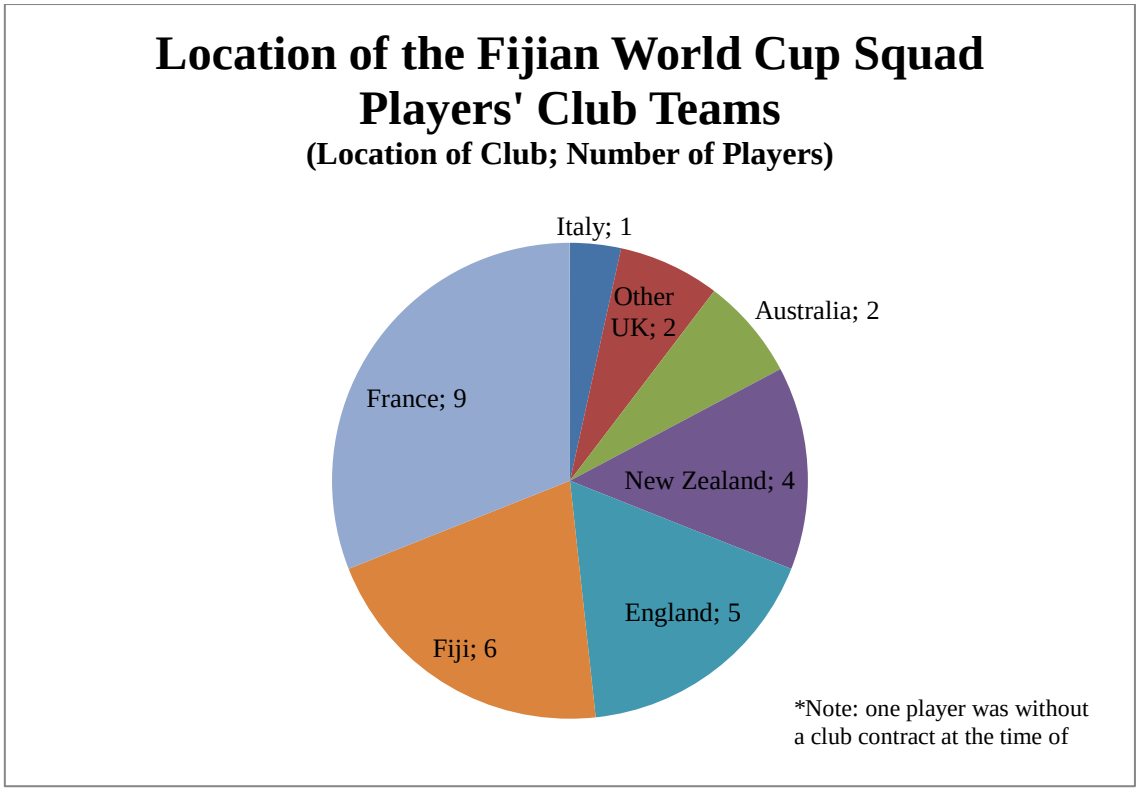

Figure 0.3. Where do the Fijians play? Locations of the Fijian 2011 World Cup Squad by nation within which their club team is located.

Without a fully professional domestic league, Fiji is a source of talent for overseas clubs rather than a destination for rugby players. Its players are attracted to the overseas competitions with high salaries, better players and increased public exposure and recognition. Fijian players are sought due to the reputation that Fiji has for producing fast, powerful and exciting players. As a consequence global topographies of power emerge, in which certain parts of the world become the centres of sporting endeavour, places where fame, fortune, talent and prestige conglomerate, whilst other places do not provide the same opportunities or rewards (Eriksen 2007). Domestic clubs and competitions then have to compete not only with distinct differentials in standards of pay and quality of play, but also with distinct differences in living standards. Not surprisingly then, there has been a large “brawn drain” (Bale 1994) (analogous to the “brain drain”) as the most skilful players tend to leave for the metropoles of the western world, in what Miller et al.

(2001) have described as the 'global traffic in sporting bodies'. We can see these patterns in Figure 0.3, which depicts the location of the clubs which Fijians in the 2011 World Cup squad played for at that time. Although 6 players were selected from Fijian club sides, the bulk of the team (17 of 30) played in the major European competitions.

The topography of the rugby world is heavily influenced by two annual international competitions played amongst the global rugby powers. In the northern hemisphere there is the Six Nations tournament, competed for by England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy. This forms the core of the international season for these top nations, and is played in the middle of the rugby season (Fall-winter-spring). The domestic leagues of these countries have far more corporate sponsorship and are able to offer players the highest pay packages. For instance the Guinness Premier League (top competition in England), has over 2,000 players, for whom the starting salaries are in the order of £20,000 (FJ$58,793) and the top salaries in excess of £200,000 (FJ$580,793). The southern hemisphere is dominated by the Tri-Nations tournament, played between Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (and Argentina since the completion of fieldwork). Before the commencement of this international tournament, the top teams from these three countries compete in the “Super Rugby” competition. Pay packages in the southern hemisphere are not as high as in the northern hemisphere, though this gap is narrowing. There is not the same TV audience, ticket revenue or high levels of corporate sponsorship that exist in the European markets. However, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are able to keep most of their top players by restricting selection to the national team to players based within their domestic competitions. Hence, the Super Rugby

competition acts as a proving ground for the greater honour, and associated market value, of playing for one's country. It has also become a good proving ground for young Pacific Island players, with clear pathways through ranks, and a high emphasis on skill development. Spending some time in New Zealand enables players to gain high pay contracts if they choose to migrate to Europe. What matters is not just Fiji versus the foreign market, but also the internal differentiation of the "global market".

It is in the context of this topography that we should understand the specifics of the pathways available to Fijians within it. Radike Samo aspired to leave Fiji for the professional and social opportunities in New Zealand, Australia and other "western" countries. He had hoped to make something of himself and provide for his families at the same time as they escape from the economic woes and social malaise in Fiji. A very prominent dream amongst the young men is the "rugby dream": pursuing a professional career in the newly professional sport of rugby. Rugby represents their passion, their social and cultural capital, their male pride. However, playing professionally requires global mobility, moving through complicated global systems of finances, regulations and interpersonal networks. It also involves integrating into and becoming part of new, unfamiliar clubs with their own cultures, politics and expectations of rugby players. For the successful the remittances flow to appreciative families in Fiji, whilst their careers ensure that they have the option of a life abroad. For the vast majority though these hopes remain unrealised. They are stuck unemployed in Suva, or in low pay jobs in Auckland.

If we examine the match Radike Samo was playing in when he scored his award winning try, we see very quickly the importance of national identity. A long term

rivalry between the two countries turned into a media and marketing sports spectacle. 51,858 spectators packed into the Brisbane stadium to watch the game, billboards, sideboards, posters and even markings on the pitch advertised various sponsors, as did advertisements during the telecasts of the match, all of which drew in the revenue to support a rugby industry in Australia. Many of the fans wore the gold jerseys of the Wallabies in a display of national spirit. Yet this was a national spirit that could easily accommodate a foreign born player. The commentators noted various Fijian features of Samo, particularly his large 'aero-dynamic afro' hairstyle, and the cameras panned to two white spectators wearing Australian jerseys who had painted their faces black and wore afro wigs in an obvious tribute to Samo. These were framed as a recognition and celebration of his difference, rather than an attack on a Fijian representing Australia.

A long history of foreign born and raised athletes representing Australia has normalized this to a large extent, and indeed that night Samo played alongside three New Zealand born players, one from Papua New Guinea, one from Zimbabwe, and one from South Africa. Performing well whilst wearing the national colours of Australia is enough to win the affections of most Australian supporters. The sporting industries of Australia attract players with lucrative contracts, as well as producing them through training programs.

Figure 0.4: Radike Samo (far right) poses with Australian teammates (from left to right), indigenous Kurtley Beale, Tongan born and raised Sitaleki Timani, and Papuan-born, captain, Will Genia.

The performance of Radike Samo was seen in Fiji as well. Rugby has been incorporated into the core of Fijian life. Playing and watching rugby are joyful pursuits enjoyed daily by a large part of the islands' population. Rugby is an expression of Fijian masculinity. Unlike almost any other type of migrants, successful rugby migrants remain within the gaze and social worlds of home. Fijians viewed that night rather differently than parochial Australians. The vast majority of indigenous Fijian men would have closely followed the build-up to the game, and, if they could find a place to watch it, would have congregated to watch the game as a group. Most Fijians fervently supported one of the three national teams, South Africa, Australia, or most commonly, New Zealand in the Tri-nations tournament, the highest profile, most watched, highest earning and most prestigious tournament in the southern hemisphere involving these international teams. Radike Samo's selection would have been enough to switch their allegiances to Australia. For many, he was representing Fiji that night, despite

wearing a gold jersey. Whilst some dreamt of all their players wearing the white jersey of Fiji, like the Australian fans they had become used to the complicated allegiances produced by the globalized sporting world. The difference was that they were accustomed to seeing Fijian men wearing the colours of other nations, even in matches against Fiji. However Samo still was regarded as a Fijian, and a Fijian hero at that. Rugby migration demonstrates the entanglement of discrete alternative values within the global professional sport. Migrants play not only for money, but also for standing, identity and prestige within multiple spheres of value. Their juggling of these multiple systems is fraught with ambiguity and tensions.

The position of the Fijian players in a way epitomizes multiple contradictions in modern sports. Sports are supposed to celebrate the strength and skills of the human body that is the inalienable part of our humanity, and is supposed to be entertaining, expressive, non-utilitarian, serving as an end in itself. Fijians grow up playing rugby with passion even seeing it as a religion. Yet, rugby must also now be understood as a tool for Fijian men to get overseas, and as such must also be viewed in relation to the other migratory pathways available and pursued by indigenous Fijians. This thesis will argue that the particular ambitions which lead large numbers of young Fijian men to pursue rugby are driven by familial hopes for financial success, but these dreams are sustained by the almost immediate localized social rewards that pursuing these particular pathways offers young men.

What is hidden from most people within the global rugby system are the struggles that Radike Samo and others have had in performing the requirements of the professional environment. This is not unique to Fijians. There is always tension between the abstract ideal of professionalism and other social values, producing a variety of professionalisms. As such, all clubs can be read as assemblages of

multiple values; this is a social and reflective process, one of ordering but not of order (Mosse 2013). It is dynamic and potentially frictive (Tsing 2004).

Yet there is something different about being Fijian within this system, stemming from the relative influence of local rugby culture on the global professional system. Professionalisation of the sport on the one hand opened up the possibilities for the Fijian players to enter the global system, but at the same time made the sport a political arena, within which the aspirations and values of Fijian rugby players compete with those of other locales. The questions are to what extent these values can sustain behavior beyond the particular social settings they were developed within? And to what extent are the values themselves changed by the adaptation of different practices? One of the unique and innovative contributions of this thesis is to answer these questions through a relativised approach to professionalism; as a system made through the production of a specific body culture in the clubs of the Global North; and by the accommodation of tensions as this professional body culture comes into contact with other values. The current literature does not take this approach.

The experiences of Fijian rugby players such as Radike Samo throw light onto a number of key issues in contemporary anthropology. This study examines the central theme of articulation between local values and practices and global systems which encompass them; it does this through the lens of the body, which is a site for this articulation at a micro level; and through the lens of money, which does this at a macro level. Mobility within professional sport brings together these issues in unusual and very visible ways.

Central Theme: Articulation in Global Rugby

Rugby is in some ways a global sport, now played by over 4.5 million players registered to over 18,000 clubs in 117 countries. However, the vast majority of the players, professional clubs, influence and money are concentrated in a few places. These are linked by a system of rules and global governance and by the flows of players, images and money throughout the rugby world. Rugby is at once highly universalised and standardised, but at the same time extremely parochial, particularly in the identities associated with its practice. Following Fijians as they move through the system brings its mechanics to light. How is this system produced and held together? What are the articulations between the local and global forms of this system in different locations? How are the local and global co-produced?

I will examine the making of global rugby historically. A key debate here is about where agency exists in this local/global contact: is there a degree of autonomy to local “culture” which can be drawn upon to provide agency to individuals (e.g. Sahlins 1985)? Or, in a Foucaultian (1991) analysis, are modern cultural constructions overwhelmingly powerful due to their ability to compel local engagement with its institutions and ideologies? Local agents and groups are left to subversion and hybridisation. My contribution to these questions is framed by the social facts of rugby as it was introduced and indigenised to Fiji.

The primary focus of the thesis is the system which is evolving as a result of the professionalization of the game since 1995. It deals with the literatures of neo-liberal globalisation and late capitalism, also derived from a similar period. This has seen the rapid integration of Fiji, as a market for the global rugby media products, but, more importantly, as a provider of a segment of the highly mobile

global rugby workforce. This has been driven by the advent of professionalism in rugby. I frame this change as being made up of four processes, each with its own particular dynamics, ideals, techniques and outcomes, but all linked together by the neoliberal ideals (Blim 2000) which tend to motivate the individuals and institutions. There is firstly a process of internationalisation marked by the drawing of countries into a system of governance; second is a process of professionalisation related to the commodification of players and rugby products, and the adopting of various cultural practices and ideas of contemporary western corporate culture. These have precipitated the third process, a reorganization of the social organisation of rugby to allow the mobility of money and players. The fourth process is the development of an orthodoxy and orthopraxy of professionalism, which facilitates player assessment and movement. Together, these processes form a point-to-point process of globalisation (Xiang 2012), whereby individual clubs, players and unions are rapidly restructured, as a result of which players move frequently and flexibly but in a highly structured way. In other words these processes lead to highly structured flexibility. Studying the processes as they have occurred at multiple sites shows both the global force, but also the embeddedness of the processes within local politics and value systems (Xiang 2007 2012).

In this I draw analogies with other globalisation and professionalization of other high-skill industries, notably that of development (Escobar 1988, 1992, 1994) and IT (Xiang 2007). I am careful not to over emphasise the totalizing effects of ideologies or deterministic power of structure. Instead the ethnography indicates that the local politics and individual decisions have been influenced by a variety of local and global considerations. Importantly the principle of ‘professionalism’ is

understood as a powerful discourse. This is similar to what (Tsing 2004) discusses as ‘universals’ in the progress of globalisation centered around a series of localised issues and events. At these times various actors and perspectives will be in “friction” with one another. Importantly, there is not the creation of a single hybrid globalism, or even a single understanding of events that occurred. Instead there is a complex system of meanings and interests which come into existence as a solution to conflict, not as a process of consensus. The seemingly all-powerful globalism is actually composed of varied internal frictions.

In response many have pointed to processes of hybridisation, resistance, and reinterpretation which have successfully carved out space within the system for variation. The Comaroffs' book Modernity and its Malcontents (1993) provides a spur here. They are suggesting that the global culture may clash with alternative values, and this clash is revealed in decidedly un-modern practices like witchcraft. Later authors stress that such clashes are not about modern and traditional or global and local but reveal different forms of modernity, alternate modernities. So, through Aihwa Ong’s ‘spirits of resistance’, female factory workers appeal to spirit beings to resist their own factory management (Ong 1987). The point is not so much the protection of localisms as the construction of alternative forms of identity which engage with the global. There is not a strict binary between the modern and tradition. There is not a particular opposition between globalisation and closing off from the world. Neither extreme is possible or desirable. This thesis is not about how values are different, but rather how they are put together despite and because of the differences, and consequently create a global sport. There is a management of frictions and accommodation of differences within the global sport.

The professional era has not been the only period for the development of global rugby. It must be understood in light of a previous, colonial era, history of the game. During the late 19th century, when Fiji was being integrated into the British colonial system, sport was being used in British society to inculcate particular ideals such as fair play, discipline, honesty and courage (Collins 1996; Money 2001). A similar ideal dominated in the colonies, where sport was seen as being a tool of civilisation, transmitting ideas of character (Appadurai 1996). Sport arrived in Fiji along with Christianity, and both drastically changed the beliefs, structures and values common within Fijian society, as well as being changed by them. 'From the beginning, Fijians blended John Wesley's religion with local concepts and practices to produce new kinds of Methodism' (Tomlinson 2009, p. 45; Kaplan 1995). This indigenising process had two key features; firstly, a process of cultural processing of the new British ideals within dynamic traditional cultural logics, so that they were accepted, but also adapted (Sahlins 1985); and, secondly a process of cultural selection by the church, colonial regime and chiefly elite, which promoted certain traditions whilst removing others by way of force and coercion. This may be described as cultural articulation (Clifford 2001, drawing on Gramsci 1971; Hall 1986). This was also a time of vast invention of “Fijian” traditions, which now remain as officially promoted and accepted myths of the past (Howard 1991; Kaplan 1995). Rugby should be understood as one of these traditions. This thesis examines how it was naturalised through its connection with the three most important social institutions of colonial and post-colonial indigenous Fijian culture: the church (*lotu*), the state (*matanitu*) and tradition/land (*vanua*); and how these have in turn been influenced by rugby. This dialectical view avoids the problems of seeing sport as an ‘empty form’ (MacAloon 2006) which can be unproblematically

incorporated into local values and meanings. Instead I focus on the web of meanings, and complex power dynamics, which can be read into modern Fijian game.

As Brownell puts it, the idea of the "empty form" is 'unsatisfactory because it creates an artificial distinction between form and content… which does not do justice to the intense conflicts, cross-cultural negotiations, and even personal suffering that have historically accompanied the spread of transnational cultural forms' (Brownell 2005 p. 135). In analyzing the arrival of cosmetic surgery in China, Brownell highlights the simple fact that these practices did not arrive empty of meaning, but rather these western meanings were given a new interpretation in this new context. The local Chinese reaction to cosmetic surgery remained framed by the understandings of these practices as being western, and therefore problematic in a number of ways.

At this point it is crucial to introduce the experiences of the mobile Fijians. The Fijian example shows the local production (families and clubs) which links into the global system. We see the links between social mobility and geographical mobility, partly structured by the particular topography of rugby union, but also within the broader cultures of migration (Ali 2007). This includes 'beliefs, desires, symbols, myths, education, celebrations of migration in various media, and material goods' (Ali 2007, p.39), which reinforce the social value of movement (Chamberlain 1997). In addition migration represents a rite of passage enabling certain individuals to enter a special rank of society defined by their ability to migrate (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004). The flows of migrants out of the Pacific are particularly strong (Lee 2009), resulting in a huge contribution of remittances to the Fijian economy (Betram 2006; Connell & Brown 2005). But these migrations are

still cast in terms of indigenous customs and comfort with mobility (Clifford 2001; Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009) and the specific values that local communities assign to migration.

The particular paths are determined not only by economic opportunities, but also by the cultural evaluation of particular modes of moving and professions. For instance Gallo (Gallo 2006) shows how female migrants might be cast as pariahs, who exist outside of the moral sphere of home due to their engagement in the foreign economic sphere. Rugby players are subject to similar lines of evaluation, but I argue the “rugby dream” remains a morally and socially valued pathway for young men. Through rugby, as opposed to other pursuits, the possibility of remaining within the moral sphere of home remains possible. This is an augmentation of Besnier’s description of the politics of hope which have resulted in a casino capitalism mentality among Tongan men seeking out the large rewards of professional sport despite their very low chance of success (2012, citing Comaroff & Comaroff 2001). I add the recognition that even those who fail to achieve the dream still obtain some of the social value and respect for having undertaken the endeavour. Merely pursuing a professional rugby contract through the ongoing work of disciplining body, mind and spirit is one highly valued way of demonstrating and attaining social worth. As with the Tongans of Besnier’s work, those who transgress Fijian moral codes whilst overseas, particularly those sent home in disgrace, are ranked in a social category below those who stay. The links here need to be between the global structuring of mobility options, and the social mobility that is attached to these (Brettell 2008; Vertovec, 2011)

As the Fijians move they are evaluated in different ways by different social actors. They have to negotiate multiple allegiances, maintaining links with home through

financial and social remittances, and fostering two modes of being. Their mobility means that these migrants themselves are focal points for the tensions within the global system. At a micro level if we examine the way that their bodies are produced and evaluated by different social actors, we get an added insight into this first theme of “articulation”.

Thematic Lens 1: Fashioning the Body for Play and Display

'Sport is the human activity in which the body is the object of the most intense scrutiny: trained, disciplined, modified, displayed, evaluated and commodified, the sporting body is the focus of not only the person who inhabits it but also spectators, trainers and "owners"' (Besnier & Brownell 2012, p. 444). The mobility of the Fijian men brings multiple social forces into play on their body. As they move they find their physical bodies judged in different ways, they are taught new ways of training and disciplining these bodies and by doing so they learn new ways of relating to their bodies. The body matters, and the different ways in which it matters highlights the complex articulations within the global rugby system.

Joining a professional club involves the beginning of a project to develop a professional “body culture” (Brownell 1995). This is a project which is profoundly linked to cultural, relational and political forces which are brought to bear upon the rugby player’s body in not purely bodily ways (Scheper-Hughes & Lock 1987). I use the practice theory approach to show how the social, cultural and historical position of the players is embodied by them through socialisation. The culture of professionalism has reified principles focused on self-responsibility of players using the body as an instrument. These and repetitious practice within the community influences the individual and produces a *habitus* from which stem their actions (Bourdieu 1977), and a tendency towards an individualistic conception of

self. All of this is situated within the body (as socially informed subject) of the individual, but a body which is itself situated within the world.

The ‘techniques of the body’ (Mauss 1935) needed in rugby carry with them also the values of the cultural system in which they are produced. These techniques can be conceptualised through Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*, the gradual inculcation of particular modes of behaving, holding oneself, talking etc. (Bourdieu, 1977). A person only looks as they do due to the particular place they have in society, the types of activities they do. In Bourdieu’s terms, the ability to demonstrate the particular habitus which is deemed to be desirable within a ‘field’ (a social context surrounding a particular group) will enable an individual to gain cultural capital. In this way the body, according to Bourdieu, can be used to portray group membership. But the point here is that there is a body constructed socially, perhaps in village Fiji by tattoo, dress, dance and ornaments. Rugby is another social construction focusing on physical qualities. While that social construction appeals to the rugby code it deviates from Fijian code. Can the body express both codes simultaneously?

Rugby is experienced through the body as expressions of play, pain, work and identity. The training regimes of professionalism result in vastly different experiences of the body as players learn not only new physical techniques, but also senses and sensations. Many of these are not readily translated into language, but taught through bodily mimicry and repetition of movements. Here there are parallels to the literatures on dance or martial arts, which describe modes of learning new ways and new experiences of the body that go beyond the five senses of folk knowledge (Potter 2008). I examine the relation between this process of learning the body, and changes in the players’ view of the world, with a

constant focus on shifting Fijians from having a communal mode of being to one which is more individualistic, more ‘self-responsible’ by the mantra of professional rugby regimes. The professional program cast bodies as tools to be used and managed, machines to be built and repaired (Sharp 2000). In this way gaining knowledge about the bodily practice can give greater understanding of the social position of the individuals and their world views, or as Wacquant puts it doing research ‘not only *of* the body, in the sense of object, but also *from* the body, that is, deploying the body as tool of inquiry and vector of knowledge’ (Wacquant 2004, p. viii).

The process of learning these new bodily techniques and relations is more difficult for Fijians than those brought up in the core rugby nations, as there are different modes of personhood there than in western society. Toren in particular points to a far more communal way of thinking about oneself, one’s body and one’s place in the world in Fiji than in the west (Toren 2003). Whilst the universality of classic contrast of communal vs. individual (Geddes 1959; Ravavu 1983) should be contested (Clammer 1973; Sahlins 1985), there are very different types of personhood in Fiji. Personhood is socially constituted, and Fijians are not autonomous individuals, but part of a larger collective. Difficulties can be cast in these terms. This is almost constantly noted by Fijians overseas, and also noted by the coaches who don’t understand certain behaviours. A nuanced account of the Fijian attempts at integration into clubs show both a shift away from their traditional forms of personhood, but also attempts to reconstitute the social and cultural conditions for this personhood.

Thematic Lens 2: Market Value and Communal Value

There is now a well-developed market for professional players. A logic of this market is that each individual will be able to be valued, marketed and sold. The commodification of person involved in this sort of transaction brings some classic anthropological themes to the fore.

Marxist ideas of commodification, alienation and fetishism are given a twist in this ethnographic example, as, in many ways, the labour of the Fijians becomes more visible, their persons more celebrated and their value more appreciated by their incorporation as commodities into the capitalist system. The contestation over rugby persons as commodified labour and as ‘dividuals’ (Strathern 1988) in complex social networks linked with communal clubs form one part of the puzzle. The other is formed by understanding how Fijians try to negotiate these multiple systems of valuation/meaning, converting their bodily capital into either financial capital or communal respect.

This work builds upon the ideas of Graeber (Graeber 2001, 2006) in particular and his concept of value as meaning. In this idea the value of anything is the meaning that people place in it. This is socially and culturally constituted. There are a variety of types of exchange relations, but in each case it is the relations which define the significance of the action or item which is being valued. The importance of this approach is that it recognises that there is a complex system of valuation which goes on in the sport before and alongside the monetary forms. As with other situations where money has been introduced into societies, there is not complete and total transformation of systems of production, distribution and value because of this (Bloch & Parry 1989). Yet, the addition of money does change things for two reasons. The first is that money enables the more facile shifting of value

between different social worlds – players can use their skills in one part of the world and shift their money to another entirely different place. Whilst a strong performance for an Australian club before professionalism would have earned a Fijian respect and prestige within that community, strengthening relations within the club, and thus reflecting in part the communal value placed on him in his former Fijian club, the money that this performance now commands in the market can be quickly translated into a different set of value within the Fijian sphere through remittances. The physical presence of the kinsman in networks of social reciprocity is replaced by a financial contribution from a remote location through remittances. Ties to clubs become weaker, and communal reciprocity is transformed as the strategy focuses on prospects of financial wealth that can be shared through emerging networks at the local levels. Hence, money serves as a strategic instrument of articulation, not only between local and global, but also across economic and non-economic relations.

If this makes mobility easier, then the second effect of money does the opposite for Fijians. Money does not come as an isolated change, but is closely linked to the culture and ideologies of contemporary capitalism. That is, this culture is based around the language of economics, and the expectations of corporate culture. As Polanyi (Polanyi 1944) long ago pointed out, capitalism is not a natural condition, and markets need to be supported with a variety of institutions and power structures. In this case the power structures and institutions have tended to produce a culture of professionalism. These structures and cultures of professionalism are unfamiliar to Fijians, who, to a large extent, must adapt or adopt them in order to succeed in professional rugby. These negotiations of values and practices occur within the social spaces of each individual club. Each

has its own history, social dynamics and culture. This specificity and its articulation with broader social forces become a key focus in the methodology.

Research Questions:

How has a global system developed that can move and integrate players from such different backgrounds?

That is:

- Why do Fijian men want to move to play professional rugby?
- How are they valued and supported within Fiji?
- Why are they recruited, and how are they evaluated in different clubs?
- How do they adapt to the experience of transnationalism?

Methodology:

The key questions and themes of this thesis require a focus on the specific dynamics within clubs as well as the flows of information and people between them. In order to investigate the articulation of mobile people and ideas in specific local contexts, I myself was highly mobile during my research, moving from site to site, tracing the movements of the Fijian migrants, and also shifting between the localised environments of the clubs which form the connected but discrete nodes of the international rugby system. The participant observation provided a thick description of the rugby club and the players' attitudes to migration (Geertz 1973). Subtleties of social practice became more apparent, and through comparison of these the process of articulation became more evident. However, particularly given my high levels of mobility, in-depth participant observation was not possible in some clubs and in some contexts. Interviews supplemented this by allowing me some strong insights into these contexts, particularly when framed by my more ethnographic information.

In reality, I would concede that the shorter amounts of time in each site limited my ability to conduct deep ethnography of a geographical location. Some of the subtleties of local variations on rugby become lost in this type of research. However, the links between the places become more obvious. Informants indicated they knew each other, and were interacting across great distances. Several players had played in multiple locations within my field sites, and most had played in many others outside of these. In an occupation pursued as mobility and passage, multi-sitedness is far more the norm than stasis. As I moved I became increasingly aware of the similarities and linkages between places. I ordered my research roughly in the same way that a playing career was commonly imagined within Fiji. Simplifying these stories produces a roughly linear progression from village rugby, to Fijian level competition, to first overseas and semi-professional experiences, to professional contracts, to extensive professional careers, fame and fortune. This was designed to allow an investigation of the local interpretations in multiple sites. At the same time I was constantly asking interlocutors and interviewees to reflect upon the system as a whole – which decisions had lead them to their current positions, and where would they end up in the future. The following is a list of places that I have researched within this trajectory:

Villages

> I carried out three months of participant observation research in the Lomaiviti rugby club in Suva. Thee villages in Overlau and Ra provinces in Fiji, where I joined young men who were playing for the Lomaiviti club in Suva as they returned to visit their families.

Fijian Level

I met with the Fijian National Development Squad during their six week tour of Australia and New Zealand

First overseas and semi-professional experiences

I undertook extensive field work in Australia based at the Western Districts Rugby Union Club, Canberra. I was there for four months during field work, which is in addition to the five years I had previously played at the club. At the same time I was carrying out observations and interviews at the ACT Brumbies Academy, again where I had been a player. Both of these institutions provided a point of transition for several young Fijians into Australian Rugby.

I was based in Auckland for three weeks, during which time I played, trained and interviewed the players at the Teachers Eastern club. In addition I interviewed players, coaches, managers and teachers at the following places:

Four New Zealand Schools and One Australian school which had extensive recruitment programs

Three New Zealand professional academies, each of which had been pathways, after school, for potential rugby migrants.

Three New Zealand country clubs, which were based outside of the normal centres of rugby, and as such provided a very different context for fieldwork.

Three ITM cup teams. These semi-professional teams are closely aligned to both the professional academies and the fully professional teams. They are viewed as providing the best test of players' abilities, and the best place to develop good rugby skills.

Professional Clubs

I had a very high level of access to the players at the ACT Brumbies, due to my past playing history there. Whilst I did not participate in training during my field work, I was able to observe much of what was going on, and already had the understanding as a former participant.

In addition I visited and did shorter periods of observation and interviews at three Australian and four New Zealand Super 15 teams

Interview Numbers and Style:

During my time at the Lomaiviti club my main field work methodology was participant observation. I supplemented this with semi-structured interviews, which I recorded by making detailed notes, and transcribing from memory the more important sections immediately after the interview. It is not always clear where the boundaries between these semi-structured interviews and informal conversations lie, however I have taken it to be the point where I have asked for verbal consent to use the conversation in the thesis. In total during the fieldwork in Fiji I carried out 26 such interviews, most of which were one-on-one interviews, though I did one group discussion with 10 people (9 high-school students and their teacher/coach), and 5 with 2-3 people. In total I had semi-structured/group interviews with 12 teammates, 5 coaches/managers, 4 mothers of players, 4 older siblings who were housing players, 3 school teachers, 9 high school pupils, 4

members of the FRU and 5 with other people in home villages (including the chief and pastors).

During the field work in Australia and New Zealand I carried out a total of 138 interviews. 87 of these, ranging in length from just under 15 minutes to just under 4 hours, were recorded using a voice recorder and were later transcribed. The remainder of these were recorded using short hand notes at the time. I have provided the following numbers as an indication of what sort of people I spoke to at each stage of my fieldwork, however at times people were difficult to put into one category or another:

Fijian national team (In both Australia and New Zealand): 5 groups of 4-6 players, grouped according to amount of experience overseas; 5 one-on-one player interviews in Australia and a further 3 in NZ; Multiple interviews with each of the 3 main coaches.

NZ: In Auckland, 10 with current players (2 Fijians, 5 other players of Pacific Island decent, and 3 others), 3 with the management and coaching staff. 7 more Fijians currently playing at other clubs, and 6 Fijians who were former professional players. 3 coaches of club teams and 5 players.

In Otago: 4 Fijians in rural Otago and 2 coaches there. I also carried out interviews with two of the Fijian players' wives here. There were 2 pacific island players interviewed in Otago.

In Wellington: I interviewed two coaches, an agent and 5 Fijian players at various clubs.

Hamilton: At the Professional Development Managers conference I attended for a day in Hamilton I carried out 2 group interviews with 8 PDMs (see chapter 8) and 6 individual interviews. In addition I interviewed 3 coaches and 3 Fijian players.

Taranaki: I interviewed 4 members of the coaching staff and 6 current players, including 2 Fijians and 3 other Pacific Island players. I also interviewed several long time employers (non-rugby based employment) of Fijian and other Pacific Island players.

Australia: The Australian portion of the fieldwork was based even more around longer periods of observation within clubs, rather than interviews. However I still carried out semi-structured interviews with 9 Fijian players (not at any of the clubs I was based at); 4 senior players, 2 coaches and 2 interviews with 3 and 4 players at Wests; 3 coaches, 4 Fijians, 4 other pacific island players, 4 other players at the Brumbies; Elsewhere I met with 3 other coaches/managers, 4 players and 2 PDMs.

In Oxford I carried out 2 group interviews (3 and 5 people) and 2 one-on-one interviews.

My background provided a passport into my research. My experience and skill as a rugby player allowed a level of participation rare in ethnographic research. Brought up in Australia, I had been a rugby player and fan from an early age. After school I was recruited into the development squad for an Australian professional team, the ACT Brumbies. This club is very well known in Fiji as it is one of the leading teams in the southern hemisphere. During my time there I played with three Australian international captains and at least a dozen internationals. I also played for the Australian u21 team, and Australian Universities team, and was

recruited by a professional Italian team, which played in the Heineken cup, Europe's top competition.

Figure 0.5: Training with a team in Auckland during fieldwork

By the age of 24 I had lived out part of the “rugby dream”, and tasted some of the success that these young men were seeking. This profoundly affected my study by allowing me greater empathy and hence insight into these young men's lives. It also allowed me access to their team, which I joined, and was quickly accepted into. The type of description that this was able to produce is far deeper in some

ways than what might have been achieved by a researcher without these particular advantages. However, it does have the disadvantage that I would sometimes be unaware of alternative meanings that could be read into the trainings and practices.

The first major part of the fieldwork took place in Suva, Fiji. I strategically chose a club based upon two criteria; firstly a club that had had a history of migration; secondly a club that still had strong links to the villages and their traditional leadership and social formations. My fieldwork initially consisted of attending the formal training sessions which ran from 4-7.30pm every weekday and of playing in the games, generally on Saturday. The club had three sides, each involved in a different division of the Suva district competition. The top division had been successful during the last decade, winning the prestigious Escott shield on a number of occasions. This, along with the fact that several of the club's players had been in recent Fijian national teams, had attracted many other players eager to play in a successful team and attract attention in this way to their own skills. Fijian clubs tend to be organised as local community organisations. Charismatic coaches and senior players lead the younger ones in games and trainings. The little money the clubs use for equipment is generally raised by the players through small sales or community fundraising events. Some teams attract players by their location, others through the charismatic leaders and others through their history of producing good players. At different times Lomaiviti had utilised all three strategies. At the time I arrived I found that many of the players in all teams of the club had aspirations and intentions to play rugby professionally, emulating the club's senior players who had been overseas. They saw a pathway to further success through the club.

As I became more heavily involved in the club I started to spend most of my time with these players. I discovered that in addition to the training sessions in the afternoon, many of the players were doing their own sessions during the mornings and hot Fijian days, in order to improve their rugby skills, speed and conditioning. During my time I tried to participate and observe as many of these training and formal events as I could. As I became better friends with some of the players I was invited into their homes on a more regular basis and attended church with them. This phase represented a long period of participant observation, and this research method was supplemented with semi-structured interviews. These interviews focused on people's migration experiences, impact of migration on their social world and kinship politics, reasons for being in Suva, how they lived in Suva, and reasons for playing rugby. During my final week at the club I presented the players with a survey asking them basic questions about their living conditions, backgrounds, educational and employment histories, reasons for playing rugby, and migration intentions and experiences. This phase also involved two trips to players' home villages. Here I lived with them for an adequate time to gain insight into the village life that they had left to come to Suva. I had informal interviews with many members of their families, often as a group, which proved to be a highly effective way of gaining information. Again I used the mixed methods of participant observation, casual chats, and semi-structured interviews to get data.

The second phase of field work consisted of a four month trip to New Zealand and multiple research trips of several months to Australia. Here, I visited clubs at different levels of the rugby world. I went to several New Zealand schools that were recruiting Fijian boys on scholarships to be the stars of their rugby teams. I spoke with students (Fijian and non-Fijian), teachers, local community members,

rugby coaches, and headmasters. I carried out short-term participant observation by joining in the training, matches, and social scenes of many amateur and semi-professional rugby teams which were bringing in overseas players (and a few that weren't to act as a control on my observations). I interviewed, watched trainings, and joined players for meals and social activities at professional clubs throughout New Zealand and Australia. Geographically they were spread out from the very southern parts of the South Island, right the way to the very north. There was a mix of clubs based in small country towns and large clubs in cities of New Zealand. There was a mixture of clubs where there would only be one or two players of Pacific Island descent, to those where the team consisted entirely of players of Pacific Island descent. These dynamics within the club were important in determining the cultural maneuverability that migrant players had within the club. Also important was the level of migration within the broader community. I went to places where the players were the only non-Anglo New Zealanders in the community, and to others where Fijians would have a choice of Fijian churches to go to within their local area.

My interlocutors perceived me in very different ways in different locations and social contexts. In Fiji, I was an outsider, but one who was regarded as having potential social and economic value due to my own rugby experience and the networks I had. The process of my induction into various social spaces and networks in Fiji reveals much about the local perceptions of the global rugby system, as I will discuss in subsequent chapters. It is important to recognise that my positioning changed significantly once I was outside of Fiji. In a club in New Zealand or Australia, I was no longer a novelty, but a part of the majority in terms of my cultural background and knowledge. In my dealings with Fijian and other

Pacific Island players, there was an increased degree of reticence to interact with me to that which I had experienced in Fiji. Gone was my attractiveness as a potential linkage with the outside – they had already made the difficult initial step to get overseas and were, for the most part, already sufficiently part of a system to realise that I had little value to them. Also, I quickly found that the social position I had adopted whilst I was in Fiji was not understood in the same ways amongst Fijians overseas. My whiteness and cultural background now became a bit of a hindrance to trust. As a Samoan researcher in the field advised me early on, I would likely be associated with the (white) coaching and management. This was exacerbated by the fact that many of my most useful introductions did come from the professional development officers (who are tasked, amongst other things, with the integration of players into professional culture and broader society). The change in the players' perception of me indicated the change in their experiences as they start actually pursuing their rugby dream. While the dream is elusive in Fiji, once they commence the journey they confront real power relations and inequality.

The limitations brought about by my mobility in fieldwork meant that it became difficult in some locations to access alternative voices. It was very uncommon for me to be introduced to the mothers, sisters and girlfriends of the players (though I did meet several wives and families at lunches). Mothers are often spoken of as being very influential in the lives of the players, in particularly receiving many of the remittances sent home. It would have been fascinating to know how the women viewed rugby players and the masculinity they embodied. Also, the temporal dynamics of professional sport could not be investigated in a single site, but only by comparison between different clubs at different times. The squad dynamics, training and social activities were very different depending on whether it

was preseason, or near the time of finals, and there were significant special occasions throughout the year which were useful for analysis in and of themselves.

Talad Asad espouses the idea that anything we describe is restricted to a particular ethnographic moment, bound temporally as well as by contexts such as culture, place etc. Therefore we can never really speak of anything with certitude beyond this particular location. In this vein, what I am describing is only applicable to the particular teams, playing in Suva, NZ, England or Australia at the particular times that I was there. Indeed even this generalisation to the team and time period obfuscates some divisions in society. However, I have tried to go both further and not as far as this. I go further, in that what I describe are small snapshots of a larger system, and I then assemble those snapshots to give overall impressions of this system. There are never enough snapshots to show the system in its entirety, but the comparison and linkages between the snapshots do give insight into the larger relationships. I try to show the process of moving through the system and different perspectives from within it. The benefit of studying professional rugby in this way is that it captures some of the fluidity and tensions within the system, by showing not only divergent practices, but also differences in the way people conceive of their small part fitting into the whole. In this way what was being studied was articulation; the constant construction and reconstruction of global ties from diverse and scattered local practices.

Chapter Outline:

The chapters are grouped into three parts, which allow me to examine the tensions between different parts of the global industry. The first part examines the localized experience of rugby in Fiji; the second, the construction of the industry through the process of professionalization; and the third the tensions which are produced as the Fijians move into these professional spaces.

Part 1: Fijian Rugby

Rugby has been incorporated into Fijian lifestyles and meanings, imbued with local values, and now forms a central activity in society. These have developed both in relation to colonization and later globalizing forces, and also isolated from these. The first chapter examines the current articulation of the local and global, and the way that it constitutes a “rugby dream” for many young men and their families. The game is celebrated as a pure expression of God-given talent, but also forms an important part of the social and economic projects of young men. This chapter explores these projects, how they are conceived of in terms of local values, and how Fijians extend these values into the global world. Young men train with the support of communities partly in the hope that they will be able to conquer the outside world and send back its resources. For some this is done through large remittances, but this is rare. This has led Besnier (2012) to argue that there is an irrationality of casino capitalism. Instead I argue that this becomes perfectly explicable when viewed as important projects of masculine identity construction centred round a culture of migration, and a highly valued masculine prototype of the Fijian professional rugby player.

The second chapter focusses on the socio-cultural meanings of rugby in Fiji. It presents a historical analysis of the development of the key values and institutions of Fijian society, and rugby as an important cultural site for the development of these values. It shows that rugby has become a powerful symbol and institution of these ‘invented traditions’. As such rugby clubs become a source of gendered identity, status and purpose for the young men who are part of them.

PART 2: Global Rugby System

This part is about the ongoing professionalization of the sport of rugby. There is a system evolving within professional rugby that carries very definite power differences between localities, and these in turn structure the opportunities for the Fijians.

Chapter Three examines the global institutions as they have evolved during the professional era. It traces the increase in the quantity of connections between different parts of the global system, but shows how these relations are not even. It traces changes in the values and organisation of rugby at an international, national and club level. The position and capabilities of Fiji to participate in these processes are contrasted with those of Australia.

Chapter Four examines the body culture of professionalism. Particularly it traces the new techniques for the codification, rationalisation and production of professionals. This professionalism forms the orthopraxy of the clubs which Fijians join in search of their dreams. Chapter Five turns to a fundamental tension in professional rugby, between the production of mobile individualised athletes, and the requirement to integrate these into professional and social units. Chapter Six describes the recruitment of Fijians. It both describes how Fijians imagine the best

pathways into professional rugby, and how these compare to the methods of coaches to view, assess and trust in their abilities.

PART 3: Fijians in Professional Rugby

The professional system produces opportunities for Fijian mobility. However, the pursuit of these opportunities is not always easy. Chapter Seven examines mobile Fijian athletes as a site for the articulation between Fijian values and those of the professional body culture. Particularly it examines how religion, an important part of Fijian life, is brought into their understandings of professionalism. At times these articulations are reinforcing, but at other times they are experienced as friction. Finally, Chapter Eight traces the ongoing Fijian commitments to communal relations. These care constantly challenged in the professional environment which favours individualised self-responsibility. In these new social spaces Fijians' responses must take into account not only their own social comfort and the requirements of professionalism, but also the ongoing obligations to their families.

Part 1: The Rugby Dream – Fijians Engage the Global

Figure 1.1: Passion for Rugby. The almost ubiquitous sight of young Fijians playing rugby. Source*:* http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/ Accessed 04/05/2010

Chapter 1: The Rugby Dream – Moving Beyond the "Play Element" in Sport

Midway through my field work I arrived at the Waikato Chiefs, a professional club in New Zealand, to interview Sitiveni Sivivatu, a 28 year old Fijian born and raised member of the All Blacks, New Zealand's national team, the best in the world. He had been at the club for six years and was very well respected within the club and the New Zealand rugby community. As a highly famous, mobile and well paid Fijian player, he was regarded as one of the most successful of the country's exports. In many ways rugby was a job for him; he was concerned with earning the money for family in NZ and Fiji; he spoke of his sore body and the difficult nature of training; and he had a planned career progression within rugby and outside. Yet, it was also a social activity, and he was well respected within the

team, and spoke with pride at having played international rugby. When he had first arrived, he had struggled to understand many of the social norms of New Zealand, baulking at the ‘lack of respect’ of the local students for their teachers. He saw himself as lucky to live with an older Fijian migrant after school, from whom he learnt how to live there. This was partly learning the practicalities of living in another country. But what was noticeable was the emphasis that he placed upon the difference in the sport. It was faster, and trainings were serious, and he hadn’t been taught the skills the others seemed to do naturally.

Now, because he was well established Fijian in New Zealand, relatives occasionally sent young men just arrived from the islands to see him, to learn about New Zealand rugby. Rather than link them with a coach he brought them to the training facilities. Here, amidst the high tech equipment and high intensity training, he simply told them: ‘Rugby here is not the game you played for fun in the village. In New Zealand rugby is different; it is serious; it is work. You need to learn that to succeed.’ His account and lesson to his countrymen could be read as a Levi-Straussian-esque series of oppositions between the two worlds he lived in: Fiji: New Zealand; Play: Serious; Religion: Money; Group: Individual. These simplistic oppositions make a strong point to his countrymen – don’t believe that you understand what rugby is, as in New Zealand it is fundamentally different.

For anyone who has visited Fiji the task of establishing the joy that many, if not most, Indigenous Fijians derive from the game seems so straight forward that it is barely worth mentioning. Individuals I met on the streets would proclaim their love for the game. Players, even after repetitive trainings, would state their enjoyment of the game as part of their reasons for playing. Indeed these statements were so ubiquitous that people generally did not mention it in regards to themselves, but

rather focussed on its central position in the collective – comments such as this recorded during an interview ‘we Fijians love rugby. It is part of who we are’, were so regular as to become unremarkable for the researcher after a short time. This joy was also evident in people’s actions, in their smiles and laughs as they played. In the energy and urgency with which they played their games in the afternoons I could recognise the pleasure they were taking from this activity. When someone made a particularly good run, dodging attempted tackles from a few opposition players, or sprinting away from the others into the empty spaces of the field, this pleasure quickly bubbled over into celebratory yells and high fives. So then, is it sufficient to say that rugby is “play” in Fiji?

This chapter introduces the idea of the “rugby dream” which is driven by the social and economic potential of rugby in addition to the pleasure of the game. It is a collective social investment in the individual player. This thesis does explore the differences between the rugby in Fiji and that in Australia and New Zealand. Yet, through ethnography it seeks to problematize these dichotomies, by showing the complex entanglements between them. This chapter will introduce the experience which Fijian men have of the rugby they play in Fiji. Indeed they are motivated by the joy which they have from the game, young people playing the sport in makeshift fields filled with games at the end of every day. This fits with conceptions of sport as ‘play’. Yet, there is often more at stake than fun or ‘play’, and my ethnography of the local rugby scene as I found it in Fiji explored the attitudes and behaviours of rugby players and their families towards the social implications of the game. This challenges the dichotomy presented in the simplistic reading of Sitiveni’s lesson.

Moving beyond the “Play Element” in Anthropology of Sport

The purpose of this discussion is not to determine when something is a sport and when it is not, but rather to identify tools for the analysis of surrounding social structures. The category “sport” is an analytically weak one, yet the social phenomena normally described by it remain interesting for analysis. As Besnier and Brownell put it 'sport is an important realm of anthropological inquiry because it provides a nexus of body, multiplex identities, and multilayered governance structures, combined with a performance genre that possesses qualities of play, liminality, and storytelling, that enables us to explore the connections among these dynamics in a unique way’ (Besnier & Brownell 2012, p. 453). The varied and complex nature of sport makes it difficult to define, but fascinating to study. This literature identifies that sport can produce physical and mental outcomes for the individual. It can also be read as a cultural expression of underlying social values, and, as such, as a key site in their reproduction in the individual and group. Sport should be understood as having implications for bodily experience, mental dispositions, community and individual identity, social ties and value systems, and can be motivated by spiritual, social or profit benefits. Importantly, these different aspects are mutually constitutive.

The study of sport within the social sciences first arose to account for what were perceived as non-productive or leisure activities. The question became, why were people spending so much time doing activities which had no material benefit to them, nor directly reproduced society? Building upon Huizinga’s historical account of the “play element”, there was a concern for how people experienced non-serious activities as enjoyable (Huizinga 1949). Perhaps due to their presumed non-serious nature, sports and games have been seldom taken up as the focus of anthropological study. Yet, even within the very brief interview extract I’ve

presented we see other aspects of rugby come to the fore – it is part of identity, a group identity at that. Anthropologists, as well as academics in other disciplines, have grappled with a number of questions in this regard: What are the features of sports around the world? How do sports come to have meaning for people, to be the basis for identities and at the centre of some societies? Features such as athletic performance, competition, rituals, exhibitions of skill, representation and creation of identity, players, spectators, suspension of normal rules of society, entertainment, play and games, rites of passage, aspects of liminality, creating solidarity within a group or connection with opposition, nationalism, war by proxy, and organisation of time and people have all been discussed as central to sport.

When SS shows his New Zealand professional club to young Fijians interested in playing professional rugby, he highlights the simple dichotomy between rugby in the two places. To explore this there must be analysis across three axes: Firstly, we must explore both the physical actions of sport and also the non-physical aspects of experience and practice; second, we must recognize that sports can be significant for individuals and also for the constitution of groups; thirdly, sporting matches can be highly significant events within the sport, yet much of people's involvement with sport lies outside of these events in the everyday practices. We could label these three considerations, respectively, experiential, the social and cultural meaning of sports practices, and the contextualization of this within wider life.

Guttmann focusses on the experiential aspects of sport, seeking to differentiate sport by its physical characteristics, competition and the playfulness. He begins with a definition of play as a non-utilitarian physical or intellectual activity pursued for its own sake, in his work *From Ritual to Record* (Guttmann 1978). Play can be

divided into two categories based on the spontaneity of the action: play which occurs naturally, such as word play between two friends, and organised play (games), which have rules for the players to follow. Games in turn can be divided into those which are contests, and those which are not, such as the Japanese *kemari* which has the aim of keeping the ball in the air by kicking. And contests can be physical, which he defines as sports, and non-physical, such as chess. As Guttmann notes, no activity is purely part of one category or the other. Yet, an activity stops being play, by his definition, when either hope of reward, fear of punishment, or social obligation compels one person to participate. This is what Malaby (Malaby 2009) means when he says 'if by play we are trying to signal a *mode of human experience* - a way of engaging the world whatever one is doing – then we cannot simultaneously use it reliably as a label for a *form of distinct human activity'* (Malaby 2009, p. 208). That is, if "play" is to indicate the non-utilitarian nature of the activity, then it is not the form of the activity, but the social outcomes in a particular context which are important. Work and play are simultaneous, and games often have consequences, immediate and long term, which make them interesting (See, for instance, Ortner 2001on the mountaineering of Mt Everest). It is far better to speak of the "play-element" (Huizinga 1949), which can be part of the sporting experience. That is, we must move beyond considering only the experiential aspects of sport.

The highly visible nature of modern sports has led many to regard these as the culmination of sporting development. For instance Guttmann (Guttmann 1978) developed an influential evolutionary model, which shows a ritual character of pre-modern sports disappearing with the emergence of industrial society and being replaced by an emphasis on achievement. He identifies new roles and structure

evident in modern sport: secularism; the concern for equality of access and fairness of competition; specialisation of roles within the sport; the rationalisation of rules and development of training methods; the creation of bureaucratic organisation; the quantification of performance into statistical information; and the quest for records. This he contrasts with primitive sports which he casts as being far more concerned with ritual than their modern equivalents. His real aim, however, is to show the connections between modern sport and modern society, so he lacks a real analysis of non-western sports (Brownell 2001). The anthropological shift to examine both non-western sports and the adaptation of western sports to non-western societies has shown a wide range of physical practices, embodied meanings, and associated social and cultural organisations which might be called sport[2].

Through ethnography of what might be called “non-modern” sporting contexts the importance of the social and cultural context of sports has become apparent.

[2] The anthropology literature examines many physical games and activities which have vastly different structures and meanings, from different places and different times. For instance, for the Waiwai, primordial archery is the framing of the masculine boy as a social being and does not have the competitive aspect as its focus (Mentore 2005, p211-218, cited in Besnier & Brownell 2012). Mesoamerical ballgames, such as *Ulama* (the Spanish name) a sport played by Aztecs and Mayans and now played against as a reassertion of pre-colonial values, is more akin to a religious ceremony in form and function, and forms part of origin narratives of these peoples. Matches against the gods by the founding fathers are said to explain the existence of the sun and moon, and so contemporary matches are more about the elaborate costumes and ceremonies, and the games aim to appease the gods (Carter 2012; Guttmann 1978). Modernist analyses of sport emphasise the triumphs of western sport in contrast to other customs. Indeed the fates of non-western sports have generally been to die out or to be rationalised as modern. Yet, modernity is not all about western triumphs, for there are struggles over ownership of sport, adaptation, hybridisation, and use of colonial sports as a tool of identity building and resistance (Appadurai 1996, James 1963). People everywhere actively engage with the new possibilities and new constraints of globalisation in sport and configure the modern in accord with the local - a view captured in the coined term "glocalisation" (Giulianotti & Robertson 2007a,b). Thus modern games can take on completely different attributes when adopted by non-western people. Famously, the Trobriand Islanders have developed their own style of cricket, subverting the western need for victors and outcomes. Similarly, the Gahuku-Gama of PNG highlands have reconfigured rugby union to act as a substitute for intertribal feuding; matches finish when elders from both sides agree a tie has been reached (Read 1965: 150-151). There are also western examples which have called into question the common definitions of sport. The dance-like gymnastics, with its subjective judging or the non-physical chess are examples.

Ethnographies such as Brownell's description of university athletics in China (Brownell 1995), or Kelly's edited volume on the social and cultural context and meanings of sport in Japan (Kelly 2007), amongst many others from around the world, show that games with common rules and histories can be played very differently around the world, with very different social meanings and consequences. Indeed many authors cite MacAloon's concept of sports as an "empty form", games are able to be adopted by different social groups, but also that an emptying process can occur whereby the old historical and cultural referents of the sport can be stripped away, replaced by local meanings and social context. This social context moves us beyond the experiential into the second and third axes for analysis – the meanings of practices and their contextualization in broader life. The two most important tools for us to use in later analysis, interpretive analysis and practice theory, differ most in how they see the individual relating to the social – one reads acts as performances of the social, the other sees them as part of becoming social. Interpretive anthropology reads events as a performance of broader social webs of significance; practice theory focusses on how ideas, hierarchies and bodily practices are inescapably embodied by the individual through social positioning and years of repetition. I will briefly outline these now.

Interpretive anthropology is concerned with cultural context, placing it at the forefront of experience and motivation, stating that it is not the structure or external appearance of the game which is critical, but rather the meanings applied to actions – the significance they are given. Geertz's (1958) analysis of cockfighting in Bali goes into great detail about the practices of these traditional "sporting" events in Balinese life. The Balinese place extremely large bets on the game,

disproportionate to their incomes. Ultimately he shows that the significance of the bets and the cockfights more generally is in their ability to define peoples' identities and social position. Geertz interprets that in this activity their cocks are symbolic of their social status. The whole event is given meaning by the Balinese commitment to principles of kinship: 'it is a story [the Balinese] tell themselves about themselves'. The way that people play games will be determined by the "webs of significance" they have developed for themselves. In turn, these games will act as moments of articulation of these webs and a reinforcement of them. These moments act as a window for the display of an individual's values, and hence those of the social context in which s/he exists. The key shift is to see these cultural events not just as moments where people are brought into the collective, but also moments where social meaning is learned as it is performed to gain social status.

By contrast other studies see sport as part of the slow process of forming social ties and hierarchies, rather than singular events outside of an individual's everyday life. Focusing on sport as an element within broader society, these analyse the process of cultivation and development of physical attributes, tactical knowledge, mental fortitude and knowledge of the game. This happens over many years, day in, day out, not just at events. Practice theorist Pierre Bourdieu takes sports as an example of a process of cultural learning that is happening everywhere in life. He points out that slowly the athlete learns not just the rules of the game but how to use their body. There are precise movements which give strategic advantage. There are also ways of holding the body, mannerisms, ways of speaking, and even styles of clothes and tastes in consumption which are learnt from the group. This collection of dispositions is called habitus, and a person's

habitus will link them to others in the group. Once a person has accumulated this knowledge to the point where it is ‘natural’ to them they will have a feel for the social field they are in, and be able to gain in prestige and status.

Within the anthropology of sport this focus on the Body Culture, a term akin to habitus, uses the anthropological concept of culture to contextualise the body within local meanings significant to people. Brownell (1995) proposes that body culture is everything people do with their bodies in accord with the cultural context which shapes the nature of their action and gives them meaning. Body culture refers to the internalisation and incorporation of culture, similar to the idea of *habitus*. It adds to habitus by including meaningful one off events into the system of analysis, as well as the everyday practices central to the analysis of Bourdieu. In sports this is a particularly important distinction due to the centrality of highly different modes of physical experience, in the form of matches. This is fundamental to the experience of participants in sport. '(S)port is the human activity in which the body is the object of the most intense scrutiny: trained, disciplined, modified, displayed, evaluated and commodified, the sporting body is the focus of not only the person who inhabits it but also spectators, trainer and "owners" (Besnier & Brownell 2012, p. 444). In other words, this ongoing learning of a socially specific way of being not only constructs the individual and gives them access to social capital, but it also constructs the group.

Rather than seeking to define what sports are, I instead take a working definition for the specific purposes of my thesis: sports are organised physical contests and the attendant cultural meanings, rituals and the social systems which produce and reproduce these bodies and practices. This definition includes the three components of the above theoretical discussion. In this chapter I focus on the

socio-cultural meanings of rugby. However, in all chapters these three aspects are highly interrelated.

Figure 1.2: Preparation. The Lomaiviti team at training.

Figure 1.3: Competing as Men. *The Lomaiviti development team in action.*

The Socio-Cultural Meaning of Playing – Rugby as Work and Performance

My Fijian based research was centered in Suva, the Fijian capital, working with young indigenous men, aged 20-35, who were playing for the Lomaiviti Rugby club. They were almost all indigenous Fijians, all Christian, mostly attending Methodist churches with some part of Pentecostal congregations. Fiji is an archipelago located in the South Pacific Ocean, consisting of 322 Islands. Its population (837,271 in the 2007 census data), is mainly based in the two main islands of Vanua Levu and Viti Levu, with the Capital Suva having 180,000 inhabitants. A slight majority (56% in 2007 census data) of this population are indigenous Fijians. Subsistence farming persists in villages in the remote parts of the country, with some access to paid labour. The British colonial era, which begun with the signing of the deed of cession in 1874, was based around a sugar cane plantation economy. Indentured Indian labourers where brought to Fiji to work these plantations. According to the latest census data, Indo-Fijians form 37% of the population, are dominant in business (2007 Census Data). GDP per capita is $US3800 per annum (CIA World Factbook), which means that whilst poor, Fiji is not part of the poorest segment of the world's population. Politics is racially divided, with the Indian population's lack of land, and the indigenous population's desire to remain in control of the resources of the country, being a major issue in this division. Since Independence in 1970, there have been two military coups and one civilian overthrow of government.

When I first arrived at the Lomaiviti rugby club in Suva, I quickly became aware that many of the young men who were playing rugby had complex motivation for being there. In addition to the widespread enjoyment which was evident in words

and actions, there were clearly other drivers. In choosing this particular club, from amongst the many other teams they could play for (or not), many stated that they had joined the club to try to emulate the success of those players who had become overseas based professional players. During informal conversations, the young men, upon hearing about my project, would recite similar lists of names of players from that club who had played overseas. Always these lists began with Marika Vaunibaka, who was one of Fiji's most visible overseas players of the late 90s and early 2000s, and who at the time of my fieldwork had returned to play for the club. Young men had often come from other parts of Fiji to Suva for the purpose of emulating the successes of these mobile players.

During my first week at the club I was approached by many players who gave me their phone numbers and email addresses. At first I took this as being mere friendliness, as all the players had gone out of their way to come and meet me and to learn my name. However, I soon realised that there were other expectations of me which were motivating people to approach me. With my Australian accent, history of playing rugby, and links to some famous clubs, they understood me to be an emissary from the land of promise and opportunity, a point of contact through which they themselves could make inroads globally. Whilst contact with the global world is frequent, with players and other family members going overseas and sending back news, money and gifts, and with images and sounds from this world penetrating through the televisions, internet and radios of Fijians, this was a process experienced as being very mono-directional, and passive. These young men could hear about the global world of rugby, they could talk about it with each other, and they most certainly could imagine a future within it, but they were invisible to it and incapable of capturing its power.

They regarded the club as providing a link between them and the realisation of their “rugby dream”. I use the word ‘dream’ not to signify that this would remain an unrealizable, intangible non-reality, but rather to speak of desires which were so well and frequently rehearsed that they took on a more formulated nature. It was a hope shared collectively. Also broadly shared was an understanding that this particular hope was achievable through the correct combination of individual, collective and supernatural action. As such it was a hope which motivated actions. So it is that these young men, who generally have little or no money, struggle to train up to six hours a day, sometimes on one meal. So it is that hungry bodies push up steep hills to harden legs and fix resolve, and through hours of training aim to make the dream of the future into tomorrow’s reality. Rugby is an activity prioritised within the social values of Fijian society and as such it is regarded as a good family investment. Rugby training is regarded as a personal and family investment in the future. As the development coach informed me during a semi-structured interview at a cafe:

> *Most players at the club are unemployed. To get to training they walk up to five kilometres from home. And again after training you will find them walking home in darkness together. For this reason they bond to the club. Sometimes if they don't have enough money for a bus fare others will give it to them. These players can't afford to play and so we do many fundraising activities and sponsorship to get enough money for shorts and jerseys and the fees. There are fundraising BBQs, yaqona*[3]*, donations at the team talk, but this will normally go towards the team funds- making sure that everyone has strappings*[4]*.*

3. Yaqona is a Fijian drink made from the roots of the Kava plant. It has a soporific effect. It is drunk as a communal ritual, on formal occasions and as a way for people to relax together. The sound of the Yaqona being crushed for hundreds of communal drinking sessions would fill the night air of Suva each day.

4. In many matches there was no strapping tape available. Rugby, a high contact sport, tends to produce many injuries. A common method of injury protection, treatment and prevention was to strap the body part with special adhesive tape. This is a major method in western physiotherapy and sports medicine. The team strapping was done by other team-mates, with the players who knew how to strap given the responsibility for either strapping their team-mates, or teaching them to strap themselves.

If one or two don't have work the family can survive here in Fiji. There is land and we are happy with simple food, basic meals just once or twice a day. As long as there is something in the mouth. Some of the boys in the club barely eat. They don't have money of their own and their families are also poor. Some of these have spoken to their families. They have decided to train hard, to try to make it in rugby. There is a family investment in training, and the players are supported at the club.

This club is one of the best, in terms of top players. It is good for them to come here and play with these players. It is development of these boys, in order to breed them up. If they come for work or to continue school in the city then we support them. If they fall out of education then they have rugby. It gives them something to do with themselves and with their time, makes them part of something. It gives them something for the future.

The coach's emphasis on the difficulty of training was not accidental. He was also proud of the effort that his team put in, and the rewards they got for these efforts. Within his account we see an emphasis on difficulties and future success. His account emphasizes the training of skills and bodies that enables his players to make something for themselves in the future. He himself had already been overseas, working as a rugby migrant/worker in Australia during his late twenties before returning to Fiji where he was restarting studies in his mid-thirties. He was aware of the contrasts often drawn between Fijian and western ways of playing the sport. As such, both in his account given to me, and in the training styles that he employed with the players, there was a focus on emphasizing the hard work that the Fijians put in. The point of the dream is that it helps motivate this effort. Despite being play and people highlighting the joy they take from it, rugby also involves significant amounts of hard work.

At the individual level, different members of the community understand the "rugby dream" in different ways. For twenty year old E from the Island of Overlau in the Lomaiviti group, rugby offers hope of a better life and opportunities overseas.

Having tried university, but found that it 'wasn't for him', he had joined the Lomaiviti club, to pursue rugby as a 'career'. His family supported him in this and his uncle gave him free board in Suva so that E might pursue his ambitions. Now, he is a talented player, but by no means on the cusp of being included in the premier team for the club, let alone being discovered as a professional player. Yet his life in Suva, and his ambitions for the future centre around migration. Like many others he has come to Suva in order to migrate. An informal group discussion training developed into a semi-structured interview that same afternoon where he said the following:

> *I came here to try to get an opportunity. You know? Rugby is my career now. I think it would be great to head to Australia or to New Zealand or to overseas. I would stay there and look for a wife. Probably a white girl, because it would be easier to make a life over there with a white girl. I don't know what is at home for me. If I stay in the village with my family then there is nothing there. The life is not good for me there, and my family there can't support me and my brothers and sisters. I don't go back home until I have done something.*
>
> *I came to this club because of the standard of rugby. It is the only way to get there, to play rugby at a hard level. I have been training hard for eight months here now. From Monday to Saturday I train and I am hoping to get something out of it. I train a lot and hope and pray to get a chance. At the moment it is only training, but I know that if I work hard I will get a chance.*

The ‘Rugby Dream’ is often a collective one; framed in terms of communal and family values; motivated by these identities and often facilitated by broader social networks; it relies upon the bodies and persons of young men produced in a particular social system. Kinship is an integral part of how potential migrants are thinking about their options, making life decisions, and being supported in these decisions. In E's responses there was an interesting connection between the Fijian centred kinship and family network and aspirations located abroad. He was using

his extended family network to provide for his basic food and board whilst he pursued a career that might take him out of Fiji and alter his position within this kinship system. Throughout the interview he repeated his gratitude towards his parents for the care that they had given him in his time, but he stated that the position that was provided for him in the village is not what he wants. These desires were both to gain what he sees as a better life overseas, reflecting motivations which can be understood within an economic logic, but there was also evidence of a desire to go overseas in order to return with augmented status. In fact E explicitly said that he does not want to go home until he has done something. Movement may not represent a severance of family ties and community links, as much as a different conceptualisation and use of these ties. E's account indicates a flexibility within these kinship ties, at least as they are imagined by individuals. He imagines a new family outside of the village structure centered on a white wife. He speaks of starting a life outside of Fiji, but also of returning; these two lives appear to be able to coexist, at least in his imaginary. In fact achieving a life outside of the village seems to be an important way he can contribute to the village life, alleviating the need for his parents to support him there.

E, a young man at the margins of the village social structures, saw little immediate opportunity offered by the life in the village, and preferred leaving as a decision with individual economic benefits. By contrast, the TuiLevuka, the holder of the title given to the paramount chief of the Levuka area including E's village, viewed people's decisions to seek employment elsewhere, less as a leaving of the village, but rather as a seeking of external resources for the village. Traditionally in charge of the region's political, military and ceremonial leadership, this prominent older

man emphasised the ongoing connections between the villages as physical and social units and people living outside of the village.

> *It is the money that gets people overseas. They go to be able to buy things and bring them back. Most of them will send money back to Fiji to their families and their villages. They will be helping with projects in the villages. The way we do it now is if there is a building to be built we will get the plan and then divide it up amongst the people from the village. If there is someone overseas we will remember them and make sure that we include them. If there is a project done in the village then everyone gives, whether they're in or out of the country. It is part of village life to do things together; if one person is building a house then everyone in the village has a part to play. (TuiLevuka)*

People who leave remain part of the community. From his perspective they continue to have obligations to kin. In return they remain part of the village projects, and so have their village based identities affirmed. There is a reciprocity of resources and affection. The chief obviously recognises economic rationales in motivating people to leave; they are heading overseas in order to get resources that do not exist in the village. However, for him the ongoing connection between those who have left and those who remain is crucial to the community as it exists now. On one level the difference between the TuiLevuka and E's account is a manifestation of the differential power positions afforded by age within the old system. On another it represents the complex relationship between individual and society which exists in Fiji. It is these dynamics which help to structure the cultural priorities of modern Fiji.

Within the village, kinship structures provide the basis for hierarchical systems of obligations and responsibilities. According to many indigenous observers and anthropologists (Geddes 1959; Ravavu 1983), this has resulted in a Fijian way of life that is fundamentally communal, rather than solitary. Lives are structured by

obligations and responsibilities to kin as the individual constructs one's identity in reference to social ties. Fijians, so a popular logic goes, are more concerned with their families, kinship and others, than with money, which is seen to be the primary concern of both European and Indian society (Brison 2007; Teaiwa 2005; Toren 2003). This is analogous to Strathern's discussion of a 'dividual' mode of personhood, which positions the primary fundamental conception of the self as being a communal one (Strathern 1988). Yet it is too simplistic to remove the individual from the equation completely and assume all decisions and actions are communal in character. There is some contention as to the level of communality that existed prior to colonial intervention, and there is an on-going struggle, with political and economic implications, over independent living in contemporary society. The individual in Fiji is commonly constructed and expressed through the communal identity and even individualistic motives tend to be justified in terms of socio-centric narratives. And yet for Fijians who move overseas there is the opportunity as individuals to reconstruct their social personhood.

Contemporary Fijian society is built upon kin obligations, wealth sharing and complex distribution systems. It is common for people who have moved from the same village or perhaps area to meet regularly in Suva and plan projects. These gatherings normally involve *yaqona* at one person's house. People assemble, talk about possible development projects (buildings, funding ferry trips to remote Islands for example), possibly business opportunities, upcoming ceremonial contributions and other needs of the village (housing school children in Suva was a common request). People then contribute some money for these ventures and head home. For the people from Lomaiviti this often occurred in conjunction with church services, as there was a church dedicated to the Lomaiviti people. These

organisations allowed people to coordinate more easily the financing of villages, but also maintained the social bonds. The meetings were occasions for people to perpetuate the kinship links amongst them.

E's comments indicated his view that the contemporary social structures enable individual endeavour by providing kin based safety nets. Young indigenous men, particularly from rural and island backgrounds, often relied upon these support networks, and fell back upon them when dreams did not eventuate. Just under half of my household surveys of living conditions within the club indicated players living with extended family members. In the village setting these men in their twenties would be amongst the most productive labour and expected to contribute significantly to the households' material needs. In Suva, away from arable farmland, and frequently with problems in attaining formal employment, many were not contributing regularly to the household. Some entered into part-time or temporary work. For instance Jeff, one of my key informants, a 24 year-old Fijian who was unemployed apart from small and informal jobs, on three occasions during my stay bought a lot of food for sandwiches that he then sold at sporting events for a small profit. Four others were employed several afternoons a week by the local neighbourhood organisation in a community clean up initiative. Interestingly this employment was subject to their remaining part of the rugby club, which was seen to ensure that they were behaving properly. However by and large young men in this situation were depending on others for their daily needs. This enabled players, such as E, to pursue training that would otherwise be impossible.

The "rugby dream" has the support of many players' families, many of whom will allow and even encourage young men to train hard to be rugby players. They do

so by drawing on the stretched resources of extended families in order to provide housing and food for the young men. From my interviews, household surveys and observations it became clear to me that many of the young men at the Lomaiviti rugby club were living with their extended relatives, often their married elder siblings, aunts or uncles. The young men would pay nothing, and make very little direct contribution to the household's material resources or domestic economy. This would often continue for some years whilst the young man pursued his rugby ambitions. I was always astounded, importing my own cultural baggage into the situation, by the complete absence of guilt or shame these men expressed about living off the hard work of their kin. Their obligations to kin however were called to account if they succeeded in overseas rugby. Thus, despite the work of training being based upon training and disciplining of an individual's rugby was part of a collective project.

Understanding Migration as a Collective Project

Migration represents large status, prestige, and material gains for the family and village as well as for the individual. It is through migration – by playing overseas – that the family's investments are paid off. It is paid off not only in monetary terms, but also in terms of cultural recognition. This is a crucial difference between collective and individual investment, and between social and purely material investment. Collective and social investments need collective and social returns. For W, 22, who was picked as a 17year old schoolboy to go to Australia to study at a private school, his time living and playing in Australia has been crucial in elevating his whole family within Fiji.

> *Rugby is like a religion, and if a player becomes successful, then the son and the whole family are worshipped. The parents will get a huge*

> *amount of respect within the community as sport is so popular. They will be seen as good parents who were able to push the son hard to train and to succeed. The parents will then live off this success, which is right, as they were the ones who helped create it.*

Note that the remitted wealth and associative prestige are seen as drastically altering the financial and social position of the parents – so much so that they are 'worshipped'. Furthermore, this is clearly interpreted as being a morally just turn of events – being a deserved return from the labour of raising a rugby player. Certain villages which have produced particularly successful migrants will become associated with their success. For instance, the village of Lote Tuqiri, a Fijian player who has enjoyed much success playing rugby league and rugby in Australia, gained prestige from money that he had invested in community development programs. A billboard at the entrance to the village proudly proclaimed these development projects and the village son who had enabled them.

Utilising their family networks, individuals are able to pursue their rugby dream and gain support from their families, to whom they will send remittances if possible. I witnessed an interesting small example of this community support when I returned with one of the players to his village. He and another ten young men from his village were trying to raise $F20,000 to fund a trip to Australia for a rugby 7s tournament. They were doing this through a variety of activities, including working as sugar cane harvesters, competing for prize money at rugby tournaments, and selling packs of food cooked in the *lovo* (traditional Fijian earth oven). During my time there they spent four days working together in the cane fields, then another preparing and selling food from the *lovo.* Their families supported this work and this effort, enabling them to have the chance to play overseas. When I asked

some of the parents about it they saw it as a huge opportunity for the young men. As one mother said, ‘they love the game and are very good at it… This will be a chance to see Australia and to get a chance to play there’. For some of the players this was more explicitly a trip with the possibility of a rugby contract. J, who had already played for Fiji, was thought by many as having a good chance to get a contract overseas. He was one of the players pointed out as wanting this career, and all recognized the hope that playing in Australia could produce just such an opportunity. The trip combined individual, group and familial resources to pursue a mixture of hopes and desires. Yet, even with communal support Australia was a long way off. They had given themselves several months to raise this money. However, even when they added up all their potential cash sources they ended up with a small fraction of this figure. When I challenged them on this they said things like ‘you have to do what you can, then God will arrange the rest’. The dream motivated specific projects like this, but it did not guarantee their success.

Already we see significant reliance upon extended family networks to enable the migration; family members are called upon to provide funds for migration, help with education, house and feed family members who come to the cities in search of work, and seek out migration opportunities for their family members who want to follow them abroad. In the earlier collective economies of the villages it was the young men who were sent long distances after resources. The extended families depended upon these individuals to provide goods unavailable closer to the village (Sahlins 1957). In return the extended family maintained the home hearth, and provided the young men with basic sustenance. Indeed, the prevalent ideas of migration in Fiji view decisions as being made within the household as opposed to being made by individuals (Betram 2006; Connell 2006). Indigenous people

continue to view the world in ways that are strongly affected by a communal spirit, even though the modern circumstances for these decisions are radically different. Individual decisions are made in reference to an indigenous value system and within a social discourse which values communal contributions and social relations. Actions are then presented in ways which conform with these socio-centric ideas, highlighting these parts of the decision making process.

The individual-communal nexus individual constructs his identity in terms of these social relationships, his individual mobility promoted by collective dreams of his success. The idea being that the traditional way is to look after society and others, to have discipline and respect rather than seeking individual gain (which is seen as being western way of life) (Brison 2007:ix). Yet this is not a simple dichotomy as modern/individualistic actions can be recast as being socio-centric, and vice versa. For instance, Brison (2007) recounts four life stories of RakiRaki women to show how each authored a different account of themselves as being a properly socio-centric self, but also with individual achievements. Hence, within the stories of their own lives some would cite their upholding of the values of *vanua* as justification of their lives. They identified their socio-centric behavior as being the morally superior way of living, and claimed the building of strong community as a personal and individual achievement (Brison 2007:68). The strength of relationships was a source of their own identities, status and sense of purpose. In contrast, others tried to cite either chiefly status, or professionalism, to claim that they were in some ways outside of the communal ways of living encompassed within the idea of *vanua*, and as such could maintain a more modern, as opposed to traditional lifestyle. Yet, they invoked these alternative ideologies not to exit the

community, but to carve out new space within a socio-centric system by positioning themselves as leaders at the top of the hierarchy.

> *Rural Fijians want to live up to communal ideals; but they also feel pressure to prove that they are autonomous individuals who can achieve personal success…. Individuals craft hybrid accounts of self and society, modernity and tradition, which resolve the particular contradictions in their own lives. In the process they blur distinctions between global and local, urban and rural, and create new kinds of translocal identities (Brison 2007:xiii).*

This blurring of identity is a crucial dynamic for the Lomaiviti players; to be an individual is to respond to others. Fijian society remains profoundly influenced by values of communalism, and respect for kin obligations. Individual aspirations are framed by these beliefs. They are restricted by obligations to kin and community, but also enabled by broad social networks.

The tension within rugby is that these collective benefits can only be achieved by the absence of the individual. The global structures of opportunities within rugby mean that the best matches and the prestige that comes from playing in these are located far from Fiji. Perhaps some players can obtain this through the rugby seven's tournaments and remain within Fiji some of the time, but for most success requires long term, long distance mobility. Mobility and migration for a young Fijian represents a transition in status and position within the social group. Mobility is a way of connecting with the power and prestige of the outside world, and of becoming one of the few players who can achieve the dream of leaving.

The Promise of Remittances

Migration is an opportunity that few are able to obtain, and so movement abroad comes with an expectation to provide financially for the family and village. Coupled

with this there is a strong desire to repay parents for the strength and health they have given rugby players, whilst the strong kinship links result in regular demands for support of some sort. Remittances become an important way for the young migrant to express an ongoing kinship tie. The importance of remitting financially must be understood in terms of the increasing precariousness of employment in Fiji (Guinness 2010), and the subsequent 'migratory dispositions' which exist partly as a result of this (Besnier 2012; Kalir 2005; Guinness 2010). Within this framework there is an expectation that the young men will continue to contribute resources to their families, and continue to be part of the economic and moral aspects of their households.

However, other studies of transnationalism have shown that this connection and financial commitment to home changes over time. Mobile people begin to develop new relationships and to reprioritize the older ones. Second and third generation migrants give far smaller remittances and less frequently, as their emotional links to the islands decrease, their social and economic connections to community and relations in their place of residence increase, and they regard themselves as belonging less to the islands of their parents. This same pattern can be seen within one person's life time, as noted by John Connell (2006) in his summary of Pacific Island remittance patterns. Connell writes about remittance patterns from long term, or permanently settled migrants from the Pacific. My own study focusses on those who are mobile, rather than migrants, and so the remittances are framed by aspirations more likely to be connected to residence in Fiji. Yet, the focus on specific relationships, for instance between migrants and their parents or siblings, remains crucial, as will become evident later in my work. Even over the

relatively short durations of these players' careers, these relationships can change significantly, altering their attitudes and practices of remitting.

	"Pure Unempl. Rate (%) acc. to ICLS definition			Unempl. Rate incl. Subs. Workers actively seeking paid employment		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
All Total	8.6	6.4	12.9	11.8	9.6	16.1
Fijians	9.8	7.9	13.1	14.7	13.1	17.4
Indians	7.0	4.6	13.1	8.2	5.6	14.6
Rural Total	6.6	4.7	10.6	11.7	9.6	16.2
Fijians	6.9	5.2	9.9	13.9	12.3	16.8
Indians	6.2	4.0	13.1	8.0	5.5	15.7
Urban Total	10.5	8.1	14.8	11.9	9.6	15.9
Fijians	13.8	11.8	16	15.8	14.2	18.1
Indians	7.6	5.0	13.1	8.3	5.7	14.0

Source: 2007 Census of population and Housing, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Suva, 2009.

Figure 2.4: Unemployment rate, by Ethnicity and rural vs urban.

These remitting practices should be understood in terms of the broader economic opportunities within the country. Unfortunately for many the reality is not so rosy, and many people have ended up in undeveloped settlements within parts of Suva, with little or no amenities such as running water or electricity. 'Economic growth in the region has been limited with one important consequence: in every state formal sector jobs are being created more slowly than school leavers are emerging from the educational system' (Connell 2006:61). As Figure 1.4 shows the unemployment rate within the urban regions of Fiji are far higher than in the rural regions (10.5% vs 6.6%). This unemployment is even more pronounced for certain groups, with Fijians having a much lower employment rate than Indo-Fijians, and, far more significantly, women having far less employment than men (14.8% unemployment rate vs 8.1%). With 15.8% of the urban Fijian population either

unemployed or subsistence workers seeking employment, it becomes clear that there is a large population who are seeking an improvement in their financial positions. Unemployment is a key cause of poverty in urban populations, and is on the rise in Fiji (National Planning Office 2004). Many of my informants reported difficulty in acquiring food on a regular basis, although none told me of any instances when they couldn't get some food during a day.

Fiji today experiences large socio-economic divides between the Indo-Fijian population and the Fijian population, in terms of wealth, but also more fundamentally in terms of type of employment. Crudely speaking the Indo-Fijian population dominates the business, professional and commercial sectors within Fiji, whilst the indigenous population is heavily dominant within the military, government, and agricultural sectors (Norton 2004). There are also important divisions in terms of gender, with both the Indo-Fijian and Indigenous Fijian women experiencing reduced access to certain opportunities, whilst men, particularly indigenous men, are under-represented within important migrating professions such as nurses, doctors, and teachers. However, indigenous men dominate certain employment sectors, most prominently the military, which employs 3,479 people, of which an astounding 3,442 are indigenous men.

Occupational Categories	Fijians		Indians		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	1,027	406	2,163	379	3,923	1,105
Professionals	3,716	4,125	4,224	3,291	8,648	7,962
Technicians and Associates	3,747	2,721	4,295	1,418	8,729	4,580

Clerks	2,691	4,402	3,996	4,271	7,025	9,493
Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers	5,567	3,891	4,888	2,310	10,856	6,564
Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers	783	41	333	3	1,162	48
Craft and Related Workers	4,261	671	7,524	509	12,384	1,233
Plant and Machinery Operators and Assemblers	3,170	1,299	5,982	4,331	9,427	5,772
Elementary Occupations	7,634	2,810	6,858	1,693	14,897	4,603
Armed Forces	**3,442**	**75**	**23**	**0**	**3,479**	**77**
Total	36,038	20,441	40,286	18,205	80,530	41,437

Figure 1.5. Ethnic and gendered break down of sector by sector employment.

Source: Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2009

Fijians are now seeking employment outside of their country at rates higher than ever before making emigration a more familiar option to indigenous men (Brown 2007, Voight-Graf 2002, 2003, Mohanty 2006). Part of this is related to political turmoil, with emigration doubling after the 1987 coup (Lal 2003). There are also economic motivations, with jobs overseas providing higher wages. For example, in 2002 87% of nurses in Fiji received between $FJ10, 920–15,409 (Fiji Nurses Association 2002; 62), whilst in Australia, in 2009 a first year registered nurse received AU$42,337 (FJ$76,158) (Visas Australia 2009). In addition migration gives individuals access to material goods, technologies, and lifestyles unavailable in Fiji. Increasingly migration is becoming a short term and voluntary option, rather than a long term and partially involuntary movement (Mohanty 2006: 111-112). The remittances from Fijians (Indigenous and Indian) have jumped in the last eight years, and totaled $F207 Million (£66 Million) in 2007, or 9% of GDP (Reserve Bank of Fiji 2009).

My informants who were able to migrate overseas gave varying accounts of their remitting practices during semi-structured interviews. In total I spoke to 23 former players about their material contributions to Fiji. As a general summary it was most common for players to remit regularly to a single member of their family, most often their mother, though commonly their father or an older sibling. At times they gave money in response to explicit requests, others would contribute of their own volition. All players were subject to requests for money, some of which were accepted, others of which were denied. Many identified some of these as coming from people who they did not recognize as kin, strangers who claimed distant kinship links in order to demand small amounts of money. Players said that sometimes they would just send back the money, whilst other times they would earmark it for particular people or projects - education of family was common, but smaller amounts would also just be given as gifts of spending money.

Within many communities there is a strong pressure to remit to the church. There were reports amongst informants of church leaders recording and reading out the amounts of money donated by each family each week, driving a culture of performance giving. Although I never saw these practices myself. Other status projects with community benefit are also undertaken, such as investing in a generator, water tank or building for the village. When players returned in person they normally collected “gears”, such as football boots and jerseys, to bring back to their village. Players who planned to return to the islands tended to invest money into private projects, houses and small businesses, which would be looked after and run by family members until their return. All of this should be understood in the context of the practice of demand sharing between kin (*kerekere)*, status, and ongoing felt obligations to family, community and church. This is part of a

larger reciprocity, based on the maintenance of the *vanua* and on the prior production of the young men's bodies. Rugby is all about their bodies, which are themselves regarded as products of collective nurturing.

The specific experiences and motivations of individual remittance patterns indicate the importance of kinship patterns and communal logics in these decisions. For example, a 23 year old Fijian contracted with a professional team, HS describes his remittances in terms of a calculation of the greater need of his immediate family: 'Here, whenever I get paid the money is heaps, so I just give it to my Mum and Dad. I earn more than my dad, so I send it back for buying my brothers and sisters for whatever. They don't even ask me I just say "go to western union and here is the code"'. The communal logic of HS is clear here, his family in Fiji requires resources, which he now has. HS finds himself overseas due to the support of his extended family network, who had pooled all their resources together to send him on a rugby scholarship to NZ when he was 18, paying for accommodation and transport. The decision for him to go on this scholarship was made by the family as a whole, with his grandfather being very important in supporting this move. At the airport on his departure his father gave him a clear ultimatum: He was not to return to the family until he had one of two pieces of paper in his hand, a rugby contract or a degree. It was well known to HS the extent of the family support, and whilst their instructions were to seek out things for himself, he took great pleasure in repaying the family money quickly and then contributing to his brother's education. In financing a young man's departure overseas it is a financial calculation at a communal level – an extension of resource pooling practices to include a family member who resides overseas, but remains socially within the same central family household structure. His

remittances then are predominantly to the head of the household. HS noted that smaller amounts would be sent elsewhere (‘pocketmonies’ for young cousins for example) but the major financial flows were to his parents. These then also represented the central kin relations for him, and to a large extent he was able to fulfil his obligations through these.

For HS his emotional connection to home remains strong, and frequent communications with family members maintains these. He is keen to show that the Fijian relationships are important to him. When he scores he points to the sky where he imagines his grandfather, now deceased, watches over him. This, according to him, is recognition of the important financial and emotional support that his grandfather and the rest of the family have given him. He is mindful that this gesture expresses ‘belonging’ to both himself, and those watching back home in Fiji. During the last season one cousin whom he was close to passed away, and he undertook the traditional Fijian practice of growing his hair for the 100 days after their death, as a mark of respect. Before each match he sends pictures of the stadium and changing rooms to his family in Fiji to ‘"to make them feel like they're a part of it. They've never been to a live game but they've never missed a game on TV. "I just write a bible verse on my wrist for my family, it's so I know they're close"' (Canberra Times 2013)[5]. To some degree the remittances are also part of this maintenance of emotional connection. They signify a reminder that HS still belongs and feels emotionally bound to Fiji. Kinship connections are maintained through his performance of them through financial and symbolic investment.

[5] Read more: http://www.canberratimes.com.au/rugby-union/union-news/with-an-ambition-born-of-tragedy-speight-on-the-cusp-of-lifes-dream-20130720-2qbkb.html#ixzz2r7oHdDwk

Rugby is supported in this way because of the resources that internationally based players are able to send home. It is also supported because of the important place it has in indigenous and national culture, which gives it an intrinsic value. It is to this that I will now turn. The decision to pursue the rugby dream is made within these contexts. It is both an individual decision, with aims to obtain a certain lifestyle or prestige, but also a communal one, which will involve the material and psychological support of social groups (both kin and rugby club). As such the value of the rugby dream is reflected in that the individual will gain much prestige from realising it, but the family will also be seen as being superior for having raised such an individual. In this manner, communalism is able to construct individualism and individualism contributes to communalism.

Conclusion:

Returning to the contrast between Fijian and New Zealand rugby as presented by Sitiveni, we can begin to see that the picture is more complicated. The painful training in Fiji is driven by the desire to make a breakthrough and to leave. The Fijian training is instrumentalist, but it is driven by this individual and collective dream. Here, there is an element of “pain as play”, as the pain that young men go through allows them to participate in the dream. The contrast then is with a professional regime which regiments and codifies their training, turning it into disciplined work rather than the enthusiastic pursuit of a dream. The details of this professional body culture are explored later in the thesis.

The rugby dream is so significant because it does motivate these young men to undertake hard work – to do things related to rugby which aren’t immediately

enjoyable. It requires sacrifice and work by individuals and collectives, so that players might move away to send resources back. The potency of the dream is not found in the experiential and physical, but in the socio-cultural significance given to the activity. The dream retains its power as it provides a pathway for the realization of individual and collective hopes. These dreams are crucial to the global rugby system. Without them there would not be a ready supply of athletes to be recruited overseas.

The following chapter will explore the implications for masculinity, status and identity of being an aspiring rugby player, regardless of whether the dream is realized. To do this I will turn to a fuller examination of the socio-cultural meanings of rugby in Fiji.

Chapter 2: The Local Significance of Rugby: Masculinity and Identity through Rugby

Many men are driven by the rugby dream, yet they know that only a very lucky few have fulfilled it. This poses fundamental questions about their behaviour: why do the men and their families still orientate themselves towards a dream that is unlikely to succeed? Is this risky endeavor the result of a lack of more predictable and feasible options? Or is this merely part of a broader desire for exodus from Fiji, in search of the promises of modernity? I suggest rather that, when its social consequences are examined, training to be a rugby player is not a high-risk strategy at all. Even if the heights of professionalism are not achieved, the symbolic importance of the sport within the Fijian society allows men to achieve an identity, and social mobility through their lives within local clubs in Fiji. These provide a social space where young men, marginal in many other areas of contemporary society, can be counted as part of the mainstream and regarded highly. Despite only a few individuals achieving the status of famous rugby player, many more participate in the dream and in the identity which that gives them.

The social meaning of rugby for Fijians is therefore of utmost importance. Whilst the Fijian values build upon western ideals of amateur sport, emphasising the group solidarity and character building aspects of games, there has been an indigenisation of rugby into Fiji. Now it is considered as an important site for the performance and creation of a fundamentally indigenous Fijian masculinity. Writing the history of rugby alongside that of Fijian politics and cultural reform is a very interesting exercise, as many of the people who feature prominently in the political histories are also those who led the early national teams. I trace the history of the introduction of rugby first; then focus on two aspects in which rugby assumes

cultural significance, namely masculinity and identity; and, finally, I offer an examination of the dynamics within a specific club in Fiji to demonstrate the meaning of rugby as it is perceived, consumed and created in practice. Here we find that whilst international mobility is a motivating factor for players' participation, it is not all encompassing. The relationships, values and identities cultivated within rugby are readily transferable to other parts of young men's lives due the symbolic importance of rugby and central positions of clubs within broader society.

Inventing Fijian Rugby

'History is culturally ordered, differently so in different societies, according to meaningful schemes of things. The converse is also true: cultural schemes are historically ordered, since to a greater or lesser extent the meanings are revalued as they are practically enacted' (Sahlins 1985: vii).

Rugby has been indigenised by Fijians to such an extent that it now plays an important symbolic and social role in the articulation, performance and naturalisation of a particular "Fijian" way of being. Rugby and the military are the focal activities for powerful construct of masculinity. This is formed around three central values of contemporary indigenous Fijian society, those of *vanua* (community as symbolised in land and tradition), *matanitu* (united government through hierarchy of chiefs and colonial rule) and *lotu* (one Christian God, community worship and religious rites). Sometimes complementary, but also often competing, seemingly irreconcilable, these values are powerful in defining the identities and practices of Fijians. Symbolically the dominant identity amongst this group draws upon a traditional imagination of men as warriors, ordered by chiefs,

acting with bravery, boldness, strength and discipline to engage with outside threats and to bring sustenance and protection to their family, clan and village. Young men are given meaning and purpose and are introduced into adult society. Rugby and the military have become means of constructing meaning, gaining recognition and becoming adult men – of moving from the neophytes to experienced adults and then to elders.

The question is often asked as to why a particular cultural feature has become popular in one place or another: why is rugby so important to Fijians? The problem with answering this question is that it presumes that Fiji and Rugby exist as concepts outside of one another. This chapter argues that they don't, is a part of how dominant ideologies were formed in Fiji, as much as it is a product of these. Early uses of rugby gave it a cultural prominence through the rough approximations of pre-existing values in a new form. As the cultural history of the sport in Fiji developed, so too did the nuance and power of the value systems within it, and these were played out in the specific social spaces of Fijian rugby. Values coexist in systems framed by political and cultural power, with particular values being invoked in the support of political movements, and others excluded by them. Today, there are many elements of society which are regarded as Fijian, as being the 'way of the land' as opposed to the foreign 'way of the money'. There is a perception of the persistence of cultural order, yet the colonial regime and global forces have been influential in ending many practices in Fiji (such as cannibalism[6] and inter-tribal warfare). They have created both the state and

[6] There is much debate about the prevalence and existence of Cannibalism prior to the arrival of Europeans. For the purposes of this thesis it is not so crucial to know whether or not cannibalism physically (as opposed to metaphorically or figuratively or symbolically) occurred in Fiji. Rather it is crucial to see that, firstly, there is a strong belief amongst contemporary Fijians, that their ancestors were once Cannibals. This is often expressed with some pride. Secondly, it

national identity, and installed the Methodist church and faith as almost unchallengeable arbiters of right and wrong.

As sports move from one group to another, whether this is across class groups or continents, they bring with them sets of ideals and values. One view is that sports, and the social institutions surrounding them, can provide important spaces for the disciplining of people into particular ways of interacting – sports teach people certain ideals. During colonialism, the consumption of European products and the performance of European practices were given a moral value, tied to ideas of personal and societal value (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997; Posel 2010). Ideas of what it was to be modern and civilized were linked to the cultivation of particular styles of bodies that people had. Amongst other things the presence or absence of particular bodies amongst groups of people made them seem either higher or lower in an imagined hierarchy of peoples and civilisations. Pre-eminent amongst the 'righteous causes' of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Britain was the civilising of the Empire. In this environment there developed strong ideas about the possibility of civilising the "savages" through the transfer of belief systems and cultural values; bringing enlightenment to the world, as well as

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is important that any symbolic human sacrifice, trade in body parts and anthrophagy, have ceased.
Missionaries to Fiji described many instances of the trade in human body parts, the offering of ritual sacrifices by the *bati* to the chief, and of the cooking and consumption of human flesh. Obeyesekere (1998, 2007) posits that these accounts of cannibalism given by early sailors and traders are merely the product of European myths about the South Sea Islanders, and anthropological interest. Indeed some of these sources do seem to be vastly exaggerated and incongruous with any form of reality that might have been. Arens(1998), discussing the prevalence of cannibalistic myths about people other than ourselves, maintains that this amounts to an exoticisation of the other, particularly those on the frontiers of civilisation; a project in which anthropology has been complicit. Against this there was a conference of the American Anthropological Association, the production of a book (Brown and Tuzin 1983). In the Fijian context, Sahlins (1983)not only to the existence of more reliable accounts, some emanating from those who had initially opposed the idea of cannibalism existing, but also pointing to the important role that cannibalism plays in reproducing social, political and material aspects of Fijian society. The writings of Sahlins, to me at least, seem to satisfy that there was indeed a practical cannibalism, to go along with any symbolic or mythical cannibalism.

political stability and economic integration[7]. Sports played an important role in the disciplining of bodies to match ‘modern’ aesthetics and ideals. Many non-white people in the colonies took this idea as a 'Black English' assimilationist dream (Bickford-Smith 2004; Cohen 2007; Hobsbawm 1987), and subsequently undertook to become as British as possible in order to gain full membership of British society. Throughout the Empire people, whether natives or settlers saw the adoption of British customs as a stepping stone to social mobility, and ultimately equal standing with the British. Yet this final step was ultimately denied them, and instead the competing racial discourses and enlightenment ideas of noble savages, and even crude social evolutionary ideas inspired by Darwin's work, painted those not genuinely British as being inherently inferior.

Yet this was not simply an indoctrination, and in many contexts sporting values were not adopted piecemeal into the population. For instance, Chinese principles of ‘face’ clashed with the ideals of ‘fair play’ in British sport (Brownell 1995), Japanese Sumo became a key symbolic site of traditionalism through the modernization process (Tierney 2007), and Trobriand Islanders drastically altered the rules and practice of sport to match their own social needs. As MacAloon (2006) has pointed out, the culturally specific symbols and values can be removed from a sport making it in some ways an ‘empty form’ capable of being filled with local significances. Cricket was introduced to India by the colonial elite as it was regarded as thoroughly masculine, and as having principles which should govern all masculine behaviour: sportsmanship, a sense of fair play, thorough control over

[7] Leo Spitzer characterizes the enlightenment ideals as leading to two different models for the development of non-Europe. The first, a “Laissez-faire” model, saw only the removal of official and legal barriers to development as important. Individuals would then be responsible for their own rise or fall. The second, “conventionist”, saw an absence of education and social norms as an additional barrier to be removed. The belief was that through educational programs Africans could be taught the knowledge, norms, manners, culture and tastes of Europe, and then, once these were mastered, they would be able to become equal (Spitzer 1989: 26).

the expression of strong sentiments, unquestioned loyalty, subordination of personal sentiments (Appadurai 1996, p. 92). Yet, in India cricket became more Indian than British. Through dual processes of vernacularisation and inscription onto the bodies, the media brought cricket terms into ordinary Indian language(s) speech, and by the sheer prevalence of these sounds, images and words, cricket became part of the life experience of most Indians. The old Victorian values were slowly replaced by new ones. According to Appadurai cricket mobilised powerful sentiments of nation and humanity. Its success lay in its ability to be used by different groups of people for their own benefit; it was used by the state to inculcate national sentiment; by the technocrats for the mastery of media and public opinion; by the private sector to link leisure, stardom and nationalism; by the viewing public to link glamour and cultural literacy; by the upper middle-class to afford privatised pleasure which was nationally sanitised; by the working class to strengthen group belonging, potential violence, and bodily excitement; and by rural viewers to gain a sense of empathy with stars' lives. Why did Cricket become so popular? Appadurai answers that 'if cricket did not exist in India, something like it would certainly have been invented for the conduct of public experiments with the means of modernity' (Appadurai 1996:113).

In a similar way I want to examine the history of rugby as it was utilized as a place for socialization of young men, but also as a symbolic site for the resolution of a number of tensions within society. The game was utilized by different groups and individuals in their attempts to contest or naturalise particular ideologies and practices. With each additional referent the power of rugby as a site for this sort of cultural production increases; history accumulating to give the value systems of

rugby particular weighting in the Fijian social worlds. This has produced the current constellation of values within the sport.

Colonisation of Fijian Life, Including Rugby

Rugby was seized upon by ethnic nationalists, particularly those prominent in the Great Council of Chiefs. To them it offered a stage which Fiji could play out its identity globally. The sport really started expanding in the 1930s when there were regular international tours, which gave the sport an allure of global impact, and the schools' competition was started. In 1924 the Fijian rugby union played its first international match against Samoa in Apia. The excitement which surrounded this and the tour of Tonga which followed first created a national interest in the sport, both as a spectacle and as a national activity. Rugby began to be seen as a way in which Fiji could stamp its mark on the world, to engage with the outside. This was particularly important as the European contact, particularly in missionary school lessons, had challenged a sense that Fiji was a big or important place in the world (Tomlinson 2009). Here rugby was promoted by a range of interests. The colonial regime supported sport as a leisure activity and the Indigenous leaders were able to act as leaders in the sport, positioning themselves further as the liaisons between European powers and the Fijian people, and gaining respect from the Europeans for their clever playing of these sports. In addition local men had a chance to represent their district, their family and their people, as many of the early teams were organised around traditional localities (Mcglusky 2005). This is the interface between rugby and power which has produced the contemporary social meanings of rugby. In order to understand how rugby is incorporated and

appropriated by power structures, and in turn acquired particular meanings, it is important to understand the defining institutions of Fijian society.

In 1874 Fiji became a dependent of Britain, and witnessed the creation of a plantation economy and the immigration of thousands of indentured workers from India to provide the labour for this industry. Simultaneously, there was the introduction and almost universal conversion to Methodist Christianity, with the large scale alterations to culture which came with this; including the prohibition of warfare; the installation of the Christian god as the primary god; and the marginalisation of Fijian traditional beliefs and spirits/gods as demons and witchcraft. Crucial to the process of this rule was the reification of certain practices and beliefs at the expense of others, and the invention of "Fijian" traditions, which now are officially promoted and accepted myths of the past (Howard 1991; Kaplan 1995). Much of the shape of the Fiji colonialism comes from the "oligarchy of three", namely the colonial government, the European businesses and the Fijian chiefly elite (Howard 1991), and from influential individuals, such as the governor, who had paternalistic ideas, or Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau or Ratu Sukuna, who had their own influences on the ideas.

At the time of European contact there were already major political changes occurring in Fiji, as Indigenous chiefs, often at war with each other, began to build bigger spheres of influence in the archipelago. During the late 18th century and early 19th century several confederacies (*matanitu*) had developed Fiji. These confederacies were based around a village with its associated leader, who commanded allegiance and resources from other villages. The Polynesian[8] war of

[8] By the 1830s two of these confederacies, Bau and Rewa, had risen in prominence and influence to be the most powerful in Fiji. Bau, a small Island one mile off the coast of Viti Levu, was the

1844-1855 saw the Bauans defeat the Rewans to become the most dominant confederacies in Fiji, and come to the brink of unifying the country (Sahlins 2004)The Bauan influence continued to grow in Fiji, and it was Cakobau, the *Tui Vunivalu* (War king) of Bau, who became king of Fiji in 1871 supported by a centralised government, formed by the European settlers and Ma'afu, the Tongan chiefly leader of much of eastern and northern Fiji. However, these changes did not represent any form of nationalisation of Fiji, either in terms of identity or governance, and Bau exercised an imperial hegemony without actual sovereignty. 'Their subject peoples were economic tributaries and subservient politically, but they remained largely or wholly independent administratively.' (Sahlins 2004: 7).

The Fijian nation-state, then, is better understood as having been created under the colonial regime. In 1874, Cakobau, with the prospect of many internal wars on his hands, and finding the administrative and economic duties required to extend control over the Islands exceedingly difficult, turned to Britain to help bring law and order to Fiji. The Deed of Cession, signed by Cakobau, *Tui Viti*[9] (King of Fiji) and *Tui Vunivalu* (Bauan war-king), and a series of the high chiefs of Fiji, made Fiji a dependency of Britain. What is important to note is that this was an agreement

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dominant sea power, whilst Rewa was the dominant land power of Viti Levu. Sahlins, in his account of the war, describes the Bauans essentially extending their influence by a commitment to wealth. Unlike most other Fijian villages the Bauans did not have any arable land not used for housing; that is the entirety of the small island was covered in houses. This meant they needed to get influence over other villages in order to obtain resources. This influence extended to many parts of the main islands, and also to outlying islands of Fiji. The Europeans gave the Bauans various goods and resources in exchange for the fishing rights over the lucrative sea-slug industry. Bau was able to secure control of this industry by raising Levuka, the centre of European settlement in Fiji. The resources which the contact with the Europeans gave the Bauans allowed them to have greater power. Interestingly, it was not the military machinery, such as guns, which were the most effective in extending Bauan control, as these proved ineffective in Fijian style battles, instead it was access to the whaling industry, with its surplus of whale teeth (*Tabua)*. This gave Cakobau, the Bauan leader, a great amount of ritual power, and an ability to gain great influence over the other chiefs.

[9] *Tui Viti* had not been used before this point as it describes a political dominance of the entirety of Fiji. The term has been translated to King of Fiji, but the system of governance was different to european style monarchies.

between the representative of the British Monarch and the high chiefs, with Cakobau and the eastern chiefs pre-eminent. It positioned the high chiefs as having a traditional authority over Fiji, which did not exist at the time of the deed of cession, nor prior to it. During the governance of the first Governor of Fiji, Gordon, these chiefs were formed into a Great Council of Chiefs and given the role of advising the governor. This institution survived until it was suspended by the “interim” government in 2007 and de-established by that same government in March 2012. It acted as the official body representing traditional interests, and had been the electoral college which appoints the president. This is an important part of the neo-traditional world created during the colonial era. This invented tradition is a key part of *matanitu,* Fijian conceptions of nation.

Amidst the competing articulations of gods and chiefly power, the colonial regime was able to select those which most suited its purposes, either due to a certain resonance with the British system, or because they empowered particularly important allies of the government. Competing discourses were labelled as rebellious, or dangerous abominations of the selected legitimate form of social expression (Kaplan, 1995). In this way out of the 'competing articulations of gods, chiefs, and the people of the land' the official myths were 'routinised' in the new order, whilst others were cast as 'heathen' (Kaplan 1995:123,124). Thus a cult was brought into being not by the mindsets of its practitioners but as a product of the central authority, which demanded the power to create and authorise truth (Kaplan 1995:203).

Unlike many other parts of the colonial world, rugby did not come to Fiji as either an immediate or direct policy of the colonial enterprise or of the associated missionaries. Instead the game first arrived with foreign soldiers and policemen,

with the first recorded match in 1884. The military discipline and masculine camaraderie allowed rugby to catch on as a leisure activity of preference. It thrived within this community, and was picked up by some indigenous policemen, amongst whom it became a popular pastime at the time of the First World War. From these groups it extended into the community at large. Clearly tied to notions of the 'civilising' power of sport, rugby in Fiji has also to some extent been 'emptied' (MacAloon 2006) of these social meanings and made into a Fijian ideal.

Once sport started to become popular within the colony it began to be used by the colonial administration and the indigenous elite to reinforce their positions. The early national teams captured the Fijian imaginations by successfully touring to Tonga and New Zealand in the 1920s and 1930s, showing that Fiji could be successful on the world stage. The players of these teams were recruited by the Eastern chiefly elite, who had had some exposure to the sports in their New Zealand, Australian and U.K. schooling (McGlusky 2008). For instance, the highly successful 1939 undefeated tour of New Zealand by the Fijian Team, was led by Ratu George Cakobau (later Sir), who held the title of *Vunivalu* (War chief of Bau, which is often equated with being first amongst the Fijian chiefs). He later became the first native governor-general (ceremonial quasi-head of state) of Fiji after independence and who was the great-grandson of the first *Tui Viti,* Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau. This transposed the traditional hierarchies into the sport, and instilled this traditionalism into the nation. Since that day rugby has continued to be associated with traditional orders and hierarchies, and indeed with elite politics. When Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka ran for and was elected Prime Minister in 1992, a great deal of tension developed between him and Ratu Kamisese Mara,

whom he replaced as prime minister[10]. Ratu Mara was also the President of the Fiji Rugby Union, and it was regarded by some that Rabuka should take over this role as well. The solution found was actually to establish rugby league, a different though very similar sport, in Fiji of which Rabuka would be the figure head. Even the Lomaiviti club had chiefs as its President and Patron (Ratu Inosi Delaibatiki and Colonel Ratu Vatilai Navunisaravi).

Utilising rugby as a symbolic space for challenging ideologies and changing practices became part of cultural politics. For instance, combative competitive masculinity was problematic to the colonial order, with the practice of inter-tribal raiding and fighting being considered detrimental to the proper running of the plantation economy. As part of the measures to combat this, rugby was offered as an alternative space for the expression of these parts of the Fijian masculinity. Young men were encouraged to use the sport as their outlet for physical aggression, and as an alternative source of social prestige. It was imagined that this would curtail and control warfare and violence. This military aspect to the game also was a fit with certain prominent Indigenous values. Rugby gradually subsumed the important social connotations of warfare that had existed in Fijian society; success in warfare had given a village political, economic and spiritual advantages[11]. As such the warrior was a valued member of the Fijian society. Rugby allowed the *bati* (warrior) heritage to be continued in a modern form, and

[10] Ratu Mara was elected as prime minister in the first post independence election in 1972; lost the election in 1977, but was appointed interim prime minister until follow elections were held later that year, which he won convincingly; He was re-elected in 1982; in 1987 he lost the election, but the new government was overthrown by military head Rabuka, and Mara was appointed interim prime minister, which he held until the 1992 elections.

[11] Warfare represented the principal method of extending control over other groups. The defeated tribe would be forced into a position of control under the other tribe, resulting in the passing of significant amounts of material resources, the repositioning of the tribe as the *bati* of the victors, and the acquiring of *mana (*spiritual power), through the *tabua (*whale teeth) and *bakola* (human sacrifices).

young men to prove themselves in a new arena. It was thus a controlled version of existing masculinities, offering new outlets rather than complete repression. Pre-existing values were combined with those of the British sense of modern civilization, producing a new expression in the sport.

However, this was no simple switch, as, with some exceptions, the widespread reduction in warfare and the growth of rugby as a major national sport occurred almost fifty years apart. Perhaps, then, the cultural values, which emphasised something positive in warfare, were maintained in tension with the Christian values throughout the early mission period. At the time when rugby became popular this cultural material was once again drawn upon. This seems more plausible as there were continuing instances of Fijians being intent to prove themselves in battle. Most prominently there was a strong and enthusiastic desire amongst Fijian men to join in the World War II effort. Military service and rugby then represent a chance for indigenous men to represent themselves and their families in battle, to prove that they are brave. The traditional masculinities of warfare are present in the modern game of rugby, in the naming of the teams (National rugby league team are the "*bati*" (Warriors), the second National Union team are the "Warriors"), in the pre-match *Cibi* (dance based on a traditional war dance), and in the images used to describe Fijian rugby. Crucially, this is mediated by Christian spirituality and sporting values inherited from the British.

In any case, of the many different forms of masculinity which could emerge from this cultural milieu, an image of the Fijian man as a warrior has gained precedence today. The myths of constant warfare and cannibalism are well known within Fiji, and there is a strong association between being a man and displaying certain characteristics of the warrior. In all, "being a man" for an indigenous Fijian man is

bound to a corporeal idea, the prototype for which is the traditional warrior of myth and folklore. This is naturalised in Fijian discourse. One of my informants, NS, 38, former soldier, now rugby manager in Fiji, emphasised his innate suitability for soldiering based on membership of the *Bati Leka mataqali* (clan entrusted with the protection of the paramount chief of his region):

> *Since I was a boy I have been told to be brave and to confront danger. Now, you know, I am working for the U.N. I am doing the job that I am meant to be doing, that my family was always meant to be doing. It is not strange or difficult for me to do this job, because it is what I am meant to do. It is the same as being a Bati Leka. It's in me. It is part of me.*

Indigenous male dominance of the military plays a central role in confirming the hegemony of militaristic hegemony in the nation state. Just as the warriors of the past gained social prestige and created a role for themselves in society through defence of the chiefs, military service is regarded as defending Fiji. Hence, during World War II the architect of modern Fiji, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, stated: 'Fijians will never be recognized unless our blood is shed first' (quoted in Ravavu, 1983). In contrast, the Indo-Fijian population at this time embraced the pacifism of Gandhi as an appropriate response to their position in society, and joined the population of India in refusing to fight for an empire which did not recognise them as equals. This led to an ethnic imbalance in the Fijian army, which is used by some to call into question Indo-Fijian loyalty and masculinity: if they are Fijian men why don't they fight for the Fijian nation? Service in Fiji's military has been seen in both historical and contemporary settings as a bastion of Indigenous masculine identity and a source of social prestige, the lack of an Indo-Fijian presence in Fiji's armed forces has been used as a pretext to question Indo-Fijian masculinity (Teaiwa 2005, pp. 206, 210). A militaristic masculinity is extended through the

interconnections of *lotu*, *vanua*, and *matanitu*, which imbue any nationalistic actions with a degree of the values of the church and tradition. At the time of the coups the ethnonationalist discourse and masculine values were used to justify the violence of young Indigenous men against the Indian population. For instance, by removing Indians from power, Rabuka[12] claimed to be protecting the traditional relationship between the Fijian people and the land, and simultaneously ensuring that Christian principles remained hegemonic within the state.

The ideals of *lotu* and *vanua* have also been interpreted as the natural basis of a national Fijian culture. This was reified in colonial attitudes and policies, the essence of which was that the colonial government 'believed that Fijians were rooted in the land' (Kaplan 1995: 136), and through the creation of a nation-state based around this principle, this rooted-ness should be extended to encompass the entire nation. This rhetoric bound indigenous characteristics to the state from its inception, naturalising the trilogy of *lotu*, *vanua*, and *matanitu* as a functional unit and viable basis for an indigenous community. For example, Paula Niukula (1994:14-15), who served as president and general secretary of Fiji's Methodist Church, wrote, “When our grandfathers accepted the Church and the Colonial Government, that which bound the people together was divided into three: the Community [*vanua*], Church [*lotu*] and the Government [*matanitu*]. They became the bases of Fijian life. They are the three pillars of Fijian society.'" (Niukula 1994:14-15 cited in Tomlinson 2009: 23-24). This is typical of a belief that the nation of Fiji is gathered under God, through traditions of the state. The strong ethnic and religious determinants are perceived to be natural and original parts of the Fijian nation state. The nation, it is imagined, should be guided by the same

[12]. Rabuka led the 1987 coup.

principles of *lotu*, *vanua*, and *matanitu*, with the government representing indigenous interests. Hence, *lotu* and *vanua* are at the centre of political ideas. Indeed they are enshrined in the Government insignia of Fiji displaying the phrase *revevaka na Kalou ka Doka na Tui* (Fear God and Honour the Chiefs) - adapted from 1 Peter 2:17. The deep connections between kin have been extended, through common cultures, symbols and beliefs, to enmesh all indigenous Fijians together.

It is interesting in that it was a creation of convenience for both the high chiefs, who wanted to concentrate Fijian power and tradition into their own hands, and the colonial regime, who wanted to create a simplified and near universal social system for Fiji in the interests of better and more efficient governance. Both the chiefs and the colonial regime then manipulated the ideology of communalism in order to suppress resentment towards the regime. This marked the beginning of the co-opting of the “traditional” into the nation and its administration. The ‘[idealised] version of Fiji's pre-colonial era is that of a uniform society modelled upon some of the eastern chiefdoms. This version focusses on the lives of the eastern chiefs and paints a picture of an almost paradisiacal village life. It is a myth that suits the interests of the chiefly rulers of modern Fiji' (Howard 199, 14, cf. Clammer 1973). The Fijian nation-state and the unification of all of Fiji under the rule of a few high chiefs came to be seen as natural, traditional and somehow eternally Fijian.

Christianity was crucial in the creation of a Fijian nation, as it provided the first pan-Fijian identity, and its introduction was both directly and indirectly associated with political and military power. Currently more than 90 per cent of the indigenous

Fijians are Christians[13] (Tomlinson 2009), and it is a religion which structures much within the lives of the Fijian population. Indeed being (Indigenous) Fijian is regarded by some people as being synonymous with being Christian. During the colonial period, part of the popularity of Christianity was its association with the European powers. Missionaries would often recognise that it was not so much their god as their awesome material wealth that was being coveted, and that Christianity was being taken up due to the promises of eternal life, which had been mistaken for immortality and invulnerability (Tomlinson 2009, Kaplan 1995, Howard 1991). More immediate political motivations attracted Fijian chiefs in the pre-colonial era as becoming Christian would ensure European support in military and social endeavours. Certain Indigenous leaders began to demand that their allies convert to Christianity before they would guarantee support. Most famously Ma'afu, the Tongan of chiefly descent who was able to gain great influence in the Eastern and Northern parts of Fiji and was eventually appointed as *Tui Lau*, would only guarantee his support to Cakobau if the latter converted. It was this alliance which secured Cakobau's absolute supremacy within Fiji, allowing him to become *Tui Viti* (King of Fiji).

Right across Fiji Christianity has abstracted elements of traditional spirituality and traditions, to become a distinctly Fijian Christianity. The integration of Christianity was a process driven by political and material advantages through conversion. Christianity was nevertheless able to link to the traditional social structures, through a translation of Christian ideas and texts into existing indigenous spiritual words and categories (Kaplan 1995, Tomlinson 2009). For instance the word for

[13]. Most of the Missionaries came from the Weslyan Churches. That the missionaries were Wesylan rather than Anglican or Catholic, has meant that the majority of Fijians today are Methodists. This church has particular traditions and ethos which becomes imporant in later chapters.

spirits (*kalou*) when preceded by the definite article 'the' (*na*) was used to signify the Christian God (*na kalou*). This enabled the Christian God to be incorporated into local understandings, but at the same time elevated the Christian god to a level above that of the local spirits (Tomlinson 2009). This allowed the missionaries to assume a superior position through their exclusive access to this god (Kaplan 1995). Cultural practices could be challenged by the church, but gradually the power of the church and of tradition became mutually constituted. Today *lotu* and *vanua* mutually endorse each other's authority. For instance, the attendance and large contributions of the *turaga* (chief) to the church establish *lotu* within traditional authority and custom, while the prayer and presence of elements of worship at group events and ceremonies similarly position the chief's use of the traditional as being sanctioned by the church (Toren 1990). All chiefly tasks are moreover said to be divinely appointed (Toren 1990:17). Throughout Fiji *lotu* and *vanua* unify the family and society under God and the chiefs, providing the moral framework for the social interactions which are at the heart of Fijian society. The integration has been so successful that the missionary arrival is not remembered as a rupture with the past, but rather a revealing of the inherent Christianity of the Fijian people (Tomlinson 2009:10; see also Kaplan 1990).

Yet there exists a tension between these concepts of *lotu* and *vanua*. For instance, in Fijian Christian belief the land is regarded as being sacred, but this significance is founded in a connection to ancestral spirits, which are said to dwell there. Local Fijians still maintain belief in traditional spirits and demons[14], often despite these being at odds with the Christian doctrine or orthodoxy (Tomlinson

[14]. In my own fieldwork I came across regular references to witchcraft, magic and the old spirits. Most interesting was a lengthy home-made video of a man who had long been a witch doctor, spending many days on end drinking kava and communing with the spirtis.

2009, 2004; Kaplan 1995). The past, the exclusive domain of the *vanua*, is seen as dangerous, but powerful, while the present is experienced with a "Fijian sense of loss" of potency and effectiveness (Tomlinson 2009:6). Whilst Christianity is regarded as bringing eschatological salvation, the traditional gods are able to provide worldly rewards. Economic problems, laziness, lack of communal spirit and a perceived physical decline in the population are all accounted for by this account of the decline of the *vanua*. Yet the responses posit an increased focus on *lotu* as a solution for this decline. On one hand there has been a growth of Pentecostal churches which emphasise links with the global church as being of fundamental importance to the restoration of the strength in Fiji[15]. They also promote the power of God in intervening in events of the material present.

These two important functions of rugby, that of a space for socializing young men, and that of a symbolic arena for the playing out of different ideologies are inherently linked. For a foreign cultural complex, such as rugby, to have either of these roles it must first become valued within the existing cultural system.

Masculinity and the 'Other'

Rugby players are regarded as the ultimate expression of indigenous masculinity, and as poster boys of national pride. They represent a nationalism which

[15]. Methodist churches will emphasis group identity and community, whereas Pentecostal will emphasise the individual. Unlike English, Bauan (Fijian) language has different forms of pronouns to indicate inclusive and exclusive groups of different sizes. The Methodist preachers almost always use the pronouns *keimami* (first person, large group plural, exclusive) or *kaimuni* (second person, large group). The first person singular pronoun *au* and first person dual inclusive pronoun *daru* (you and me) are far more frequently used by the Pentecostal preachers (Brison 2007). More generally 'Methodist sermons positioned the speaker as the representative of a large group.... listeners were imagined as being embedded within larger status categories based on age and gender. In evangelical sermons, on the other hand, when speakers used the first person singular pronoun they were proclaiming themselves to be unique individuals with particular experiences, rather than representatives of communities.'

combines the two central indigenous Fijian ideals of Christian discipline and physical *bati* strength. The stark contrast is with the predominantly Indian sport of soccer (football). This sport is seen as being less brave, tough and manly than rugby, and definitely does not have the cultural connections with either a warrior past or contemporary military occupations.

Masculinities, the ways in which men conceptualise themselves as men and their roles in society, are plural in relational and historical terms; they are products of 'power relations between the dominant and alternative/subjugated modes of masculinities and connecting local and global ideas and realities' (Jolly 2008, p. 4). The masculinities which are associated with those in positions of power are more able to set the parameters against which other masculinities are defined; structural power imbalances are mapped onto identities; these identities then take them for granted. In Connell's terms a hegemonic masculinity of a society is that which is most dominant and sets the parameters of what it is to be masculine (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Connell 2001). Other masculinities are defined against, and made subordinate to this masculinity, though this "manliness is a contested territory, it is an ideological battlefield" (Edley & Wetherell 1999, p. 106). In this sense hegemony might not be the best term, as it ignores the contradictions within the norms of masculinity – the tensions between competing value systems, or those produced by the cross cutting of gender norms with norms of race, ethnicity and multiple other factors. Dominance of particular norms is constructed by elites around particular social spaces, while in other spaces these norms are able to be more contested. For this reason, as a rule, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is overused by analysts, who ignore the vast differences within masculinity, and confuse prevalence at a national level with power at an interpersonal level. The

concept also tends to obfuscate the structures which reinforce these particular gender orders. However, in the case of Fijian rugby, the dominant image and ideal of indigenous rugby masculinity, based on images of traditional warriors and ideals of *lotu* and *vanua,* is powerful both within this social space of rugby, and by extension others. Rugby, as a national sport, provides the platform for its domination, including the subjugation of the Indian 'others'.

The symbolic value of rugby is also strongly connected to its role in marking Fijian men against Indian men. In this context Rugby is an important space for the creation and naturalization of difference between the groups. Playing rugby allows indigenous Fijians to mark themselves as proper men, as opposed to the Indians who (generally) don't play and aren't included in the indigenous nationalist masculine ideal.

One informant, TT, was particularly revealing about the relation between rugby, masculinity, respect and ethnicity as he had experienced it. As a half Fijian, half Samoan boy he had experienced some degree of otherness from Fijians in his class. On the margins of this social group he was acutely aware of its boundary markers. He was a smaller boy growing up, and had used rugby to prove himself to his schoolmates. As an adult he was also involved with mentoring at the University and had ambitions of becoming a successful coach, which he still imagined in terms of this Indigenous masculinity.

> *In Fiji rugby is associated with the Fijians and soccer with being Indian. In the [outer] islands in particular, guys are meant to play rugby. Representing the school equates to a position of status within the school and community, and so many young boys will seek to be part of the best rugby team. Even*

as an adult if you play rugby then you gain some respect from others. It is seen as a man's game. Playing it will give the individual self-worth and elevate him in the eyes of others.

In the Fijian context a man is constructed in terms of hierarchy. There is always the chiefly hierarchy, with each man already allotted a hereditary position based on his mataqali. Ladies will serve the man, who is the boss. In this relationship the man should be strong and tough, and rugby is one way of associating yourself as a man with this type of masculinity. Rugby, in modern Fiji, is one of the activities most associated with the outdoors, with being outside, with the toughness of those places. In contrast inside is related to the woman.

At school I played rugby to show that even though I was small I was still a man. I was tough, and played number seven because I loved the rough stuff. Also I am half Fijian and half Samoan, but was regarded as being Polynesian, or Rotuman, and regarded by many as being weaker because of this[16]*. I wanted to prove them wrong. Playing rugby was trying to get people to respect me. I may not look as Fijian as the other blokes but I am just as hard. It is also the same motivation that I have now in playing touch (rugby) - to prove myself. But I have come to the point where I don't need to prove myself to anyone but only to God.*

This account reflects many of the sentiments that were put forward by my informants, of which I want to emphasise two for further analysis. Firstly, this status is closely linked to his proving himself in accordance with a certain

[16]. Number Seven is a position on the rugby field which requires a lot of tackling and competing for the ball in physical contests.

archetype of masculinity explicitly and implicitly defined against the Indian and Polynesian populations. Secondly, TT explicitly talks of using rugby to acquire status and gain an elevated position in society, both as a child and as an adult. For TT, rugby offers the opportunity to prove himself as a certain type of man, to claim his Fijian identity and to gain social status. Its value is that in order to become a member a person must go through the physical and mental difficulties of training and matches. An indigenous man need not be the most successful rugby player (though this helps), but he must exemplify attitudes and deportment at training and in the matches. Hence, TT emphasises the ‘rough stuff' of rugby which allowed him to prove that he possessed the strength and toughness expected of Fijian men. Masculinity is created and expressed in the world of sports, which form an important modern version of the indigenous male realm which is said to be the 'Outdoors'. Whilst I was in Fiji there were no Indian players in the national teams. In fact there was a human interest story about one player who had been playing in a regional representative side because he identified as having mixed Indian-Indigenous heritage. The fact that Indian people don't play rugby is taken by many indigenous Fijians as evidence of their lack of masculinity, and posited as a justification for their inferior social position. They seem to focus on alternative sporting activities, such as football and boxing, but without research it remains unclear as to whether they use these as alternative arenas in which to try to prove their masculinities in indigenous Fijian terms, or whether these represent an alternative to this militaristic hegemony. Playing rugby takes on whole new meanings within this context, and becomes a useful strategy for social mobility.

The policies and ideals of the colonial era naturalised a fundamental division between the Indian and Indigenous populations. Fiji's first Governor from 1875-1880 Sir Arthur Gordon pre-eminently shaped nascent relations in the early period, by his construction of social, legal and economic divisions in society. Indentured Indian workers were brought to Fiji in order that indigenous Fijians 'be saved from economic exploitation and kept from becoming enmeshed in the market' (Howard 1991; Kaplan 1995: 136; Lawson 1991). Economically the colonial regime operated to isolate Indians as labourers without rights, the indigenous as landowners preserved in the past, and the European business interests as fuelling the colonial economy. This model of a tripartite system has been glorified by many later Fijians, most notably by Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna[17], the pre-eminent statesman of Fiji in the pre-independence era, who described Fiji as being like a three-legged stool, representing the labour of the Indo-Fijians, the land of the Fijians and European capital. Each leg is an integral and irreplaceable part of the whole. From this point there legal differentiation between Indian and Fijian was established which continues today, with 83% of the Fijian islands the inalienable property of the indigenous population. However this confined the indigenous people to the rural economy, a position from which they were unable to elevate themselves through the growth of the national economy. Today the legacy of these colonial divisions can be seen in the inferior engagement of the

[17]. Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna was the child of a Bauan nobleman and the daughter of the High Chief of Lau, herself a granddaughter of Cakobau. His father gained prominence in the colonial administration, and was able to gain much favour with the colonial officials. This was able to gain him the opportunity to send his son to school in New Zealand, and later to Oxford. Whilst in Oxford World War I broke out, and Sukuna, denied the right to serve for England on racial grounds, joined the French foreign legion, in which he gained France's highest military honour, the Croix de guerre. After returning to Fiji he was appointed on the national legislative assembly, and was instrumental in the development of many key reforms in Fiji, including the establishment of the Native Trust. Later he gained the title of Tui Lau

indigenous Fijians in commerce, and their dominance of the functions of the state (Norton 1993, 2004).

The Indian population is seen as dangerous because of their lack of adherence to the central indigenous values. As shown in the table below, they are principally Hindu with a significant Muslim minority, but only 1.6% Methodist, and 4.2% Christian of some variety. The Christianity of the Indigenous person becomes a defining feature of their identity, at least in part because it is not shared with the Indian. This implies the Indians' lack of the values typically associated with the church, including those of the *lotu*/*vanua* complex. Hence, indigenous communal practices and sharing with kin are contrasted with a perceived lack of these practices amongst the Indian population. They are said not to care about their own kin, and to be overly concerned with money and individualism. This conveniently manoeuvres the disparity in economic achievement between the two groups to be a sign of Indian moral weakness.

Denomination	**Percentage of Indigenous Fijian population who are members**	**Percentage of Indo-Fijian population who are members**	**Percentage of total population in Fiji who are members**
Methodist	66.7	1.6	36.2
Sanatan Dharma (Hindu)	0.1	57.1	25.2
Roman Catholic	13.2	1	8.8
Sunni Muslim	0	9.5	4.2
Assemblies of God	6.3	1.4	4
Seventh-day Adventist	5.1	0.2	2.9

Arya Samaj (Hindu)	0	2.8	1.2
Not specified	8.6	27.4	21.4

Figure 2.1: Table demonstrating religious association by ethnicity. Source: Tomlinson 2009.

Fijian politics has been dominated by the issue of race. Policy, politics and voting have all been based on ethnic background rather than policies. There has been an assumption, since pre-independence, of the primacy of race in the decision making process (Lal 2009). This remains the case despite the 2006 coup which was justified by an attempt to end race politics in Fiji, and to ‘clean up' politics by removing those indigenous politicians who had benefited or condoned the ethno-nationalist coup of 2000. This policy seems to run counter to what is a very powerful belief amongst the Indigenous population of themselves as the only legitimate rulers of Fiji. Even the current coup, carried out in the name of equal citizenship, has been led and governed by the Indigenous military leaders. The danger is that, if the military government is not successful in restructuring politics in Fiji then these same ethno-nationalist forces will again take power in the country (Lal 2009). The fear is that if this does happen, the ethno-nationalist response to their current exile will be more brutal than in the past (Fraenkel & Firth 2009; Lal 2009).

In Fiji rugby promotes the superiority of the indigenous way of life. The national team consists of indigenous men. History links them to the indigenous political leaders who established the nation state along lines of indigenous ideals. In their pre-match rituals the team performs a version of an indigenous war-dance. Publicity images promote the relationship between rugby players and the indigenous warrior ancestors. The national team quite openly and proudly displays

its religious identity, with prayers and hymns before and after matches, and references to “Phil 4:13” (Philippians chapter 4 verse 13) emblazoned on their jerseys: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Tomlinson 2009). Rugby as a “global system of common difference” acts as a tool for the promotion of a differentiated indigenous Fijian culture. Tourists and the rugby world are presented with images of a vibrant indigenous culture, and rugby as a modern expression of this. In doing so these traditions and symbols are reaffirmed within Fiji, and pushed to the forefront of national consciousness. In a climate of social turmoil and political struggle, Fijian rugby acts as a boundary marker of identity. Often these inherently indigenous associations are forgotten and rugby is idealised as a unifying force for the nation. Indeed it does seem to be supported by a lot of the Indian population, and politicians like to espouse the ability of sport to cut across social divisions. Explicitly Indians are invited to join in this national symbol, but it is a symbol of a society in which they are marginalised. The ethnic and religious aspects of Fijian rugby are so ingrained that even publicity material intended to promote national unity and cohesion ‘depict and promote the *i taukei* hegemony' (Cattermole 2008, p. 108).

Figure 2.2: *Cibi* performed before the Fiji v Samoa match - IRB RWC 2011 Match 26: http://www.zimbio.com/pictures/QhXzrAgSifl/Fiji+v+Samoa+IRB+RWC+2011+Match+26/lbp80nEv8l9

The Lomaiviti Club as a Space for the Socialisation of Young Men

Rugby clubs are the key sites for the practice of the social meanings of rugby, masculinity and identity. The Lomaiviti rugby club was founded within the Rewai area of Suva. The club was founded around a local identity, but also in line with the local community's identity as originating from the Lomaiviti group of islands, in Eastern Fiji. This is where many of the players had grown up, and where their villages, kin and traditions were based. However, on top of this regional identity within Rewai was also a reputation for having high rates of crime, particularly thefts, burglaries and violence. Particularly during the 80s, 90s and early 00s the area had a very high crime rate. The foundational myth (I use 'myth' to foreground the importance of the story in the minds of those in the club, rather than to cast

aspersions on its veracity) is that the club hoped that it would provide a new outlet for the young men of their community, engaging them in rugby rather than crime and violence, and giving them a purpose, identity and sense of pride. The older men who were associated with the club as young men at the time remember with pride the building up of the club, of how they defied other's expectations by forming a team in such a place, and of how they saw the immediate results of this in the community.

This myth remained important in the self-identification of the young men with whom I played. They often expressed feeling lucky to be part of the club. Often in interviews they would mention this story, or would allude to it. When they discussed their rivalries, their fiercest was with the army and police, whom they represented as exploiting and oppressing them. They were proud to say that other teams were afraid of them and their violent criminal reputations. However, they liked to say that this wasn't the case anymore, that they were under control, and would protect each other. Three times at training during my time there were talks given to the young men about respecting each other's property and the law. KK embodied the potential of the club as a tool of socialization, and a space for belonging. He had been in trouble with the police for years, in and out of prison on charges related to fighting and petty theft, and had been unable to find a place in the society. When he was 26 he had joined the club, at the invitation of some of the senior players, who were from the same village group as him. At the club rather than being on the outside he was included and given a set of boundaries to work within. By the time I arrived, he had a central role, leading the singing at the start and end of training. He still had some problems with Yaqona use, but he was regarded by everyone as a success. When I spoke to him he stated how important

the club had been to him, saying that ‘I can’t find the words (literally) to say how much being part of Lomai is to me, how important it was for my life. I had problems, and went to some horrible places. But now I have a group to support me, and to keep me with God’ (paraphrased from field notes). More than others he shows the potential for the club to change peoples’ lives, to be an important social site, as well as a place to play rugby and pursue fame and fortune.

This is a key entry point into this discussion. Rugby is a social space for the playing out and containment of certain tensions in society. Young men are encouraged to be aggressive even dangerous, but taught to control this. The club then plays an important part in their personal development and socialization. Importantly, rugby has developed within Fiji in a way that it occupies a central part of broader society. It is regarded as a place to produce young men as acceptable citizens in their communities. In the context of the socially and economically marginal position they largely occupied in Fiji as young unemployed men, playing rugby for the club was a rare option in this regard.

The rugby club offered a space in which men could learn and perform the dominant form of masculinity to gain a position in society. However, as exemplified in the example of KK, the rugby club didn’t provide only one route to social status, nor one form of masculinity. His elevated position in the pre-training rituals signifies the co-existence of several values, of several types of masculinity.

Many of the club’s features mirror those found in the village. For instance, the club received the spiritual endorsement of the *talatala* whilst the local church was promoted amongst the team by holding important social functions there, such as my farewell service. The club’s name, borrowed from the name of the island group

where most of the players' villages were, carried connotations of land and kinship. The permanence and significance of this community can be seen in the tension that was experienced by those who had left the club. For instance several had ended up getting jobs in the military or in the police. The players at Lomaiviti said that they were still part of the club, but that there was a great deal of tension when the two played each other. The policeman and the military players were nervous as they knew how much the Lomaiviti players hated these teams. In the explanations of the Lomaiviti players, the policeman and military players ended up making excuses to not play as they didn't want to play against these brothers they loved so much. Here, in the discourses of the club, the importance of the club itself, rather than abstract values of sportsmanship, is important. Loyalty is to the club and identity found in the club.

When I arrived in Fiji I experienced rapid acceptance within the rugby team. Personally I found that my participation in trainings and games elevated my status and acceptability within the group. By participating in these important social occasions I went from being a foreigner to being somewhat of a local. It was at one of the trainings, after I had attended enough times to prove that I was a willing to do the hard work required of a member of the team, that the manager took me aside and registered me for the competition. The form, in yet another sign of the complete indigenous hegemony within the sport, began with what to an indigenous Fijian would be basic information: Clan, Sub-clan, lineage and village associations. Yet to me, and any Indian that might want to play, these were meaningless categories. I asked the manager what I should put and at first he replied that I didn't need to fill the form out, then, pausing for a minute, he responded: 'no, I'll fill it out. You can be from Nawaikama, Gau, from the same village as me, S, J and

some other boys. You can be part of our *mataqali'*. This proved to be an enduring symbolic act amongst the boys in the club, as from this point onwards I was referred to using the kinship term appropriate for my place of origin; that is, those from the Gau island called me *kai*, those from Lau and Vanua Levu would call me *tau*, and those from Rewa and associated territory would call me *naits* and those from Ba and Ra would call me *matz*. I had been accepted into the club, and through this had been accepted into a form of Fijian sociability. This naming process is extremely territorial and possessive. They claimed ownership of both my rugby skills and my physical personhood.

Within the Lomaiviti rugby club the pairing of community and religion remained at the forefront of people's lives, structuring their actions and identities. Displays of religion were important in the club's rituals, and its players' identities. Yet, in style and meaning the context of their religion has been transformed. The rituals of the Lomaiviti trainings and matches indicate the centrality of Christianity to the identities of these men. Religion forms one of the most significant aspects of a rugby training session. Most notably, before and after games and training they gather into a quiet circle and pray. At these times the prayers are led by a senior member of the team, or by the team's *talatala* (priest). Most people stand with their heads bowed to the ground, or kneel, silently following the prayer. Some players pray audibly at the same time. At the end of trainings and games they sing a hymn. Everyone forms a big circle and one of the more able singers starts by giving the first line of the song, then repeating it, then counting in. The rest of the team joins together in beautiful harmony. I discovered that the Methodist influence, with its strong emphasis on community development through song, was responsible for such euphony. In a survey of the players carried out during my

field work, all respondents identified their Christianity with a particular church congregation. These manifestations of religiosity were understood as being a defining factor of the players' identities and culture.

However, Christianity takes on a slightly different set of meanings in the club, as it is detached from strong links to particular traditional sites and church institutions, and is more closely bound to broader cultural identities. In the rugby club the emphasis seems to be on spirituality rather than on the church as an institution. Thus whilst all players claimed to be part of a particular church, many rarely attended church. This fact was known by all, and within the club was not identified to me as a problem. Instead spirituality was being expressed, by some, through the club and game itself. Frequently my informants, including some of those who regularly attended church, spoke of 'rugby as being a religion', and in one case as 'going to church every night at training'. The ubiquitous Christian rituals and references keep the familiar religious identities close to the minds of those training, but this reflects a fundamental difference in the substance of spirituality. Here the individual is being bound, through God, not to the structures of the church and the village, but to the team. Additionally the club players often gathered together after the games for various social events. These typically had the dual function of fund-raising and team building, and normally involved either *yaqona* or alcohol.

More relevantly, the ideal of Christian fellowship is used to create a sense of communal spirituality. The pre- and post- match and training prayers emphasise this group relation with God. For instance, the following prayer was spoken to the young men on the side of the ground after training:

'Heavenly Father, we look up to you this evening. We thank you for your help in our training. We sacrifice our lives as a team. Please Lord protect the lives of all the young men. Bless their lives and their families. We, about to dismiss in this place, we need your protection and your guidance on our way home. As we pray in no other name, only in Jesus' name, our king and our saviour.' (Transcribed and translated from the original Fijian language prayer by one of the players).

In this account God has also been present, active in the training itself. With his help the players have been able to carry out the important common work of improving themselves and the collective through physical labour. In return for aid and for protection in training and travel, the players will commit themselves to God, not as individuals, but as a team. This unity within the team is encouraged by communal spirituality utilised in team building exercises designed to prepare players for matches. The coaches often emphasised this element in training, and it was the most prominent feature of the pre-match routine. Below is a copy of the pre-match preparation schedule which outlines the foci for the Lomaiviti team before their match.

Bonding represents the most prominent feature of the warm up, being constantly repeated during the hour before the match. These rituals consist of huddled team talks, where players bind in a tight circle interlocking arms and are addressed by the coach, captain or senior players. These huddled talks focus on being tough and disciplined, sacrificing one's own body for the team. *Lotu*, in this case a brief prayer and words of encouragement from the team *talatala*, begins this warm-up process, and God is a common theme throughout the motivational and team bonding exercises. Twenty seven of the sixty minutes of warm up consist of non-physical activity, focused on bringing the team together, under the protection of God. The team utilises the communal spirituality and converts it into a mental state

of mind appropriate for the match that is ahead. A sense of belonging to the team, of the importance of the team sociability, and of spiritual significance of the activities is created. Rugby is translated into the framework of Fijian sociality. As such the team has become an important site to develop and express Fijian Christianity, and to seek spiritual fulfilment.

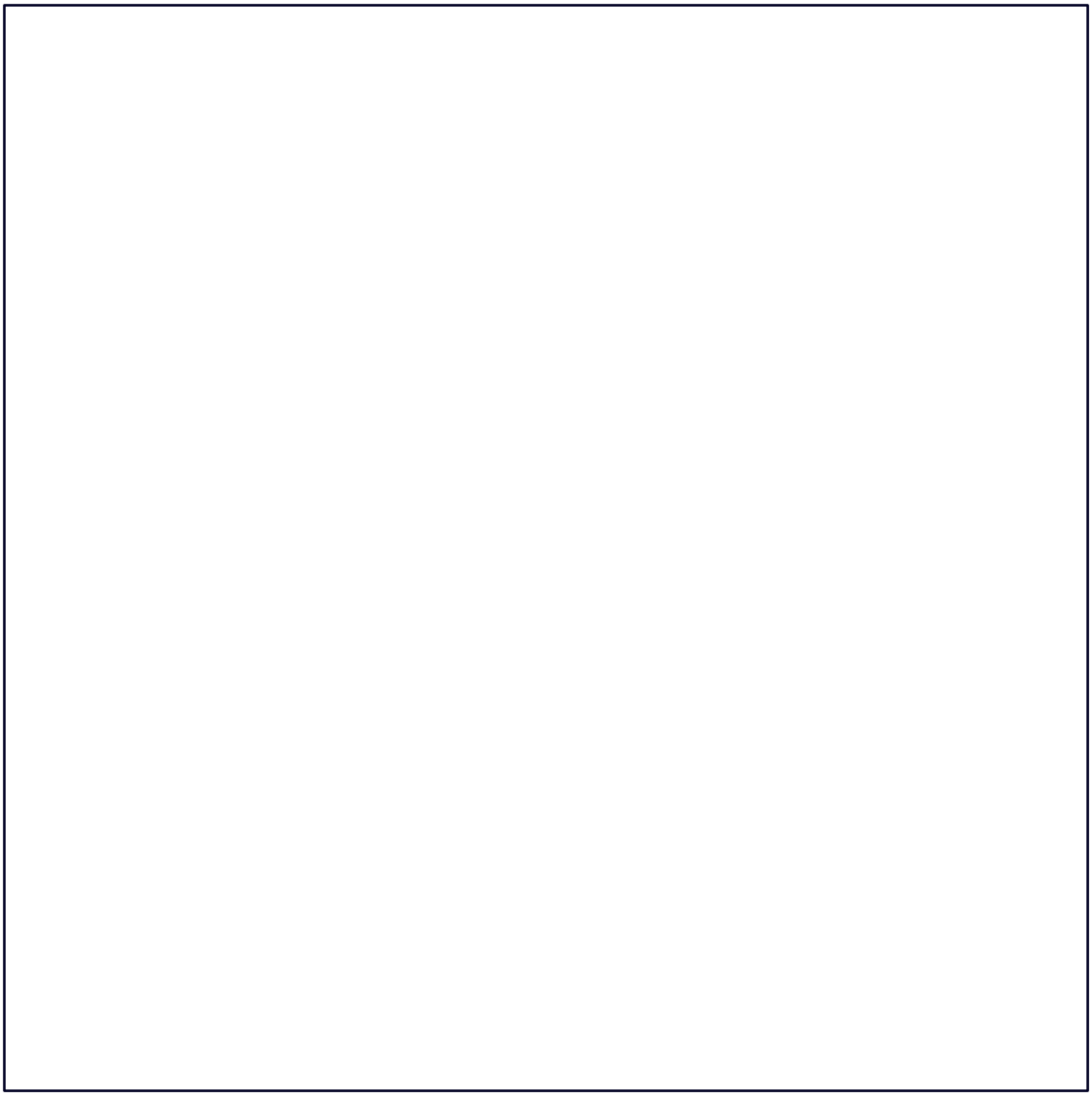

Figure 2.3: Pacific Agencies Lomaiviti Black Game Preparation (Source: Reproduced from the handout preserving original formatting)

The coaches of Lomaiviti explicitly stated that the pre-match was designed to alter the mindset of the players so that they were ready to 'go into battle on the field'. The use of religious images and ideas, the repetition of warrior images, as well as

the ritualised aspects of the pre-match and the excitement of the match itself, all mark the weekend's match as something outside of the everyday. The match, as *rite de passage*, alters the players' positions in society, and gives them a new role and set of expectations. It offers a marker of identity, and forms an important social process which people must go through in order to be part of society. As suggested by Bourdieu (1991), *the rite de passage* has the social function in Fiji of dividing those who have gone through the rite from those who have not. Most pertinently it institutes a powerful distinction between those who have undergone the ritual, and those to whom the ritual will never pertain. That is, playing rugby is crucial in Fiji as it separates indigenous men from women and Indian men, two groups who will never be able to participate in the same way. As such it perpetuates the hegemony by naturalising the importance of the masculine value systems.

Conclusions:

It is through rugby that the young Fijian men create social ties; through rugby that they gain social prestige, through rugby that they create themselves as good men in terms of the social values espoused by the household, village, nation and church; through rugby that they engage with the outside world and the cultural and economic potential that is contained there and so gain repute within their communities. Even if they are only a short way along the perceived pathways to international success, these aspiring young men are able to imagine themselves in terms of the rugby dream and its huge potential. In the complex entanglement of values within Fiji, the social identity of a rugby player translates into a sense of purpose and meaning, a perceived value for the young Fijian men. Thus playing the sport and being involved in its social institutions is an individual and group

tactic for identity, status and emotional preservation. Regardless of their ability to migrate, the young men are valued through their involvement with rugby.

Rugby is also a site for the expression of frictions as young men escape the authority of chiefs and the responsibilities towards their community by playing overseas. Being overseas means that the players are outside of the gaze of their communities. Those who move overseas are now coming under the authority of global capitalism which has little knowledge or regard for the key Fijian values. Outside of the Fijian clubs and family networks they have increasing agency, and must find their own way to a greater extent. The best players still remain the poster boys of Fiji, still are imagined as embodying the values of *lotu, vanua* and *matanitu,* even though they themselves might have to live other values in their day to day life. This is another aspect of the social meaning of rugby, which is becoming increasingly important in the professional era. The following sections introduce these alternative values of global professionalism, and discuss how Fijians are adapting to them.

PART 2: A GLOBAL SPORT

Chapter 3: Institutional Power in Global Rugby

On the 27th of August, 1995, the IRB executive council, consisting of representatives from the national governing bodies of England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, France, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Italy and Canada met in Paris and decided that the game of rugby should become professional. The decision marked the end of a slow movement towards professionalism, and ushered in a rapid reconfiguration of the institutionally supported paradigms of the sport. For many of these nations the ideal of amateurism had been a major part of the cultural meaning and identity of Rugby Union. The deliberations of the late 20th century remind us of the resistance to professionalism in the UK and Ireland one hundred years earlier. The 19th century was still the time of Pierre de Coubertin and his particular style of Olympianism, which was centered on amateur pursuit of self-betterment rather than a professional ideal. So strong were these ideals, the belief that certain activities should remain outside of material gain that the middle classes viewed professional sportsmen as being akin to prostitutes. This was despite industrialisation creating a broader section of the population with access to enough money to spend on leisure activities, and the realisation that sport could be turned into an industry – simply by enclosing stadia and charging money for admissions (Vampew 1988:54 quoted in Groeneveld 2004). So instead of professionalising, the English Governing body (RFU) split in two, with the Northern Union clubs leaving to establish a new sport of Rugby League. The RFU then carried out a witch-hunt against any clubs or players seen to be taking money for their labour. One hundred years later professionalism has turned from being a scourge that brought

divisions to the sport to the proscribed means to unify it. What can this change tell us about the power of institutions within rugby union?

Professional rugby was made possible institutionally despite resistance and divergent positions held by different countries in the world. The global system which has been created out of it is a highly unequal world, bought together through unified rules and flows of money, images and people. The control of the central unions over the rules, and cultural meanings of rugby have not been complete. However, they are powerful, and unevenly so, reinforcing imbalances through control over rules, authenticity and authority. The purpose of this chapter is to show the structures of the global institutions of rugby union which have developed during the professional era. This chapter outlines the deliberations which led to the professionalization of the game, it then traces three interlinked trends – the internationalization of the sport, the reorganisation of governance, and the introduction of monetary incentives. Within this framework I show that Fiji has not had the capacity as other nations to control their role in the global professional system.

What is Professionalism?

The word professional has come to mean so much more than the exchange of money in return for services. Clubs, national unions and competitions are now run as businesses, adopting certain *professional* practices, and structuring themselves as businesses. Some players, despite their on-field abilities, are overlooked due to their lack of *professionalism.* Most professional clubs have established academies, which are designed to teach young players how to *be professionals.* A

professional athlete may have a special status amongst strangers as well as their friends and acquaintances, revered for their mastery, body and implied work ethic. In turn, the media will create myths around some *professionals,* turning them into national heroes, focus points for collective pride and national values. Conversely, the media will defend these values by admonishing an *unprofessional* effort from a team, and calling into question the *professionalism* of players who are caught in scandals in their private lives. There has been an extension of the idea of what is expected of a player in return for their pay cheque, and there is an expectation that there is an obligation to behave in a certain way once a pay cheque is given.

The wording of the IRB's announcement was that, when approved by the national governing body, the game of rugby union could be "open" to monetary payments to players. Money is at its simplest level a token of one person's, product's or action's value as perceived by another. As a product of perception it is a symbol of localized value, tied to the particular value systems and relationships it lies within. In this way I understand value in a similar vein to Graeber (2001). This thesis argues that the professionalization process of rugby has formed a global system with different structure and values than before. Yet, whilst anthropological studies of the introduction of monetised economic systems regularly indicate significant socio-cultural changes to occur as a result, these studies also indicate a propensity of humans to maintain other forms of value and relations, integrating money into pre-existing patterns of exchange. It is not money per se, but its particular functions within a cultural and social milieu which is important. As Bloch and Parry point out in reference to Papua New Guinea, it is incorrect to presuppose that money creates an economic domain distinct from the social, but

instead can be incorporated directly into existing socially embedded exchange relations (1979:546). We need to look at how money is being used to understand its role in changing social relations.

In the case of rugby we need to understand two impacts of professionalism; firstly, the introduction of money as a technology of exchange which enables freer circulation of value; and secondly, the neo-liberal ideas, technologies and organizational principles which come with monetized markets.

Money is a technology of exchange. It is an exchangeable token of value earned and a measure of the debt owed to the bearer. Either way money, more than most other tokens of value, is able to be exchanged over long distances, and outside of the specific social milieu it is produced within. This is because money has incorporated into it the power and trust of the state – it is endorsed by powerful armies, backed by strong reserves of other wealth. Thus the money of one state can be deemed near worthless outside that state, while the money of another state is used as global currency. This allows the mobility of value; a player can earn the money through their value in one location, and then transfer that value to another location. Rugby has always had a particular value system by which particular actions of individuals are evaluated and rewarded with praise, reputation, titles, roles, trophies, food, board, and other material goods and status. These systems are each motivated by a set of values and occasionally come into competition with one another. For instance, trophies are symbolic of the value given to winning, but if a player is playing for an unsuccessful team, the pursuit of a trophy by joining a better team comes into conflict with the demands of being loyal to the club. Regularly there are small incentives and rewards given to players by clubs. These are given within a relationship with the club. For instance food is

given by the club or even an individual patron, and consumed by the player with no obligation at all to return food or money at any time. In some cases this might even involve the giving of small amounts of money. Here, these goods are incorporated into social networks of the club, part of systems of general reciprocity and patronage.

Titles such as captain, respect as a loyal club man and trophies are outside of the sphere of exchange. They cannot be bought and sold, but must be acquired by other means; bestowed upon a player due to leadership qualities, loyalty, good play or other values. To a greater or lesser extent these objects and the value which they represent, are bound to a particular social group. A player cannot take their captaincy to another site; it only pertains to the club where they play. The most obvious difference is that as a medium of exchange it can be divided up, stored, and used in many locations and social settings. Money as a system of exchange introduces a new ability for mobility to occur. This mobility is about the severing of relations, which is what money facilitates, and as such introduces new value systems and new power relations. The use of monetary payments standardizes and disembeds value, allowing a widening of the scope of value circulation to unprecedented levels. This is crucial in motivating the mobility of people, and can change the relations through which things are produced, as the value is not tied to these relationships. For example rugby players such as Fijians are compelled to move, their actions worth more in one place than another. Yet it should be emphasized that the clubs themselves still remain as the most important nodes of culture in rugby. Despite having short term contracts, the players spend 6-8 hours a day at the club training each day. Here they learn the skills, and it is through the clubs that they gain access to the international labour market.

In addition, monetary payments are regularly associated with a secondary legal and ideological changes. Principally, contractual relations become the norm, as do a growing set of expectations of professional relations between employers and employees. These can drastically alter the social structures and cultures of rugby. Often the concept of market forces is introduced as justification for major changes within clubs, or for the contracting decisions of players and clubs. The work of philosopher Michael Sandel is interesting in this regard as he points out the non-neutrality of the market system: introducing money can corrupt certain social goods, make others unfairly distributed due to uneven preconditions, and can be ineffective motivation in certain circumstances (Sandel 2012). The institutions and ideologies of neo-liberal capitalism, and its associated institutional structures and technologies do have the ability to alter social relations and meanings; they are not neutral. Some have lamented on what they see as a fundamental shift in how people relate to each other; ending old relations based on other deeper social ties; converting people into labour; converting all relations into temporary ones, lasting until a higher financial reward arrives; undermining existing sporting values (See for instance Walsh and Giulianotti 2006). Others have pointed to the creative potential of the new products produced in professional sport (Moor 2007, who draws on Miller's (1995)understanding of consumption). However, the purpose of this thesis is not to engage these particular moral questions. Rather, I combine this insight on the power of market culture with the observation of Bloch and Parry that the specific impacts need to be understood in each social location. So then, what is the specific implication of professionalization in global rugby union?

In the following three chapters I seek to detail three parts of the changes due to professionalism. Firstly, this chapter outlines the restructuring of global institutions. The institutional structures of rugby have significantly altered to accommodate and produce professionalism in a way which has shifted more power and control to the central organisations. The next chapter will show the development of a set of techniques and ideals focused on the production of “professional players”, and the authenticity this gives them. Finally, I will show the implications of this for the role of clubs as sites for the socialization of young men.

Internationalisation and Professionalisation in Heterogeneous Places

The global professional rugby system has been built out of the processes of internationalization and professionalism of rugby which have resulted in a reorganization of the sport across multiple levels. By professionalization I mean the introduction of monetary payments and professional culture. By internationalization I mean the building of links between rugby organisations in different nations. By reorganization I mean the fundamental changes in the social relations which control rugby, occurring at the levels of clubs (amateur and professional), national governing bodies and the international governing body. These have been very much connected to one another; professionalism has at times facilitated, at times incentivized and at times required internationalization and reorganization; and alternatively professionalisation has been in part driven by the changes caused by internationalization which had preceded it. I begin by looking at the process of professionalization as it occurred in different places within the rugby system. I use the decision by the IRB to professionalise as a pivotal moment through which underlying processes might be better understood.

The IRB was originally founded as the IRFB to organize international matches between England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland. By the end of the 20th century the control of rugby union shifted away from the upper middle class core within the home unions of the UK and Ireland to a much wider governing body spread across the world. Most notably, there was the rise of the non-Home Union stake-holders in the sport. The on-field dominance of New Zealand and South Africa (and to some extent Australia) translated into their incorporation into the governing body of the sport. They were admitted to the international rugby board in 1948, with France added in 1978, Argentina, Italy, Canada and Japan in 1991.

By this time the ideals of professionalism were already prominent within general society and sports. Within other sports professionalism was already a well-established way of structuring the elite competitions. In a gradual move towards prioritising the interests of the players there had been, in many parts of the world, a gradual increase in the prevalence of payments (Malcolm, Sheard, & White, 2000). Payments to players had become disguised as part time work. Retiring players would be given a trust fund. Informal transfer markets had developed to lure the best players to the richer clubs; European clubs, particularly some well backed clubs in Italy and France, attracted New Zealand and Australian stars in the off-season. In fact David Campese is well reported to claim to have beaten England's captain Will Carling to be the first rugby millionaire, all through endorsements paid before the professional era. Sponsorship money began to become more readily accessed by the clubs, and to cope with this the unions and clubs had steadily grown in administrative size and some of these structures were relatively professional. With all this going on the clubs began to formalise their

relationships with players to protect their investments, whilst the players sought financial security. So much so that the period had been characterised by some as “shamateurism”. These options were unevenly capitalised upon, with some countries and clubs being far more adept at providing benefits for their players than others. There was some feeling that it would be better to have the professional element of the game out in the open publicly; to maintain the fairness and evenness of the competition through transparency. Ironically, part of the drive to professionalism was to get all payments out in the open and thus make competition fairer.

A second great incentive was the huge increase in public following which was believed to be possible through commercialization of the game. In 1987, the inaugural World Cup was held with much success and international interest. The even greater financial success of the World Cup in 1991 further highlighted that there was a sizeable public interest in the sport, if it was delivered in the right way. It was obvious that this initial phase of internationalization had produced increased public interest. The financial value was recognised within the media at the same time. The new media climate of the mid-90s, when cable and pay TV access began to grow rapidly in Australia and the UK, meant that there was suddenly more money within the media. Whilst in the 19th century the aim had been about the sort of character that could be produced from the game, professional rugby is guided by competition within and without of the sport.

The decision within Australia to professionalise was precipitated largely by forces outside of its national governing body. The Australian Rugby Union (ARU), Australia’s national governing body for the sport, was already more open than their northern hemisphere counterparts to the professional game. This was largely

driven by their own troubles with establishing and maintaining a presence as a sport in Australia. They were in constant competition with overseas unions and the other sports within Australia. Their star players were regularly being poached by European teams for large sums of (hidden) money. Also, Australia has a particularly competitive environment between the sporting codes, particularly between the different types of football. Australian Rules Football, Rugby league and soccer all have higher participation rates than rugby union. Whilst the international competitions of Rugby Union, test matches played by the Wallabies against touring sides, were well attended, the game had no national competition and little television exposure. Professionalism, it was argued, would allow for the expansion of competitions and development of the game as a spectacle. This would allow it to be marketed more easily to new supporter bases, attracting greater match attendances, TV audiences, and subsequently corporate money to be reinvested into the game. In a time when sport was becoming business, Rugby Union couldn't afford to remain amateur if it wanted to compete.

In addition the players became aware of the potential financial rewards of professional rugby, and of how easy it would be to get them. In the early nineties, a corporation called WRC (World Rugby Corporation) based in Sydney began to sign existing New Zealand, South African, French and Australian international players to a planned world-wide professional league (Fitzsimons 1996). The financial rewards were great and they were able to successfully convince a large number of these players to sign with them in 1995. This jeopardised the validity of the existing competitions and governance structures, which, all of a sudden, no longer have total control of the game or the best players. In response the national governing bodies from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa came up with

their own competition, called Super Rugby, which was to be backed by Rupert Murdoch through an exclusive television rights deal with his Foxtel enterprise.

At this time Rupert Murdoch was trying to use exclusive televised sport to attract new customers to his pay TV businesses. The Murdoch interest was increased by the WRC's approach to his direct competition in the Australian television market, Kerry Packer, an Australian media mogul who had pioneered professionalism in cricket in the 70s, (Williams 2007). Rupert Murdock in 1996 told his shareholders that " 'sport absolutely overpowers' all other programming as an incentive for viewers to subscribe to cable and satellite TV and added: 'We intend to … use sports as a battering ram and lead offering in all our pay television operations.'" (Healey 2009, p. 31, Quoting a Murdoch report to news limited shareholders). In Australia and the UK Murdoch targeted particular demographics for recruitment as new pay TV customers by gaining exclusive rights to popular sports. Regularly he established a new competition, with larger financial incentives for players and clubs, and exclusive rights for his pay TV company. Groeneveld (2004) describes Murdoch using a similar ploy of establishing a new professional rugby league competition in the UK in order to attract the northern English audiences to his pay TV network. The establishment of this "Super League" competition with a payment of £87 million in 1995 also required the changing of the timing of the sport, so that, after 100 years of being played as a winter sport, it became a summer sport (Groeneveld 2004).

Peter Fitzsimmons (1996) describes the behind-the-scenes machinations of this time in Australia in his book, The Rugby War, where he examines the deployment of Machiavellian negotiation tactics within a culture defined by a culture of camaraderie and sportsmanship. After successful approach to the senior players,

the WRC representatives secured the signatures of the majority of the Australian team. All the players assembled in Sydney for what turned out to be a series of tense meetings between the players, and eventually representatives of the WRC and ARU. In a final twist, an agent invited by the captain, Phil Kearns, to give an impartial perspective on the two options, instead did a ‘demolition job’ on the WRC case, essentially questioning their ability to pay the players the significant amounts of money they’d been promised. Most of the players ended up signing with the ARU, and, with the New Zealand team on the phone during the proceedings, quickly the other two unions agreed to these conditions. Hence, before the IRB met in August to decide upon professionalism within the sport, there were already contracts signed by most of the senior rugby players in the southern hemisphere. With this happening amongst the southern hemisphere nations, and ongoing pressure from clubs, senior players and fans within England, the RFU’s support of amateurism became untenable.

This process is very interesting as it shows the ability of factors outside of the institutions to influence their behaviours and structures. However it should be noted that Peter Fitzsimons ends his account with the image of Phil Kearns, after a meeting which decisively ended the prospects of large financial reward for some of the parties after months of hard work, turning to the key power players on both sides of the struggle and asking if they wanted to grab a beer, a nod to the traditions and values of rugby. As I will discuss, what is in place is not a total schism with the old values or power structures. Many of these values, or at least those of the central rugby nations, are incorporated into global professionalism.

Current Global Institutional Powers

Following the decision to professionalise, the IRB and each member union changed its own organisational structure and outlook significantly. These new institutional structures were carefully constructed (or perhaps developed by trial and error) to maximise the performance financially of the organization, and to ensure the best possible performance of its teams onfield. The linking of these together, coordinating them, and dividing the international rugby revenues between them have necessitated a growth in the administrative power of the IRB.

The following figure shows the total number of member unions of the IRB. For the bulk of its existence the international body only had 4 members, but within 10 years of professionalism this number had grown to 100, including significant expansion in all continents. Each of these member unions is the governing body for the sport within a particular nation. They are bound by the decisions made by the board, and it is through these member Unions that the IRB governs the game at the local level. The process of becoming a member of the IRB involves four stages; firstly a national union must register as an associate member of their regional union (each, roughly, representing one continent); after a year as an associate member, the union may be accepted as a member of this regional union; at this point they may apply to be an associate member of the IRB; and finally after two years, they may apply to be a full member.

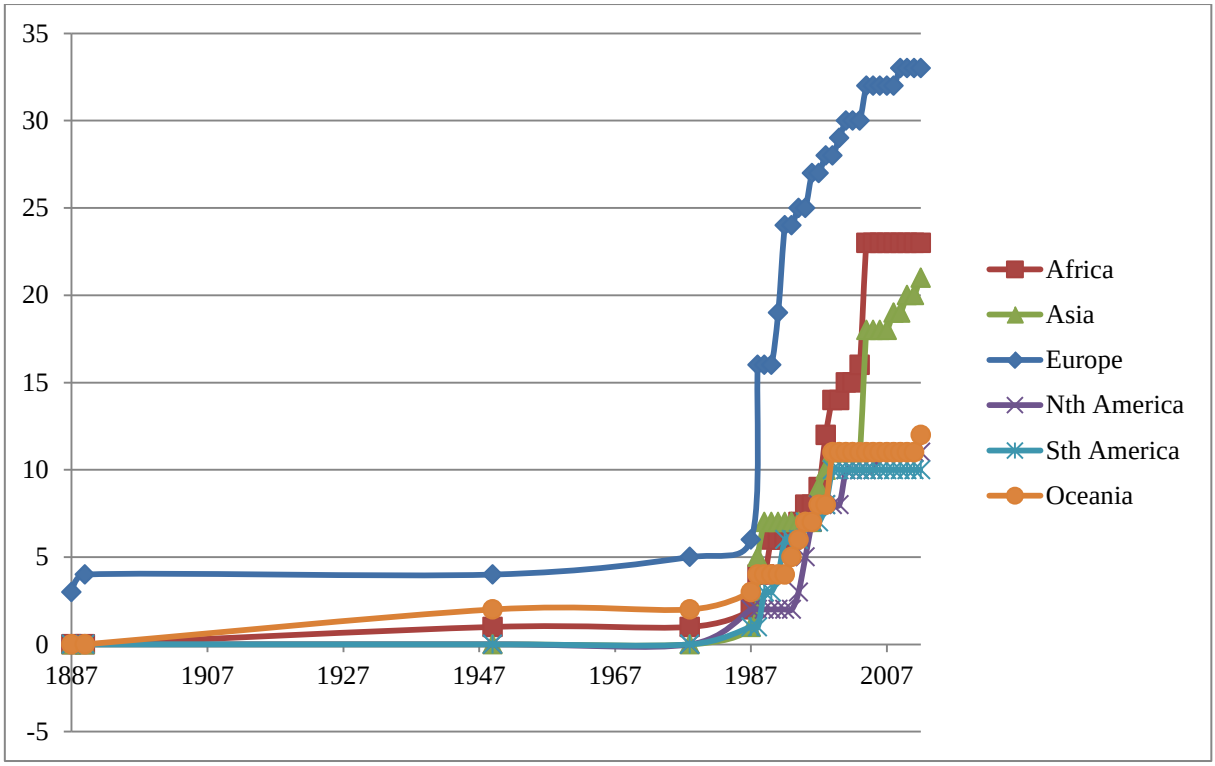

Figure 3.1: International rugby board membership by continent 1886-present day IRB Membership by continent

In 1987 the game opened itself in many ways to the outside world, and encouraged the IRB to accept other members. The success of the inaugural World Cup tournament proved the game could be global, and engagement with developing nations could be achieved. In its objectives the IRB has become progressively international, with the IRB handbook listing the following as its aims and objectives: 'a. promoting, fostering, developing, extending and governing the game… and d. to regulate and co-ordinate arrangements to ensure that there is a fair and equitable programme of matches, tours and tournaments for Senior National Representative teams of all Council Members.'[18] While the 1987 World

[19.] Full list, from the IRB handbook: (a) Promoting, fostering, developing, extending and governing the Game.(b) Framing and interpreting the Bye-Laws, the Regulations and the Laws of the Game.(c) Deciding and/or settling all matters or disputes relating to or arising out of the playing of or the proposed playing of the Game or a Match or any dispute between two or more Unions relating to the application of the Regulations. (d) To regulate and co-ordinate arrangements to

Cup was an attempt at global engagement this was to be done under the control of the existing nations. In exchange for helping the fledging national unions the IRB maintained hegemony by setting the rules and creating a broad institutional structure. However, the IRB control of other unions was minimal at this point. Whilst this initial phase of internationalization preceded professionalization, the advent of professionalism fueled its expansion.

Even a cursory examination of the IRB reveals the bias towards the foundation unions. The full membership meets at a General Meeting convened every two years. Regional meetings are held at regular intervals. However, most decisions are made by The IRB Council, which acts to decide issues of governance. It is made up of the eight foundation Unions, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and France, which each have two seats, and Argentina, Canada, Italy and Japan each with one seat on the Council. There are also representatives from each of the six regional associations (Africa, Asia, North America, South America, Europe and Oceania). In this way the power and advantage of the old foundation unions is maintained. Its duties include setting the international match schedules of all nations, deciding the venues for the World Cups and controlling membership of the board. An Executive Committee meets on a regular basis in order to formulate and oversee the implementation of the IRB Strategic Plan, monitor performance and implement good corporate governance principles and practices. The executive committee monitors the performance of the CEO and the various committees appointed by the board.

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ensure that there is a fair and equitable programme of matches, tours and tournaments for Senior National Representative Teams of all Council Member Unions. (e) Controlling all other matters of an international character affecting the Game. (f) To prevent discrimination of any kind against a country, private person or groups of people on account of ethnic origin, gender, language, religion, politics or any other reason. (IRB HANDBOOK)

There are a number of tournaments under IRB control, including the Women's Rugby World Cup, Rugby World Cup Sevens, HSBC Sevens World Series, IRB Junior World Championship, IRB Junior World Rugby Trophy and IRB Nations Cup. The principal IRB property is, however, the Rugby World Cup. These tournaments represent the significant majority of the IRBs funding. Gate takings, merchandising and television rights secure the organisation a working budget in the hundreds of millions of pounds sterling (IRB Budget). The day to day business of the Board is conducted by a professional staff of over 50, the majority of whom are based in Dublin. Personnel employed around the world include Regional Development Managers, High Performance Managers and Regional General Managers working in Europe, Asia, Africa, The Americas and Oceania. The aims of the IRB are to develop the game. The official documents and websites state that this should be the growth of the game in numbers of participants, sponsors, and fans.

National Governing Bodies

Most national rugby institutions have also significantly restructured in the time of professionalism. Those national governing bodies that had sufficient financial backing and fan bases quickly established professional competitions. These featured fully professional teams, and, more importantly for the structuring of the game, brought the teams and the players under more central control. Payments for television rights for the tournaments and sponsorship deals are arranged by the unions, securing huge revenues for the national bodies. These payments are fed into regional and local unions and through them to the professional clubs, and

even to the amateur clubs. These payments, however, give the national bodies more control, and make the structures more organised. The sport, at least at the elite level, is being run as a business with the emphasis on the production of a product most easily sold to the public. Increasingly other parts of the game are also expected to be run as such.

The pressure to professionalise has often come from an internal desire to organise for success, and an associated belief in business management techniques to achieve this. The mantra in early 1990s New Zealand, late 1990s Australia and early 2000s England was the complete organisation of the rugby within their nations to channel all energy towards a common goal. In Australia and New Zealand a highly centralised structure was generated. Essentially the entirety of the rugby in the country would be focused towards the benefit of the national organisation. On-field, the best players developed in the amateur rugby competitions would be offered professional contracts with the super rugby franchises established for the purpose. These franchises in turn fed their best players into the national teams, to play in a series of competitions, the pinnacle of which was the World Cup every four years. These clubs remained dependent upon the national unions, and, whilst taking their rugby seriously, also recognised their role as a development and feeder competition. Off-field the old organisational structures were overhauled and replaced by professional administrators – with the intention of giving long term and collective clarity and purpose to the organisation. Regional unions were included in this restructuring, with the carrot of central funding effecting the change. Local clubs were able to keep more independence, but were given a model structure to fit within.

In the SANZAR (South Africa, New Zealand and Australian Rugby) countries, as elsewhere in the world, there has been pressure from the national governing body to ensure that the competition is as strong as possible, and no one team can dominate. In Australia and New Zealand, where the majority of the money comes from the centralised national body, redistribution of finances can be controlled and evened out by the central union. In South Africa the uneven financial position of the provinces has meant that the more financially successful have been able to recruit the best players by paying far greater salaries. For instance in 2004, there were stark differences in the abilities of the different south African teams to recruit: the Western Province, the Sharks, the Lions and the Blue Bulls each turned over in excess of R100million per year, while the Cheetahs turned over R20million, Border R11.3 million and Boland R6.7 million. These funds were largely generated by the greater size and economic base of these provinces fan bases. It translated to vastly different expenditure on salaries; the Sharks spending R22million, Western Province R21million, Lions R19 million and Bulls R13 million, more than the total revenue of most of their rivals. An uneven competition resulted, and subsequently the fan bases began to dwindle as a lot of matches stopped being competitive. As elsewhere, the solution has been a variety of measures to either equalise financial positions directly through top-ups by the national union, or by imposing a salary cap on all teams in the competition, limiting the spending power of the richer teams. Often, as in the days of amateurism, these measures can be circumvented through hidden payments or third party deals. The South African Union has had to restructure itself to reduce the total number of provinces, concentrating the player and financial resources. Similar solutions have been pursued in France, Wales, Italy and Scotland, each after its own financial and

organisational problems. France, in the first year after professionalism cut down its top competition from 40 to 16 teams. It is interesting that professionalization encourages a reorganization of competitions by the central union to protect the competitiveness of different teams. This centralization to cultivate local competitiveness is a direct product of both the financial incentive of having a highly even competition, and the increased disparity in resources which professionalism produces.

The national administrative and structural changes also needed to accommodate the amateur game and volunteers who run most of the non-elite parts of the game (Darcy, Taylor, Cuskelly, & Hoye 2008). The motivations for these people and this part of the game are very different to the professional and elite side of things focused on performance on-field and in financial terms. Instead volunteers tend to be more motivated by involvement in community and a sense that their work is being valued. The ARU had 800 community rugby clubs, 165,000 players registered, and 18,000 volunteers in 2005 (Darcy et al. 2008).The ARU has tried to incorporate both of the ideals into its approach, viewing themselves as an overall product with two separate but linked branches. ARU staff told me that they have full control over the elite and development parts of the game, and often referred to the community and grass roots part of the organisation as “customers”, or building the “brand” amongst the population. The six stated points in the ethos of the organisation do show this shift towards professionalism*:*

> *‘1. Innovation: we ensure Australian rugby has the leading edge through innovation, and sets the standard by which others follow; 2.Integrity: Australian Rugby operates in a transparent and ethical manner; 3. Professionalism: we promote the excellence in our approach to the corporate realities/imperatives of Rugby; 4. Teamwork: we focus on results using the discipline, cooperation, mateship and camaraderie*

associated with Rugby; 5. Pride: we exemplify the spirit of Rugby; 6. Energy: we work with enthusiasm and go the extra mile.'

The ARU has restructured to give focus to a completely integrated approach in all its organisations. Yet tensions between the professional staff and volunteers continue, based around fairly different methods of motivations and value systems.

The Differentiating Effects of the Market: Pacific Islands within the Global System

The 1987, 1991 and 1995 World Cups offered the teams from the Pacific Islands a far higher level of rugby, and a rare chance to play against the top nations in the world. The team from Manu Samoa performed exceedingly well at the 1991 tournament beating Wales. There seemed to be some hope for the countries of the Pacific who had proven themselves on the field. All three of the major Pacific unions, Samoa, Tonga and Fiji had been admitted into the IRB in the late 1980s. However, when it came time to negotiate the future of the game they were not invited to the boardroom. Nor were the concerns of these, or other 'developing' nations, important to the representatives of the unions. As I have shown above, they each had their own pressing domestic concerns. In fact, initially the Pacific Island nations had concerns about the professionalization of the game, as it would further weaken their position. Professionalism would open the way for greater resources, but only for those unions who could capitalise upon them. The tiny populations and economies of the Pacific Island nations made this unlikely. They were very marginal within the annual international match schedule, with Samoa not even being invited to the inaugural 1987 World Cup in New Zealand. Alone they didn't envisage a strong professional future. As the Samoan Rugby president

at the time put it: ‘one lesson we have learnt is that however well we perform, the fate of Samoan rugby is intertwined with the fate of Fijian and Tongan rugby… we have almost as much at stake in the quality of our game as in the Fijian game and the Tongan game. Quality equals commercial value and this is the only language which the Murdoch proponents understand’ (Tamasese Efi, 1995, quoted in R. Downey 2008). The experiences of the pacific island clubs really bring together the trends of professionalisation and internationalization. However, their experience of internationalization has been a lack of capacity to professionalise

Figure 3.2: The Pacific Island team, led by men dressed in “traditional” warrior clothing, performs a specially choreographed combination of the Samoan, Tongan and Fijian pre-match war dances, against England, 2008

http://www.rugbydump.com/2008/11/739/pacific-islanders-combined-war-dance-siva-tau Accessed 28/04/2014

The Pacific countries were ‘lacking television revenues and significant sponsorship, barred from the executive decision making exercises at the IRB Executive, excluded from the repeated expansion of what became the Super 14 competition, burdened by high public expectations, unable to retrieve many of their

best players from overseas, increasingly in debt and on the wrong end of lopsided score-lines against the game's top teams' (R. Downey 2008). Whilst the separate unions of the Pacific Islands individually tried to restructure to develop new competitions and pathways into top rugby union, they also formed the Pacific Islands Rugby Alliance in 2002. This combined the symbols, colours, dances, identities, athletes and interests of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji into uniforms, choreographed pre-match dances and logos. This new alliance formed the Pacific Island team, which toured both the southern hemisphere and northern hemisphere nations. The ultimate aim of this team was to provide a sustainable pathway for young Pacific Islanders into professional rugby, and a Pacific based professional team. However, despite efforts for the team to play permanently in the Super rugby competitions, the cost of such a venture, lack of infrastructure and potential sponsorship, and, ultimately the lack of power in negotiations with SANZAR meant that the idea never eventuated. Instead the CEOs of the Island nations put together strategic plans, detailing budgets, development plans and match schedules which gave them a stronger position from which to lobby the IRB for funds when the IRB undertook their £30million funding initiative in 2005 to support global rugby.

The central problem for Fiji in promoting stronger professionalisation is their ability to create a financially viable product. Since professionalism they have tried restructuring and deployed their resources in a number of ways. Various local initiatives have been tried, such as seeking out local sponsorship, running development academies which allow players to attend, free of cost, part of the year, then return to play and train for their teams at home. Partly these efforts have been frustrated by the lack of a stable administration both of the Fijian rugby

union and the nation (though these are often intertwined). Embezzlement accusations have been prevalent for years due in a large part to the far smaller administration with a correspondingly less ardent culture of professionalism, but also due to incompetence, negligence and the occasional piece of cronyism (or traditional demand sharing?). The 2011 scandal erupted out of the national lottery to cover the national team's costs for the 2011 World Cup in New Zealand. Tickets were printed, distributed to vendors and sold. The case is still in court, so some details have not come out yet, but it appears that many of the tickets were being sold at half the advertised $20 price and almost half were missing. At the end of the day the exercise led to very little revenue, large legal fees, and yet another complete change of the Fijian Rugby Union administration.

The difficulties the Fijians have are better understood in comparison to other attempts at financialisation in the sport. Organisations like the Australian Rugby Union spend many hours, and hundreds of thousands of dollars creating particular brands that might be bought by the consumer. These efforts try to sell the matches and the ideals of the sport as easily consumed products; people can be affiliated with a professional team so long as they own a replica of the team shirt or attend matches. Professional rugby has shifted the fan into a position of vital importance. It is the spectator who buys tickets for the game, who increases broadcasting value by watching on TV, who buys the products the club produces. The spectator is such an important part of the equation. They want to consume winners with brands that they buy, games they watch, and identities they cultivate. Commodification of a variety of goods has shifted the focus of clubs and the sport whereby they now must produce goods to be consumed; exciting matches, attractive brands and superstar players. A quick examination of the revenue

sources of the ARU and RFU indicates (see Appendices 1 and 2) that the major sources of revenue for major national unions are broadcasting, sponsorship and ticket revenue. Crucially these practices all involve the selling of the rugby game and its players to a public. In areas with large, rich populations of rugby goers, this provides significant revenues. Hospitality – that is the practice of selling corporations and individuals higher value tickets, which include additional things like special seats, time talking with players or coaches, and rooms with food, drinks and other entertainment provided – is also an effective revenue raiser for the English union, and relies on the existence of an even wealthier segment of the population. It should also be noted that the expenditure of the RFU on business and admin, products of the process of professionalism and subsequent reorganization, are larger than what they spend on either their elite players, or the amateur clubs where most people play.

By contrast Fiji's position is far less bright. Their balance sheet shows total revenue from games to be around $600,000, which, as the later breakdown shows, includes gate taking and hospitality. Overall the games are costly for Fijian rugby, with a loss in 2011 from games of $838,242 (FRU 2011 Financial report). This is despite the Fiji Rugby Union not paying significant player salaries. Note the difference in expenditure and losses on national games. In Australia there is a profit made from the games, a huge part of the overall revenue. In Fiji it represents the majority of the expenditure, but accounts for a very small amount of revenue. There is some sponsorship (see figure 3.3), but nowhere near the order of that received by the larger countries. Fiji relies on smaller locally based sponsors, often contributing to specific tournaments and programs (see Appendix). The FRU receives no broadcasting income, and only minimal gate-takings from its domestic

competition. The rest of its money comes from government or IRB grants. Essentially they have the same level of financialisation that might be expected from an amateur union.

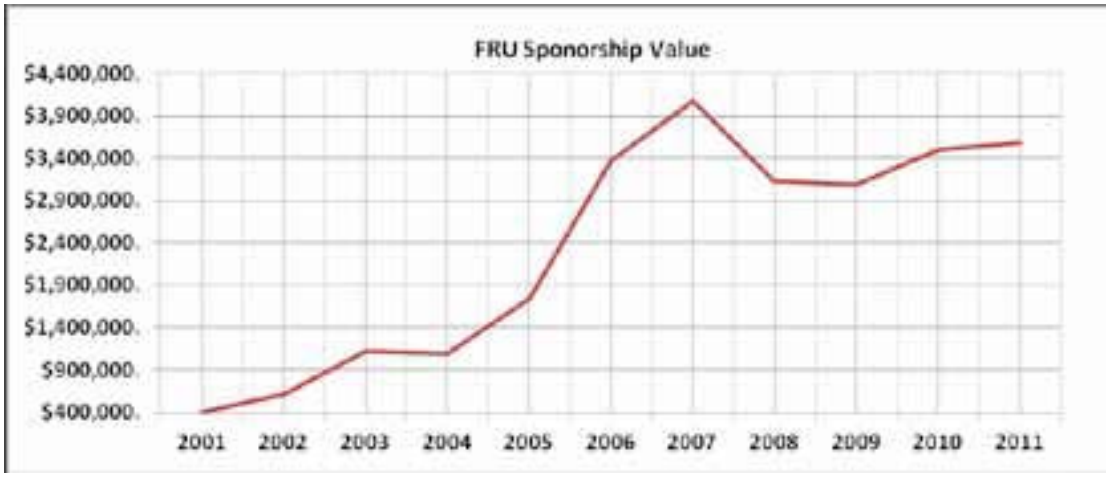

Figure 3.3: Fijian sponsorship value. Source: FRU annual general report 2011

Fiji is essentially held back by the lack of a market. They are a small nation, numbering fewer than one million people. Their economy is also small, with few people having large amounts of disposable income. One of the country's larger companies, Digicel, already sponsors the semi-professional domestic competition. Furthermore, there is not the level of competition or money in television in Fiji to attract the sort of broadcasting fees achieved by other rugby competitions. The one company owns the country's only free-to-air station, and also the only pay TV network. The market is small with television only being introduced in 1991. There is a pay TV station, super channel, which has rugby league and union matches from NZ and Australia almost continuously playing. Many of my informants, even in Suva, didn't have television, and stories from the islands were always about

huge efforts being made to erect temporary television aerials on top of peaks near to villages to allow some people to watch the important Hong Kong sevens' matches. The lack of competition for market share is unlikely to breed large bidding wars over the rights to broadcast, and, in the case of a Fijian team playing in Fiji, it is possible that the government would step in to ensure that the matches were able to be seen by the whole islands.

This is not improved by Fiji's marginal position within the international rugby match schedule. They are not involved in any annual tournaments. Due to the desire for the highest revenues by playing the matches in the places where the games will attract the most media coverage, spectators and sponsorship, they don't play any matches against tier one nations in Fiji, and hence don't have access to the broadcasting revenues which go to the host nation. The Fijian attempts to get into a permanent competition (super rugby) as part of a Pacific alliance are aimed to address this, but the argument of financial success is always used against them. None of the major cities of the Pacific Islands would be able to support the higher costs associated with travel, or the requirements of the television broadcasters. There were proposals for the team to be based in Australia somewhere near to a major population base, such as the Gold Coast, where there might be access to a large amount of money, some degree of local Pacifika population interested in the team, and fewer issues with transport. However, this proposal was not taken up by the SANZAR as there were still doubts about the financing of the side (the Super rugby franchises are heavily supported by the national unions in Australia and New Zealand), and about the organisational side, particularly given the instability of both politics and sporting administration in Fiji.

The market is never a level playing field. The difficulty that Fiji has faced in its process of institutionalization can be conceived of as a specific mechanism through which small nations lag behind in market-oriented professionalization. The deep differentiating (unequalizing) effects of market-oriented professionalization have meant that the global system which is produced is uneven, with clear centres of economic and political power. Without intervention it is unlikely that Fijian rugby union will be able to create the sort of professionalism that would allow its players to play top quality games in Fiji, let alone earn a full time living there. In 2013 the Pacific Island players formed a players' union, which might protect their interests in negotiations with overseas clubs. However, in April 2014 SANZAR announced plans to expand the Super Rugby competition, but again in a direction which didn't include a pacific island team. One clear solution would be for the IRB to step in and ensure that there is access of these second band nations to large competitions and the broadcasting rights associated with them. This would ensure the growth of the sport into new markets, and increase interest in the game – one of the clear features of which is the importance of the international game. The world cup has been such an instrument, and it provides what the IRB refers to as its 'financial engine' for their strategic plans (Source IRB regulations). They have supplemented this with a competition for the development teams, who consist of locally based players of each of the pacific island countries. However, the best players will still only play a handful of matches for Fiji each year, with very little preparation time, and never in Fiji.

The Internationalisation and Professionalisation of Nationality

The nation-state remains a central unit in how global rugby union is organized. The IRB remains a body collecting together representatives of national governing unions. International rugby matches between different nation states remain the biggest and most prestigious matches in the world. The IRB has instituted some restrictions on the player market with the explicit purpose of protecting the place of nationality in sport. Most importantly the IRB has introduced extra regulations to govern the nationality of players, restricting this beyond the limits imposed by individual states through citizenship or residency. Their regulations have changed over time in response to practices by certain countries which have been cast as abuses of the system. Currently the regulations dictate that a player may only play for one national team in their lives, and that in order to be eligible for a national team they, a parent or grandparent must have been born in that nation, or they must have completed thirty six consecutive months of residence in that nation immediately prior to selection. This regulatory framework, designed to protect the sanctity of nationality, is augmented by a requirement for professional clubs to release their players to play for national teams if selected during the international season, which maintains the preeminence of these competitions. Normatively, it reifies nationality as a constant; it is a part of identity which cannot be bought or sold. Both in terms of domestic identity, affirmation of a national value, and in international politics, sport can play an important role in national projects – allowing a space for the performance of national identities, creation of nationalistic myths, sense of national worth and as an alternative form of competition between nations.

However, the ability of different nation-states within rugby to pursue this nationalism is vastly different. The power imbalances in global rugby have created

a system in which a player's national identification is very much able to be bought and sold. Some players represent nations which they haven't been born in, with the countries with economic pull being able to attract talented players from marginal countries with the lure of professional contracts and nationality. This differentiation is enhanced by the protectionist selection policies imposed upon most professional teams by their national governing bodies. For instance, in Australia, in order to be contracted for any of the super rugby clubs a player must either be eligible to represent Australia currently, have signed an agreement that they will pursue citizenship and eligibility, or be given a rare exemption. The purpose is to ensure that the national team will be in the best position to play well, by ensuring a large pool of the best players competing at a high level domestically. Similar restrictions are in place in all the major competitions of rugby. The powerful national governing bodies attract foreign born and trained talent, further reinforcing their dominance on the international stage through on-field victories; whilst marginal countries struggle to compete, as many of their players either choose to play for other countries, or decline international representation in an attempt to keep their professional contracting options as open as possible.

At the level of nationalism, the differences in power relations have resulted in major differences between the global north and south in the experience and structure of national sporting pride. The process of creating the nation and embedding the imagined nation into the everyday psyches of people is accomplished through events such as sport. The foreign born athletes representing countries challenge simplistic readings of sporting nationalism. If stories of the great teams of old excelling on the sporting field promote a sense of men 'overcoming the odds, pulling together and asserting dominance over an

opponent for the greater glory of the nation and its manhood' (Chandler & Nauright 1996, p. 3); then these foreign born players have to be incorporated into very different myths and symbols than those essentialised versions of nation-state. Incorporating a Fijian, such as Radike Samo, into Australian "idioms of masculinity", the stories men tell themselves about themselves to understand themselves (See Herdt (1982) for an example of masculine idioms), involves a change in the nature of these stories and the attendant nationalism. A new nationalism must be developed which is based around the ability of Australia to provide opportunities and incorporate outsiders. The emphasis is on the national symbols such as the gold jersey, rather than on birth or heritage. By contrast, Fijian sports nationalism has shifted away from being purely about these symbols to encompass those Fijian born athletes playing under the symbols of other nations. It is not within the scope of this thesis to explore the different forms of nationalism further. However, it is important to recognize that these divergent versions of nationalism make it far easier for a player like Henry Speight to take the path he has whilst still maintaining a Fijian identity and Fijian social relationships.

At the level of the individual and family, talented Fijian athletes are faced with a choice between national representation and professional careers. For those already overseas, already part the way into the New Zealand or Australian rugby development systems, accepting an invitation to play for Fiji drastically reduces their ability to gain contracts in these countries. In 2007, having represented Fiji at the u19 and u20s level, the 19 year old winger, Henry Speight moved to New Zealand to do the final year of high school for the second time, this time at the well-known rugby school of Hamilton boys high school. He performed well and

was given an opportunity with the regional semi-professional team to play in New Zealand's NPC competition. This is a show case of the best New Zealand talent, a shop window for the 5 professional teams in NZ and a rite of passage for would be rugby professionals. Here they compete against the best non-professional talent in the country, and performing here can ensure that a young player will receive many contract offers overseas. Henry made the most of his opportunity and in 2011 was offered a contract with the Australian team, the ACT Brumbies. The Australian teams are only allowed to play players eligible for the Australian national team. However, each team is allowed two exceptions, "project players", born and raised overseas, but who show great potential and willingness not only to make Australia their full-time home, but also to play for the Australian team. These players may be offered three year contracts, with the condition that they work towards satisfying Australia's citizenship requirements, and to satisfy the IRBs eligibility rules. Explicitly the aim here is to attract the best of overseas talent in order to bolster the national ranks. The Brumbies wanted this talented Fijian to give up his chance to play for his country; Henry was willing to start down the path towards becoming an Australian citizen and national representative. The decision is made easier due to the adjustments in collective understandings of nationalism which have occurred in response to the current constellation of global professional rugby.

Conclusion

The dynamics of the professionalization process has changed the outlook and approach of the clubs, national governing bodies and the IRB. Overall it has escalated the level of institutionalisation by motivating and facilitating the growth of an increasingly connected and organised global system of rugby. What might have once been described as a system of independent clubs, acting as fairly isolated

nodes of rugby activity, is now becoming more continuous. The smallest, most isolated clubs, whether in Britain, NZ or Fiji, now have a role to play in developing players for the national team and top professional sides, feeding them upwards and towards the financialised centres. One of the consequences of the introduction of monetary payments has been that there is now expected to be accountability at all levels, bred by the growing connectedness of the media, finance and governance of the sport. National governing bodies must justify their structures to the IRB to attract financial support. Clubs face similar expectations from these national unions. This has diminished the isolation of clubs, and reduced their hold on their own players. There is now an acceptance of greater geographical mobility for the purpose of social and professional mobility. Money has enabled value produced through training and playing to be disembedded from this localized club context. The subsequent links forged by the movement of people, money and ideas make up the basic structure of the global rugby system.

These links are not symmetrical or even. Those clubs and nations which have not been able to reorganize and professionalise participate in global system in vastly different ways to those who have undergone these processes. Seemingly minor distinctions, such as the ability to access broadcasting and gate revenues by hosting home matches, completely differentiate different locations in the rugby system. Some successful national teams rarely play at home, their clubs can't provide players full time careers, and their best players leave to play overseas. The Fijian team, currently ranked third of all international "rugby sevens" teams, and eleventh for the more traditional version of the game, is a prominent example of this.

In order for the global system to function effectively there needs to be systems to accommodate this mobility. The socio-cultural differences between different locations are important in that they preclude the seamless integration of players into clubs, form barriers to migration, and can represent a major shift in the outlook for the players who do move. They are also important in that they are the basis for local meanings and local values – crucial even in business models. The following chapter presents the nature of professionalism as an orthopraxy, and emerging cultural expectation. The final part of this thesis examines the Fijian experiences of moving through this global rugby system.

Chapter 4: Embodying Professionalism: The Training and Socialisation of Professional Athletes

The clubs of the professional era require a different culture in order to function as business and social entities in this new global professional system of rugby. The dialectics between the individual and the collective, always present in rugby, have shifted with the introduction of professionalism. The focus has moved more towards the cultivation of the individual athlete's body, and away from the cultivation of their character, or the collective. In the first chapter SS identified a dichotomy between Fiji and New Zealand: 'Rugby here is not the game you played for fun in the village. In New Zealand rugby is different; it is serious; it is work. You need to learn that to succeed'. I showed that in Fiji the players do in fact work very hard for their rugby, and that it is more than just simply fun. This chapter seeks to dig deeper and explain exactly why SS makes such a point of alerting new arrivals to a significant difference. To do this I examine the body culture and values of global "professionalism". I argue that this body culture requires a very different set of dispositions and skills from that in Fiji.

This chapter begins by looking at the establishment of professional culture at clubs in Australia and New Zealand. I begin by examining how the professionalization of the sport has resulted in a new attention to the bodies of individual athletes. I then examine the relationship between the techniques, practices, values, ideologies of professionalism and the way these are experienced and expressed in the bodies. I highlight the techniques for the codification and rationalisation of bodies. I then show how the skills, dispositions and body culture of professionalism are taught. Finally, I discuss the global nature of this culture, which brings be back to the

central question of the thesis, examining the relationship between global discourses, local practices and individual bodies.

Being the best: the drive towards accountability and self-responsibility

Professionalism in rugby has seen an increase in the attention given to the players' bodies. They are monitored and developed according to strict regimes of training, medical attention and management of nutritional intake. The drivers here are the high levels of competition throughout the game, an increasingly common rhetoric that "performance is everything" and a mantra of "self-responsibility". These three features are direct products of the construction of a global professional rugby system which is based around the introduction of neoliberal and market ideas to the existing ideals of rugby union. These motivations have slowly penetrated into the culture of clubs, arriving in the demands of new coaches, players and media at different times. How do individual players experience this shift in culture?

The financial pressures of professionalism have shifted the focus of clubs and the sport whereby they now must produce goods to be consumed; exciting matches, attractive brands and superstar players. The introduction of monetary payments and the contract system went some way to disembedding players from their ties to clubs. They have become more mobile and, crucially, the value that they earn through the club is now highly portable, able to be moved and spent anywhere or sent home to families. The marketization of rugby has seen the increase in competition in the sport. New and longer competitions become more important for clubs as they compete to attract sponsorship deals, television rights and the best players. They need to be seen as market good in order to survive. This is

experienced at clubs as a pressure to achieve success, and a willingness to try anything to succeed. This has seen the importing of corporate principles. Coaches, staff and players are to be accountable to the corporation for their performance. This should be measured and those who are not performing should be culled. Whilst the clubs have retained some cultures and structures which resist this, the transition has been major.

Similar pressures exist for players. They are part of a highly competitive arena, and one in which their performances are judged by moments, rather than constant production. Ironically, this has actually seen a shift towards a more long term and holistic approach to preparation. The introduction of money has had a moral effect, introducing a belief that they should prioritise the sport above other things in life. This is enhanced by the media and public, who expect the players, given their high wages to be fully dedicated to play games, and is only compounded by the fetishisation of measurability within modern society and sports in particular. Statistics need to be collected, performances quantified and records set.

Professionalism involves a range of techniques, practices, dispositions, relations and attitudes which have become norms within professional rugby clubs. These clubs have developed specific techniques of the body based around the disciplining of bodily practice, and the development of systems of knowledge and methods of how players should use and control their bodies. These require values of discipline and self-reliance. These focus on a codification and rationalisation of body culture. All of this I define as the “professional culture” of rugby, and whilst I show the dynamics of change within it, I argue that it forms a relatively stable complex which forms and judges the bodies and persons of potential professional rugby players.

The approaches of clubs are parochial in some ways, built around the experiences, values and techniques into which the coaches and senior players have been socialised. However, the mobility of professional coaches and players, imitation of successful team practices from around the world and high levels of cultural similarities between the major parts of the world have developed a professional orthodoxy. A common culture of professionalism allows the easy movement and integration of players into new clubs. Professionalism becomes embodied at these clubs. This chapter will focus on two main sites for the ethnography and life-history about clubs – Auckland Blues, based in Auckland, New Zealand, and the ACT Brumbies, based in Canberra, Australia.

I turn first to an examination of the Auckland club, which became professional in 1996. I had access to the Auckland club through an existing contact with a former player from the club, who then arranged for me to carry out interviews with many players and staff, and to observe some training. I was given a lot of access to the coaching manuals and associated documents. The head coach was particularly helpful here. I also met with senior and junior players. I have tried to present a brief ethnographic style picture of the club from multiple perspectives, focusing on the taken-for-granted discourses, and the orthodoxy within the club. When discussing the club as it was before professionalism several key interlocutors during semi-structured interviews said that the club was run much like an amateur club. That is, during the representative season the players would train together twice a week before playing the game on the weekend. After these games, and at other times throughout the year, the players would socialize together. Normally this would involve the consumption of a large amount of beers in the changing

rooms, then again in the club house. Pride in the club was high, and Auckland entered the professional era as one of the leading clubs in New Zealand. They had won the competition for much of the preceding decade and had the majority of the All Blacks, New Zealand's national side, playing for their team when they were released from national duties. Players were proud of this, and sought to emulate their teammates through hard play. They also enjoyed the social aspect of the team.

At the time of professionalism one of my interlocutors, MK (38 years old at time of interview, which took place at a mutual friend's house) had just entered the ranks of top level rugby, and was juggling the commitments of being a professional player with university. He describes the experience of the introduction of professionalism to the New Zealand teams:

> *[when he got his first contract in New Zealand in 1996] professional rugby was so new. They were trying to get formulae in place, structures in place to get people developed into the sort of players that would win games. The first year we arrived, we were only training three times a week. It was great. You would basically turn up do a couple of fairly light sessions, one team run and then play on the weekend for money.*

Similar accounts are given by other players and coaches, who also noted the influence of competition at this time. Whilst Auckland experienced success on the field in the first two years of professionalism, in the third year their rivals, Canterbury Crusaders won the competition, and the rumours began to get around the New Zealand rugby scene that they had started to do things differently there. Players from Canterbury in the national side spoke about an increased level of intensity at training, and an increase in the amount of time each player had to put into the sport. New training techniques had been developed, and there had been

an increased focus upon developing the bodies of the players to best equip them for the demands of professional rugby. The competition drove the Auckland team, used to being the best, to look for new answers. They found their answer in a more thorough preparation and greater "professionalism" from the players. MK continues:

> *The coaches after that year went away and had a look at what was happening in other sports; football and baseball in America, but mainly the [Rugby] League in Australia. They saw the level of training that was expected of professionals there, and they tried to adapt that to Rugby and bring it back. Then, the year after, it was once a day for training, and now it is twice a day. We got used to it slowly, the culture slowly changed…. When I was going through I would have my studies and be socialising with friends as well as the rugby – plenty of parties and fun – a good balance. The young kids who are coming in now have had it bred into them about the requirements of rugby. The days when we were kids we would turn up and play. Now they learn in school about how to eat and drink properly, about how to train, and when to train. Not only that knowledge, but they see that as a requirement to play footy… It's a lot different now. It's all about skin folds and PBs*[19]*.'*

The shift to an increase in the amounts of training time signified a large social change for the players. They moved from being full time in other occupations, to completely dedicating themselves to rugby. They were no longer bound to spend time on other things, so were expected to be free to spend more time playing the sport. Players were initially apprehensive about the number of hours spent training each week. However, quickly the experiences of similar sports were used to justify a large increase. Once one club experienced success through this model, competition compelled the others to follow.

[19] Skinfolds are a common test of the amount of fat on a persons body. PBs are Personal Bests, which are the highest recorded performance that a particular athlete has achieved in their lifetime on a particular exercise.

At this point there was another major shift with the introduction of a scientific approach to training and playing. The new training techniques integrated at this point almost all focused their attention on the individualised bodies of the players, rather from group style trainings. Systems of measurement were developed for a variety of aptitudes. At the Auckland club there was always an attempt to take this outside knowledge and make it specific to the needs of rugby. Best practice was sought from other sports and other teams, and players were expected to make greater sacrifices for their professions. As teams professionalised preparation, there was a rapid move to monitoring the players' bodies. Players' weights, strengths, hydration levels, diets, and conditioning programs are all monitored closely. MK noted that the young players coming through into professionalism now are used to having their bodies monitored in this way. My interviews with these players, as well as with their coaches and my personal observations show that practices, such as checking bodily composition, monitoring for small changes in their fat reserves and lean muscle mass, are understood as normal parts of the profession for young players. This level of scrutiny has been naturalised by the socialisation into the sport that now it does not even seem unusual. Players generally accepted this monitoring as they wanted to maximise their performance, and saw the biomedical approach as being one of the best ways forward, the self-responsibility mantra necessitating as deep an understanding of one's body as possible. There were instances of players not enjoying this, or finding it intrusive, the most common being instances where players were being told to lose weight. Three interlocutors told me that they found the constant monitoring of their bodies stressful. However, even in these cases there was not a strong questioning of the right of the club or coach to do this. In return, the biomedical gaze, focussing on

individuals and even deconstructing them into parts to be analysed, reinforced the self-responsibility rhetoric.

Today the professional culture at Auckland is all about accountability and measurement. As the head coach during my research put it, ‘it’s more a case that there are choices in life and there are consequences… Ultimately the only currency that these players, and the coaches, have is performance. And if you're not performing then that's an issue… and then someone else will take your place. It plays on every decision a player makes in their lives.’ Overall, players are asked to give their all to the team. They work within a team environment, but the mantra is ‘self-responsibility’. They must show discipline and make sacrifices for their own development. All the players interviewed told me this was the requirement of professionalism, and would cite various senior players, normally with the All Blacks, who had taken preparation to new levels. Interviewing one long term All Black it became obvious how far this goes. He hadn’t attended any of his friends’ weddings, had made all his major life decisions based around his rugby, which also dictated his home life. ‘You have to be very very competitive and very selfish and not let anything get in the way of your goal. I wasn't as selfish as I could have been, but I had to be. I had to say that I have to do this at this time. I've missed all my mates’ weddings. You have to make those sacrifices. You have to be selfish at training. It's not just for rugby – it's the same for others too.’

This is the core of the ideology of professionalism which Auckland tries to promote: Performance is everything, and every decision in life can improve performance. When discussing instances of players who ‘weren’t successful’ during my semi-structured interviews, the interlocutors mostly employ descriptions of other players which reinforce the self-responsible discourse. They would

describe players who were lazy, or who ‘never quite had it’ or didn’t put the work in. The ultimate anti-professional was the player who could have had success but never worked hard, particularly never developed his fitness. Stories around these characters became folktales which naturalized the moral framework of individual responsibility. They were internalized enough to scare young ambitious players into adopting the training regimes and biomedical approach to the sport. During one-on-one semi-structured interviews with players I asked whether they could recall an instance of a player who had struggled to make it in professional rugby. Many of the comments were similar in nature to this from one of the Auckland players ‘he could have had it all, but just never put the sweat into it’, or this from another ‘he had completely the wrong attitude, and just never put the work in’ or ‘he worked hard at training for a while, but then just went missing for weeks’. Later I develop these into an explanation of the player’s perspectives on luck and control in the recruitment and labour market. Here it is more imperative to focus on their effect of legitimizing a focus and attention on the individual bodies of athletes.

Bodily Testing, Development, Experience, and Practice in Professional Rugby

I now turn to detail the practices at the ACT Brumbies, a Canberra based club. The ACT Brumbies are another professional team in the same Super Rugby competition as Auckland. However, unlike Auckland, they were founded in 1996 as a fully professional team to play in the new competition. This meant that the club didn’t have a pre-professional history. The players at the ACT Brumbies are less likely to be local Canberrans. The Australian rugby scene also differs from

that in New Zealand as rugby is not the most popular sport in the country, and so there is not quite the same level of media attention, or rewards given to the players. More generally the styles of play and rugby culture are subtly different in Australia than New Zealand. These two cases contrast in some ways, and provide a fuller picture of the body cultures of professional rugby.

Here, as a young man of 19 I was taken into the professional set up and first exposed to the techniques of professionalism. I played there for 5 years, being trained through the academy system to be a professional player. Depending on the time of year, whether I was fit to train and my own position within the club, this could involve up to 8 hours at the club a day, 6 days a week. Years later I returned to examine this process as a part of my research. Due to my existing relationships with the club I was able to access almost all parts of training and preparation, as well as spend time with the players socially. I supplemented this with semi-formal interviews and group conversations about my research. Obviously, due to my embedded position within this community, my perspective was limited in some ways, both because people wouldn't expand too much on issues that they would presume I would understand in any case, and because they might be wary of making certain comments to someone who is part of the system. However, overall my position within the organisation was a huge asset in this study, offering me a unique position and point of access.

Testing and Being Seen – Objectification of the Body

The first thing that most players will go through at a club is a series of medical screenings, aimed at examining and detailing any potential weaknesses in their

bodies which could cause future problems. At the Brumbies I observed that these are typically done as a group of incoming players, in the team medical rooms, where other players would often be walking in and out during the screenings. Medical histories will be examined, joints tested for weakness, muscles for flexibility and blood work and hearts examined for underlying issues. As this takes place in the often crowded medical rooms of the club, players will move from doctor to physiotherapist whilst their future teammates wait nearby in the same room. Little here is private, but rather open to the scrutiny of teammates. They strip to their underwear as calipers are used to measure their skin-folds, the thickness of skin at a variety of sites on the body which gives an indication of the level of body fat that the player has at that time. They are weighed, and their heights measured. Tape measures are wrapped around key parts of their body, measuring the size of their body parts and muscles. After this they will be tested in the gym for strength of various muscle groups and bodily movements. They're timed over various distances, and fitness measured in a series of running and aerobic tests. Elsewhere it is possible to test lactic build up in the blood during fitness, and to measure oxygen intake during exercise.

Together this provides the coaching staff and fitness trainers with the basic picture of their body. This they discuss amongst themselves, and then a couple of days later call the player in for a meeting. The players are shown their results mapped as a position within all the results for Australia's professional rugby players. The player is given advice on how to best cultivate their body to perform in rugby. The coaching staff will identify particular weaknesses or areas that might become real strengths with additional work. Players regularly discuss these meetings openly amongst themselves, sharing with each other the main thrusts of the

conversations. From these comments, and my own experiences, my understanding is that the meetings would generally go through the test results one by one, identifying areas that could be improved. The player would then be given their central focus for the short, medium and long term. They might be told ‘you’ve got good fitness but you don’t have enough lean muscle mass’, or ‘you need to improve your leg strength and lower your body fat percentage’. These become the bases of their on-going bodily project, a goal of transforming their body into a better instrument for the playing of rugby. The fitness and coaching staff will then point to the up-coming training periods, indicating how the player might be able to tailor the training to best improve their own abilities.

This begins a process of making the body visible to the coaches. After this point it no longer belongs to the player alone, but is subject to constant monitoring and assessment. The fitness staff have some degree of ownership of the players’ bodies, as they are responsible for designing and implementing the programs to build and sculpt them, to strengthen muscles and improve speed. They compel players to this bodily transformation by near constant monitoring of the players’ efforts and progress. Tests are carried out every day on the player’s body. At the Brumbies each morning every player has to weigh in, drop off a urine sample and report to the physiotherapist. Each time a player lifts something, or runs or jumps their speed and strength will be monitored and recorded. This data will be compared against their previous bests, cultivating a culture of self-improvement, and allowing players to match their own progress to the training that they have done. People in similar positions will be compared to each other, their bodies monitored for any potential strength that could provide an asset to the team. All of this information is available to people within the team. This produces a player who

starts to see his body in a different way, and is used to having their body seen by others. It becomes a project and ultimately a tool to be utilised in the game of rugby. Players become used to a heightened level of being seen, and of having their physical attributes assessed.

Players' understandings of their bodies are increased through their constant interaction with professionals who describe its functions and obviously manipulate it to produce particular desired outcomes. In rugby injuries are very frequent. It is not unusual for the vast majority of the team to be seeing the physiotherapists several times per week, to work on their bodies, either treating chronic injuries, or dealing with acute ones. There were two full time physiotherapists at the Brumbies who would be available from 8am-4pm every day. Treatments would occur in the medical room, and it was common for players to congregate there between trainings to have conversations, as they waited to consult the physios. As the physiotherapists manipulate joints or treat patients they simultaneously will be passing on to the player a distinctly biological understanding of what is occurring in an athlete's body. In my experience, the player internalises these, developing a very intricate knowledge of their own body. Injuries are very common, with most players having some sort of impediment to training during much of the season. Players become adept at discussing their injuries and their bodies, not as part of themselves, but rather as parts of the body-project. When I've asked players about their injuries it is quite common to get a response along the lines of this response from a mid-career player at the Brumbies: 'I'll be able to get back in the gym in three weeks once my medial ligament heals. Then another three until I play. In the meantime it's just physio and beach weights'. Here, beach weights referred to any

gym work that was aimed for purely aesthetic purposes (to exhibit the body on the beach) rather than functionally to improve a player's ability in rugby.

Whilst pain has always been a part of the subculture of rugby, it takes on a different role in professional rugby. To some extent players are treated as resources to be maximised. Pain is only a reason not to play if there is an indication of potential to do further damage to the body, although even this might be ignored if the player feels that their position in the club is tenuous (Howe 2001). It is fairly common for players to be using painkillers and anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ibuprofen and voltarol) for most of the season, minimising swelling that could impinge their ability to train and play. This is despite these drugs only being recommended for short term use. Players may also have injections before games to help deal with the pain. The norm is to nurse playable injuries through the season before having them operated upon in the off-season.

Metaphors of the body are used by fans, media, players and coaches alike. In discussing a player's abilities it is very common to find them being likened to a 'machine' or 'tank' or 'rig', or being discussed as something to be 'built up'. The logic of professional sport is that there are always gains to be made, always ways of getting that little bit extra out of the biological body. In many ways it represents an objectification of the body, which has been internalised to be a self-objectification. This is prevalent within the discourse, and is reflected upon by the players as they form their ideas of self. However, it does not mean that for the players there is a separation between the mind and the body, as both their perceptions and practices are framed within culture. In fact this particular mode of self-awareness is a reflective process which draws upon a discourse of 'professionalism' which is itself embodied.

Producing the Body

These bodily projects have been successful. Since professionalism the size and shape of rugby players has changed significantly. Studies examining the physiologies of international levels have seen drastic increases in the weights (average increase of over 6kg per person) and heights of players (Quarrie & Hopkins 2007). Discussions with players and strength and conditioning coaches have also indicated an increase in strengths and fitness levels of players over the past ten years of training. The fitness coaches have centralised databases with the readings from each official test (normally carried out every 3 months) of each of the players, and shared within the national systems in Australia and New Zealand. Based upon their reading of the data and their impressions, three separate fitness coaches said that they had seen a reduction in the body fat percentages and an increase in lean muscle mass for players overall.

At the Brumbies, the training discipline is matched by nutritional discipline, with supplements and schedules for consumption carefully planned out. Players receive detailed instruction from nutritionists during hour-long workshops at the start of the season. Players are also invited to more specialist sessions, where professional chefs teach them how to prepare meals which are healthy. The coaches and players are aiming to maximise the outcomes for the players' bodies and so will follow their understandings of the most up-to-date sports science in order to get these. That means taking multiple supplement pills, food supplements and replacements, and timing everything from times when they will train, to how long they will need to recover, and to when they should consume each and every calorie. The organisational effort alone changes the person's relation to their body. There is also an experiential level where the body has to be forced to do things

that it doesn’t want to do. This transformation depends upon an attitude of self-responsibility, discipline and a willingness to run his life completely towards rugby.

Many players have to lose weight. They are put on a diet where they will be doing large amounts of training but not eating the same quantities of food that they are used to. They report to me experiencing almost constant hunger during these phases, craving calories that they are not allowed. Similarly, shifts in diets away from highly processed foods, sugars, fatty foods, and carbohydrates can be experienced by players as very unsatisfying. The body, used to these foods, will often crave foods that it is no longer allowed to have. For others, the aim will be to put on large amounts of lean muscle mass. This can involve almost the reverse situation, whereby a player will have to eat, not because they are hungry, but because they are scheduled to consume 60g of protein every two hours. At times a player might have to force feed themselves beyond comfort in order to get their bodies accustomed to the higher caloric diet. As with both of these cases, all diets will be carefully controlled for the type of food consumed, avoiding “low quality” foods, as our coach used to describe them. In order to meet these demands a large amount of time needs to be spent organising and preparing food. A lot of players are not used to this time and effort, or, particularly when younger and coming through the ranks, don’t have the money for the higher cost items. Following the diet is regarded as being crucial for players, and promoted constantly by the staff. However, they have very little ability to actually monitor the eating habits of their players.

Passing like a Pro – Practices of Professionalism

The codification of the game is very advanced within the realm of “skills”. Passing the ball is together with catching, running and tackling, the key components of the game. However, despite its ubiquity there are several distinctive styles for performing this one skill. Professional clubs will spend a lot of time developing their player’s passing techniques, trying to instil in them precise movements. Many training sessions will begin with half an hour teaching and practicing the precise position of the hands on ball and motion of the arms to pass the ball, and players will be heavily scrutinised for a bad pass. This might be understood as a ‘technique of the body’, which Mauss (1935) defines as ‘ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies’. As these techniques are driven by imitation of those regarded as prestigious, they are highly culturally specific. Most evidently, in the alternative sport of Rugby League players pass the ball in a way that produces an end-over-end rotation, whilst the rugby union players use a technique which produces a spiralling rotation as the ball spins like a torpedo. According to players and coaches there are efficiency issues involved in each, each style better suited to the needs of the game. Whilst this may be the case to some extent, it is also a clear marker of a socialisation to the practices of a particular group.

Bourdieu develops Mauss’s concept of *habitus* by indicating that it is embodied, occurring beyond the conscious level. This ‘system of enduring dispositions which is the unconscious, collectively inculcated principle for the generation and structuring of practices and representations’ (1977:72) focusses on the embodied nature of these dispositions. The practice theory posited by Bourdieu (1977) develops these ideas in a number of ways, most pertinently by adding a

conception of power. He shows that particular *habitus* will be held by small subgroups in society, and be a basis for the signification and naturalisation of class divisions. Tastes indicate membership of particular groups, and postures and mannerisms are said to speak to the innate qualities and capacities of the individual who holds them. For instance, in his early article 'The peasant and his body' he details the way in which a particular set of clothes, mannerisms and social mores marks the men of small hamlets (*hameaux*) apart from those of the market towns (*bourg*), and that this positions them as unmarriageable in the contemporary society of rural south western France (Bourdieu 2004). A *habitus* of professional players is becoming well defined.

Perception is also mediated; objects are only sensed via perspectives from a particular social/cultural/historical position; and these are based in the body, which is a "setting in relation to the world" for the self (Merleau-Ponty 1962). That is, the way the world is perceived, even at the unconscious/preconscious level which Merleau-Ponty refers to as the *preobjective*, is determined by the culture, history and position of the embodied self. In this context rugby players are part of such a unique behavioural environment that they develop very different ways of perceiving the world. Here, there are parallels to the literature on dance or martial arts, which describe experiences of the body which go beyond the five senses of folk knowledge (Potter 2008, Samuda 2008). That is, the dancers have enhanced senses of touch and sound, and also have senses of heat, kinaesthesia and pain not normally identified (though tacitly present) in the normal population. These senses are gradually built up by the specific techniques and practices of dance classes, the terms and ideas such as "centre" of the body used in the school, and the teaching styles which emphasise these in explicit and implicit ways. The

development of these senses in dance forms a key part of the skill set needed to enter the professional world, and developing it is a part of their apprenticeship.

In professional rugby, a players' awareness of their body and ability to control it forms a crucial part of their skillset. They are taught new ways of sensing[20]. Despite the already strong emphasis on vision in Amero-European societies, visual skills are explicitly augmented through the rugby training. Coaches constantly emphasise to players how to see more completely each situation, shifting the gaze between a focus on the minute details of an opponent's body position and a broad view of the positioning of all players on the field, always being mindful of peripheral vision. This skill is emphasised in almost all parts of training, treated as part of a multisensory context awareness highlighted by the term "game awareness". During training, coaches will often call out to their players to 'look for the space', a skill which involves an advanced tactical awareness combined with a visual ability to keep track of a whole field of players. One instance of this skill, which is practiced frequently in training, is the changing of the direction of running whilst catching the ball. In order to do this correctly the player must watch the ball closely, and be aware of the positioning of the opponents and teammates. The peripheral vision is targeted explicitly in many drills where players are required to perform simple tasks which require their visual attention, like catching a ball, whilst looking for visual cues from another direction. These visual skills are obviously developed and utilised as part of complex systems of perception and action, involving the simultaneous use of more than one sense.

[20] There is evidence to show significant interplay between changes in neuroanatomy due to the development of particular skills. There is preliminary evidence to show specific enlargement of areas of the brain utilised for specific skills associated with periods of intensive training of those skills (Downey 2012).

Assessing this skill is a very subjective thing, with some players being regarded as very good at sensing the game and reacting to it.

Other skills, such as processes of bodily movement and balance are not as readily explained with words, and rather are taught through bodily manipulation, touch and mimicry. In a very similar way to dancers the rugby players develop heightened senses of kinaesthesia, ‘a dynamic sense of constantly shifting one’s body in space and time in order to achieve a desired end’ (Potter 2008: 449). In training rugby players undergo almost constant process of sensing bodily position and movement and feedback about this. For instance, training sessions to improve rugby skills are structured to break down each complicated movement into a simpler isolated movement. Players then practice this repeatedly as coaches tell them exactly where to position their body, demonstrating subtle differences in the player’s position and the optimal position through words but also touch. Visual aids might also be employed to help the players understand their bodily positions. In the gym mirrors feed back to the player their precise position as they go through each movement. Sometimes training sessions focussed on the finer points of technique will be done in the gym so that players might get feedback on their position whilst they perform each movement. Almost always the group training sessions are videoed and replayed to show subtle variations in techniques. Coaches spend a lot of time, over months, subtly changing a player’s foot position, or shoulder alignment, changing the sequence of a movement, all to effect different techniques. Eventually a player gets the feel of the activity and the movement and feels comfortable performing these.

Players are also used to working with each other’s bodies. Whilst performing any exercise there needs to be constant feedback about teammates’ bodily positions.

Many movements in rugby involve the close cooperation of teammates, the pushing, pulling, grabbing and holding of bodies. They become accustomed to each other's bodies, to seeing and feeling how the other person's body is moving, and how to react to best use their body in conjunction with another's. Many of the techniques of rugby are about making it as easy as possible for players to work together as effectively as possible.

For instance, part of the team, the forwards, will spend a lot of time working on a part of play called a "line-out"[21]. Here as one player jumps two others grab him by the legs and lift him into the air. This has been performed so many times over the years that now there are particular techniques coaches instil in their players to improve the lift. The jumping player must jump as high as possible, but do so in a way that enables the lifters to lift him; after a short squat he jumps, keeping his legs as stiff and straight as possible. The lifter who is behind the player must begin with legs about a shoulder width apart, squat deeply, keep his back straight, and then position his hands on the upper thigh or shorts of the jumper. The lifter at the front will have a similar position, but using his hands to grip the jumper on his lower thighs. When the movement goes well the jumper can be quickly lifted and held at full arms extension above the heads of the lifters for long periods. When the movement goes poorly the jumper may get no additional height to his jump, may be dropped from 2m, or may end up kicking a lifter.

[21] This is a form of restarting the play when the ball goes over a sideline. There are two straight lines of players perpendicular to the side line. One team the attacking team entitled to throw the ball in and dictate the number of players in the line, typically between 3 and 7 players. The two lines are separated by 1.5m, and the ball is thrown down the centre of the lines. The aim for both teams is to catch the ball and pass it to their team mates.

By contrast, players also become used to using their bodies against another, through large amounts of time spent practicing the techniques of physical contact. They learn how to read the opponent's bodily position, to better position themselves in relation to this, and how to use their body as a weapon against the other. The various positions that players put themselves into in rugby are studied and analysed. At each situation the player will know how to recognise when an opponent is in a weak position and techniques that will allow them to exploit this. For instance at the "ruck", the contest for possession which follows a tackle, there is often a situation where an opponent will be in a crouched position over the ball, defending it so his teammates can pick it up. Rugby players will spend a long time perfecting this crouched position, and also in developing techniques for removing opponents from the position.

The heightening of particular sense abilities and the development of physical techniques are closely related, and tied to a particular approach to the game. Developments of the body involve drastic changes in the mental approach and abilities of the players. The mental dispositions of players are heavily influenced by their experiences and bodies. The players are also shaped by a set of ideological and cultural practices. In the case of professionalism the push is for codification, individualisation and rationalisation of success and talent. The techniques and dispositions produced by the professional institutions have these at their core, and are felt as such by the players.

The Global Spread of Professionalism

Travelling to the top professional clubs in Australia and New Zealand, I saw a large level of commonality between the cultures, expectations and practices. This is symptomatic of a large focus on ingraining in clubs a very clearly defined set of

values and practices in the players, developed from very similar positions in relation to the structure and discourses of the global rugby world. Also interesting was that the words and sentiments spoken, written and affirmed in Auckland were almost identical to those found in other professional clubs, including those developed by the Brumbies whilst I was playing there and when I returned to interview players. They were imagined as being local, but the commonalities were marked.

This is the orthodoxy of professionalism. It is generated locally, but has a commonality within this sphere of elite global clubs because of the similarity of their positions with relation to history, culture and social structures, and the high levels of movement of people within them. Success of one club or another is often attributed to the creation of a culture suited to producing the highest level of professional practices. Club practices are mimicked by rivals, as they compete with each other. Mobility between these top clubs, both of coaches and players, also leads to the spread and sharing of ideas. Even outside of New Zealand, their players and coaches attract a very high level of respect because they took the game to new levels of dedication and professionalism and have kept them there, and as such they are looked to as the cultural leaders of rugby professionalism. The professional culture also draws upon many features of the underlying cultures of New Zealand and Australia. It imports some of the mainstream business values and behaviours, adapting them for a sporting environment.

This ideal of professionalism was even experienced within Fiji at the Lomaiviti club. Certain practices of professionalism had returned along with the players who had been overseas. On the Friday before the match there would be a “captain’s run”, a common practice in NZ and Australia, and for this training session players

were required to all wear black – mimicking the professional clubs insistence on common clothing. When I asked players and coaches about this practice they cited a number of different factors and rationales. Historically they traced it back to a former coach/manager, who had insisted on the practice as a sign of professionalism and commitment. In turn the players drew analogies between themselves and professional teams in this practice. In a similar way certain training techniques and practices, such as particular drills or the practice of being punctual, were emphasised as signs of professionalism in the club. Punctuality was very interesting as I found the players to all be at training not only on time, but early – they saw this as a crucial part of their discipline. This contrasted heavily with the image of perpetually late Fijians. However, despite these links and borrowed practices, “professionalism” as an ideal, was seen to exist elsewhere, to be conspicuous in Lomaiviti by its absence. “Professionalism” and the equipment, methods and opportunities that it encompassed, was part of the reason why these players didn’t yet have big opportunities overseas. It could be imitated, even replicated in Fiji, but never completely owned by the island’s players.

Conclusion

The idea of professionalism is both a global and local ideal. Globally it has spread to create an idea of expertise and a category of experts who are recognised globally. It is also locally produced, still defined by the practices and ideologies of the hegemonic countries, particularly New Zealand. There is a power prevalent within this system demonstrated in the ability to define what count as important and valuable knowledge and practices (Foucault 1991). The power of the professionalism discourse is that it allows these experts to control access to the

labour market and institutions of rugby. Fijians, like SS, arriving in a new club are not recognised as having the appropriate body culture of a professional, and must adapt. Thus, the professionalism approach creates tension in the global system, even as this same process of integrating players into the mainstream is crucial for the cohesion of the system of mobility.

More than this, their experience of their bodies changes significantly. The particular nature of the professional body culture is also important. Professionalisation has led to new levels of scrutiny of players, their bodies and their performances. The subsequent rationalisation and codification of talent and performance is an attempt to ensure that players maximise their potential. However, it also alters the experience of the sport, especially in its emphasis on self-reliance. Taken to its ideological extreme the social meaning prioritised is the pursuit of individual perfection. Trainings are designed methodically and executed as a group in accordance with highly regulated sets of daily expectations. This emphasises control and diligence over passion. This is the underlying essence of the contrast SS identifies. In New Zealand Fijians must learn to be motivated and dedicated by the self-reliant pursuit of technical and physical excellence, rather than being able to enjoy the everyday social motivations that they get when playing in Fiji. Importantly professionalism then constitutes a different relation between the individual and the group.

Chapter 5: Transforming Club Cultures: Turning Amateurs into Professionals

The world of rugby operates as a series of highly localised nodes, clubs which form the sites for players' practice of rugby, but also places with deep social ties and obligations. This chapter deals with the tension between individualism and team work in global rugby. Professional clubs are structured around on-field performance, and value athletes who embody the individualised ambitions and responsibility of professionalism. To form a collective out of these individuals commonly teams focus on the concept of "team culture" which emphasises mutual dedication to individual self-discipline. The collective is formed out of a collective trust in each individual's dedication to values of professionalism, which at that time necessitates a dedication to each other. Therefore, at least to the extent it figures as part of the rationale for team victory, building a team out of individuals is crucial for every club. In contrast, amateur clubs tend to be focused on incorporating people into a social group, and as such allow people to be valued for different reasons: loyalty; bravery; humour; and skill, to name the most prominent. The clubs also act as a site for the reproduction of these values, instilling them within young men by socialising these men to be within the team. The individual and the team are closely intertwined; the moral meanings and club structures are related and there is a delicate balance between discipline/structure and communality/sociability. Amateur clubs tend to be built around histories, rituals and identities, rather than rules, roles and structures of professionalism.

I examine the tensions both within the newly created professional clubs, and the amateur clubs they bring within their sphere of influence. This is crucial to

understanding the Fijian experience as rugby clubs are the key sites into which the Fijian men need to integrate, and in which they will be judged. This chapter begins by discussing the nature of identity, belonging and status in western amateur clubs. Then I show the contrasts with the professional system. I finish with the observation that, in practice these alternative systems of building the collective overlap, with the rituals of amateurism forming the base of many professional team practices, and the ideals of professionalism penetrating into most amateur clubs.

Individual and Group Subjectivity: Building Bonds in the Amateur Club

Teammates can feel themselves to be deeply bound by common identity, symbols and experience to each other and the clubs they play for. During my time as a player I have been heavily involved in two different amateur clubs, Wests in Australia, and Oxford in England. To construct this discussion I add my research visiting and conducting interviews at amateur clubs in Auckland, Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and rural Otago (NZ), and Canberra and Sydney (Australia). To best capture this feeling of belonging I have to turn to one of the clubs in which I have had extensive experience as a player, and where I was privy to the more emotional side of rugby clubs. I base the following predominantly around the 2011 varsity match, my role as participant and later participant observer and interviews with players and coaches.

The Oxford University Rugby Football Club assembles each year for its grudge match against their old opponents, Cambridge University. The Varsity match, as it is called, is the focus of the year's training and preparation. On the eve of the

match day the players are assembled at a team hotel, where they go through the final preparations together. Much of the preparation involves physical readiness, proper meals and hydration, relaxation and plenty of sleep. However, there is also a strong psychological and emotional aspect to the build-up. The coach and captain utilise a variety of techniques to emphasise the unity and cohesion of the team. A shared dress code featuring the club's dark blue colours, travelling, eating and sleeping as a group, videos of good plays in previous games and photos from the team's preparation all act as a constant reminder of the common purpose shared by the team. Captains will utilise many of the traditions of past years, photos will be taken in the same place, themes will emphasise links to the club's history. At the same time there will be a degree of uniqueness each year – a way of stating that this particular group stands out within this history by the bonds the players share with each other.

The pinnacle of this preparation is the jersey presentation, where the playing strips, monographed with each player's name, are presented to the players one by one in front of the team. The mood for the ceremony is tense. Many players are either nervous or emotional. As each jersey is being presented, each player's role in the collective is highlighted with words from the captain.

Once all jerseys have been presented the players sit quietly whilst they are addressed by a special guest. This is a standard of sport, the emotional call to arms, to stand together, to sacrifice oneself for the team, or as one 'old boy' of the club put it the "snot the bastards" speech. The most memorable of these pre-match talks was when the long term physiotherapist stood up to deliver his talk. He had been at the club for two years as a player, and a further three as the 'physio'. In his ten minute talk he reflected upon these times, the importance of the

club for him and his identity. He spoke of the potential of the varsity experience to create an unbreakable connection between teammates, the strength and depth of which would be maximised by winning the match. This feat would require the dedication and sacrifice of each individual to the greater team good. Multiple times he was brought to tears as he realised that this would be the last time he was in that room. He spoke with pride about the characters of the men in that room with him. I felt a rush of pride, emotional attachment and security in my own identity. Looking around the room and seeing the others, they felt the same, and a large majority of the players had tears in their eyes. Once the speech finished the players went up to thank the physiotherapist, embracing him in a quick hug. The expression of emotions, particularly in such a large group, is a rare thing in today's world. Even rarer amongst young men like those assembled that day.

What's more the club is made up of university students, the majority of whom are only at the University for two or three years, and a significant proportion of whom have only joined the team 10 weeks before this moment. How is it that such a strong emotional connection has been created?

Although the Oxford University rugby team is one of the oldest in the world, it is also quite different in its traditions. Even so, it still portrays the general patterns of discipline and community. It has its own field, Iffley Road, complete training and gym facilities; its own club room, filled with memorabilia; and its own change rooms, painted in the clubs dark blue. However, whereas most clubs play in an annual competition, with weekly competitive games, and have the bulk of players staying at the club for years on end, the university team (like most university teams) must draw together large numbers of new players each year, and reconstitute a team culture and cohesion for a season focussed almost entirely on

the playing of one game. This results in an intensive period of team building as the squad comes together in September. Players meet for the preseason training sessions, designed to prepare their bodies, ingrain some of the basics of team strategy and tactics, and bond the players together as a cohesive unit.

Pain and joint suffering is a large part of this process. This occurs at the fitness sessions at the end of each training, called “Jagsy time” after the assistant coach who bellows orders at the team, forcing them to run through pain, admonishing anyone who shows signs of fatigue or falls behind the cracking pace he demands. The team also has sessions designed purely for this reason. Conditioning runs up mountains continue until enough of the players have vomited that the captain is happy that people have tried; often timed to immediately follow heavy team drinking sessions to maximise the pain and physical discomfort felt. Whilst physical performance is always commented upon, always judged, the main stated purpose is to have each individual working beyond what they would like to give, for the purpose of the team. Having gone through these sessions the players are meant to feel commitment to one another and the club.

Social membership is also entered into through a series of club socials. Excessive alcohol consumption, normally with the use of drinking rules to ensure that everyone is involved, is matched with a series of challenges to get the players to be more open in front of each other, to embarrass themselves. Games with rules that only the senior members of the team know form a strange sort of secret knowledge into which new players are inducted. The internal social hierarchies are formally and informally created in these games with the socially senior players giving the orders about who drinks, while the new players are required to do duties like collect the beers. However, the formal rugby hierarchies are often challenged,

when for example the captain and coach receive multiple “fines” administered by the junior players. The social side of the club is meant to provide a few moments of group excitement, moments of humour, and importantly a feeling of team solidarity by moving as a group in public. The affirmation of the individual is in terms of learnt masculine tropes, or satisfaction of innate psychological dispositions.

The rugby club forms a site for the intense cultivation, celebration and enjoyment of a particular culture, identity and belonging. A century and a half of development of the institution of clubs has seen a formula develop which most clubs follow. This model depicts the clubs as physical structures, sets of practices, social orders and value systems. Each individual club, particularly within the same region or country, will share strong similarities with other clubs, creating a sense of a broader rugby culture. Yet, the local expression of the ideal model allows for sufficient incorporation of local ideals, personalities and values for each club to be regarded as a product of the community itself. Rugby culture is structured in a way that allows its reduplication elsewhere. The game can be taught, clubs established, cultures replicated.

Club Expectations – Sacrificing Self for the Team

This validation of playing injured, of pushing through the pain barrier and of sacrificing the body are common within the western sporting world. Sport is a part of society in which the human body is utilised as a weapon, purposefully used to inflict pain upon others, and, less purposefully, to cause serious injury and even death (Messner 1990: 203). Even within the rules, rugby can be a very physical

sport, with some of the largest men in our societies sprinting and jumping into each other, lifting and throwing each other's bodies into the ground. Players are taught to use their bodies as weapons against their opponents in the pursuit of victory. It is questionable as to whether the aggression displayed in sports is an expression of innate natural human aggressiveness (normally tied to hormones or the psychology, particularly of men), or is socially constructed. Perhaps there are psychological payoffs or neurological effects of aggressive physical actions, but these are limited by cultural constraints of action. It is only a small subset of men and people who participate in this behaviour, and thus it seems to be an expression of particular cultural values and contexts. Often those who are the most aggressive on-field are the opposite off it. They are trained to be physical athletes, but not violent people.

Physicality and strength are affirmed and advocated by coaches, peers, family and society, in the form of strong tackles and runs. Violence, the breaking of the rules, is condemned. Even when serious injury arises as a result of a legal play there is no resentment of the assailant. Injury is regarded as bad luck, rather than the outcome of personal violence. In contrast, plays which are outside the rules, such as illegal tackles, punches or stomping with the feet tend to be heavily sanctioned by the clubs, media, fans and authority. Players who frequently transgress the rules are condemned as violent and somehow deviant.[22] Players regardless of the

[22] Interestingly at times the laws of the game have changed to eliminate certain actions which were once commonplace, such as the use of the studs on the boots to stomp on opponents bodies when they were lying in the way. Before the rule change and strict policy of enforcement, these actions would be encouraged by many coaches and much of the rugby establishment; during the introduction of the rule change players who contravened the rules would be said to have made a tactical mistake because of the new focus on this rule, but wouldn't be cast as particularly bad; some years after the fact, when the rules have become ingrained in the psyches of the rugby world, some players have faced great censure within the sports laws, media and fans for doing these things.

outcome or fierceness of the match are expected to shake hands with the opposition, even to share a drink and food at an after-match function. Rugby players are socialised from an early age to certain controlled physicality. They are taught the basic techniques of physicality – how to run without hurting oneself, how to position the head, shoulder, arms, torso and legs to avoid injury during a tackle, how to maximise one's own power with the position called the "tower of power". This physicality is introduced as something fun, so that slowly players are de-sensitised to it. Every training session will ask of the players something which will cause them some sort of pain. Gradually more advanced techniques for inflicting your own will upon the opponent are also taught. Effective physicality is encouraged, fear of it condemned.

There are two interrelated but subtly different ways that I would like to look at these practices; firstly as a part of a long term project of disciplining the body to match certain positively understood stereotypes of identity and gender.; and secondly as a rite of passage to a new status. In the first, these projects are undertaken by the individual in an attempt to fit in with the community. Modes of using the body, posture, and language are slowly learnt by the individual, partly through an explicit socialisation, and partly by the repetition and refinement of action. For instance, the work of Wacquant (2001; 2004) gives some insight into the long process of disciplining the body for African American boxers in Chicago's inner city. He identifies the ways that in learning to be boxers they are simultaneously being socialised into a particular way of being men. Boxers learn how to use their bodies as weapons in socially acceptable ways, during socially endorsed events. The hours of training in the gym, slowly refining the physical movements of boxing are also the mode of learning values. Idioms and world

views are gradually learnt as truth and the gym acts as a place to socialise the young men into their roles as the underprivileged in society. They learn certain forms of sexuality, what Wacquant calls the heterosexual “libido sexualis”, and the homoerotic “libido pugilisica”. Young men from poor and ethnic minorities have fewer options for success and so sacrifice their bodies for the sake of sporting identities.

It is in dealing with pain that the socialisation of rugby is most obvious. From a young age players hear stories filled with much praise for the players who bravely played on despite having multiple injuries. At trainings they are asked to do things that will hurt them, to practice enduring the pain. For instance, front row forwards suffer through 80 minutes of colliding shoulders with an 800kg wall formed by the opposition’s forward pack. These are huge physical forces, and the bodies are normally well trained for the task. However, it was not uncommon for a front rower to have to endure this suffering despite injury because club rugby teams do not have the depth of high-quality players to replace them on a weekly basis in the case of a gradual buildup of injury. The players’ bodies are objectified and are dis-associated from the subjectivity of human experience of pain. The question of whether a player is too injured to play is not answered by their level of suffering or the costs to them in the long term but of whether continuing to play will affect their ability to perform the following week. There is an expectation of physical sacrifice on behalf of the individual for the sake of the team.

Messer details how this ability to use violence becomes central to the identities and self-images of many professional American football players. They train their bodies to be these weapons, expressing admiration for their creation and skill. They also talk of these acts as being natural given their size and strength – they

are meant to do that job. Yet, the physicality that they use cannot be achieved without significant pain to themselves as well. 'The instrumental rationality which teaches athletes to view their own bodies as machines and weapons with which to annihilate an objectified opponent ultimately results in violence against one's own body'(Messner 1990, p. 211). American footballers have significantly lower life expectancies, in the order of 15 years less than others in their community, and there has been much recent documentation of the serious effects on their brain function and other health problems. The same concerns have come to the fore in rugby in recent years (Rathbone, 2013). Medical and popular concern for players' short and long term health and safety after suffering head blows has led to an overhaul of protocols, and an insistence that players undergo tests to assess neurological risks. This is to combat a culture which strongly drives players to play through pain and injury. Surviving a match with an injury becomes a badge of honour, playing through pain almost necessary. Players see their pain as part of the game.

Players' moments of playing through pain help to define themselves and cement their reputation. Players are lauded for 'playing through the pain barrier' for the sake of the team, as one media article put it (e.g. Dutton 2013). This particular article detailed the exploits of Peter Kimlin, an outstanding player for the A.C.T. Brumbies team, who forwent a scan to his thumb because he didn't want to be told that he couldn't play in the final of the competition. A scan after the match showed a significant break requiring surgery and six weeks off training. Pain and dedication are not the only ways to prove oneself. Skill at rugby is another quality that is rewarded. At the end of each match of Wests the best players are identified by the coach and publicly praised. When the team wins there is in the change

room a moment of effervescence with the celebratory song sung by the whole team. The song begins with three slowly bellowed yells, and the honour of leading these will go to any player who played his first game with the side that day. These two ways of understanding going through pain see the process occurring over different time periods.

Comments will be made in the community about players who are “soft”, i.e. not willing to risk their bodies, or too quick to give into pain and stop. There are parallels here with non-western initiation rituals. Keesing (1982) draws the parallels between the initiation rites of the group he worked with in PNG and with Amazonia. In both places there was an emphasis on created bodies and masculinities of the young men here as processes apart from the natural growth of boys into men. Male bodies, to be male, would have to be produced through ceremony and ritual. For Keesing, initiations ‘dramatise the change of status through symbolic rebirth - while at the same time operating directly and drastically, at a psychological level, on the bonds to women and their world, which the novices must leave behind’ (Keesing 1982:35). The pain is later a source of strength, as players are able to draw upon an image of themselves as survivors for all further difficulties.

The age-group of the most active members of the adult clubs is normally between 18 and 30, the normal playing ages for the sport. During these years the club plays a greater role within these men’s lives, as they have fewer work and family commitments. This is the crucial period in the person’s life, often a time when they establish themselves in a career, and establish new relationships as adults rather than as boys. The rugby club can help with this, providing young men with an identity and a platform on which to prove themselves and validate their worth. The

status of rugby player carries some degree of broader social recognition, with certain parts of the community also valuing this social category of a rugby player. In contemporary society this is not the only way, or even the most prevalent way that boys can become men. Work, university, marriage and overseas travel, all represent alternative choices for young men. However, playing rugby does allow entry into a particular mode of masculinity.

The Professionals

Professional "Team Culture": Individualised Team Responsibilities

In every professional club I went to there was a strong emphasis placed upon team work. For instance, during the pre-season trainings at the Brumbies there were numerous social occasions as a collective team, as well as part of small groups within the team: group meals, activities such as go-karting or paintball were undertaken by the squad as a whole group. There was an awareness that simply being contracted and even training hard for the team wasn't enough; for the team to truly work each individual had to join socially into the unit. More notable were the cases where this was not the case, and an individual was not integrated well into the team. The professional practices of team building drew on the amateur team cultures in Australia and New Zealand to a large extent; a problem for Fijian players who were socialized into very different club cultures in their homeland. However, the restrictions of the orthopraxy of professionalism clashed with some of the bonding practices and rituals of amateur clubs, particularly those involving the heavy consumption of alcohol. More fundamentally, the high player

mobility and focus on the individual player as key site for professional practices challenge the importance of team identity, bonding and belonging within professional clubs. I argue that the concept of “team culture” has developed as an alternative way of forming the collective in professionalism, and that, as a product of professionalism, it has an individualized notion of the collective.

Within professional rugby “team culture” is cited as a major factor in the performance (or otherwise) of many teams. It is a folk concept which conveys an idea of team cohesion and a set of behaviours and attitudes which produce success. Partly this concept can be seen to flow out of the older structures and values of the rugby club, as cultivating togetherness through sport. However, it is also related to aspects of sports psychology, which emphasise the importance of the creation of positive working environments which set achievable challenges and support effort. These psychological explanations also have an individualistic focus, pointing out the benefits of a good team environment in aiding the optimum performance of the individuals. The idea of a “flow” state is prevalent in sports, describing the optimal level of attention, which lies between in-attention due to lack of interest and over-attention which manifests as stress (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). This breaks down the mind-body dualism but in ways which tend to still focus on the individual athletes. At the theoretical core of “team culture” we find individualism.

The contracting process of the modern professional game means that a player might be an important part of a team’s onfield plan despite only being contracted there for a short time, and often players have to play out the majority of the season

knowing that they will be departing to another club, or without a job at all. This breakdown of the ideal of loyalty is very different from that found in amateur clubs and would seem to cast doubt over the strength of team culture within clubs. Indeed the logic is that players are free-agents able to move between clubs at will. P.D. Howe's ethnography of the professionalization of the Welsh Pontypridd club shows a distinct change in the attitude of club officials to players once the players expect to be financially rewarded for their time and commitment to the club. In this particular article he focusses on how players' reports of pain and injury begin to take on significance for contract renegotiations; players will only report pain when it will not affect their negotiation position (Howe 2001).

In the professional club the head coach is held accountable for the team culture. He (it is a he in all cases that I have seen) sets the overall vision for the team, and then recruits the appropriate support staff to best carry out this plan. It is ultimately he who is held responsible for a lack of on-field success. The professional environment sees a high degree of turnover, and many players are new at the club each season. Continuity is ensured not through long term social contracts and building of social ties, but through the coaches' careful management of the contracting process to ensure enough of his squad remain for long periods of time. Collectivity in professional teams is maintained through collective rules, structured activities and through the allocation of responsibilities, as opposed to rituals, the sheer amount of inter-personal interactions, and historical narratives/memories. Each year, however, the head coach must join these players together and train them so that they not only all know the team's tactics and strategies to play well together, but also bond together as a squad. A key part of his job is remoulding individuals into a team. Even in this a detailed knowledge of each player's skills

and body is given more weighting than intimate knowledge about their characters, personality or broader social lives.

The Auckland head coach did this through careful planning and clear communication, having a ‘very clear coaching philosophy’ which was both rational and reflexive. It could be easily disseminated to the team. Along with the staff and senior players he set the team culture. He saw himself as the ultimate leader for a dedicated group of highly skilled people. Many parts of this system were carefully laid out on dozens of charts, documents and files which covered the walls of the head coach’s office. They were an indication of the breadth of the planning and preparation of a professional team. One part laid out many of the basic structures of the rugby part of the club, skills training methods, team strategies and tactics. Another section had itineraries breaking down the season into weeks, the current two weeks divided into daily training and recovery schedules, and the next few days training schedules into 5 minute blocks. A year’s worth of strength, fitness, skills and team training for the whole team was planned out on one wall. The rationalisation of the team culture, and such meticulous planning would not be seen at amateur clubs. The amateur clubs don’t have methods to formally control people’s time.

Nearby was a list of all the players in the club, divided by leadership groups, each led by a senior player. The coach also had the medical information of all players: who was injured, who needed specially modified training, and who was fully fit. He had daily meetings with the physiotherapists, and at least twice weekly with the doctor, which kept him abreast of all the players’ statuses. On a first impression it was comprehensive and meticulous. The head coach of Auckland was keen to point out how he had planned every detail, and had it laid out and constantly

communicated to his players. His first point was that professional rugby does not leave things up to chance. In a profession where success or failure can hinge upon the bounce of an irregularly shaped ball, everything had to be planned, and no option for bettering the team left unexplored. Being used to this level of control and expectation is one of the key defining factors for success. As one of the young Pacific Islanders, reflecting on his transition into Auckland rugby, said during a semi-structured interview at the club after one training session ‘when you’re playing at home the game is fun, but when you get here you realise that it is something different, that it’s professional and you are expected to perform.’ This expectation of performance changed the experience of the club for players, particularly those who were new or marginal within team structures. They were being constantly evaluated, and assessed for future contracts based on their performances. This is tied to this shift from playing for fun, to playing as part of expectations.

Auckland, just like the Brumbies and most other teams I met with, held a “values setting session” early in the pre-season training period. In this meeting, the players and coaches discussed what their club stood for, and how the players would need to relate to one another. At every place, when I spoke to senior players, junior players, and coaches they described similar key words to describe their ideal rugby player’s character and behaviour. For instance words like: respect, hard work, sacrifice, preparation, communication and self-responsibility were used in each place. Perhaps more interesting was that in each place these were conceived of as being particularly local values of the club’s culture. They were even related to local symbols and ideals, such as the “Highlander Man” of Otago’s professional team, who was said to characterise the ideal type of professional

player, both professional but also part of the local links to Scottish heritage and hardworking, rural people. The managers and coaches in Otago referred to this icon and showed me several documents with used this to structure ideals of behaviour. Similar images were used at the Brumbies, though related to a local history of rugby there. This should be interpreted in two ways: first as part of an ongoing attempt to build the symbolic appeal of the club to the local fanbase, in order to attract supporters and sponsorship revenue; and secondly as an attempt to utilise some of the symbolic efficacy of a localised identity to build a sense of team identity – that is the emphasis on the “highlander” is aimed to create a feeling that there was something distinctive about the team in order to increase the strength of players emotive connection to it.

One of the most interesting documents on the wall at the Auckland offices was an A4 laminated piece of paper outlining the team values, which I was showed by the head coach. It set out the key features of the club’s professional expectations. Officially decided upon during the pre-season values meeting this particular sheet listed the dispositions that the players had decided were important for the team that year. According to two senior players and the head coach, all the players and staff had assembled and spoken about what they thought would contribute to their success. They divided into small groups, made lists and combined them. Senior players led these small groups. They had previously met to come up with their own set of basic ideas, thus enabling them to exert influence over the team as a whole, giving them extra say in the overall outcome. The document referred to various features of the on-field game, indicated by things like organised defence, strong set-piece, and counter attack. It referred to elements of personal motivation

on the field and at training – sacrifice, dedication, following coaching and medical staff advice, and alluded to physical preparation and mode of behaviour: aggression, dominant hits. It itemised general behaviours: punctuality, preparation for training and referred to how players should relate to each other, with respect, honesty, accountability, and positive attitudes. And it spelled out how they presented themselves to the world: team uniforms and public relations ideals. This seems to allude to a shift towards a recorded contractual base of authority to which the coaches increasingly appeal, rather than to the claims to authority based around control of social status and community.

According to the head coach, the values chart: ‘gives them a perspective on what a professional is or should be. And every year you need to build your collective purpose. If someone has not been part of it, then you need to get them part of it. You can still have the general, but the specifics need to be dealt with. These are our pillars: the tactical, the physical side of the game, appearance, the way we look, general respect for the facilities. Everything really. The young ones, when they hit our environment already know what is expected of them.’ The idea is to set clear expectations so that if anything goes wrong they can just go back and, in the words of the head coach, ‘just see what hasn’t been done’. This clearly shifts the onus for success onto individual players, who are held to account not just for their on-field actions, but also for their attitudes.

Their execution, in games and in trainings, is completely dependent upon their own actions, for which they are either praised or criticised. Yet, the coaching staff try to build this focus on individual and competition into a bond between the players. They encourage players to share in the difficult tasks of their individual body projects. Trainings, even purely individual exercises, are always done with

teammates. While the bodies are moulded as singular, the players are brought together by the mutual experience of pain, suffering and hardship in training. For instance, fitness drills and tests are taken together. The individualism is evident in the competitive nature of these tests and the individual gains in both physicality and status from them; yet they are done as a team, with team mates encouraging each other throughout.

This is what is commonly referred to as “the professional culture” within a club. It was regarded, in discussions with players and coaches, as a difficult thing to build, but very easy to lose. The clubs, coaches and indeed most of the players I interviewed identified the same key features of professional culture. It involved a willingness from all players to sacrifice their bodies and time to their own individual improvements, and then the desire to employ that for the sake of the team. This second part, it was believed, came from the belief that others were also working hard and were also willing to sacrifice themselves. As one interlocutor, a player in the middle of his career, who had been at Auckland for 7 years, puts it in response to a question about the professional culture of the club during the times when they had succeeded and when they had failed:

> *It is quite subtle. You don’t want to force the culture. It’s a collective buy-in. You've got to be willing. The best way is that you've got experienced guys and you see what they do, they demand that you come in to that environment. You work to certain standards. You lift yourself, you try to improve. Culture is made as much on the training paddock as anywhere. It’s the hard yards you put in the honest effort that when you're stuffed you keep on going. When your mates do that, you want to keep going yourself. Head towards the goals you want to achieve. You don't want to take short cuts, you want to be honest with yourself, you want to give what you can. It’s simple, but it’s quite elusive as well.*

The emphasis of this quote is that each individual should spare no effort or time in improving himself alongside the rest of the team who were doing the same. The "Team Culture" is the conscious synchronisation of individual self-improvement. The chief function is to motivate players to work hard by allowing them to trust that their teammates are doing the same. Trust becomes so important as their interest in the team only persists as long as they are contracted. In amateur clubs, collective hard work was used as a tool for building a collective, part of a ritualised experience of suffering, which emphasised collective belonging and identity. In professionalism, the collectivity is only a means to the ultimate, individualised ends. The project of team building rationalises even the social aspects of the game. Precisely because of the individualism encouraged elsewhere within the club, the project of group creation needs to be conscious rather than implicit.

This difference can be clearly seen in the changes in the social practices at clubs as they become more professionalised. When I first started playing for the Brumbies club there was a focus on drinking as a group, reproducing the socializing practices of amateur clubs within the professional culture. However, during the five years that I was at the club this quickly changed. Once a year, as an end of season blow out, drinking was encouraged, but throughout the rest of the year it was strictly prohibited or widely discouraged. Players would gossip about those who had big nights out, and some would be punished. When I returned for my fieldwork three years later, one of the senior players, who had been a core part of the social side of the squad, noted to me that 'the times have changed now, you can't have a big piss up as a group. It's not professional. We just can't drink that much during the season, plus a lot of guys don't like that. It's not worse now, but it's definitely different. The whole social side of rugby has

changed.' Instead, he noted, a small group of players would likely get a coffee at a trendy café near the training ground, or other groups would grab sandwiches together for lunch. During my write up phase there was a big change in the club, as the old coach was fired, and replaced some time later by former World Cup winning South African coach Jake White. I didn't get a chance to investigate the changes first hand, but my interlocutors reported that a big part of the change was a shift towards a greater emphasis on certain collective rules - all players would be provided with meals at the clubhouse; all players would be required to play for local Canberra clubs during the off-season, rather than departing to Sydney teams as most had done previously; there was an expectation that they would fall in line with the needs of the team. These are all common features of the social lives of professional clubs, but there is a tension with the realities of the professional system, where players only stay at the side for the time that they are contracted.

Player mobility has also opened up clubs to cultural differences, as players are recruited from a variety of different backgrounds. However, these differences are generally expected to remain outside of the team environment. Instead there is perceived to be a division of space and time, which marks out the times and places where the "professional culture" is expected, from those times when people can show cultural differences. One senior player at the Brumbies, a non-pacific island player who had been in professional rugby for almost a decade, reflecting on the influx of players from Pacific Islands backgrounds at the club, put it like this:

> *'it doesn't really matter where a player comes from or what he does in his spare time. We've got guys here from all over the place. Some of the young guys are heading to music festivals in their spare time. Me, I've got a wife and kids and a house. Some of the Islanders, they will pray and go to church. It doesn't really matter. When they arrive at training they are Brumbies and act like professional players. Those that don't, well they get found out pretty quickly.'*

There is a widespread and enforced commitment to the routines and expectations set by the coach and senior players during club times. At other times the players are fairly free to have their own lives – as long as they don't violate the basic principles of professionalism. This perception of two social lives with two modes of acceptable behaviour was commonly held at the Brumbies. Often young players were pulled into line for disrupting the normal mode of interaction. People who joked at inappropriate times were pulled into line with a sharp look or quick word. The separation of the two spaces was marked in a number of ways by the players. The most notable of these were the clothes that they would wear in each place; team uniforms were obligatory at all times at training or any public appearance, whilst players would only wear their casual clothes at all other times. In other ways individualism was encouraged within the bounds of club culture. Around the club joking was normal, and even encouraged, but during trainings joking and talking were not permitted. Before games the transition could be even more ritualised. MK had spent a career developing his individual routine and wouldn't change it for anyone. Indeed the success of the team was seen in allowing each individual to prepare in his own way for games. MK described it during a semi-structured interview at a mutual friend's house: 'Most guys have routines and rituals that they go through. Nothing is going to break that ritual for me and nothing else exists'. For instance, in the days and hours leading up to each match he would have a prescribed routine to best prepare him; food intake, sleeping hours, even social interaction would be as carefully controlled as possible. At the Auckland Blues this level of individual preparation within a team culture was facilitated by having players stay at the team hotel, even for home matches played within easy driving

distance of their own homes. The culture then encourages a division of rugby time from the rest of life.

The transition to go from the normal mental state and approach into a mind-set suitable for a rugby match requires a complex and ritualised process. Professionalism requires a temporary cessation of “normal” life in order to engage with a different psychological and social state. Whilst a similar transition occurs within the amateur social bonding, in the professional club, with its highly individualized focus this has generally become an issue of high individual and team importance. In the amateur club the emphasis is on preparation as a team, from which comes performance, whilst in the professional team culture the expectation is of individuals to prepare appropriately, and from their performances success will come. Many players told me that the important thing was not that they did the same pre-match preparation as their team mates, but that they did what was right for themselves. The bonding with others happened at the latest possible stages of the warm up, in the final moments before players ran out on to the pitch.

The games themselves were approached very seriously. When the ball was in play, all players were intensely focused on their tasks. Occasionally one player slapped another on the back, or yelled instructions, but most communication was of a style and content practiced to efficiently communicate in a register reserved for playing rugby. However, at moments when tries were celebrated there were sometimes great outbursts of joy. These moments were used by some players to mark individuality by performing a personal celebration (for the Fijians it was common to point at the sky, to signify God or a relative). The shift within professionalism altered the balance between team and individuals, particularly reducing the element of non-rugby socialization undertaken by the club.

The Amateurs

Player Initiation in the Amateur Rugby Club

What I learnt quickly in this multi-sited fieldwork was that a player can't just walk onto the field and play a game of rugby, they must first be accepted into a team. Joining the team is a multi-stage process that allows an individual outsider to be accepted into the group. I detail this process for one club, Teachers Eastern in Auckland, highlighting some key differences in the culture and process between this club and others I have been at.

The first part of the process is the registration with a club. The bureaucratic registration involves three steps; registration of a player's personal details, for the club and union record; legally releasing the club from any liability should they be injured in the normal course of training and games; and the signing of a form which states that they will not play for another team. Legally at that point they are part of this team. Protection of the group occurs at multiple levels. Whilst both the team and union want more players in the sport, they also need to protect team cohesion and the reputations of the club by limiting membership to those who are committed. This process is the governing bodies' way of ensuring control over the sport, controlling all matches and players. This makes sure that everyone is part of their system and playing by their rules.

I first came to Teachers Eastern because the coach, by reputation, had a great insight into Pacific Island rugby culture, having been a player and coach in NZ and the Samoan national team for over a decade and a half. The interview at Teachers Eastern went well, and towards the end the coach asked if I would like to join in a

training session. They were at the start of the season and looking for more players. I agreed. That afternoon I came early to training and met with some of the senior and more enthusiastic players, who had come beforehand to do additional fitness training.

These players were as welcoming as possible, asking me questions and making sure that I knew what was going on. These initial conversations touched upon two main topics; what I was doing in NZ, at their club, and where I had played in the past. Whilst rugby club conversations are often filled with boasting or discussions of sex and drinking, what might be referred to as “men talk” (Coates 2004) these conversations were notably different – I wasn’t an insider yet and had to earn their trust. However, rugby specific jokes, making fun of the ill-fortunes of the teams I supported, particularly the Australian national team, were frequent. Essentially these initial conversations followed the exact same format and substance as the beginnings of my interviews. Just as it was important for informants to know who I was and where I was from before they felt comfortable in an interview, so it was important that I was acknowledged and placed within a system before they would play with me. This was the first level of recognition – I was somehow linked to their world, and carried with me part of my history.

I was judged and placed according to common understandings and stereotypes; culturally I was a white Australian, but that was slightly complicated by my time and interest in Fiji; I had played at a reasonable level, but my Australian-ness was seen as likely inferior to their New Zealand skills. In terms of rugby they anticipated that I would be fit, enthusiastic, not very dynamic with the ball, but willing to work for the entire match. Teachers Eastern, along with several other

clubs in Auckland, had become predominantly made up of Pacific Islanders[23]. Throughout training coaches and players alike expressed enthusiasm at the prospect of having another white player on the team, in the words of one player: 'to do the hard work so that we (in this case referring to the Pacific Island majority) can score the tries'. My experience as a professional player and my size placed me as a potential insider into their group. Typically initial assessments would take into account past rugby history, appearance of physical fitness, speed and strength, and broad social evaluations such as race and class.

During the many initial games I have had with various teams I have noticed a direct relationship between the openness and willingness of players to talk to me about my work, and the level of my involvement in the club. Players are more willing to talk if they have trained with me. Once I had played with them their openness increased again, I had put my body on the line, contributed to their cause, worn their beloved jersey and sung their songs. However, it was during the first match for Teachers Eastern, just days after the training session described, that I had a significant breakthrough. I played mildly well, not terribly at least, and during the match, as the other players on the team saw that I was working hard for them and the team, they began to include me more in the plays and discussions. However, the key moment happened in the second half when there was a fight between some of our players and the opposition. I stepped in to break it up and was punched in the face by one of the large players on the other side. My nose

[23] According to popular opinion amongst coaches and players in Auckland, this was for three reasons; huge increase in the PI population; the superior size and, to a lesser extent, skills of Pacific Islanders, meaning they outcompeted white players for top spots; and, the "white flight" from rugby, particularly at junior levels, where players didn't play due to fears of injuries caused by the larger Pacific Island players and more physical play they were said to use. It is commonly believed that Pacific islanders are not only larger as adults, but also go through their adolescent growth spurts at a much younger age, meaning as young teenagers they will be significantly bigger than the other boys. I have not investigated these claims.

bled a little bit. After this moment the team was noticeably with me. After the match almost all the players came up to me and volunteered to talk to me. I had not only played for them, but bled for them. By some metrics of individual character I had proven loyalty and sacrifice for the team. This was respected. The best way to show commitment to the team is through playing, risking injury, sacrificing the body for the sake of the team. Bleeding and playing through injury are encouraged.

Earning Status within the Club

Sacrificing self for the team is one route to status. However, rugby is a highly differentiated social field and superior status is earned in diverse ways. Status and respect are not equal among the members of the same team, club or even age-group. Players may accumulate standing by their physicality, on-field character, skills, representative honours, or, through the social side of the club, by their humour, daring with women and alcohol. Each of these, to a certain extent, represents a different social domain for players to accumulate social standing and symbolic capital. The status of rugby player is never definitively achieved, but must be constantly worked upon and refined. In this way sport differs from other rites of passage; participating does not attain a new ritual status, but positions the player to gain respect within a particular ranked order of other players. That respect is won both on and off the field. The significance of competition to modern sport is that it can differentiate players into grades and awards, and conversely it can discard individuals as worthless. There is always a tension between the different aspects of rugby; the individual glory and the team cohesion are not always served by the same action. The valuing of character and the social aspects

of the club reconcile this in some way, elevating not just the most talented, but also the most loyal individuals.

Clubs themselves are highly structured along informal and formal hierarchies. The main formal hierarchy will have a base of players led by a team of captains, senior players, coaches and managers. The formal hierarchy is most important in making decisions and leading action within training and game contexts. Around the world, and from club to club, the strictness of the obedience to this formal hierarchy differs greatly; in some places players are expected to be speaking up regularly and challenging leadership on some issues (though not on others); in others players will remain silent for most trainings and matches, strictly following the instructions from above.

At Wests club the top of the structure is the club coach, who is employed full time by the club to manage and promote junior and adult rugby, and to coach the 1st team. The coach will know all the players. He will greet any new player. He will call the whole club in at the start of training sessions and everyone will be quiet. At this time, if people are talking senior players or other coaches will tell them to be quiet. At all rugby events – before games, training – the coach will have authority, commanding quiet and respect. However, the coach is not ultimately in charge, but employed by a board made up of members of the club (predominantly past players). In my time at Wests there were only two coaches, both with long term tenures, but other clubs have had more frequent overhauls, with coaches being replaced. At these times there will be talk about the club's performance, both its field performances, and its ability to attract and keep players happy playing and training together. At times there can be tensions between coaches and players, particularly when there are senior players who are returning from higher levels of

rugby to play for the club bringing with them different ideas of how rugby can be played and coached and the belief that these ideas are superior to those of the coach.

At other times, such as before training, at social events, before games, and at the after match functions there will be a more egalitarian structure and social style, though with senior social players having more influence. An informal hierarchy is more evident in social activities based largely along lines of age, skill and personality. These criteria also contribute to the formal hierarchy, so there is often a large crossover between the two, but the informal hierarchy allows lower skilled players, younger players and players with personalities not suited to traditional leadership to have some status.

The formal playing hierarchy and the informal social hierarchy operate separately. There are divisions in time and space which mark out what sort of conduct is expected of a player. Spatially the pitches for trainings and games are reserved for the formal structure and conduct of serious rugby (play and preparation). At Wests the change rooms were a similar place, at least for the 15-30mins before the match. Both places at other times of day, even just moments before training starts, were not marked by formal hierarchies – players joked, laughed, played tricks on each other, complained about the problems of their lives. Indeed, at Wests the trainings themselves began with humour, as amongst the weekly club announcements (new players were introduced, venues for matches were announced) the club had a tradition of presenting the "*yasi*", a never before washed filthy torn raggedy jersey. Run by the senior off-field players (not coaches or captain), the tradition involved players telling any embarrassing, funny or stupid

stories that happened to them that week. The rest of the players got a good laugh, and the worst story was punished/commended with the jersey.

The *yasi* signifies three things. Firstly it introduces and affirms the less hierarchical social side of the club at the formal rugby training. It clearly indicates that this is an important part of the club's life. This message is reinforced explicitly by managers, senior players and coaches who encourage the younger players to attend club social events. This opens up space for other players to shine. Often it is the younger players or those in the lower grades who have most of the *yasi* stories. Those who revel in the role as club clown or mischief maker enjoy the limelight, as everyone laughs at the stories of their antics. Secondly it affirms and challenges particular off-field behaviours, but always by bringing the individual back into the fold. Normally the *yasi* is awarded when a player has acted in a way that people genuinely feel brings disrespect to the values of the club, or when they have humiliated themselves through what would otherwise be socially unacceptable behaviour. This would normally consist of missing a training or club function for something deemed not worthy, or at worst, contrary to the club's character. An example of the first type would be when a player was once given the *yasi* for skipping a team social to go shopping with his girlfriend, exacerbated by the fact he lied about it to his teammates. The degree of one's claim to the *yasi* jersey is generally equal to the degree to which the behaviour was unacceptable to society outside of the club, such as alcohol fuelled behaviour often involving rejection by women, dealings with authority like bouncers or police (though only for things like drunken fights which were accepted by at least parts of the club) or losing control of bodily functions in embarrassing situations. In all instances the idea was for

everyone to laugh, the embarrassment be aired, laughed at and in the longer term forgotten.

A similar occasion presents itself at post-match celebrations. These are often typified not only by large quantities of alcohol but by various degrees of homosociality, physical contact and nudity. A variety of practices involve people engaging in what might otherwise be regarded as degrading behaviour. For instance players might perform table slides, where they slide naked and headfirst on their belly along a series of joined (often the joins are not so good and cause the players a lot of pain, to the enjoyment of everyone else) tables lubricated with beer, as the team mates push them to accelerate them toward the end. Most players avoid table slides, so these represent an opportunity for the enthusiastic to distinguish themselves. The more a player can humiliate themselves in front of the group by exposing his body (particularly if it is somehow out of shape) and reputation, the more endeared they are to the club. On a rare occasion some players take things further in the search for recognition, doing acts like canyon skulls, which involve the pouring of beer down one players back and backside into the mouth of someone below. They become a treasure, something to continually remind the rest of the players of the sacrifices required by a clubman. In this sense, sacrifice on the field is matched by that off it.

Overall these activities and behaviours emphasise the idea that the players are occupying a privileged and closed off social space, defined both by hierarchical structures on the field that build on a disciplined body of players and by non-hierarchical social structures built around recreational activities of a community of players. I argue that there are two different processes going on, initiation and disciplining into the club world of rugby, with its associated value systems and

cultures; and the attainment of status through the achievement of highly valued feats of the game. Rugby then offers the potential for inclusion and belonging, but also distinction and elevation. It is at the one time about individual difference and communal belonging.

The Influence of Professionalism on Amateur Clubs

As professionalism has emerged as a universal system and orthopraxy in most major rugby centres, amateur clubs have responded by allowing more of a focus on individuals and their careers. Many players in the amateur clubs now see themselves as partly on a career path and see the club as merely a stepping stone towards greater success later. This is made clear in what coaches and players say. For instance, coaches regularly note that players become increasingly disgruntled if they are not selected in the club's best team. Whereas in the past there was the incentive of earning social capital within the club and working their way through the sides, players had become unwilling to wait for their opportunities to play for the first team. Whilst in the past a coach could be sure that the majority of second team players would be training and socialising within the club even if they were not being picked in the first team, in the professional era ambitious players were looking to get opportunities in the first team as quickly as possible. It wasn't uncommon for players to shop around for their quickest way to the professional leagues, moving from club to club within the competition. In this sense, the value and status that a player could build within the club was not being converted into monetary value, and hence sought less by the players.

The influence of professionalism has also begun to alter social relations at amateur clubs. I discussed this in a semi-structured interview with an Anglo-New Zealand man, about 45, who had been coaching a successful top amateur team in

Wellington, New Zealand for the past two decades. He has seen many changes over that time. The demographics of his team had shifted from being almost entirely Anglo-New Zealanders to having a significant proportion of players from the Pacific Islands, both first and second generation immigrants. In his mind, the lack of a drinking culture amongst many of these islanders, plus the introduction of drink driving laws and alcohol being available at supermarkets, has seen a drastic decrease in the desire of players to attend the post-match social functions at the club on a Saturday night. Fewer wanted to drink, and those who did either found it expensive, inconvenient or less enjoyable to do at the clubhouse. He described how when he was playing for the club, most of the players from the entire club, not just the first grade side, would come back to the club house after matches and spend the evening drinking and socialising with their teammates and the many friends, family and supporters who would join them. These were important social events for the club, and, as the club was an important social hub for the community, they had a crucial social role for the community as a whole. Huge amounts of beer would be drunk, generating revenue for the club as a whole. Nowadays, as I saw, the post matches are far more modest affairs. Most of the first grade side attend, but sit scattered around the room in little clusters, not really engaging with the few spectators who linger there after watching the final match of the day. Many of the players aren't keen to spend their evening with the team or the club, at least not in the club house, and so have a quick drink then head off. For his clubs, like many others, this has meant a drastic reduction in revenue and social significance of the club.

In the Auckland rugby competition one club, Ponsonby has been so dominant over the last few decades that they have developed a reputation as a breeding ground

for future talent. It is commonly believed that if a player is able to make it into the top team at Ponsonby then they would have a good chance of being recruited by the semi-professional and professional sides of New Zealand. Due to this, the best players from many other clubs come to the pre-season training camps with Ponsonby, playing up until the early part of the season, trying to get their way into the first team. There is a cut-off date, normally after four games in the competition, after which a player can no longer play for another team. At this point, many of the players return to their old clubs, having decided that they can't make it into the Ponsonby side. A coach I interviewed at one of these other clubs, which normally finished in the middle of the competition, described his frustration at having invested so much time and effort in his players, only to have the best players leave to play against him. In his view, their best option was to stay at his club, to play in the first team there, and to stand out to the selectors by starring for an otherwise less talented squad. Very interestingly he did not try to contest the professional logic as a justification for their behaviour, but rather offered a different strategy which still lay within that logic. Coaches of the past might have lambasted players departing to their stronger rivals as betraying the club, or being mercenary. In the contemporary era the value of loyalty is not as important, and it is acceptable for professional motivations to take over. His alternative presumes professional motivations, and indeed encourages them, instead positioning his club as a viable alternative (for different reasons) to Ponsonby. For him there was great significance and meaning to be derived by being a senior and important player within his team, in building something together, rather than move to the best team in the competition.

When I asked players and coaches within Auckland about what they saw as Ponsonby's success they noted the dominance by the team of the competition, which it had won more often than not over the preceding 10 years, and the high number of Ponsonby players who had gone on to play professional rugby. Almost all Ponsonby players would add that part of what should be regarded as a success was that the club had a great atmosphere in which people enjoyed playing and living. How the success was accounted for varied widely. From the outside it was put down to an ability to attract the best players, either through family links into the Samoan community, through the work and connections of the Ponsonby coaching staff at top Auckland rugby schools, or through a history of providing a stepping stone to the top teams. The Ponsonby insiders, represented in six interviews, focused more on the dual factors of a strong and supportive family-like club culture, and a professional and hard-working approach to their rugby. However, players also went to Ponsonby as it was regarded as the most professional of amateur clubs. By this they meant that the approach to training and preparation was most like those espoused in professional clubs: their coaches and senior players had experience at the highest level, and had brought back the most up-to-date training methods. Part of the appeal of this was that they believed that having this sort of approach and using these training methods were the best ways to prepare the body. The sports science ideals permeate the amateur clubs, brought in by returning players, and taught to the coaches. Players then have an added incentive to join the right club as being there will most develop their skills. They desire exposure to the sorts of drills, the coaches, and players who will also be playing at the next level up.

One of the key drivers for this system is the integration of the whole of rugby union into a single, nationally governed system. All teams in New Zealand rugby fit somewhere into the plans of the NZRU; the young teams are places to develop the basic skills of the game, and make sure the next generation loves the sport; the senior amateur teams refine these products, and offer the best players a chance to progress; the professional sides maintain a base of players in the country, making sure that enough of the New Zealand talent stays in the country; the All Blacks form the ultimate pinnacle of the sport, the flagship of the union, and should be winning at every occasion. The sport as a whole is integrated along these lines. The games, even local games, are organised into a national structure, the explicit aim of which is to produce fans for the national team, and potentially players. While there are other motivations – giving people an enjoyable sport to play, community building etc. – the dominant motivation and organisational principle of the sport are ultimately these of brand building, producing players, and profit. Relationships are fundamentally restructured and reconfigured.

Conclusion

The professionalization of the game has altered the delicate balance between team bonding and individual skills. This has always been a tension for clubs, who have combined players through rituals and rites into a collective with a strong, emotional sense of belonging. These were structured as sites for the socialization of men; places where young men could have a sense of belonging, and gain status and identity through a number of routes.

This is challenged in the professional era by the shift away from rugby clubs as a place for the socialization of men towards a site for the production of entertainment for the non-participating masses. Players' on field performances are of the utmost importance, and as such an athlete will only belong to a club as long as the contract. Binding players together in this context becomes a different task. The recourse of professional clubs to a concept of "team culture" which emphasizes individual responsibility and effort is a fundamental shift. It does allow a group to be formed, but it limits the opportunity for this group to be part of important emotional identities for the individuals within it. They are there as professionals.

The experiences of Fijians as they move from amateur clubs in Fiji to professional careers elsewhere show just how complicated and contingent the relationship between individual and group is. Their different cultural and social background provides a new challenge to the professional clubs who must integrate them socially if they are to succeed on the field. This is the subject of the final part of the thesis.

Chapter 6: Fijian Pathways into Professional Rugby: Balancing the X-factor with Reliability

The mobility of aspiring Fijian athletes is dependent upon their ability to be recruited into professional teams. For coaches, managers and CEOs of these clubs the recruitment process is a form of betting. Even within a highly structured and somewhat standardised global industry of professional rugby, a player's ability to contribute to the success of a club can't be guaranteed. Crucially, the contracts offered to players are not payments for work done, but rather attempts to capture the potential of the players. Players are contracted because coaches believe that they will be able to contribute to the club. Coaches recognise that there is an "x factor" in the Fijian player, unpredictable because the player has not been trained in the trusted rugby development systems, but potentially explosive and eminently marketable. The success of pioneer Fijian players in other clubs and the dominance of the Fijian national team in many rugby sevens' tournaments have produced a widely held evaluation of Fijians as having great potential as powerful, fast athletes. This has brought Fijians into the global market, not because they are regarded as professionals, but because they have the potential to provide athleticism not necessarily produced by professionalism. The Fijian is regarded as "raw talent" in the sense they have not been cultured by the global professionalism.

However, they are not raw in Fijian terms but have been produced through Fijian coaching methods and Fijian styles of play. The x factor thus represents a different style of play and different attitude to the game which is potentially highly valuable to the professional club. Fijians have come to recognise this, and have developed their own understandings of the recruitment pathways into professional rugby

open to them. In many ways these perceptions match the reality of the rugby system, guiding young Fijians into opportunities to prove their potential to coaches. However, these perceptions don't fully recognise the nature of the recruitment process, and the value it places upon particular forms of body culture. This chapter presents two main perspectives on the recruitment process. Firstly, it highlights the beliefs of the Fijians who are aspiring towards professional rugby. I then examine one important source of these perceptions, the myth of natural Fijian talent, embodied in the person of Rupeni Caucaunibuka. I use this same person to show the other side of the perceptions, showing the way that Fijians are understood by coaches in the professional market. Finally, I present the process of recruitment as a cultural practice, which I explored through an ethnography of the recruitment practices of clubs. These recruitment practices and the dynamics they create constitute another dimension of the working mechanism of global professional rugby.

Fijian Perceptions of their Professional Opportunities

The hope of professional rugby was not experienced as an abstract fantasy, but rather as a dream with well-defined routes to its realisation. Each individual and their family had their own conceptions of what the best route might have been. However, amongst the players of the Lomaiviti club, Suva, Fiji there were several general pathways that people imagined themselves following to overseas professional contracts. I summarise these as being four main channels: the first through recruitment to New Zealand or Australian schools on rugby scholarships; the second, through arrangement by kin networks or club networks with appropriate clubs; the third, through chance recruitment by tourists or scouts; and

the fourth, by rising through the Fijian ranks and getting a contract based on good performances on the international stage for Fiji. These translate into mobility strategies which are far from mutually exclusive as most players try to pursue more than one of these at the same time.

The first pathway is through the schooling system. Australian and New Zealand private schools regularly have rugby scholarships for talented players from the Pacific Islands. The social dynamics and educational histories of private schools in these countries mean that they often have an emphasis upon sporting achievement and a history of playing rugby epitomised by fierce rivalries on the rugby pitch and, crucially, a large amount of capital and/or wealthy alumni[24]. This all leads to scholarships offered to Islander players, both from within Australia and outside. Partially this is motivated by a belief (and reality) that many Islanders develop physically at younger ages than Caucasians, and as such are far more physically imposing at school. Recruitment often takes place at school matches in Fiji. The Australian or New Zealand principal or coach will watch a game, then, having already discussed opinions with the relevant parties, will offer a scholarship to one or more of the better players. School provides an entry into the normal development pathways for Australian and New Zealand top players. However, the players will enter into this development below a level at which they would be paid, and there is no guarantee of having any success in this field. One of my informants, Jeff, often spoke of having wasted his chance as a schoolboy scholarship holder in New Zealand because he had returned to Fiji after his schooling and had not succeeded in migrating again since. For him the time in

[24] Private schools in Australia and New Zealand tend to be located within the affluent areas and cater for the richest portions of society.

New Zealand was his best opportunity to do something that he found valuable with his life.

The school pathway can provide dividends for some young men. W, one of my informants located in Australia rather than in Fiji, had been recruited in this manner to a school in country New South Wales. Each year the principal from the school would come to his school (Queen Victoria in Naitasiri) and recruit one of the best players. Some of the past players had successfully entered the ranks of the Sydney premier competition and one was a Super 14[25] player. As such it was regarded as a clear opportunity to enter the ranks of the Australian professional rugby market. W's parents encouraged him to move due to this potential earning, but also because it would allow him to gain an education in Australia. As a consequence he always made sure that he worked hard at school. In his final year of school he was selected to represent the Australian Schoolboys' team, and the following year was picked into the Australian Under 19s' team. After school he was offered a work and play deal with a club based in Canberra, which gave him full time employment with an employer associated with the club. This allowed him to train with the rugby academy of the ACT Brumbies, one of Australia's four Super 14 teams. These schools were so well integrated as pipelines for professional teams that all but three of the Fijian born players I interviewed who was playing professional rugby in Australia or New Zealand had entered through a school rugby system. This was not the case for clubs in France and Japan.

[25] The Super 14 (now Super 15) is a competition played between the professional teams of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. There are 14 teams in total, which play each other once during the regular season with finals to follow. The three national teams are chosen directly from this competition, and the tournament is seen as a pathway to these honours and associated money. It is a fully professional competition, with base salaries in Australia at AUD$60,000. The top players receive over AUD$1 million, as they are also contracted by the national teams.

Secondly, the increase in emigration from Fiji has established several diasporas, with communities well established in several Australian and New Zealand cities and towns. Whilst most of these migrants have not been involved in rugby, it is quite common for them to arrange some sort of contract or deal to bring out a young family member to play rugby. Many of my informants spoke of getting an uncle or aunt to look for work on their behalf. Most of the time, these relatives would arrange for players to be brought out to work in businesses with ties to a club. Sometimes the businesses would sponsor a player to come across, helping with the visa process, but there were also instances where the players came across on tourist visas with the intention of overstaying. Amongst the aspiring migrants there was little awareness of the bureaucratic and legal aspects to migration. After almost securing a contract to go to NZ as a schoolboy, one of my informants convinced his aunty, based in Brisbane, to arrange something for him there. He put his studies on hold and left for Australia to try to make it as a rugby player. The plan from the start was 'to further my career, but just trying to balance it with my schoolwork'. He continued:

> *School comes first as my future is in it. After my rugby career I will have to get a job and I'll need education to do this. At the moment I am studying mechanical engineering and electronics at the Fiji Institute of Technology. The family's big thing is to help me to achieve my goals, to be independent from them. If I go overseas then I will go and help my family because they help me here. I don't have a manager, but my family has many connections overseas. They will go to the clubs and sound out if they need a player. Next year I will go to Brisbane and play with [the] Brothers [club] there… My sister organised it through her friends at the club. She has work there in*

Australia now. There have been Fijians at the club before, and my brother played there before he went to New Zealand.

In these instances the power of the dream to become a rugby star is clear. Once abroad the player will still have to work in a menial job, normally at minimum wage. Yet, the rugby motivation remains central.

The third perceived pathway into the professional rugby market is through scouts and agents. There have always been stories of scouts, often imagined as on holiday, who will chance upon the next great Fijian player in a local match. Whilst there are some famous stories of players recruited in this way there did not seem to be much evidence of this happening in practice. When scouts do come they tend to go to high schools, recruiting players for their development academies in accordance with the system outlined in the first category[26]. Both the CEO of the Fijian Rugby Union and the former High Performance Unit manager identified a decided lack of agents on the ground during my interviews with them. They observed the presence of a French man who had been involved in the Fijian rugby scene for decades and had brought many players across to France over the years. However, these players were recruited from the top of the domestic competition rather than elsewhere. In many places the absence of agents was recognised and lamented. Players and coaches often complained that 'if only the scouts would come to our island' (TuiLevuka) or 'if only the French Rugby Union didn't ignore our club' (Seru) then there would be a lot more players recruited. Scouts represented the only hope for those who were too old for school

[26] Most professional teams will have development academies. These will be made up of junior players who have been identified as having the potential to play at a professional level. The club will provide a training program, coaching, some development matches, and often some form of financial support, or support in finding work/education.

recruitment and were not sufficiently advanced in the Fijian rugby system. This discourse places a great deal of importance upon luck or divine intervention (both to be discussed later).

The final pathway recognised amongst my informants was to go through the ranks of the Fijian rugby union, working from their local club and provincial team into the national team, and be spotted whilst playing international rugby. This dream had been fulfilled by a number of current and former members of the Lomaiviti club. In the 2003 Rugby World Cup six players had originated from the Lomaiviti rugby club, while the 2009 Lomaiviti squad featured seven players who had played for Fiji, three of whom had regularly played with the Fijian sevens side in the past two years.

Stories of successful migrations inform a Fijian about the rugby market. Networks involving former athletes, as well as formal media sources circulate information on those who have already had some degree of mobility. Their successes and failures are built into an understanding of certain pathways which are imagined as being the best for young Fijians to follow as a way overseas. In part these perceptions capture a reality of the professional industry. However, they also are only partial pictures, generated from the overly positive accounts of returning migrants. These migrants feel embarrassed about giving accurate accounts of both their successes and failures. Speaking too much about success is regarded as a sign that the person has lost the “humble” Fijian nature, and read by many as a sign of an overall loss of culture. Failure to achieve is not dwelt upon due to the desire to save face, both for the individual and his family. As such, Fijian rugby players aspiring to mobility will generally not have a great deal of knowledge about the challenges of entering into professional rugby. Understanding exactly how

these perceptions of pathways develop was a difficult task. My conjecture is that the picture was built by the accumulation of information from media sources, the stories of successful migrants and the distilling of these into manageable myths of how the system functions.

However, when I investigated these pathways, I realised that the understandings held in Fiji did not match those held by migrants overseas. There was a mismatch of perception and reality. Players who had been overseas were inclined only to tell particular stories, and even these were rarely interrogated. For instance, amongst the Fijian development team there was a handful of players who had played and lived overseas for significant amounts of time. The rest of the squad was aspiring to follow in these men's footsteps, or perhaps to exceed their efforts. Yet, when talking to these men they stated that they would neither ask nor tell about their experiences in travelling overseas, of trying to follow these paths. Individuals and groups of inexperienced players whom I interviewed during a rugby tour all suggested that asking such questions was embarrassing and inappropriate. Similarly, the experienced players felt as though they had a lot of information to give the younger players, but they felt it would be too forward of them to tell them unasked, and that Fijian culture didn’t encourage this sort of behaviour. This was despite each and every man interviewed stating that they were on that tour for the explicit purpose of pursuing a professional career. This shyness broke down after my questions and many conversations about the process and experience of rugby migration began.

Each of these pathways shared a common emphasis on the initial movement into the overseas based rugby structures, particularly of New Zealand and Australia. Once they were there, there seemed to be an assumption that their talents would be sufficient to ensure their success. The difficulties of the “rugby dream” were, to some extent, left to be discovered by each migrant individually. Instead the players relied upon versions of a myth of their rugby potential. They should train and play hard, remain committed to God, and trust in the natural Fijian athleticism and will of God to provide them with opportunities. The Fijian player Rupeni Caucau was emblematic of this potential, and the ambiguity with which it was regarded on the world stage. His story was so well known and cited by young Fijians, that I have listed it here as a myth which helped define the parameters of the Fijian rugby dream.

The Myth of Rupeni Caucau – Fijian version

Many Fijians, when asked about the potential of Fijians overseas, spoke of Rupeni Caucaunibuka (“Caucau” – pronounced thauthau). Caucau was one of the outstanding players of the 2007 World Cup, one of the stars of the French competition and world game. Before this he was a revelation playing for Auckland teams in the New Zealand and Super Championships (with teams from Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa). A dynamic, extremely fast winger, he was the embodiment of all the possibilities the rugby world saw in Fijian athleticism. Yet, his story has also become a warning amongst agents, coaches and managers about the unreliability of Fijians, and Pacific Islanders in general. As such I will lay it out in full here. I quote a Fijian man, in his 50s, who was introduced to me as “Caucaunibuka's personal minder in Auckland” to start the story. I met him over

several hours in a private meeting room of the Auckland ITM Cup team's offices.

His account begins with Caucau's origins:

> *Rupeni is from the jungles of Vanua Levu. A really small village, hidden away from everywhere else. To get there even from the main town you need to have a four wheel drive and use machetes and be lucky with the roads. One day he was playing for his village in a sevens competition just in the neighbouring town. There happened to be a man there from a club in Auckland who saw him, and that was it. He saw how fast and strong he was, and thought he'd never seen anything like it. He spent some time that night talking with Rupeni, and with Rupeni's family and chief. I think Rupeni didn't really want to go, but the possibilities were so good and the money so much. Most people in that part of Fiji live well, but live without money. Just the crops you grow and the fish you can catch. You know?*

Here we see the elements of what has become the imagined origin of all Fijian players – from an isolated island where their natural athleticism has been lying dormant under a coconut tree. Once this is brought by a scout to the rugby playing world the results are clear as his latent talent was realised in spectacular fashion:

> *Rupeni came to New Zealand and he was playing the next season. He was very good. A lot better athletically than anyone else. He was stronger and faster and would score tries whenever he wanted…*
>
> *He quickly got to be well known, and he rose through the ranks and was playing for Auckland soon after. Even against the best players in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa he was faster and stronger and could score very easily.*

Yet, the account concludes with a long account of the problems faced by Caucau in abroad:

> *But he also was having many problems there. He didn't know how to look after himself. He didn't know about things like organising his time, or getting to places where he should be. He didn't know how to shop or decide what to eat and cook. At first he was living with other young guys, but they couldn't help each other. They would also distract each other a lot, with drinking and going out. That's when the club got in contact with me. They knew that I was big in the Fijian community*

around Auckland and asked if I could help this young man who was very talented but struggling with fitting into New Zealand and the lifestyle here. I used to go around there and pick him up and take him to my house. My wife would cook a big feed and we would eat properly. Sometimes I would take him to other places as well. It's important for these boys from the Islands that they have that sort of thing. You need to have elders there to tell them what they should and shouldn't be doing, to point them in the right direction. It's the Fijian way. He did pretty well and liked the time with my family. Those were his good years, and he was playing very well and getting success. Then he went across to France on a very big contract, and he stopped playing. It was too far from home and his people.

This acts somewhat as a defining myth for the aspirational professional rugby migrants from Fiji. In Caucau the raw physical potential of Fijians is highlighted and celebrated. The physical dominance that he had was cultivated on the islands, inherited from a history of warriors and physically dominant athletes. A similar potential was thought, by Fijians, to lie within most young Fijian men, there to be discovered if only they had a moment of visibility like Caucau had. It was oft reported to me during my fieldwork in Fiji that the typical Fijian man would be able to play at the highest level because of the talent or strength he had. Many would cite players such as Caucau and others who had gained success overseas as proof of the racial suitability of Fijians to rugby. It was this racialised self-perception from the Fijian youth which helped to justify their dedication and pursuit of professional rugby.

Yet, equally as prominently the myth also contains some warning for the Fijians. Their success overseas is fragile, depending on them being able to remain free of distractions and dedicated to the game. Caucau loses his way and begins to lose his opportunities at a variety of clubs. In this particular version of the story, told by the man who was entrusted with providing Caucau with stability and support, we see an emphasis placed upon traditional Fijian values. For Caucau to be

successful he needed to behave in accordance with the traditional Fijian value systems, to pursue the family and communal relations which were his upbringing. Without these his potential is squandered, lost in the distractions of the non-Fijian world. The ongoing importance of Fijian value and belief systems is crucial in understanding the experiences of Fijian players overseas.

The Myth of Rupeni Caucau – Recruiters Version

The myth of Caucau exists in a slightly different version amongst the overseas players and coaches. For instance, the Auckland players who had played with Caucau at the time had another story which formed the basis of an alternative myth. Caucau's time at Auckland was not remembered as the stable success described by the Fijian manager. Instead they remember the many absences and a constant lack of professionalism. In the words of one of the players who was playing with Caucau during my fieldwork:

> *He just couldn't get organised. The club bought him an apartment right next to the ground. You could see it as we warmed up. They got someone to go past and get him for every training, but even with all this he'd still be late. Or be stoned or something. He was a great player, but he was distracting everyone else. Not because he was loud or anything, but just because he would miss so much and people would notice. In the end I think they had to get rid of him, and so they got the agents to look in France. He earned a mint over there, but he's got fat and barely played. I think he just wants to go back to Fiji and sit under a coconut tree drinking Kava all day.*

Caucau is spoken of as the anti-professional; a warning story to young players not to waste their talent. In a similar way, one of the members of the Fijian Rugby team's management speaks about one experience with Caucau.

We wanted to pick him. We knew he was the best player we had, but he just wouldn't fit in with our plans. He was meant to come to a training camp in Suva. We arranged everything with his club, got him a flight home, even let him have 4 days in his village before the camp started. He flew in, went to his village and just never came back. In the end we had to leave without him. He went missing for six months then. No one heard from him, no one knew where he was. Eventually the owner of his club in France got so frustrated he paid a free-lance journalist to fly from France to New Zealand, then to Fiji, then to his island, and finally to take the trip through the jungle to his village to find him. He did find him there, he had put on too much weight and was out of shape. He took him back to France and he started playing again. He was bigger, a little slower but still great. They had to move him to the centres because he wasn't as quick.

This version of the story of Caucau is such an important one for those within the rugby world who are thinking about contracting Fijians. Very similar versions of the story are to be found in New Zealand, Australia, England and France[27]. Like the Fijian version of this myth it identifies the Fijian man as a natural talent, sitting in the wilderness of Fiji waiting to be found by a resourceful New Zealander. The natural athleticism of Fijians gives instant reward, regardless of the competition. Faster, stronger, and more powerful, Caucau was spoken of as being able to score points at will. Yet, Caucau was the prototypical Fijian in another sense. His raw athleticism was matched by a similarly raw lack of reliability and professionalism. He was unable to fit in with team structures. These deficiencies persisted despite the best interventions of the club, and despite how simple the job of integrating into the club was made. Clubs often think that, like him, Fijians are unable to learn team work, and are incapable of acting in a professional manner. Again these characteristics are believed by many coaches to be inherent to the Fijian way of life and ethos.

[27] Niko Besnier, personal correspondence

In my interviews about their hiring process, coaches, agents, managers and CEOs of major professional clubs had mixed responses to the potential of Fijians. Most had considered the option of recruiting a Fijian into their side, and all, at least fleetingly, mentioned the athletic potential that many Fijians were said to have. Yet, some also had strong reservations about hiring Fijians. For many coaches this perspective was fed into their practice of limiting their risk at any one time by explicitly only taking a few players from unknown and risky categories. In the words of one coach of a major professional team, in choosing the young players to be brought into the squad for the next year, the team would be:

> *'limiting ourselves to only three or four coconuts*[28] *[in the team], and only in certain positions on the field. I know you're not meant to say this stuff but it's true, and it's what you've got to look at as a coach… Can you make sure you don't reference me on this? It would look bad... They just can't fit in with team dynamics either, so they split off and have their own little groups. That's fine, if there's only a couple of them, but when there are too many then it starts to divide the team in two. And they just can't learn the plays and learn the structures. You see it less in the guys who were born over here, but it's still there...*
>
> *It's not actually a racist thing. There are some of the white guys in our team that we have to treat the same way, making sure they have extra time to learn the plays and explain all the structures. It's something about what they've been taught. I mean the most experienced players at international level, the Tana Umagas and Toutai Kefus*[29]*, I wouldn't count them as being one of the dark boys, if they've got the experience and the knowledge of what to do...*
>
> *That's why we make them come to clubs here in the local competition, we keep an eye on them, and talk to the coaches. If they can't learn, then it doesn't matter how good they are physically, we're not going to take them.'*

This is an explicit example of the system of profiling of players' potential that exists in recruitment. When asked about what qualities they would require from a Fijian

[28] Affectionate/derogatory term for the pacific island players
[29] TanaUmaga played for the All Blacks for the best part of a decade, whilst TotaiKefu played for the Wallabies for a half a decade.

player before they were hired, various managers and coaches mentioned repeatedly '*intelligence*', '*professionalism*', '*ability to fit in*', or '*ability to learn*'. Essentially, what was in question was the Fijians ability to integrate themselves into team culture. They were seen as potentially disruptive to the squad. There was a concern that they would not fulfil their own potential because of the lack of professionalism and an inability to learn. When I interrogated this idea it became clear that there was a common expectation that Fijians would not be aware of how to act as a “professional”, arriving late, not eating properly, not preparing properly, not having the correct attitudes to training or to matches; and, that Fijians were less capable of learning the basic strategic knowledge needed.

In this recruitment policy the understood naturalness of the Fijian talent is still desired, but their lack of previous participation in the western systems means that they have not been produced as low-risk labour. We see from the coach's second comment that this is the case also for other groups who are similarly without professional training or the expected performance of expertise. However the political climate of Australia and New Zealand would not allow for such policies to be expressed in public. Within New Zealand there have already been scandals with professional coaches being accused of racism in their selection policies.

Fijian players are evaluated partially in terms of the dominant perception of the body culture said to be associated with Fijians rather than specifically with the player. As shown in the work of Hokuwhitu (various), and Teaiwa and Mallon 2005, this stereotyping is enhanced by the particular constructions of “pacific culture” within Australia and New Zealand. Pacific Islanders have long been

imagined as being strong, fast, physical but ill-disciplined and unintelligent – a savage warrior image heavily influenced by colonial histories. In addition there is the almost inescapable association between Fijians and rugby sevens, the form of the sport which they play so well – taken as an indication both of their abilities in creative, free-running positions, but also of their lack of ability in more structured situations. Yet, far and away the most commonly cited source of negative "information" about Fijians comes from a single story. Despite playing by ostensibly the same rules, each country has its own particular style and ethos on and off the field. The Pacific Rim nations are thought to play an open and expansive style of play, where players are free to throw multiple passes and risk daring attack; whilst the northern hemisphere teams prefer a more structured slow game, with the emphasis on slowly wrestling the physical advantage from the opposition through defensive tactics. These stylistic and cultural features also become mapped onto the players during contract negotiations, as stereotypes about playing styles and off-field temperaments come into calculation when deciding on the next recruit (Maguire 2008). In this context, Fijian players are known for their attacking flair, their speed and power, and their poor ability to play in any organised or structured way.

In the words of one coach, 'Pacific Islanders are just physically different to other people, and can outperform most other guys on strength and power things. The few guys here have been very impressive in the gym and in speedwork almost straight away. There are differences between them too, and Fiji seems to produce guys with a good eye for space. The Samoans like running over people, but the Fijians prefer to find a way around them.' This reputation constructs the value and employability of the Fijian rugby players. Their reputations for flair will enable

wingers[30] to be regarded as attractive recruitment opportunities; they are believed to be fast strong and dynamic ball runners, and clubs are willing to pay for this, even if they don't know the player. The best Fijian wingers enjoy superstar status and the pay cheques which go with this, and are offered many more contracts. By contrast the presumed lack of organisation and structured play means that Fijian tight-five[31] players, and five-eighths[32] are less appealing on the foreign market. They are not expected to have developed the appropriate skills to play these positions at the highest levels, and players will normally have to prove these skills to prospective teams. Coaches, managers and CEOs regard Fijians as high-risk but potentially high-reward prospects. They don't go looking for reliable Fijians, but rather for the x-factor.

These experiences and stories of other Fijians become part of the knowledge commonly held in the rugby system. When coaches come to make an evaluation of a prospective Fijian player they will use their normal tools for player evaluation; physical attributes like size, strength and speed will be measured using testing; game analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, will provide insight into the player's skills and strategic abilities. Yet, when it comes time to assess the player's potential these initial observations will be tempered by the underlying perceptions they have of Fijians. Crucially the outsider's myth positions the Fijian culture as a negative thing. The raw physical talent is undeveloped or even developed in problematic ways by the Fijian system. The Fijian myth sees the opposite, with Fijian potential only able to be fully realised through its cultivation.

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30 "winger", pronounced wing-er, are the players who stand near the edges of the fields. They will often receive the ball as the last player in a move, and are required to be swift and elusive enough to run through the space created and score tries.

31 The tight-five are responsible for scrums and lineouts. Both these areas of rugby involve the co-ordination of eight people, and the subsequent development of specialist skills

32 Five-eighths (called other names in different parts of the world) are the teams play makers, and are required to direct play and make tactical decisions.

Here we see the mechanisms for this translating into monetary value. Caucau is a myth that gives Fijians hope, but positions them within the global player market with a visibility as high-risk high-reward commodities. This helps define their price as highly available, but unreliable sources of talent. Any signs of athleticism will be taken as signs of greater potential, but clubs also read this as being very uncertain potential – liable never to be realised due to difficulties in cultural transition.

At some levels this seems to be the speculation on the value of bodies. All bodies are somewhat diminished to the talent read within them, and young men recruited to far off places for the potential value latent in their bodies. Yet, recruitment by many coaches takes into account far more than bodies in this decision. I view prefer to ambiguity which the coaches have in understanding Fijian bodies as a result of a nervousness in placing trust in foreign systems, which are known more through myths than experience. The players' talents are not known, they can't be trusted, and their experience is not highly valued. When speculating on which player might ensure the future of your club this ambiguity can be crucial. To understand the opportunities of Fijians, we must have a better understanding of the recruitment process.

Balancing a Team on Paper: Recruitment Planning

Choosing a squad is one of the main skills of a coach and club CEO. It involves the processes of player evaluation; that of balancing talent, experience and player costs to ensure short and long term success; and that of contract negotiation. I deal with these each in turn.

I have only been present at two contract negotiations, and a handful of informal discussions about this with agents, coaches and CEOs. All of these have been

negotiations about my own value, my own potential as a professional player. It proved difficult to be present at the ethnographic moment of the decision making process for other players. Instead, I have relied upon interviews with four head coaches or former head coaches, four managers, two player agents, two CEOs of professional clubs, and countless players about the process of negotiating a contract. This is coupled with observation of the ongoing techniques and practices of player evaluation. These might be condensed to the key ideas of talent, trust and experience. Coaches are able to recruit those players who have all three with almost absolute reliability; with these players, risk is minimised.

Coaches and agents look at players' bodies, persons and histories for evidence of their skills, athletic talent and suitability for the team. Some recruitment decisions involve little risk; coaches looking for a specific type of athlete are already confident about a particular player's ability to be that. At other times the coaches are more speculative, taking a bet that the latent potential they see in a certain player will be realised at their club. With the restrictions of club finances, competition rules and labour laws this is a high risk endeavour. The key people in this process are the head coaches, CEOs and agents. These evaluate the needs of the clubs, and recruit those who they believe are best to do the job. They use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative techniques to gather information on prospective players.

The idea of "talent" revolves around a perception that players have particular qualities, co-produced by genetics, socialisation and training. Therefore, these talents came with the player and could be utilised at whichever club was willing to pay for them. Summarising the responses of the various people within professional rugby union I identified four components of "talent" which were used

for recruitment: athleticism, involving measurements of strength, speed and bodily size, as well as subjective judgements based on appearance; skills, which gauged the level of competency at the specialist techniques of the sport, sometimes measured through game-play metrics (e.g. scrum wins); strategic vision, which was almost purely a subjective judgment of a players tactical knowledge; and professionalism, which encompassed their attitudes to training, matches and the sport of rugby in general.

Players already established within the professional system play in matches frequently seen by coaches. Their abilities and marketing potential are more easily assessed by a coach, who is able to see how they have performed in a relatively similar environment. Their skills and potential can be easily compared to others; their ability to “fit into” professional culture is well established. They are the “finished products” of professional rugby; seasoned professionals who have already learnt the requisite skills and body culture of professionalism; their potential is thought to be certain, or at least easily read by coaches. The extreme of this are those players a coach has coached before. Almost always a coach will bring a few players with him when he moves clubs. These players are well known to the coach, and he will be able to trust not only that they have the required skills, but also that they will understand his style of coaching. Indeed they will be able to help him explain this to the other players in the club. They are the opposite of the Fijian “raw talent”; their talents are not only developed, they are also known, and they have the added value of experience.

For players who were unknown coaches tended to fall back on their subjective interpretation of “raw talent” in particular players. These were understood as the latent physical potential and partially developed talents they possessed, but which

needed good training in order to cultivate them to the professional level. This focussed on the unrealised, unpolished, unrefined nature of some players' skills and athleticism. Many coaches believed that there was no substitute for raw talent, and would spend a lot of time and money looking for those players who had something special about them. 'Ironically, sports commentary and coaching are strongholds of obsolete and essentialist thinking—racism and faith in "talent" which borders on genetic pre-destinationism.' (G. Downey 2012). Talent, cast in the broadest possible terms to include qualities such as professionalism, is commodified.

One discussion with a club official in charge of recruitment and player development revealed much about his methods for evaluating player's talent and team contribution. He opened an excel spreadsheet that mapped out much of the information they used to make these decisions on current players value. This spreadsheet was a tool aimed at quantifying the on-field contribution of the player. It gave me a good idea as to how the official viewed the needs of the club. The spread sheet provided details on the existing squad of players' ages, cost to the club, performance, total minutes played that year, position on the field and information on the length of the contract.

Each position was assessed by a different set of metrics of performance. For instance he evaluated the front row, consisting of three individual on-field positions of loose-head prop, tight-head prop and hooker, in terms of the number of ball carries a match, number of metres won, but, most of all, percentage scrum wins whilst they were on the field. In these positions, he said, 'we really just want them to win the scrums. If they can be going forward with the ball, or get the odd offensive tackle in then that is great. But look at [player x], he's dynamic, but just

doesn't get the job done at scrum time. We can't have him as our full time starter. We'd much prefer to get someone in who can consistently win us ball.'

As I probed the metrics used for other positions I found a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures of performance. For some positions, such as second row, there was an emphasis on quantifiable performance indicators (lineout percentage, tackles made, ruck involvements, carries per match). For other positions, such as flyhalf (number 10 in other nomenclature) there was an emphasis on an 'ability to read the game' 'to create things for others'. In regards to this position, the story he kept coming back to here was of how he "found" a talented player at a small local amateur club. He was there to look at someone else, but when he saw this kid play he 'just knew there was something special. Something in the way he controlled the game, and could see opportunities. It was like nothing I'd seen before at that level. I talked to him straight after the match and took his name to the [professional] club's manager. Three years later he's playing internationally. Sometimes there's just talent there.' For other positions he emphasised physical attributes. For instance, in describing why his number 8 was just irreplaceable he only mentioned this player's 'freakish size and strength', producing paraphrases and synonyms when elaborating.

The popular book and movie *Money Ball* (2003) has documented the move towards more systematic, quantified recruitment processes in baseball – the power of data to provide more accurate insights. This shift towards statistical analysis of a player's past performances and a modelling of their future contribution is found increasingly common within rugby union. The techniques of match analysis have increased and now incorporate video and data analysis of each match, easily quantifying various performance metrics such as metres run

with the ball, dominant tackles, just to name a few. As described in the professionalism chapter, there is a large emphasis on the measurement and development of players' physical attributes throughout the rugby academies and professional sides; athletically gifted players are identified early and players are continually evaluated on their physical attributes. However, for the main part the recruitment process remains fairly dominated by subjective judgements on a player's potential. Coaches rely largely on their subjective reading of the games to determine whether a player fits well into the team structures and strategies.

The second key process in recruiting for a team is balancing the team, in order to find the right mix of players to suit the game plan and come in under the budget restrictions and salary caps (which almost all competitions impose on clubs to ensure a more even competition). To explain this process the club official began by showing me the breakdown of expenditure on each group of positions, and on the players within it. Certain positions, tight-head prop, number 10, number 8, are regarded in his game plan as key positions, worth spending more money on. By his assessment, a brilliant player in these positions could be the difference between winning and losing. Other positions, second row, hooker, for instance, are not going to win matches for the team, and so are not paid as highly. His spreadsheet clearly broke down the expenditure on each group of positions, making it easy for him to point out areas where he was over-spending. He also used the spreadsheet to highlight a recruitment strategy he regarded as a waste of money – the hiring of middle range players to cover for an expensive player. This practice was common in the balancing practices of many teams, who liked to have a good quality back up should their star be unavailable. Showing me the breakdown of cost per minute played, he emphasised how these players ended up

becoming even more expensive than a good player, but without really providing much “value” to the team. Instead it was better to have very cheap players in the squad to free up money for the big spends elsewhere.

Balancing also involves an assessment on the amount of experience in the squad, and whether this would be sufficient to ensure a successful team culture, and to help develop the younger players. For instance when discussing the selection of wingers and fullbacks, this official described how the current fullback was very experienced, but in addition to him the club only had two very young, potentially very talented wingers on long term contracts. As the experienced fullback was going to be at the club for three more years, and they expected the young players to be very good in the future, they were willing to hire in someone as a temporary measure, for a high amount of money, to play for one season. He was hopeful that the younger players would learn from this player and be able to take over the following year; the experienced players performed a role as part of the disciplining regime for younger players, helping coaches unlock their potential skills and athleticism. The head coach must not only plan for one season, but must recruit to ensure that the club remains strong for several years to come.

In contract negotiations a coach must take into account not only the value of the player as he perceives it, but also the value of the player on the open market. In practice these contract negotiations done predominantly through player agents, who not only have more information about the market than most players, but also form somewhat of a social buffer between players and club officials who otherwise have to work together. This is important as these negotiations can be fairly heated, with big decisions being made about very short, highly precarious playing careers. One story in particular highlights this. The official who told me it had recently been

part of the contract renegotiation of a close friend of his. This player had been at the club for five years and had performed well for all of this time becoming one of the team's leaders. However, he was getting old. In the words of this official, 'he is competing well at the moment, but he's 34 and will only get worse from here. The negotiations have been going on for weeks now. At the start he came to us and was demanding a pay rise. He's already getting way more from us than he's worth on the open market... and will only be worth less and less in the future. We told him we weren't willing to offer what he wanted... It's always the same, the players they hear from their agents "this club or that club they want you and are willing to pay"; the agents are saying the same to us, telling us that their player is worth far more and is wanted everywhere. But the truth is that when push comes to shove very few clubs are actually going to pay a lot for one of these guys. When he came back to the club a few weeks later we knew he didn't have much else. We offered him less money and a contract for one year only. It hurt him. But he'd brought it on himself.' This story exemplifies the tensions between different values. The manager considers player's market value, the potential to contribute onfield to the team strategy, contribution to the team culture, and their own personal relationship with the individual. In this particular case the calculation was made in a way that prioritised the market value of the player. The alternative valuation of the social contribution the player made to club culture and his past achievements in consolidating that culture were downplayed. The moral justification for this was that the players themselves had initiated this particular line of negotiation by demanding a pay rise on the basis of outside interest.

Creating Certainty in a Player's Talent

Even the developed talent of a seasoned professional is difficult for the coaches to describe, let alone quantify One moment when this is frequently evidenced is during a change of coach at a club or national team, when there is also normally a significant change in the players who are selected to start each match. The new coaches evaluate players' contributions very differently, and also regard some of these contributions as being unneeded in new game plans. Focussing on the decisions of the coaches highlights the balance they have to take between uncertainty, risk and potential when evaluating any prospective player. For this contracting to occur a player must be known to a coach, their potential must be recognised, and the coach must trust that this player will be able to realise that potential at his club. In this view, a player's value is constantly changing as the coach sees more of a player and learns more about their history, or alternatively drifts out of the networks the coach relies upon for information. It is less that these networks allow potential or developed talent to be seen, but rather that they allow a coach to trust that what they are seeing is indeed talent.

Within sports migration studies the concept of visibility has become a popular way to move past an essentialisation of "talent" or "skills" as commodities to be traded by athletes. Much of the existing work within sports migration literature has focussed on the macro-level relations between the Global North and the Global South, producing accounts which emphasise 'neo-colonial exploitation and an active underdevelopment' (Agergaard & Engh 2013, p. 3); practices, such as the establishment of football farms in west African nations, which undermine the local sporting infrastructure by continually extracting "talents" to play in the leagues of Europe. Instead, through the lens of visibility, the mobility of an individual migrant will not depend so much on their skills, but rather the extent to which these are

recognised, valued and desired by a potential employer. There are still power relations between places, as it is the visibility within certain localities which will allow contracts. Engh and Agergaard follow Carter (2011) in seeing visibility as a “commodity”, to be created and used by the athletes, rather than being a quality inherent to them (2013:8).

Rather than describe visibility as a “commodity”, I would like to regard it as being a quality of the relationship between a specific athlete and a specific recruiter. In understanding recruitment decisions, visibility is based on the awareness of a player’s existence, which is enhanced when a player plays in a higher profile team or competition; but it also determined by whether or not a coach can see the potential in a particular player. For this reason, in my own analysis I use the term “trust” rather than that of “visibility”, as I am approaching the analysis from the perspective of the coaches, and as such am interested in how they evaluate athletes.

Certain national programs, clubs and even schools have developed their brand to such an extent that it too can act as certify that a coach can indeed trust a player. Each club has its own development systems through which talented players are identified, trained and tested. Schools, amateur or smaller professional clubs (normally geographically close by) will act as feeders for these teams. The coaches of the professional team will liaise with the local coaches to ensure that there is continuity in player development and training styles. The rugby player development systems of New Zealand and Australia are centrally coordinated by the national governing bodies, and designed to produce professional players. Passing through these systems gives men credibility as players, and teaches them the language and bodily comportment of this expertise. These pathways are

aimed at teaching professionalism, at turning the “raw talent” into a player who the coach is able to trust. Coaches are able to recognise the latent talent in players from backgrounds they understand – these players will have similar qualities to those they have seen earlier, and they are confident that they know how to improve upon the parts of the person which are lacking in order to bring out their full potential. However this system falls down when coaches are judging players who come from different backgrounds. These have not undertaken the same development pathways and their strengths and weaknesses tend to lie outside of the norms within which the coaches and CEOs make their judgements of value (Downey 2012). The Fijian recognition of schools as important recruitment pathways reflects this opportunity.

This means that the final way of being seen by a professional club is through a larger, but less trusted system of agents and scouts. These will have varying levels of relationships to the club and coach. Some agents are part of large firms which not only represent many players, but also many coaches. They are full time professionals at this job, normally with either qualifications in law or management, or a background in professional sports. These will attract a fairly high level of trust, as long term reputational loss to the firm will result from any obviously poor recommendations. Good agents always try to be aware of every club’s needs. They have an idea of which players are coming off contract at the end of each season, and who on their books might be available to fill the vacant position. Agents are in constant contact with multiple clubs passing them information on their players, and trying to establish a visibility and market value for each of their players. The relationships between the player agents and the club managers/coaches/CEOs can be mutually beneficial or strained. Most agents

spoke of trying to maintain very strong relationships with the clubs. However, the clubs often felt misled by agents, who were regarded as artificially inflating the price of the players by inventing interested parties overseas, who often did not exist.

Others, particularly player scouts, will traverse the globe looking for young men with the potential to win games single handedly, and bring these to the attention of the largest, richest and most powerful clubs of the global north. These men could be the “raw talent”, with great potential, but they are highly unknown. Particularly in Australia and New Zealand, where the professional clubs are restrained by caps on the number of players allowed in their squad, and restricted in the type of contract they are able to offer due to powerful player unions, there is little scope for taking a long shot on an unknown potential talent. At this level recruitment becomes more of a risk. The players are young and unproven, and, more importantly, it is unknown how they will adjust to the professional rugby environment.

This directly impacts upon players’ market values. Coaches look for signs that they can rely upon the potential they see in a player being realised. For agents and player managers the recruitment then becomes simplified. They know that, regardless of a player’s technical abilities or physical prowess, an untested player from outside of the standard systems will not be contracted by a major club. In the short term these players are valueless. In the words of one of the most prominent player agents in New Zealand:

> *'We won't take a player onto our books who hasn't gone to school in New Zealand, or hasn't already been playing for years at a club here, so we can check out everything with his agent. With the schools doing so much recruitment and giving out so many scholarships it's making it a*

> *lot easier for us. These guys, who would otherwise grow up in South Auckland, or communities in the middle of no-where, come to the big schools, where they're taught how to learn and listen, and work hard. They learn how to play rugby too, and what it's like to be a professional.*

The result is that Fijian athletes will need a lot of cultural work if they are going to be able to enter a professional club and fulfil their athletic potential. It is only if they can show that they have the ability to realise their potential, that they will be signed. Australian or New Zealand born players have many paths to prove their potential to agents, through feeder schools and rugby academies. The Fijian alternative pathway to gain the sort of professional-rugby-cultural-capital required in order to prove their ability to adapt to the professional environment is through years of dedicated performance for one of the senior amateur or semi-professional clubs. The difficulty with this route is that it requires years of playing without financial reward. Given the time commitment required for training, this realistically requires an extensive social capital, a social support network (potentially the extended kinship group or Fijian diaspora). This support network then becomes crucial to the young Fijian men.

Conclusion: Value Systems and Evaluation of People

The "rugby dream" of playing professional rugby involves a commonly held idea that Fijians have a potential in their bodies to be great rugby players – if some luck, or the will of god will give them the chance. Within Fiji, young men may be valued as members of their communities by their living out an embodiment of key ideas of masculinity and community. However, the coaches and clubs of the global north are not used to assessing players from alternative backgrounds. Often they

fall back upon racial stereotypes and generalisations, having little information with which to distinguish between the personal character of a player and that same player's cultural background. Fijians are regarded as unfinished products full of potential. The assessments of coaches, agents and CEOs determine the opportunities and salaries available to Fijians. These decisions are made in the context of a balance of the x-factor and reliability; potential and risk. This reflects a larger contradiction integral to market-oriented professionalization. --- the sport needs to be run professionally, but it cannot become a standardized predictable profession like engineering. It needs surprise, needs excitement, needs heterodoxy. It needs to be able to take the best raw potential and realising this talent. The gateways and pathways of the Fijians are about taming the raw, professionalizing them, and reconciling the manageable with surprising, therefore maximizing their value.

This is the nature of the global system of professional rugby; uniformity is developed by the expansion of the power of central discourses of "professionalism", driven by the central drive towards competition. This system sees players as goods to be developed, marketed and transferred around the world. The academy and school systems serve as sites where these bodies are disciplined to such an extent that they can easily be evaluated, bought and utilised by clubs. Even the language of "finished products" and "raw talents" indicates the way this is viewed partly as a production line.

Yet, the drive for the 'x' factor that will enhance the team's market potential also forces the uneasy accommodation of difference in the pursuit of competitive advantage. From one side, intangible qualities of "team" are beyond the market valuation of individualised talent, and sought instead in cultural unity and cohesion

and style; from the other, clubs work to understand and utilise the talents of players produced by and for completely different social environments. The best coaches and teams are not only those who can recognise talent already ‘visible’ in the market, but also bring it out in all their players in ways that complement that original visibility. The entails considerable risk and experimentation on the part of coaches and clubs. Many teams now are seeking Pacific Island players not stripped of their culture to suit market visibility, but rather those who in the strength of their cultural difference may offer new perspectives on team and belonging. This can be a difficult process, and it is to this that I now turn.

PART 3 – FIJIANS IN PROFFESSIONAL RUGBY

Chapter 7: Mental, Physical and Spiritual Qualities of Fijian Rugby Professionalism

> *Once we get our players to turn up, physically, mentally and spiritually, then we have a chance against the other sides. Physically we don't match NZ or Australia. Mentally we are way behind, but the only place we can match these teams is spiritually. That way we are together. To develop that was to have a Lotu every night… I do my own time with God, I do fasting and praying. I look for knowledge. The Bible says in Proverbs 1:7 –"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge". That knowledge is what I seek so I can relate it to the team*

Head Coach, Fijian Rugby Team 2011

> *They are an interesting people, because, and to this day, they will take the easy option every time. The reason they don't succeed in most things is that they will take the soft option every time and then they will hide behind God. They don't put the work in and they don't get the result, but they would just keep turning back to religion to explain this failing. I used to say to them, "boys, what's going to happen today, we're feeling good, Samoa is feeling good, we're both praying to the same guy… so who do you think is going to win?*

Head Coach, Fijian Rugby Team 2006

This is the story of two very different ways of understanding the world, and understanding the game of rugby. One sees the power of religious practice and devotion to spirituality to affect the result of the game. In turn it imagines this devotion as part of a communal practice. The other sees these very same practices as barriers to success in rugby, and, in some ways as being as immoral as they are naïve. Here, to simplify, the difference signifies the different

backgrounds of the two coaches: the first coach was an indigenous Fijian who had represented Australia in rugby, but had returned to the Fijian coaching job with a strong focus on religion; the other was a New Zealand coach, who had attempted to instil the values and practices of professional culture into the Fijian team. The result is one peculiarly Fijian mode of professionalism, which combines communalism and religion with the body culture of professionalism.

I focus particular attention on the practices and beliefs of the Fijian national teams, which brings together coaches from Fiji and the west, players from the villages and those raised in the cities and schools of New Zealand. Here a fascinating entanglement has developed due to the predominance of Fijian born and raised players in a context heavily influenced by rugby professionalism. This sees a unique mix of neo-traditional values, especially of religiosity and sociability, and those of professionalism. Players discipline their bodies and minds, and have developed a variety of practices and meanings which are a mixture of those common in professional clubs with those of Fijian spirituality. Whilst sometimes these practices are complementary, for instance in their mutual disregard for the use of alcohol, they often compete for players' time. More importantly perhaps, at times they explicitly compete as ways of understanding the world, with the logics of each at times subtly undermining those of the other. Both have adjusted to employ Fijian hierarchies and modes of relating to convey their messages. In this context the weight of numbers can empower Fijian values, allowing space for particularly Fijian forms of professionalism. This alternative professionalism is couched in communalism and the power of God.

Forging a Professional Team Through Shared Religious Practice

The coordination of collective activity, the bringing together of different individuals with different motivations, and the creation of a collective purpose are some of the key challenges for rugby teams. During overseas tours, during which players and staff spend almost every waking moment of the day in the team environment, this becomes even more important. In 2011 the Fijian rugby governing body sent what they viewed as a development team for a tour of Australia and New Zealand the team. The side mainly consisted of players based in the Fijian domestic competition, or those who were overseas, but not contracted with major professional teams. The aim then was to uncover new players, and introduce them to the standards of play and preparation required of them at the international level, so that these practices and knowledge could be used as the basis for the bringing together of Fijian team. Explicitly the coaches waned to teach the techniques, body culture and attitudes that those players who did have contracts in major professional teams would already know. In a sense the idea was to teach the young Fijians professionalism, through just over a month of emersion. Yet, the form of professionalism which emerged from this tour was very different from what I had experienced and witnessed at other clubs: it was a particularly Fijian form of professionalism.

Part of this was that the professionalism taught by the coaches was not immediately learnt by the players. There was the slow process of adjustment to the expectation of punctuality. Many players were not used to having times set by a schedule, and were late to trainings or dinner regularly at the start. The head coach had to call a team meeting where, at length, he extolled the importance of these practices. After this a new system developed where players would actually all remind and collect each other to make sure that everyone arrived on time – an

interesting adaptation to the western requirement for precise time keeping, which utilised the Fijian practice of coordination through communal action. There had also been difficulty for many players in adapting to styles of play which required novel, nuanced, predetermined and coordinated movements of players. When I interviewed them, they spoke of being confused at first but having finally figured out the system, yet when I spoke to the coaches, they identified that in fact they were still regularly frustrated by what they viewed as very stupid decisions made by players on the field ; decisions which were completely outside the dictated system of play.

However, the far bigger difference was that so much of the everyday practices and ideologies within the team were overtly Christian, based upon the need to have God influencing the side. In Fiji churches are normally very much centred on the building of relationships between members of the community. As chapter two showed, *lotu* has become a core of contemporary Fijian society and cultural forms. It is imagined as part of the essential core of traditional Fijian life, but also as a powerful force of modernity. Rugby and rugby players are experienced and framed in these terms. In everyday practice, this manifested itself in frequent prayers, hymns and references to god both formally and informally at the Lomaiviti club in Suva. There rugby was regularly imagined as an act of worship, which enhances, displays and celebrates the physical and spiritual gifts that God has bestowed upon young men. Throughout Fiji religious ceremonies and symbols are very common within the team environment. Religion influences the way teams bond, how players conceive of their identity, rugby and the world, and their off-field behaviours and resource use. During my fieldwork with the Fijian national team, religion and religious rituals were used as a way of bonding the Fijian team

Figure 7.1 The Fijian Development team says a prayer at the start of a training in New Zealand

together. For the Fijian national team, religion can be the core of preparations and understanding of rugby. I identify two key parts to this process, firstly the importance of these rituals and beliefs as a source of team solidarity and team building; and secondly, team members are religious, and place a lot of trust, hope and effort in God, particularly in times of uncertainty.

Religion is seen and used as a basis for building a strong team. A prominent part of this was the regular spiritual rituals which players liked to undertake themselves. There was a team church service and bible study every evening, in addition to the prayers and songs at training and matches. Many players said that they prayed, read the bible, and worshiped as best as they could every day. Group prayers were led by one person within the group, normally the *talatala* (priest) and

occasionally the coach, or a selected player. The prayers addressed the material and psychological difficulties of peoples' lives, and posited God as a solution to these problems. These prayer and worship sessions were highly ritualised, that is formalised and formulated along a particular structure and pattern of action, and sacralised, set apart in the day's events. These formal aspects of the rituals add to the bonding effect, producing a group way of thinking and sense of togetherness (Bell 1992). To a large extent it is a formalised process which doesn't allow for individual spontaneity. It acts to reinforce the hierarchy, both by its cohesive role, the partnership between the official rugby and religious authority figures, and by the use of biblical passages and authority to reinforce the views of the management. . The songs, ceremonies and sermons formed a commonly shared history and understanding of the world. Players described feeling more united together by their shared beliefs and traditions. In this way it was similar to the cultural practices of other rugby teams, which emphasise solidarity between different levels of the structure.

This communal worship represented a different style, which brought players a different spiritual feeling, and a different group feeling. They felt protected by God through prayer. Many players described how these songs also reminded them of the time they spent with their families singing and worshiping together. As such it kept the homesickness in the minds of the players, but also at bay, in some ways easing the burden by replicating the culture of home. There were only a handful of songs sung by the Fijian teams. These remained the same over the years, and formed part of the ritual of the group. In this way, there was symbolic efficacy in these occasions, reminding players of their bonds to God and their duties to their

families. These duties emphasised the group concerns over that of individual prestige.

The non-Fijian raised players, who had only ever been the minority in the team, were often not affected by religion in the same way; they often did not understand the Fijian language well enough to pick up on the main points of the sermons; they rarely knew the songs, though they often learnt these quickly; and they almost never had the same set of beliefs and memories drawn into their minds by these services. For some this represented a barrier to their total involvement in the team, and registered the ritual as a frustrating encumbrance to their day. However most saw the motivating and bonding effect it had on their team mates, and took this as evidence enough of its value; and for some it represented an opportunity to engage with their heritage in ways that might not have been available to them before. In their reactions we can begin to see the important differences with “team culture” found in other professional environments. The explicit project of team cohesion is universal, perhaps even driven by international pressure and competition, but the nature of Fijian solution is a parallel to the NZ and Australian practices. To understand this fully we need to examine the role of religion for the individual within these professional Fijian teams.

Over and over I encountered a Fijian idiom that rugby has three parts: the mental, the physical and the spiritual. For many of the informants, such as the Fijian Head Coach of the opening quote, the act of praying before the match was not a mental preparation but a spiritual one. He commented on the importance of maintaining their relationship with God, of ‘preparing spiritually for the game’ and of being able to make up for deficiencies in material conditions and even skill through spirituality. The Christian God, to them, is a powerful agent in this rugby world. He

is capable of not only controlling the aspects of life defined as being "uncontrollable" by western professional rugby culture and knowledge, but even controlling those aspects that might be said to be part of the physical "real" (and professionalised) world. In this Fijian understanding, spirituality and God are real components of the sport. They are potent. In the Lomaiviti team and the Fijian national team there were moments where the team paused for group prayers before trainings and even during trainings, where, on the whole, there is no risk. These pauses were chances for mental refocussing, but they also involved an element separate from mentally preparing, as the purpose is not to ready the mind to best be able to use the body, but rather an entirely different source of power, lying outside of the individual.

This is experienced as a tension within the national side, with the Fijian head coach coming into conflict with the professional coaches hired from Australia to consult on the rugby side of the operation. At times trainings were cancelled for prayers; the Australian coaches' attempts to develop players' understandings of their professional model of the game were at times undermined by the head coach's spiritual explanations of the team's faults. Whilst the Australians would prescribe training to focus on skill or tactical weakness, the coach would instead promote increased prayer, bible reading and communal worship sessions to improve the spiritual side of the game. One player even noted that the coach had said 'if you don't believe in God then you won't be on this team. That is one of the morals that we have. Other teams have other morals, but this is one for us'. The most profound impact of religion on the players occurs through the ways which religion alters their conceptions of the game. The core of these conceptions is that God is the source of individual and group strength. This plays out in a variety of

ways. Commonly God is claimed to be the source of strength. This is typically framed as a reason for humility and worship – their achievements shouldn't be a source of boasting or pride. Regularly players comment along the lines of: 'We believe that our strength comes from God. That is why it is important to do it [pray] every afternoon.' Players, when discussing their own individual or group efforts frequently slip into the rhetoric that it is only due to God's will that they had performed well. Upon scoring a try in rugby it is very common for Fijian players to point to heaven in an outward acknowledgment of God's role in their fortune.

A corollary of this is that bad occurrences, whether losses, poor individual play or injuries, are a result of insufficient religiosity within the side or actions against God. This line of religious reasoning is reasonably common amongst the players. They would cite times that they had slipped away from their beliefs and values, and point to a series of bad events. They would also do this for major events – the devastating earthquakes in Christchurch, which killed many people and levelled large portions of the city, were blamed by some of the players on a lack of religion in NZ and a widespread societal acquiescence to practices such as homosexuality. Prayer and spiritual diligence rather than training would become the answer to team problems. This poses a challenge for the logic of professionalism, which sees the results of matches as being largely the result of absolute dedication and detail in the preparation of player and team.

Accommodating a Belief in the Power of God in Professionalism

Christianity is a communal practice based on the belief in a powerful God, and as such can influence the logics, values, meanings and motivations of Fijians in all

aspects of their lives. Due to its role as a unifying cultural practice, religion has been either accepted or actively encouraged by the coaching staff of the Fijian teams. At times it may reinforce the professional culture, particularly as a moral justification for obedience. However, there is an underlying tension between the Christianity of Fijians and the professional culture which the coaches try to implement.

Sport and religion have been compared by a number of different authors. There are commonalities in their function and content, diverting people from their daily lives with structured performances which provide heroes to admire, elicit emotional responses and build community sentiments. However, sport does not explain humanity's place in the universe. In his analysis of the relation between the two Carter notes that after September 11 sporting contests were postponed in the USA as they were regarded as inappropriate, whilst people turned to religion in increasing numbers (Carter 2012, p. 147). Clearly they play different roles in individuals' lives and in society as a whole. Broadly speaking religion scholars have regarded sport as an extension of a pre-modern ritualistic ceremony, but with less conceptual elaboration than in religion. In contrast, sports scholars have tended to see sports as the secularised more developed, modern variant of religion (See Carter 2012 for a literature review). Levi-Strauss (1962:30-33) saw both to be essentially functioning to create equality or hierarchy in society. Games as events create hierarchies from equality; rituals create equality from hierarchy. All of these approaches rightly point to the ability of sport and religion to bind people together and differentiate them. These aspects have been well dealt with elsewhere in this thesis. However the Fijian experience of rugby brings together

key qualities of both sport and religion, equality (or perhaps better) community and hierarchy. Fijian rugby thus offers an original insight into this debate.

The ethnographic description of rugby indicates the ways in which the communal aspects of religion are used to create bonds between the players within the team in reference to their home village Christian rituals. In Fiji however, Christianity takes on a slightly different set of meanings in the club, as it is detached from strong links to particular traditional sites, and is more closely bound to broader cultural identities. In rugby, spirituality is expressed by some through the club and game itself. Frequently my informants, including some of those who regularly attended church, spoke of 'rugby as being a religion', and in one case as 'going to church every night at training'. The ubiquitous Christian rituals and references keep the familiar ideals of *lotu* close to the minds of those training, but this reflects a fundamental difference in the substance of their spirituality. Here the individual is being bound, through God, not to the structures of the church and the village, but to the team. The religious rituals reinforce the equality and commonality between the group, momentarily erasing the hierarchies between management and players and among players themselves. Simultaneously these rituals have deep psychological links to home and the values of home. Players reaffirm their identities through the rituals. For players who are overseas in professional clubs, religious rituals are part of a different identity project, being tied to nation building. Approaches which focus on the performative aspects of sporting events (e.g. Geertz 1958) are able to illuminate this by noting the values that are being expressed and produced through these events.

Often scholars see sport and religion as separate things, and disregard any incursion of religion into sports as ‘an anachronistic holdover because religious

beliefs are assumed to be incongruous with the technical rationality of modernity' (Carter 2012, p. 148). My ethnography shows not only the persistence of religious elements in sport, but also the creation of an alternative professionalism based, in part, around ideas of religious potency in the world, spirituality and worship through corporeal expression in sport. To some extent Gmelch (Gmelch 1992) addresses this by drawing attention to the range of fetishes and taboos which exist within professional baseball in the USA. His analysis shows that these practices, broadly cast as magic, are used to deal with the uncertainty of the game. They are used to help players feel control over the uncontrollable randomness of the games. Religion and modern sporting practice in this instance are not at odds, but rather relate to different domains; scientific sporting practices are used, but where there is still uncertainty and chance people employ magic. Seemingly irrational behaviours become rational. There is some extent to which prayer and other religious practices are used similarly to calm pre-match nerves in rugby. However, it seems clear, even from the quotes which start the chapter, that in reality the religious beliefs of the players pertain to more than just areas of luck. Pre-game prayers include God in the game, acknowledging that this activity is played in the sight of God and to honour God.

The religion-as-magic idea is fairly reflective of the general understandings and views held within professional rugby clubs in Australia and New Zealand. The professional culture provides the players with the direction for their conduct as professional rugby players; the individual's religious beliefs lie outside the domain of rugby as matters of personal taste and culture. Religious practices and symbols are permitted within the rugby environment only to aid an individual or small group of players' mental focus and preparation. In Auckland and the Brumbies clubs

Figure 7.2: Communal prayer between the Brumbies and Reds 11/4/2014: Source: http://www.greenandgoldrugby.com/reds-v-brumbies-2/

Individuals and groups of Pacific Island players will pray together before the matches, and even meet up to have bible studies. This is even encouraged by the clubs, who know the importance of this for their mental well-being.

In the case of the Brumbies, religion had become a clear symbol and practice of the Polynesian players within the team, including several Fijians. Many of these players would play with religious verses or symbols written on their strapping tape. On top of this, they would meet regularly, over coffee at a local café, for bible study as a group. Led by one of the players whose father was a pastor, this involved the reading of the bible and its meaning for them and their lives. At one of these bible study sessions which I attended, the players sat at a café and went through a series of readings. At the end they discussed some of what they were

going through in their lives, and said a prayer. Religion forms such a strong binding principle for these players that in a recent match against a rival Australian team, many of the players of Pacific Island heritage ended up praying together in the middle of the field at the end of the match. This was clearly an act of devotion, but also one that was purposefully positioned centrally and very visibly. In this particular instance it was likely that it was a gesture of solidarity for the victims of flooding and earthquakes in the Solomon Islands. A photo of this is above.

During the matches these Brumbies players would almost always signal towards to heaven, or even say a brief prayer when scoring a try. In this moment, which was a time for individual glory for some players, they chose to signal the role of God, shifting credit from themselves onto others. When asked about this action, my informants said that this was a reminder to them of God working through them in rugby. Comments such as: ‘I am blessed by God, and only achieve through his will’, were regular. It is also a reminder to the individual of their connection to Fiji, to family and to home. For one informant, pointing to the sky was actually pointing to his grandfather, who had passed away recently, remembering the role that this man had played in his life. These dual foci, family and God, were prevalent throughout the players understanding of themselves. Not to say that they didn’t recognise their own agency in the moment, or indeed the role of the many months of hard work of training. However, both of these were in turn inspired and energised by God and family.

There is a variety of ways of thinking about these activities, and players often expressed both the spiritual side and the mental side of their actions. Or indeed, a few players framed their own practices of prayer in terms of their mental focus on the game, as part of their personal pre-match routine. For instance one informant

explained that ‘It is a psychological thing. It’s a mental thing to get collected, to get yourself ready for the game’. This framing allows the practice to actually become part of the professional body culture; it is simply a technique for calming the nerves and getting prepared for the game. Perhaps for these players there was not the possibility of outside power coming to bear upon their lives.

However, the majority of players were adamant about the power of god to influence their lives; when discussing the material world, they referred to God’s will as a central powerful determinant of social and political events; when discussing their hopes and plans in rugby they used bible verses to explain their efforts and the role of fate. Both Gmelch’s analysis and the approach of professional clubs presume that the sanctity of the sporting domain will remain unthreatened; that is, that religion won’t enter into the thinking and practice of the parts of rugby which are thought to be controllable through the western professional rugby cultural complex. Essentially, they don’t recognise that for magic to be thought to be effective, it must also be powerfully meaningful for the participants. Religion of this sort challenges professional discourse because it is thought to impact even those ‘professionalised’ practices of the team.

Group Religion and Individual Control

The emphasis on the creation of group through religious values is heavily influenced by the Methodist tradition of Fiji. As well as the communal aspect of the ceremonies, rituals and sermons, this is also played out in subtler ways. For instance, at the start of the tour of Developing Players the Australian coaches introduced the idea of “sacrifice” as an important instrument of the self-

responsibility that was required by professional culture. In Christian teaching sacrifice is something offered to God as sign of humility and subservience. The ultimate sacrifice was the death of Christ as the 'sacrificial Lamb' to allow those of faith to renew a relationship with God. Christ condemned the ritual sacrifices of the Jews as stemming from pride rather than humility and called for mercy rather than sacrifice. The team management had transformed this idea from a sacrifice of one's life to God, to a sacrifice of the self for the team. By the players this was experienced as rhetoric, a way of understanding the importance the coaches placed upon this form of body culture. *Lotu* was used within the team to extoll this form of sacrifice. For instance, sermons targeted against irresponsible behaviours like drinking. However, this changed the rhetoric, and soon there was a common saying within the camp that 'obedience is better than sacrifice'. Individual self-control as an offering to God was reconfigured as obedience to team rules. In the particular example of the use of alcohol this had the effect of drastically curbing usage. However, it did undermine the core premise of professional culture of a self-responsible individual by twisting the religious meaning of Christian sacrifice. So the dedication of life's activities to the honour of God was presented as transformed into a self-negating obedience to team rules.

Outsiders often perceive hypocrisy in the behaviours of the highly religious Fijians in the team. Behaviours such as *kerekere* (demand sharing) were interpreted to be stealing and a lack of moral control. The coaches would comment upon this to me with amazement at how a group of people could spend so long praying, and then be so immoral. For instance, JP, one of the former coaches of Fiji of Anglo-New Zealand background, cited during an interview an incident on the night before a test match when one of the players was caught stealing from another and saw this

as exemplifying a superficial lip-service to the tenets of Christianity: ‘99% of the Fijians are very religious, and by that I mean they are perceived as being religious and go to church. Half of those don't listen to a word that is going on and head out and do whatever they would go to do.’

However, most of the Fijians didn’t experience this as hypocrisy, due to the communal function of religion mentioned before. Group worship in rituals of village or rugby team expressed and strengthened the communal commitment of all members. This was not always evident to players when they went overseas and participated in Christian worship there. Even when they were able to pray and attend church, this was very likely to be a very different experience for them. Individual prayers and even worship in western churches tended not to have this sense of communality, at least not to the same extent. The players observed that people overseas put a far greater stress on their behaviour and belief. For the Fijian players Christianity was thought to be about recognising the power of God and the importance of building a relationship with God and the community, rather than about correct behaviour and theology. Spirituality was expressed by dedication to prayer, church and bible verses, more than obedience to rules.

Most coaches, whether Fijians or outsiders, sought to control the extent of the religious practices, recognising that, left unchecked and in the presence of a particularly charismatic player with evangelistic tendencies, religion could take over the lives of the players. For instance, under a previous coaching regime prayers and songs were permitted before and after trainings and matches, but only of a certain length. The new foreign coaching staff tried to push the language and practices of religion out of the rugby domain, to restrict them to a role as personal preference. For the New Zealand head coach spirituality led to a

widespread willingness in Fijian culture to avoid personal responsibility through the reliance of explanations blaming others, including God. The rhetoric of self-responsibility, so important in professionalism, relies upon a belief in the individual's ultimate control of their own performance. Individual desire for success is channelled into hard work. Individual guilt generated in players when they fail to perform motivates future action. These mechanisms of motivation were both partly undermined by this brand of spirituality, with its emphasis on external, divine power. He described his time as coach as being constantly frustrated due to this attitude – players were too quick to say it was the will of God, rather than their own inability to work hard and with focus towards their goals:

> *I understand religion, but I feel they rely too much on that. God helps those who help themselves. They would pray so many times a day, and there are only so many hours in a day. They would pray morning tea time, afternoon tea time, supper and before going to bed. They are programmed like sheep. Some of them who are westernised see through it all. I would talk about living values, because they would be so religious yet they are stealing off each other. They rape and pillage virtually every day of the week. We are talking about in team hotels guys waking up at 3 in the morning the night before a test match to find guys going through their bag to steal stuff. Team mates, the night before a test match. Every player in forty odd players I used in four years let me down in some shape or form, yet they will go to the Bible and be, you know, these fantastic people. So what I try to do is break it down and say I've got nothing against it, and I'll say we have one pre-match prayer and you can lead it and do what you want. You have one little muck up at the start. The religion got in the way and it took over. They put so much effort into that. I would always say that preparation is nine tenths of the job, and they would take an hour for prayers. And the other thing is that religion took so much money from them. The richest man in each village is the talatala.*

This is obviously a fairly extreme reaction, as I can safely say that there was no pillaging occurring during any tours, and did not hear of any cases of rape. It was born out of a frustration with his experience with Fijians. He spoke of having difficulties in translating what he saw as fairly simplistic demands into actions. He

would get a commitment from players, which he saw as being forgotten as soon as there was even the slightest difficulty. Prayers, in his view, were part of the problem. For many of the players that I spoke to this was not their experience. The quiet reflection during prayers comforted them, reminding them of home. In addition they often regarded getting things right with God as part of the solution, and an important part at that. They saw accusations such as these as missing the point, being naïve to the power of God. However such dedication to God could be mis-used by coaches. Often the sermons would be co-opted to promote some of the practices of professionalism. Even this Australian coach used the traditional leadership of the *talatala* to reinforce unpopular decisions, and to increase the team cohesion. The coach's bans on intoxication, through alcohol, marijuana or *yaqona*, would be given the weight of the Bible and the *talatala*.

Conclusion:

Most Fijian athletes have a strong belief in God, and almost all used to social relations based around the church. This comes with them as they enter the professional set ups overseas. Within the national team, as described above, there was clearly more scope for an alternative version of professionalism to develop. All saw the value of utilising the religious identities and rituals as alternative sources of team culture. Even the cynical head coach co-opted this religious authority to support his professional regime. Yet the strength of belief in God also was a tension, a challenge to the ideological basis of professionalism.

Most of the year is spent living and working in clubs where there will not be a majority of Fijian born and raised players. Here the entanglements of the two

cultures play out differently. Religious rituals are not the basis of the group or team culture, and there is not the same space for alternative ideologies. This accommodation is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 8: Accommodating Fijians in Professional Rugby

Within the professional sides in Australia and New Zealand Pacific Island players only form a minority of the whole team. Entering into these spaces can be difficult for some Fijians, who can be unaware of the social norms, and find some of the social relations uncomfortable. Complicating this picture is the fact that these young Fijians also maintain contact with family and friends in Fiji. Given the highly mobile nature of these men, sometimes moving to a new place and club every few years, these transnational relations can be of more importance. For the very successful rugby players, the facts of their high social status and fame means they actually become more visible to other Fijians after their migrations than when they were home. Their actions, identities and contributions to Fijian life are judged. Juggling these relationships and obligations with those of a professional athlete can be challenging. Many have been very successful in this space, either learning to get by within professional teams, establishing close social ties with other Pacific Islanders in the team, or altering the culture within the team. Yet this success should not hide the difficulties that they face. Particularly, common Fijian values of respectfulness and communal control can be at odds with the practices of professional clubs. Fijian and Pacific Island identities, practices and subgroups were sometimes welcomed in clubs, but often frowned upon as barriers to team building and professionalism. The importance of several support structures in guiding young men in this process should be highlighted, with Professional Development Managers, coaches and in-between players acting as important translators between different expectations.

This chapter explores these tensions and the various resolutions to them. It begins by noting some key difficulties in integration players have; namely coping with professional ideals of communication, and a lack of intensive communal relationships as they used to have in Fiji. It then highlights the formation of pacifika subgroups within squads as a response to this.

Adapting to Professional Modes of Communication

Fijian men arrive at clubs under a professional rugby system that aims to standardise their rugby behaviours allowing them to be easily integrated into team strategies and tactics. Yet, the Fijian men from the islands won't have undergone the same physical training or skill acquisition. Newly arrived Fijians are quickly identified as "Fresh off the Boat" ("FOB") due to their lack of the professional *habitus.* They are stereotyped as lazy, prone to tardiness and as unlikely to be able to communicate and integrate into the more complicated aspects of team culture and strategies. The previous chapters gave some indication of the depth of bodily, mental and sensory knowledge that needs to be developed in order to play at the top level. Understood in the terms of Bourdieu, to completely assimilate into the professional culture requires a reconfiguration of a player's techniques of the body, approach to training, and sensory awareness. Fijians frequently find themselves struggling with each of these adjustments due to their very different backgrounds.

Many Fijians have commented upon the marked differences between the style of play in New Zealand or Australia and those in Fiji: 'I had to get used to the basics. We don't get taught about it. There are not much basics in the islands; of how to tackle, of which way to put your head, how to catch a pass. We got taught a little bit at school, but not too much. It is far different here from what is coached on the

islands.' Players in Fiji have been through very little formal rugby by the time they finish school. It is far more common for people to be playing informal games at the end of the day in the villages, rather than being part of a formal competition. The Fijian rugby union staff and coaches also regularly commented about the difficulty in getting formal grass-roots coaching and development for their players. A lack of resources means that kids don't play formal rugby until they are in their mid-teens. Perhaps the most obvious sign of a lack of professionalism is arriving late to training or with inappropriate kit. Timing has an important role in the team environment, particularly when travelling and playing. Match schedules are planned down to the minute, and all players are meant to meet them. Having all players present for the team meetings, trainings and skills is so important that even when it is just one player being involved, the coaches will often still insist that they are on-time. Many coaches and managers often singled out Fijians as being particularly bad at punctuality. In short, Fijians struggle with the transition into professional culture.

Fijians are also known for being shy and quiet at training. During training Fijian players are unlikely to participate in discussions or debates about rugby. If asked a direct question, Pacific Island players, particularly young ones often kept their eyes to the ground and softly give a one or two word answer. For Fijians there are sometimes problems with language itself. Whilst English is taught at the schools, many Fijians from village backgrounds are at times confused by the peculiar colloquialisms or accents of their team mates and coach. Probably more importantly, there are also very different communication styles in Fiji from Australia. In Fiji, direct feedback is regarded as an admonishment and sign of failure. It is disrespectful of the person who receives it. Talking with the Fijian

school boys who had come across to New Zealand schools, they would often note the vastly different concepts of respect. In Fiji, the teachers would speak for most of the lesson and the Fijian students were expected to listen. By contrast, they saw the New Zealand schools as being dominated by the students who seemed, to them, to be able to get away with anything. One of the senior Fijian players in New Zealand describes how when he first arrived at a New Zealand school he felt offended by the other students, ‘for us it is either you listen or you get caned. We are really strict. We are better behaved. We have respect.’ This characterisation seemed to be fairly standard amongst Fijians who had experienced both cultures, and it also seemed to extend to other parts of their lives. They spoke about the need to remain quiet around authority figures and let them make the decisions. Hence, in this context the best thing for them to do is to remain quiet and to listen.

As another respondent, at the start of his career at only 22, said ‘It’s part of the island way. You have to respect your elders. It’s the same when you come here you need to respect the elders. I won't say anything I'll just keep to myself. I know I have to say something, and that it makes plays better, but I keep to myself. They always tell me to talk–The All Blacks guys.’ The senior players in the squad, here identified as representatives of the New Zealand national team “The All Blacks”, clearly regard this silence as enough of a problem to bring it up explicitly with young players. Yet Fijians regard their quietness as being deeply appropriate due to the respect it conveys. In this regard and many others, some Fijians would say that it was important to remember how they were raised, and the Fijian way of doing things. This became very evident when discussing the issue of communication with one young player at Auckland. He had been identified by a number of informants as being particularly quiet, reserved and lacking in the

communication skills needed for professional rugby. He realized that this was the case but felt it would be ‘disrespectful to be saying those things. I know that I’m meant to, and that the players often ask me too, but I can’t. If one of the senior guys throws a bad pass, then I just stay quiet.’

Interestingly, what he saw as being a matter of respect, other players had identified as being a problem that was impeding his and the team’s progress. Coaches were unclear if the Fijian player had understood the instructions clearly. What the Fijians took as good manners, the coach would take as disrespect and disinterest. Some coaches admitted to having initially presumed that the player was unintelligent. This lack of communication also undermined one of the common cultural features of the professional team, feedback to teammates. An essential part of developing as individuals and a team was regarded as getting feedback, almost constantly, from one’s teammates. This communication might be something like ‘that pass was hard to catch’. In highly coordinated activities, such as defence, this might be essential in actually instructing the player of what to do. Verbally and with systems of signals players must indicate things as complex as ‘no longer cover the player that you have been marking, I now ensure you I can tackle that player, you tackle the next one’, all within a split second. Without this communication professional improvement and team coordination can be compromised.

Figure 8.1: Part of the Fijian community of Wellington gathers for a lunch after Sunday church.

This provides good entry point into what is regularly a difficult problem in Pacific Islander integration. Regularly dietary restrictions produced family and community tensions for younger Pacific Island players. It is very common for the broader pacific communities to use large meals, often around church services, as important fixtures in their social and community calendars. Similarly extended families will often gather to eat large meals. Large tables are set out in long rows and filled with food prepared by the women in the community. Much of this food allowed on the diet of rugby players, or at least not in the sort of ratios available at the table. In another common variation of this practice families will assemble to share in a meal of take-away deep fried chicken, even further prohibited by the strict dietary codes of professionalism. Everyone in the community will line up to

get their food, in some places in roughly in age and gender groups (with the older and men first). Everyone can see the each other's plates, and eating well is encouraged of the players. It is an occasion to care by feeding one another, and showing appreciation for the labours of the community.

There are interesting contrasts here between the individual and group modes of consumption, which are representative of the process of valuing[33]. Refusing to take the food is a difficult task, and requires a fair degree of tact in order for it not to come across as rudeness. For some it is an insult – a claim that the nurture being provided is not of high enough quality. Becker (1994) shows that in Fiji the body is less a reflection of self than it is a reflection of community. Fijians don't see the body as a personal showcase, but rather as a product of a collective achievement. Fijians derive prestige from the production of others' bodies. This is a product of a fundamentally different way of thinking of personhood and self. Body here does not belong to the self, but is a product of community property, an artefact of social connectedness. This situation has to be handled delicately. In Fiji, the national team staff will often visit villages to talk to extended families about the importance of supporting a particular player's efforts. They will get the village as a whole to be part of the project of the player's future, explaining to the player's parents and senior people in the village the importance of a certain diet. Within transnational communities these pressures can be the same, and younger players can find such negotiations difficult to perform themselves.

[33] I am reminded here of the point made by Graeber (2011) that contemporary theories of consumption focus only on one aspect of consumption, the individualistic performativity, but ignore other modes of consumption which are performed within, given meaning by, and help reproduce a variety of equal and unequal social relationships.

Figure 8.2: Two Fijian teammates gather to drink *yaqona* whilst playing in rural New Zealand

Coping without the communal

Fijian men experience a social comfort in communal settings which comes into tension with the realities of the professional clubs. One of the most commonly identified social features of the Fijians' way of life that players mention is the deeper relationships and connections that they hold, particularly with family. For instance, the experience of living in the village for young men was characterised by many informants within the Fijian national team set up as being inseparable from the company of the other young men, for almost 24 hours of the day. They would sleep at the same house, or meet early in the morning, then spend the day doing jobs for their elders, playing sport or sitting and talking. Repeatedly players would describe a far greater reliance upon others, particularly family with whom

they would share resources. By corollary they saw themselves as having a greater commitment to these families than their non-Pacific Islander team mates. These ties were imagined as a greater part of their identity, and as constituting a more important part of their lives.

This fits well with the classical Anthropological portrayals of Fijian culture and sociability (see Ravavu 1983), which have emphasised the systems of reciprocity and kin relations, spiritual communalism and resource sharing in preference to individuality. If we understand personhood as the individual idea of self, then we also need to recognise that this self-awareness is socially constituted, and that the lifestyles lived by Fijians are less likely to lead them to think of themselves in the first places as autonomous individuals, but rather as part of a larger collective. This resembles in some ways the characterisation of the people of Mt Hagen, PNG as being dividuals and partible persons because they aren't individuals separate from society but rather persons who in their self-making highlight social relationships, and do so at different times (Strathern 1988). Linguistic anthropology has also shown different conceptions of personhood as important in Fiji. Different uses of pronouns indicate differing bases for the authorship of actions (Tomlinson & Makihara 2009). For instance, the "heroic I" commonly used in Polynesia refers to ancestors or polities as the sources of a person's actions (Sahlins 1985). This suggests that actions are not acts of individual persons, but rather of personages that encompass others. Toren in particular points to a far more communal way of thinking about oneself, one's body and one's place in the world in Fiji than in the west (Toren 1990, 2003). This is what Csordas (1990) refers to as 'difference in self-objectification cross culturally'. Given the importance of individualism within the professional cultural complex, these alternative

understandings of agency and personhood are important factors in a player's integration. The individualistic and instrumentalist professional approach to their bodies can clash with their understandings of self, and the potency of communal agency. Yet, to have careers they need to be part of the professional system.

Alienation however is not always the experience of Fijian players, and in various clubs and places they can experience a communal feeling similar to that of home. Over the past ten years there has been a noticeable development in certain amateur clubs in New Zealand to recruit Fijians or other Pacific Islanders. At the time that I was in rural Otago, in the southern parts of New Zealand, there were a few Fijians playing for the Lawrence rugby team, based in a very small country town of about 450 inhabitants. J was the captain of the local rugby club, and he also ran a shearing contracting business. He had brought out a few Fijians, put them in a share home, given them employment working for his business or for others in the community, and integrated them into the rugby. The Fijians were typically the club's best players, and had been selected for these reasons. The situation in this remote town, at one level, might have been very difficult for the Fijians. The Pacific Islander population is so small in this part of the country that when I spoke to these Fijians they told me that there had just been another family arrive about 200km away, information they knew because it was such a rare occurrence that the broader community thought it interesting enough to pass on. However, this also indicated the bonds and support networks which were constructed by the Fijians.

The most noticeable thing about the country town was that the local community had taken personal interest in the Fijians, more than they do in the cities. Two of the men who had been playing in Lawrence told me about the warm welcome and community spirit they felt there: they were regularly brought meat by the farmers to cook, and were a central part of a church which was itself the heart of the community. They lived together in a house, worked together, played rugby together and went to church together. In short, whilst some of the cultural practices were different, the communalism and care for the individual by the group were closer to that experienced in Fiji. None of the informants I spoke to referred to their time in Lawrence in a bad way. On the whole the town, after some initial apprehensions, had become enamoured with the new migrants, who brought new energy to their church and community, and had given the town new pride through their performances on the rugby field. However, despite the success of this initiative, this was not the ultimate dream that most of the young Fijians in Lawrence were pursuing. They dreamt of rugby fame and financial success, and as such some were trying to move, or had already moved away from the community. J and the community were supportive of these efforts, making allowances at work for one of the young informants to have time off work to pursue representative opportunities in the city. The experience of community in the small town was not enough to satisfy the players' desire to fulfil the expectations of their home village that they achieve prominence in professional rugby and contribute financially to their community back home. The social comfort they have there is at the cost of this professional and social success.

France was experienced by many informants as almost the direct opposite to Lawrence. A contract here was the pinnacle of financial rewards, and also represented a very high and prestigious standard of rugby. Yet, more than any other place in the rugby system, it was spoken of as an isolating and lonely experience. Each of the three Fijians who had played in France they mentioned this as their experience, and many others mentioned that this was the reputation that French rugby had amongst many Fijians, whether they had been there or not. The geographical isolation from Fiji was extreme, with trips home taking multiple days and thousands of Fijian dollars. This distance was exaggerated by the politics and culture of the team; teams were renowned for not including players families, for not providing any support outside of the club; the French language was ubiquitous, and people reticent or unable to speak English, let alone Fijian; and the players were often left fairly isolated socially, and their wives and families unsupported. Whenever Fijians played against each other in France they would get together for Kava after the match, because as RS says 'it is too far from back home. They are a bit homesick. I reckon it is just family. It is pretty much everyone living in the village. When a lot of people come away they are really homesick because they are used to just hanging around with friends and family. When they go to Fiji they don't want to go back to France again. But you have to get used to it.' RS had a long career which saw him leave Fiji at 18 and play in France, Japan and then again in Brisbane. He never had the same desperation to go home, but when I spoke to him towards the end of his career he spoke of a continuous homesickness, a longing for Fiji.

In Japan this subsided with RS developing relatively strong connections with players, while in Brisbane his homesickness was still present, but reduced

somewhat by a close friendship with certain players on the team, and the support his family had from his wife's family. Yet, even here, the difference with Fijian lifestyle was felt by him as a profound absence:

> *'All my family back home they live in the village. They all live together in the same house. Mate, that is the way that people back home live. Kids just sleep all in the same bed, or in the kitchen or whatever. When we go back home we go stay with my brother. All the kids, 2 of mine, 6 of his, they all stay in the living room. Sometimes my missus goes and stays in the village. She loves it there with the kids. You don't have to pay at all. All you have to do is buy food. That is the good thing about going back home. We go back and don't stay in the hotel. We go five weeks in the village.*
>
> *At home it is always busy …It is good to see everyone. I grew up there, then after that I disappeared. I really miss it. Just the lifestyle in the village. Everyone close to each other. We just sit around chatting to each other every day. You live in Australia you get your own house, it's not like a village where everyone lives next to each other. [In Fiji] everyone will come and get everyone and just say let's go see somebody and everyone will head off. Here you go to training and then you come back and you try to do something but there is no one there. They are out or they live 15minutes away.'*

RS has experienced all social situations since Fiji as being distinctly less community oriented than the life he enjoys in Fiji. However, France stood out as the least welcoming place for both RS and many other informants. Here players find that the lifestyle, weather, and most importantly, rugby are not what they had imagined. The result is homesickness, which leads a lot of players to return to Fiji fairly soon after arriving in a primary destination. For some it becomes clear just how far removed they remain from realising their dreams. In some clubs this has happened so much that the clubs are not willing to bring players direct from the islands anymore. SS describes the mind set of one such man: 'When I used to live with this Fijian guy, who played rugby in the NPC. He was really depressed. I was used to it and tried to tell him what to do. Every month I would ask, I kept on

asking, “are you ok”? He just doesn’t connect with the place. It makes it easy for us because we went to boarding school, we had a lot of people around me. The people who live at home and go to school in town, they depend on their families to look after them. They’re not used to it. He went to France, and then back to Fiji. He just went to France for two months then he left. He just hated it.’ In negotiating between the social comfort and the professional desires, some withdrew to Fiji. The pains become too much, particularly if professional success isn’t quick to come.

SS had a different experience of moving away from Fiji. He was used to living outside of the village, as he had been to a Fijian boarding school for many years and grown used to living with a large group of boys. His move to NZ, when he was 18, was to the Wesley school near Hamilton. Here, not only was he in the familiar institution of a Methodist boarding school, but he also had dozens of classmates who were also from the Fijian islands, and many more NZ born Pacific Islanders. Culturally he found the move a very small adjustment, and didn’t have the strong feelings of isolation that others talk about. When he left school he joined a club. Again he had very few problems, as he moved in with another Fijian who ‘had figured out how to live over here’. This more senior player taught SS the key points of playing in a NZ rugby team, telling him the importance of prioritising rugby, punctuality and preparation. SS was part of an alternative response to the tension. He had professionalised many parts of his life, and had become part of a pacific island subgroup which had formed at his club.

Fijian and Pacifika subgroups within teams

In the clubs with larger numbers of Pacific Island players, these men often group together into a subgroup. Here a multi-layered group membership develops, in

which players belong to these subgroups, as well as the larger team whole, and other cross cutting groups. These subgroups do a lot of socialising with one another out of training times, group together to help with food, and provide emotional support to each other. Within these constellations hierarchies of relationships develop, distinct from any hierarchies within the larger team structure. The person with the most influence in this group will not be the captain or coach, but the most senior pacific island player (unless he happens to be the captain also). These pacific island leaders are readily identified by both Pacific Islander and other members of the team and management. The formation of these subgroups is partly motivated by a preference for people with a shared set of values and understanding of how to behave. It is also bound to lifestyle, identity and a sense of solidarity.

At the Auckland club there have been a large number of Pacific Island players for a long time, due to the high number of Pacific Island people in the city. There was a widespread recognition of the communal orientation of Pacific Islander players amongst the staff and players in most clubs. At the positive end of the spectrum the coach of Auckland, who works with a very high proportion of Pacific Island players, commented on the greater ability of the Pacific Islanders to show loyalty and commitment to the team as a result of their communalism:

> *'Rugby is a natural fit for the Polynesian community. It is a team sport. To go back to Polynesian culture it is all about extended families. If you look at the way the village life is set up they are all living on top of each other. That is why they have so many kids: there is always someone to look after the kids. And old people too, they are always looked after. And that's just the way the culture is. Then if you look at the rugby team and you're around and surrounded by 30 other people, and you feel part of it and it's like another village life. If, as a coach, you can embrace this:- this is what our culture is about, this is what our family is about, then those guys will come in, and you make them feel part of it and they'll just give everything.'*

By this logic the social self could be transposed onto the rugby club and its members, who constituted a new social entity. Indeed there are commonalities between the lifestyles of rugby players, who spend large amounts of time together as young men, and those of the islands.

At the other end of the spectrum, divisions can be seen between different subgroups in the team. The head coach at Auckland spoke out against this claim. Whilst he recognised some of the difficulties that a Fijian might have in adjusting, he denied that there was any divide in the squad. Going back to his prescribed dichotomy between the rugby environment and the home environment, he claimed his squad was united despite having large groups of different backgrounds. My discussions with some of the players indicated that this seemed to be case to some extent. Players trained together, and would work in drills with whomever happened to be assigned to them by the coaches. There was a large degree of mingling around the ‘pitch’, and players would share jokes that would actively cross those cultural divides. For instance, one young Pacific Island player noted during my interview with him at a cafe near the Auckland training facility: ‘Nah there's nothing. The white guys are like black guys and the black guys are like white guys. That’s the great thing about the team, everyone is together. Everybody mingles together. There is a lot of brotherhood, and everyone is close. You just go up to someone and say 'what’s up?' or a white guy will come up to you and say 'what's up *toko*' because in Tongan *toko* is brother.’ The references to ‘brothers’ and ‘brotherhood’ indicate the impact of the pacific islander culture on the team, which is partly responsible for introducing this idea of extended brotherhood. Yet,

both of the terms ‘brother’ and ‘toko’ remain used more by people with Pacific Island heritage, and hence remain partly as markers of difference.

Indeed, at this club Pacific Island players would often socialise together to the exclusion of others. The change rooms at the club used to be two even sized rooms, both designed to cater for about 20 players. By the time I arrived at the club the change room to the right of the corridor had become the Pacific Islander change room, and the other was predominantly used by the Anglo guys. However, the number of Pacific Islanders on the team had grown so significantly that by 2006 there were more Pacific Island players than the others. Yet, despite the inconvenience, the division remained. In the words of one of the white players: ‘On one side there was the white guys, and there were only a handful of us, so we'd have two lockers each. In the other change room there were all the brothers [Pacific Islanders], and they'll be sharing. The first time that I joined the team, I went into the other change-room and I didn't know. I just got in there and they told me that I was in the wrong place and should go to the other side.’ These divides tend to show up at other times as well. Players would often eat with groups from along those lines. The favourite anecdote of one of my non-Fijian informants described one bus trip between games when two vans arrived, both about 15 seaters. All the Pacific Islanders ended up going in the one van, cramped together closely on the seats, whilst the other van was only half full. He had been so surprised by this that he’d actually filmed it, and showed this to me. In some ways this was a matter of personal comfort, wanting to spend time with people who had a similar understanding of the world. In other ways the sub-group divisions challenge neat conceptions of homogenous team culture.

The players of all backgrounds were quick to defend the ethnically based sub-groups against claims of racial segregation. This was not motivated by a dislike for the other group, but rather a stronger shared bond between specific players. In the Pacific change-room players who were more likely to be friends off the field would prepare together. There would be less tension or awkwardness about certain cultural practices, such as the saying of prayers before the match. This issue of prayers was an important divider in the clubs that I visited, with a lot of players and coaches having strong ideas about whether it should be an activity for individuals to do in private, or in small groups, or at as a team bonding exercise. The issue can be generalised to three competing viewpoints: one saw prayer as a valuable individual tool for focussing, but a distraction for the group as a whole and excluding the players who didn't believe; the second saw it as a waste of time, but allowed that some players would want to do it; the third saw it as a valuable exercise for the team, either for reasons of cohesion, or because of the spiritual powers it invoked. It therefore clearly had the potential to divide the team. In moments such as this the multi-layered professionalism had its limitations, unable to accommodate difference into this particular social space.

The internal dynamics of these subgroups were influenced by both the requirements of professionalism and of pacific island cultures. These can be best understood through the concept of *mana,* which was commonly used in the Pacific, as well as a term of academic analysis. As a term used by individuals, I predominantly encountered it in New Zealand. Here, it is part of the popular lexicon, used by *pakeha* (a Maori term for foreigners, particularly Anglo- New Zealanders) and Pacific Islanders alike. This fact has influenced its usage greatly, as it is used as a synonym for respect or recognition, but also as a word that

signifies identity. Hence, it is used in a way which positions it as a quantifiable substance attached, e.g. 'with all the *mana* he brings to the team, he is great for the younger guys' or 'he has so much *mana*, everyone listens'. It is something achieved by acts, age, and character. By contrast, it was used slightly differently as an explanatory tool to me by a Samoan academic. He advised that I begin every interview by letting people know who I am, as a way of establishing a connection between me and them – they would need to know what *mana* I brought to the conversation. This was a *mana* of connection, a signification of my place in the world as understood through the relationships that I had. It was part of a mutual process of recognition of the other's value, as part of a process of creating rapport. *Mana,* which is often conceived as spiritual power, is constructed out of relationship. God's *mana*, its common referent in Fiji, is created in people listening to Him, He has no *mana* apart from their attention to Him. A chief's *mana* is in his speech acts and their effect on their listeners, it is performative and reciprocal. *Mana* can be seen as a gift that people make to those they invest with *mana*. Rugby players in Samoa or Tonga are seen as having *mana*, because of the recognition that their audience gives them. My own acceptance as a researcher was in the *mana* I was able to acquire, through the multiple networks of reference and respect.

At the Waikato Chiefs club, one of the coaches there, himself a former captain of Fiji, despite his birth and upbringing in New Zealand, described the process which leads to the establishment of a leader among the players: 'Here, Mils has been the top man. He sat astride both the island and white guys. Sione was the leader because he was the most islander, but Sione would do exactly what Mils said. It is not just a rugby thing. Mils had the language and culture, and had a good record

with the All Blacks, and also had a good discipline record. All the guys would be in there together, and they would look up to him. If you wanted to find any of the brown boys they would be together.' Mils' *mana* comes from his ability to perform the speech and body acts required by both professionalism and of Pacific Island culture. Despite these distinct subgroups within some of the teams there are people who can jump between groups; able to identify and interact with a variety of Pacific Islanders and also the white players. Like Mils, they were highly regarded by both groups for this ability. Typically these were Polynesian players who were able to master the professional rugby culture, either by virtue of having one non-Pacific parent, or being educated at a private school, or having played international rugby. These men were respected for their abilities to communicate. They had the respect of the Polynesian players and the coaching staff, and would often act as go-betweens for the players and the staff. For instance, when a new Pacific Island player would arrive the coaches would ask the senior Polynesian players in the squad to let them know what sort of values and culture are required in the club. Essentially, they needed to show the younger men how to take the job seriously.

At the Auckland club, the head coach of the time filled a prominent role himself due to his Samoan heritage and history playing for that nation, combined with his official position and experience in rugby. Where in the past players who were feeling awkward about their weight, or feel like the coaches might not think they work hard enough, or train enough, would speak with the leader of the islanders, but in this context they often went directly do the head coach. For instance, one of the young Pacific Island players said: 'It's different. Not the same as Pat. He is easier to go and talk to. With the other coaches I feel like I have to watch my back,

that I can't do anything wrong. I have to earn their respect. With Pat I have his respect. I think it's because he understands a lot more where we come from. It's a lot easier to go and talk to him. That sounds a little bit racist, hey?'.

At other clubs the coaching and management staff had recognised the potential of this multi-layered professionalism to create unity despite the divisions. The Professional Development Managers are key persons in the transition into professional life. These are full time positions in all fully professional sides in Australia and New Zealand, and part-time positions in the New Zealand teams. The job description includes responsibility to ensure the development of all off-field aspects of players' lives. This role came out of a concern amongst current and former players that professionalism was leading to a stagnation of a players' social and career development. The PDMs are intended to be separate from the club officials, as a support to the players, and, to a large extent, this is the case. Their remit is to meet with each player individually and together come up with elements of educational or work experience outside of rugby training. In addition, in some clubs they have organised a series of workshops aimed at improving some "life skills" of the players, for instance organising cooking classes for those who have not done cooking before. Whilst their overall aims with Fijian players differed little, their methods and the outcomes tended to reflect a recognition of some important differences. For instance, the PDMs in their annual conference in NZ paid attention to some of the general approaches which could be useful in helping their Pacific players. Primary amongst these was the importance of respect when dealing with these players. It was a commonly held opinion amongst the PDMs that by working hard to win over one of the senior players, all the Pacific Island players in the team would follow suit and be involved. As one put it 'There was F,

who was the highest ranked Samoan in Wellington. If he said the sky was green then all the other Samoans would say the sky was green. If he said that PD was shit, no one would turn up.'

This example is symptomatic of a growing awareness and interest in the different social formations of the Pacific Island subgroups. Increasingly clubs were interested in encouraging these groups, and building the links with other groups in the team, rather than trying to assimilate the Pacific Island players into a monolithic culture. Paradoxically, the shift in professionalism away from heavy socialisation within clubs allows space for these alternative socialisation processes to occur.

Professionalism and Kinship Obligations

Individualised financial planning was being actively taught by the institutions of professional rugby. For instance both RUPA and the NZPA have a strong program to teach basic accounting and financial planning to all players. The Professional Development Managers and financial planners brought in as consultants from the banks said that an important step in the professional development of players was to teach them the skills of financial planning. They were taught to make financial goals for themselves, normally in the form of houses and businesses, and then to put aside the money over years towards these goals. This education has three outcomes: firstly, players are taught to think of themselves as being responsible for a far narrower set of people, normally focussed primarily on the nuclear family unit central to Australian and New Zealand societies. In the extreme this would just be the individual, but normally was the nuclear family and perhaps the parents. Secondly, the player would be taught to differentiate in terms of these financial goals between necessary and unnecessary spending, and to limit the amount of

the later. Finally, the player was encouraged think of the long term, recognising his current resources as fairly limited. This is particularly important given the highly tenuous nature of a professional rugby career, in which many players only earn money for a few years.

One of the major banks in NZ was facilitating this through a product targeted at the professional players, that allowed them to have multiple accounts and multiple cards, the trick being that one card, to be given to their relatives, would only show the money in one account, the other card, to be kept by them and their immediate family, would show the money in all accounts. Regularly clubs and agents strongly advised (almost to the point of instructing) all players to direct a portion of their money into a saving account each month which they couldn't access. This education and experience in the new country often shifted a player's focus. As one former player put it, 'you can't keep thinking just of the islands all your life. Your life is here now, you need to focus on making something here'. For many players, this is heightened by marriage and the birth of children, particularly if they don't marry a Fijian woman. In the instances where Fijians had married non-Fijian women, the practice of remittances would often have to be explained to the wife before she would allow it. This was used by many men as a method for controlling money, simply by passing the blame onto their wife, a non-Fijian, who was more difficult to influence with ideas of obligation.

Their training as professionals encourages them to establish themselves as individuals and restrict their obligations to their club, the paying public, and their immediate family resident with them or immediately dependent on them, such as elderly parents or younger siblings. The players thus negotiate a route between contesting expectations and they run the gauntlet of competing parties on whom

their reputations and sense of identity depends. Their anxiety to meet home expectations through remittances and to appear financially responsible to their club colleagues and managers put enormous strains on them. They follow different trajectories through this maze. The least successful fail to meet either set of expectations, squandering their earnings and returning early to their home communities with their status in tatters. The most successful learn to fulfill their obligations to home communities through selective remittances, supporting church, vanua or matanitu in projects which enhance their standing in the community and keep demands at bay. For many marriage to a white girl allows them to resist some demands but it also distances them from the community and they commit themselves long term to a life beyond the community. Others learn to resist many demands as unreasonable in terms of a wider definition of masculinity that emphasizes responsible sharing and the narrowing of kin obligations.

Yet these courses didn't completely alter the sense of obligation to kin. In the following account from DK shows the importance of his ongoing relationship to Fiji, but also his career. He has an obvious willingness to both invest at home for himself, but also contribute to others through remittances. His negotiation between these two sets of demands involves a realisation of the dream. The account was recorded over two interviews away from training in Brisbane where he resided at the time. I had played with DK six years earlier and we had many mutual friends and contacts. Kinship was not experienced by DK as a static set of rules which he should follow, but rather as ongoing commitments to relationships. The nature of these relationships, and their prioritisation in his own calculations change as a result of new relationships and competing moral frameworks.

I just, you know. I was so close to my family. When I first left home my mum was the one who worked in the family. My mum was like had to look after me and my younger brothers. We go to school then come back and I had to do cooking. My mum was paying for everything and no one else. I was like 'fuck' I have to do something. Just had to go, just send money home, just help her. The life like that is very hard. People struggling. That is why I did what I did, because people struggle. People need to look after their family. My close cousin I grew up with, I look after them too. I grew up with them. Some of them when they left they never think about that. They leave France and go back, and they don't think. But you only get one chance.

The start of his account gives us an indication of the deep history that he feels with his family, and the obligations which come from that. It is an emotional connection which primarily gives rise to economic contributions. However, he goes on to frame these as part of his commitment, contrasting himself to those players who leave their place of migration due to homesickness. Implicitly his choices overseas are framed as an emotional sacrifice for the benefit of his kin. This is in contrast to his characterisation of his brothers, whom he regards as misusing their kinship relations, neglecting their obligations and making requests out of laziness rather than need:

They want to stay in Sydney because there are Fijians friends there. The Fijians there just get together and get on the piss. They get on the piss on Thursday and Friday and Saturday and Monday. They try to get me to do it with them, or they ask me for money for it. But I say "no, you are in Australia. The ones I help are in Fiji. You are in Australia it is different here, you have to do your own work." They do stupid things, when they drink then they drive. They just keep the fines piling up and they have so much, nearly five grand. Then they come to me and ask me to pay it. But I say "no, I've got a young family, and family back home to support, and I can't support you too." … For them, Canberra wasn't much for them. They needed stupid people getting into trouble. They are going and robbing service station and that sort of thing. Two of my brother ended up in Villawood (immigration detention centre). So they got deported because of that. Being stupid, and now back home. The village was shamed. When they left, my mum was pretty happy 'stay there, find a white girl, get married, don't come back home because what will you do back home' But they didn't listen, and now they are back home. They didn't listen and now she is not happy.

This account highlights two different forms of transnationalism. The first, which DK uses to characterise his own actions, focusses on the ongoing relations to Fiji and those who are there. He emphasises his ongoing obligations to provide to the community, particularly given the increased earning capacity he has. Time in Australia is an opportunity to provide for himself and his family. By contrast, he sees his brothers as engaged in a different, negative ongoing relationship with Fijians. They have invested their time in socialising with other Fijians, and their ties to these men are very strong. He still feels the same desire to socialise in this way, but emphasises his need to control and limit it. In the final segment of his account we see that the inability of his brothers to control their own actions, to his mind, has violated any claims they might have to the resources which he produces.

> *That is why I don't go to Sydney, because when I go there everyone comes and asks me for money. They think that because of who I play for I have a lot of money. But they have no idea. My missus goes up to them and they understand where she comes from. We still hang out, they are family and that is their choice. When they were in Sydney, they would try to get me to come on the piss. But I would do it only for one night, not three or four or something like that. For them, I don't know what they are thinking. They have a good job. They were working at the airport, good money. There are six Fijians working together. Now they are back there, they ask me for money. I give it to them sometimes, but not always. They want to ask me to get them a car, and I just say get the bus. They want to do expensive stuff. I let them have my car and told them they could do some taxiing. But they stuffed the car up. They have no idea. They just do crazy things. Stupid crazy Fijian.*

Here he contrasts his brothers with other kin who should be helped – those who not only have fewer resources, but fewer opportunities for work. Within this framing of kinship the obligations must be reciprocated by the commitment to making a life for the family. Those in Fiji, with less ability to work fulfil these

obligations in other ways. Furthermore he now has new obligations to his wife and children, whom he identifies as one of his primary concerns. His wife, an Australian woman, was realised within a different set of social relations and carried a different set of expectations as to how families should relate. Their marriage was a contact point between the two systems. He notes how much his wife enjoyed the level of social interaction within the village when they were there. He had made it clear to her at the outset of their relationship that his commitment to family in Fiji was very important, and would be maintained through ongoing remittances. They would have to commit significant amounts of resources back to the islands and the island based projects. Yet he has learnt to decline requests from his brothers, citing not only their incompetence with money, but also their laziness and squandering of the opportunities in Australia. The managing of home and professional expectations leads to the maturing of the cosmopolitan Fijian, who is able to resist the extremes of both the western individualistic professional and the village youth shackled to village demands.

Conclusion:

Fijians while playing overseas usually hold their home village community and culture as central in their lives. Their accommodation then to the professional club is always in the context of being Fijians away from home. The photo in Figure 7.2 graphically portrays this, as they huddle together to remember their origins more than to celebrate victory or suffer their loss. It indicates a Fijian/pacific island style of professionalism. Those clubs who have realised these key distinctions are already enabling their Fijian players to contribute more valuably as Fijians to their team success. They have adapted to a multi-layered professionalism.

Conclusion: Global Rugby as a Cultured Professional System

The thesis began with the snapshot of a celebration of the global nature of rugby, as the world's best players gathered in a single auditorium for an awards ceremony. This event highlighted the connections between the various places within rugby, the joining together of vastly different people in the same room. Indeed that night it was also a celebration of Fijian rugby, through the figure of Radike Samo. Yet, this was not a Fijian celebration, but one conducted at a center of global rugby, in the major city of the powerful rugby nation of New Zealand. Even to be there he had to leave his family and have professional contracts in eight clubs in four different countries, finally pulling on the gold jersey of Australia. The global rugby system had given much to him and his family, but, to reach the heights of distinction that Samo achieved, rugby for him was much more than the game he had played for fun in Fiji. It had become a career which required him to adapt to the values and expectations of professionalism; to negotiate between the requirements for self-professionalisation, and the continuing obligations to his family; to sacrifice much of his personal and communal life along the way. He had done so, and had learnt to perform within the professional body culture.

He still spoke at the end of his career of the lack of communalism and individualism in the rugby of core countries as being very uncomfortable for him. Indeed, on the night in Auckland Samo was visibly uncomfortable in this style of celebration which highlighted him as an individual apart from his team or community. The few words he softly spoke when receiving the award drew attention back to those team mates 'It's all about the boys' he repeated several times. In the long run his sense of self identity and achievement was inseparable

from his relations to the teams and the home communities in which he located his person. He still saw himself as being Fijian, emphasizing his connection to home through trips, regular contact with his family, and the sending of remittances. These connections had changed over his career, as he had learnt to prioritize his wife and children, and the professionalism which his career depended upon. Yet, Fijians still proudly supported him, seeing him as one of their own; a Fijian who had lived out the rugby dream.

This thesis uses the experiences of Fijians, such as Samo, to disentangle the making of global rugby. In this conclusion I will revisit the central argument first by a review of the history of this making of rugby; and second through the logic of contemporary practices, surrounding the relation between form and content.

The Poetics and Politics of the Making of Rugby

The articulation of divergent socio-cultural systems within a global system requires the management and control of all the elements that make it up. Difference must be accommodated to allow room for individuals to express their potential. Difference must be controlled to allow actions to be coordinated. The contemporary global rugby system relies not only on the formal cross-border institutions, but also on the linking of the divergent meanings and values found within borders. The drawing together of the global system reduces the level of isolation between different rugby cultures. Different practices, values and meanings increasingly impact upon one another. This is poetics, as in a process of discursive articulation and meaning making. This is also politics, as this negotiation of meaning occurs from unequal power positions. Using these concepts in tandem allows us to recognize that when different values, practices and meanings come together they rarely clash, but rather tend to be in friction

(Tsing 2004). That is they coexist not as separate entities, but rather in constant contact and tension with one another and other concepts. This friction is a constant source of change and action as people draw upon the different ideas and meanings in multiple ways. The question is when there are frictions between these different cultures, which practices, values and meanings stay the same, and which change? I explore this question through two historical phases of globalization of rugby union. The first phase saw the spread of the game from the core to the periphery, an outward movement, with a local adaptation. The second phase, of professionalism, is marked by an inward movement from the periphery to the core.

Sports studies have documented the introduction of Euro-American sports into new contexts and their subsequent adaptation (e.g. Kelly 2007, Appadurai 1996). We have that story in this thesis, but we also have another, as the sporting culture of the periphery permeates the clubs of the core. In addressing such a movement, I explore the relation between form, the rules and institutions of the world body, and content, which include practices on the ground, social relations in clubs, and meanings developed by individual players. While the process of internationalization and professionalization can be seen as a process of re-forming, putting in place new rules and institutional structure, the reverse movement demonstrates how content from divergent places fill up the form. For the form to be effective and sustainable it must be able to accommodate diverse practices.

Using MacAloon's (2006) idea of 'empty form' only seems to get us so far in the understanding of global rugby. This conception describes the process whereby a particular cultural form can be incorporated into a new cultural setting, emptying it of its existing meanings and significance, replacing them with local variations. Its

distinction between the more fixed and the more fluid parts of culture is useful in understanding why some parts change, and others remain constant. This can be interestingly examined through contrasting two key phases in the development of global rugby.

The game of rugby, the form in this instance, arrived in Fiji as a set of rules and basic techniques, which were quickly filled by local meanings of *lotu, matanitu and vanua* and the related social structures. Rugby was initially globalised as a colonial export – part of the civilising process brought by colonial powers to their colonial subjects. Arriving in Fiji the global culture advocated by the rugby 'masters' was localised, actively appropriated by a variety of actors within Fiji. Eventually it became so imbued with a particular set of Fijian values that it became a key tool for the socialising of young men within Fijian society. Fijian value systems were embodied by players, taught, expressed, naturalised and evaluated by the wider society through the practice of rugby. Rugby became part and parcel of the larger political project of national identity formation; while on the other hand, the meanings of rugby were influenced by the beliefs of the institutions of Fijian church and state. But rugby retained a certain structure when it arrived in Fiji thus limiting the extent those local meanings could be introduced. This Fijian system therefore coexisted with a very different set of practices and meanings cultivated in the core countries, such as England and Australia. The rules of the games they played were very similar, but the meanings, interpretations and values attached to them were not.

However this process was not without its frictions as it touched down in the colonised villages of Fiji. Brownell's (2005) elaboration on MacAloon through the term 'empty frame' is a useful addition here, as it shows the limits to this

emptiness. Cultural forms can't exist outside of meaning, nor can their practice in one place be isolated from their practice elsewhere. This is an advance in two ways; firstly, it recognizes the framing influence of outside meanings on the development of indigenous concepts; secondly, by investigating what is framed and what is not it gives us an insight into the relative power of each concept. Rugby arrived in Fiji as more than just a form. It was introduced through colonialism, and the associations between the game and its foreign source were important in framing the particular Fijian meanings developed. What I am asserting is that such connections are frictions (Tsing 2004). These will always be partly in tension with Fijian values in some ways, and such values can be drawn upon to produce alternative sources of meaning. This framing is therefore part of the process of filling the "empty" form with meaning. In this framing it is important to understand the power of the different agents and the extent of their influence. Most notably, institutional connections require a particular level of common culture to function, and emphasise particular forms of a particular cultural activity over other versions. These are important sites for the power structures which influence cultural meanings.

The logics of the contemporary global system of professional rugby provide an interesting twist to the normal debates surrounding the movement of culture, or indeed sporting culture. The frame here is professionalism – standardization of behavior, introduction of money. The movement of most interest is not that of professionalism into Fiji (though this does occur), but rather that of the Fijians, who were raised within indigenous webs of meaning and social relations, moving into professionalism. The socio-cultural content is the relations which they cultivate in different parts of the system. Due to this reversal of direction, the

professionalization process penetrates into localities more deeply, to create a global system of overlapping and competing local values.

The “frame” of professionalism then is strong, but it is constructed and construed as de-contexualised knowledge. The values of professionalism are powerful both in that they are important in determining people’s access to resources, and in that they form a powerful referent by which people judge their actions. Individuals who can perform professionalism sufficiently well are able to develop skills in one location, be paid to use them in another, and to transfer these money payments back to a third. It has motivated the mobility of many athletes; reduced the importance of bonding and loyalty at clubs with an emphasis on performance; and produced a rigorous culture of self-responsibility. Hence, professionalism has become important globally, as players learn that accommodation to the professional institutions and codes of practice actually becomes a crucial prerequisite for achieving the locally based status and identity in very different localities that financial remittances bring them. That is, Fijian men can achieve more status as rugby players and as community members by migrating as professionals than by staying in these Fijian communities. The capacity of Fijians to resist this professional frame is thus drastically limited by their desires to engage fully with it. Herein lies the friction as players negotiate their professional and local reputations.

It is in the clubs that we see the real strength of the global system. The global frame is imbued with meaning for players and supporters through its local interpretation in the clubs. In the Auckland Blues and the ACT Brumbies clubs where there was high sensitivity to the diversity of players’ cultures the Pacific Island players spent a lot of time within their subgroup – using this space not so

much as a buffer between them and the team, but as an alternative space within a multi-layered professionalism. Crucially these clubs were allowing some space within “team culture” for diversity, whilst endeavouring to teach the Fijians the values espoused by global rugby of individual self-responsibility. In short they resisted the homogenising effects of the system, so that their own values were framed by professionalism rather than dictated by it. It is precisely this room within the professionalism frame which has allowed a global system to form more fully around it. The global system exists because actors in countries like Fiji want to participate in it, both for the economic benefits, but also because it allows them some room to pursue the rugby dream in their own way. The global system requires the socio-culturally specific dreams of Fijians to exist even as it seeks to frame these.

To draw out the nuances in this accommodation I now return to a few key features of the contemporary system.

The Ambiguous Value of the Fijian Athlete

Global markets are frequently seen in terms of commodification of labour and subsequent flows driven by economic incentives. However the globalisation of sport is more than the production and exchange of commodities. The thesis has drawn attention to the political construction of global markets in sport, as in other economic arenas. National pride, communal values and personal identity are intertwined within the political complexity of weaving the global market. Rugby migrants play not only for the salaries set within the professional frame, but also for standing, identity and prestige within multiple spheres of value. Whether they are valued within each of these spheres depends on the extent they can meet the diverse social and cultural values set within these spheres. This is the socially

constituted nature of value. While scholars have focused on the economic drivers of migration less attention has been paid to the cultural values that support migration, and interestingly the challenge to those values that result. A focus on the juncture between social value, economic value and cultural identity demonstrates that both the professionalisation and indigenisation of rugby is driven by cultural as well as economic forces. Values sustain behaviour beyond particular economic circumstances. And as the global system has evolved values themselves have not been immune from change.

This particular rugby arena is governed by rules that regulate the playing of the game and the conduct of the market of its players. But this is more than a free market. We have observed the huge disparities between core and periphery in the conduct of market relations as the nature of the game has brought numerous non-playing actors into the mix. Coaches and managers sharpen their reputations as winners, corporations market a diversity of other products through their advertising, national governments strengthen national pride and resolve through lauding the national team and numerous communities and families across the world celebrate their identity through the exploits on the field. Political and community leaders see in the playing of the game the inculcation of values central not only to players on the field but players and supporters alike off the field. In these multiple overlapping arenas money is only one useful measure of value. Value is also measured by acclamation in the press, praise at a church service, support in the club, or popularity amongst fans.

Ultimately the introduction of professionalism in rugby has allowed certain people and interests to determine the dominant values of rugby. Money has been a powerful tool for these people in the process of politics and poetics in that it is

easily abstracted from the values of the culture in which it is produced. That is, money allows a commodity to be moved around the world, even though the value of the player is appreciated very differently in his various support bases. Lured by money Fijians can play for a club or even a country without ever being part of the community in which they play; instead they get the financial and subsequent social rewards derived from an overseas value system and transfer these back to Fiji. While they accumulate economic value in their adopted professional rugby clubs, they are able to accumulate social value back in Fijian communities. This is not without its pain as they cope with the ambiguity of their position, respected more in community far away than in the one in which they play. However, in an interesting twist, their economic value, based as it is on performance and reputation on the field, is partially dependent upon their adherence to particular values which make them the person they are, that is the values of their home community. To be too Fijian might disrespect the values of those who pay the salaries., and will cause a player to lose their earning capacity – Rupeni Caucaunibuka is the warning case for this.

As a consequence, the value and identity of Fijian men remains ambiguous within the multiple arenas in which they are evaluated. They can hold high social value in Fiji, but be on a slippery slope to rejection and loss of economic value in the core club. They can be contributing remittances whilst shifting their priorities, practices and sense of identity away from those of Fijian social relations. The multiple values used to assess them regularly differ greatly, but to be successful as a Fijian professional rugby player in an overseas club, the player must embrace and satisfy the values of their multiple evaluators. This ambiguity is difficult to manage and results in success only for those who are able to negotiate the balance

between the different demands of the various localities in which they are simultaneously evaluated. To succeed as Fijians within the professional game they need to establish identities as being both good Fijians and good professionals, a vastly more difficult proposition than that faced by the core country players.

The power of the values of professionalism is challenged by the constantly arriving Fijian players, who have yet to balance their strong adherence to Fijian values with the demands of the professional code. They are more likely to fall back on the very things which produced their talent – their communal loyalties and belief in God. For the audience in the core country this is a strange way to reach the heights of professional game but the Fijians are motivated by collective dreams unacknowledged by most of the vast global audience. Dreams have a basis in socially constituted hope. Unlike a fantasy this dream is not an illusion but has become a reality for the small elite who have preceded them, and there are definite pathways imagined towards it. Unlike individualistic economic decisions, these don't make sense simply as calculations of risk and reward, but need to be seen as identity projects. The risk involved in pursuing a dream is only possible due to the fact that this pursuit, in and of itself, is given social value. Young men are respected and encouraged even if they are a long way from fulfilling the dream, and for this they draw upon the significant support of their families and communities. They are produced as recruitable players through this collective support. Once recruited into the system Fijian men are converted from the 'raw talent' of their home playing fields into professionals; athletes who are capable of taking up contracts at far flung clubs, accommodating to the requirements of these social spaces.

However in social situations where the Fijian rugby values predominated, such as the national rugby team, a very different form of professionalism emerged. Most notably, religion and communalism were central to efforts to bring the team together. Players were united in their commitment to God and their connections through village and club communities. The national team culture which resulted led to different behaviours and a different set of values. Often in this environment non-Fijian born coaches and players were frustrated and struggled to operate effectively as professionals. Here in the national team as in countless Fijian club teams the Fijian system of values was given prominence over the professional frame. Ultimately many of the Fijians I interviewed were very keen to negotiate the requirements of professional clubs whilst maintaining their adherence to the values of the Fijian community, and whilst establishing themselves as the provider for their nuclear family; a complicated balance for those who were successful at rugby, and almost impossible for those without the financial resources or fame.

This tells us something about value and values. The monetary value the players had within professional rugby was a product of the values of the core rugby community. However with the transfer of this money back to their home community Fijian players can maintain their value in the Fijian system of valuation, adhering to the social values of communal production and resources sharing, and demonstrating modesty, religious devotion, respect for hierarchy – those values dear to Fijians.

Constructing the Body as a Global Phenomenon

The problem with viewing things purely in terms of value is that this makes all of this seem to be a calculative performance. To get past this I explore the ways these values are embodied by the individual.

Learning a new body culture is difficult, yet it is a very obvious sign of a person's value in a particular context. These body cultures are themselves contingent upon the ideologies which construct them and the disciplines that shape them. The disciplinary strategies rely on codes of practice determined by governing bodies of the sport or the factory or the nation, lubricated by the financial rewards of conforming to the new disciplines. They have resulted in an intense process of professionalization which teaches the players the techniques of professionalism. Yet, the important change, the change highlighted by the players themselves, is a shift in the way they experience rugby. Rugby skills and physicality can be trained into the bodies identified as having raw talent, but for this to occur the players themselves have to adopt a self-professionalising approach.

Rather than existing in isolation from ideologies, bodies are key sites where the frictions between different ideologies are played out. Players' bodies and beliefs are coproduced in a process marked by an articulation between multiple social values. As with all movements of globalisation and modernisation this thesis has been about the disciplining of individual bodies into the demands of new global industries and patterns of exchange. Yet, due to the friction as mobile players engaged with multiple values at once, there was also resistance and creativity in the embodiment of these values. To simplify it, the Fijian bodies were understood and experienced not individually, but as products of group labour, and as inextricably part of communal experience. It was this sense of personhood which they sought to recreate, and the communal ideology behind it which so challenged

the professional ideals of self-responsibility. The result of this overlap has led in some clubs to the importation of the ideals of God and community into the professional approaches of players. In clubs the Fijian players not only were subject to multiple values, they also embodied these in alternative professionalisms. Many clubs are beginning to allow space for these alternatives, sometimes even utilising the Pacific Island communality as one source of “team culture”.

This thesis has drawn attention to the diversity of local disciplines and codes of practice that are often naively assumed to conform to global market and professional practices. In reality diverse cultural codes of practice expressed through individual bodies are brought together in team cultures and through them into the global game. The player’s body is more than a commodity to be fashioned into a rugby mould of heavy forward or fleet-footed back. The potential of that migrant player rests equally as powerfully in the cultural dispositions set by home community and close family. Without that sense of security that comes from expressing those values Pacific Island migrants could easily revert to value-less commodities in the rugby market. In that mix is both great risk and great potential. It has become recognised by many of the managers that the loss of an individual’s sense of place and standing threatens his performance, that is there is potential risk in moulding individual bodies so completely to a global disciplinary construct that the uniqueness of their person and thus their marketing appeal is lost. What I suggest here is that an analysis of the body must be extended beyond the body itself, to include the social values within which the person is being made, and judged.

The globalisation of the sport breeds not only conformity to certain codes of practice but particularity to the proud identities of countless nations and communities who follow the game. The space within the system for the expression of these alternatives is vital for its overall cohesion. Fijian juggling of these multiple systems is fraught with ambiguity and tensions. They typify all migrants in this regard, yet are also specific. Few other migrants have such attention paid to the body and bodily practice. Few other migrants can earn the salaries of the most successful rugby migrants. Few other migrants have the potential to be national icons by doing what they love. Few others are so publicly evaluated. In this ‘friction’ of global and local demands many a player falls foul of its ambiguities and contradictions but those who succeed achieve not only global but local renown.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Rugby Football Union (England) Revenue Sources 2012

Revenues:		**Expenditures**:	
Hospitality	27.6	Elite	13.8
Broadcasting	22.8	Community	15
Sponsorship	15.3	Stadium	15.9
Other	14	Business and	21.9
Ticket	13.3	Allocations to	26.8
Travel	6.9	Direct	33.6
Hotel	6.4	**TOTAL**	**126.7**
Merchandising and	5.2		
Health and leisure	3.3		
World Cup	1.8		
TOTAL	**116.6**		

Source: RFU Annual financial report 2012

Note: Hospitality relates to the selling of special packages which include food, drink and other entertainment at matches; Elite refers to the funding for the best players, coaches and support staff, including salaries and expenditure on equipment; Community refers to expenditure on local level small amateur clubs, and on camps and other programs aimed at involving the community in rugby.

Appendix 2: Australian Rugby Union Financial Report 2010

ARU Revenues (AUD)		**ARU Expenditure (AUD)**	
	(Millions)		(Millions)
Broadcasting	20.3	Commercial Operations	12.366
Sponsorship	23.039	Corporate services	8.652
Net Gate	20.679	Community rugby	3.274
Corporate	4.042	High performance and	11.584
Licensing	1.215	Super 14 grants and player	30.537
Government	0.339	SANZAR costs	3.383
Affiliation fees	0.021	TOTAL	69.796
IRB Grants	2.203	Allocations to member unions	6.08
Other income	0.249		
Financing	5.02	Surplus	1.066
Total	77.107		

Source: ARU annual financial report 2010

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