Nation, Nationalism, and Sport: Fijian Rugby in the Local–Global Nexus

Guinness, D.; Besnier, N.

Link to publication

Nation, Nationalism, and Sport: Fijian Rugby in the Local–Global Nexus

Daniel Guinness & Niko Besnier
University of Amsterdam

ABSTRACT
The changing architecture of the professional rugby union has created a seeming contradiction in Fijian nationalism: the best Fijian rugby players are now representing other nations and yet remain national heroes regarded by many Fijians as the embodiment of masculine indigenous Fijian ideals. Fijian ideologies about rugby problematize Benedict Anderson's celebrated but problematic understanding of the nation as based on a territorially bounded, imagined community in which perceived commonality and deep horizontal comradeship override a reality of inequality and difference. Instead, the semiotic connections among rugby, indigenous masculinity, and nationalism operate to the exclusion of other potential claimants to the Fijian nation, particularly members of a sizable minority of South Asian descent, in ways which are better understood using George Mosse's conception of nations as defined through the marginalization and exclusion of internal countertypes. Furthermore, Fijian nationalism operates in relation to the institutional and corporate structures in world rugby, which serve to standardize particular forms of nationalism that differ in significant ways from the commonsensical understanding of nationalism as coterminous with citizenship. An ethnography of an amateur club in Fiji, a multi-sited ethnography of Fijian players based overseas, and the analysis of mass media highlight the multiple levels on which Fijian nationalism is produced and reproduced through rugby. Nationalism is not culturally or

socially bounded by a nation, but rather linked, in this case through sport, to identity politics that are at once intensely local and masculine while at the same time global, corporate, and nationalized. [Keywords: Nation, nationalism, sport, rugby, migration, cultural identity, masculinity, ethnicity, Fiji, Pacific Islands]

Few aspects of contemporary life are as focused on the expression and celebration of nationalism as elite sport. At all major international tournaments, athletes in many sports compete primarily as representatives of their countries, and secondarily as individuals, and even if their individuality is showcased, on television screens their name is always accompanied by their national identification. States celebrate prominent victorious athletes in formal ceremonies, such as receptions at presidential or royal palaces and processions through capital cities. The Parade of Athletes in the Olympic Games opening ceremonies prominently feature symbols of every participating nation in the form of flags, uniforms, performative announcements, and other features designed to represent the nation to the world.

Displays of nationalism have the effect of inscribing the nation onto the bodies of athletes and giving the "imagined" nature of the nation a concrete, palpable quality (e.g., Bairner 2001, Cronin and Mayall 2005, Porter and Smith 2013). On the occasion of games pitching one country against the other, fans routinely engage in displays of nationalist fervor, many of which fall under the category of "banal nationalism" (Billig 1995). Other displays can border on ultra-nationalism, as is the case of football hooligans. This nationalism often gives politicians the opportunity to further their own political projects. The practice of sporting activities, even at non-elite levels, can provide a meaning and purpose inflected with nationalism to people's lives, particularly for young men.

When we dig a bit deeper into the relationship between the nation and sport, however, we begin to find considerable complexity, uncertainty, and unease. These qualities are evident, for example, in the fast-tracking of the naturalization of non-native athletes in certain countries (e.g., middle-distance runners in Qatar) and the strategic choice that some athletes make to represent countries with which they may have a heritage relationship but not citizenship, but where the competition for national selection is less stiff than in their countries of citizenship (Besnier and Brownell

Figure 1: Fijians based in France chatting around a kava bowl after a match between an invitational team of Fijian athletes and former members of the French national team, Sanguinet, France, June 2016.

PHOTO BY NIKO BESNIER

2016a). The fragility and contingency of the relationship between nation and sport is also evident in the unease generated by athletes competing in international sporting events whom some deem not to "properly" represent the nation. For example, racially marked athletes of Team Britain at the 2012 London Summer Olympics Games became the object of tabloid accusations in Britain for being "Plastic Brits" merely exploiting funding opportunities; and the February 2015 chairperson of the British Football Association advocated new restrictions on the transnational movement of soccer players, arguing that the Premier League, the country's top football competition, would soon be "owned by foreigners, managed by foreigners, and played by foreigners," thus preventing promising local talent from participating in the game at the highest level (Applebaum 2015). These

Figure 2: Fijian athletes huddle together before the match in Sanguinet, France, June 2016.

PHOTO BY NIKO BESNIER

controversies demonstrate that the relationship between the nation and sport is mediated by a host of factors other than straightforward semiotics.

Our focus here is not the paradox of the non-local embodying the local, but a more complex and somewhat opposite situation, in which elite athletes have left to represent other places but continue to embody the nation, while part of the nation is actively excluded from the national sport. More specifically, we analyze how one sport, rugby union (hereafter referred to as "rugby"), is implicated in negotiations of who belongs to the nation-state in Fiji, an island nation in the Southwest Pacific.[1] In this country, the embodiment of nationalism through rugby defines a Fiji nation as belonging to the indigenous population to the exclusion of other potential claimants, particularly members of a sizable minority of South Asian descent. The semiotic connections among rugby, indigenous masculinity,

and nationalism are lived and reproduced at the most local level of the sport, as evidenced in the practices in an amateur rugby club that we document presently. At the same time, the masculine nationalism enacted through rugby operates in reference to a broader context of professional rugby, in which many of the most talented athletes who "carry" the nation are playing for foreign clubs and other national teams. The international success of these elite athletes projects certain articulations of nationalism onto the global level while simultaneously perverting any simple conception of bounded identity. The sport is at once intensely local and gendered, while at the same time remaining global, corporate, and nationalized.

This examination of the interaction of grass-roots and elite level nationalism complicates Benedict Anderson's celebrated but problematic understanding of the nation as a community that is territorially bounded, the product of the imagination, grounded in commonality despite difference and inequality, and "always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1991:16).[2] We take seriously the less well-known conceptualization of the nation that historian George Mosse (1985, 1998) developed at the same time as Anderson first articulated "imagined communities," which holds that the nation rests on the exclusion and marginalization of internal dangerous "countertypes," as well as Kelly and Kaplan's (2001) problematization of the concept of "identity" as the ideational underpinnings of nationalism. Anderson conjures up images of territorially bounded nation-states encompassed in a single national imaginary, which does not capture the complexity provoked and embodied by elite Fijian rugby players. In Fiji, nationalist ideology is only one among many social boundaries. But we locate nationalism in the context of a globalized world dominated by the structures of neoliberal capitalism, particularly as these structures shape the governance of sport and enable or constrain the mobility of athletes. Here, the local sociocultural dynamics involved in defining the nation are rooted in the long-standing constitution of local contexts, but they are also intertwined with global dynamics.

Our arguments implicitly join the chorus of the critiques of methodological nationalism that have emerged in the last couple of decades, namely of the naturalization of the nation as coterminous with both society and a bounded territory, supported by the mobilization of nationalist political identities and ideologies (see Chernilo 2011, Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, Bernal 2014). One celebrated counterexample of this conceptualization of nationalism is "long-distance nationalism," namely the "set of

identity claims and practices that connect people living in various geographical locations to a specific territory that they see as their ancestral home" (Glick Schiller 2005:570; see also Anderson 1998, Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001). The case that we focus on here, however, differs in both nature and complexity from long-distance nationalism, in that it involves a nationalism located in the "ancestral home" that seeks to englobe migrant citizens at the same time that it excludes some who have a legitimate claim to local citizenship. This dual inclusion and exclusion rests on an ideology that equates nationalist ideals with a belief in their gendered universality.

We analyze indigenous Fijian nationalism as it operates on different levels through rugby. The institutional and corporate structures in world rugby serve to standardize particular forms of nationalism that differ in significant ways from the commonsensical understanding of nationalism as coterminous with citizenship. However, the changing architecture of the professional sport also complicates nationalism for nations on the margins of the sport's global capitalist structure by encouraging the concentration of players in the center of that structure. Despite being marginal in this system, Fiji rugby plays a central role in promoting a particular form of nationalism in local identity and cultural politics. The final part of the article turns to the articulations between nationalisms embedded at once in local politics and the global system of professional sport **(see Figures 1 and 2)**.

An International Professional Sport

All expressions of sporting nationalism in rugby, even the most localized, are backgrounded by the organizing framework of global professional rugby, to which they reference both explicitly and implicitly. The sport's rules, organization, and top-level tournaments are governed by a super-national body, founded in 1886 and headquartered in Dublin (Ireland), called the International Rugby Board (IRB) until it changed its name to World Rugby in 2014. Like international bodies that regulate other sports and sporting events, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale du Football Association (FIFA), World Rugby is a federation of state-level member unions, which currently number 100. For the purpose of the board, a "country" is not necessarily a politically sovereign entity: for example, Wales, Scotland, and England, three of the earliest members, count as separate countries, while Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland count as one.

Nationalism is a core aspect of the promotion of professional rugby on a global scale. The annual competitions in the Northern Hemisphere, particularly the Six Nations Championship (between the four "countries" of the British Isles, France, and Italy), are all structured to highlight its key international fixtures. Matches provide moments that spark the nationalist imaginations, as the prevalence of national symbols and the invocation of national myths allow mutual strangers to imagine themselves as part of a national entity. Choirs singing national rugby hymns and hordes of fans wearing national jerseys and draped in national flags are featured on ads as frequently as images of outstanding play. Support for the nation can be expressed by watching rugby, wearing the national jersey, and enjoying seeing rivals lose—the nation is transformed into easily marketed symbols and brands, to be consumed not only by its own citizens, but also by anyone who is willing to buy the relevant merchandise. Heavily nationalistic media campaigns promote the tournament by highlighting alleged age-old rivalries between countries transformed into easily digestible forms, which are prominent in what supporters regard as important.

Nationalism has played a crucial role in the rugby world in yet another way, and to understand this role requires some background on the history of amateurism and professionalism. The tense qualities that the relationship between nationalism and elite sport has acquired in recent decades are the direct and indirect result of the relentless corporatization, mediatization, and commercialization that world sports have experienced during the same time period. What used to be local teams and clubs are now owned by corporations and people, who often have no particular attachment to local contexts, and are transformed into products to be consumed transnationally. The fact that these teams are tied to particular countries or cities has become only a minor aspect of this consumption (Miller et al. 1999). Thus Manchester United, the Chicago Bulls, and the New Zealand All Blacks, while presented as being grounded in particular locations, are now branded commodities that can be purchased anywhere in the world in the form of clothing, fan club memberships, or other patented symbols. In addition, teams now compete with one another not only on the sport field, but also as corporate entities whose goal is to maximize profit in whatever way they can, and which compete with one another for scarce resources, including talent.

Until 1995, rugby union was insistently an amateur sport, which meant that clubs and countries could not officially pay their players to play. By

1995, however, the sport was deeply entrenched in the structures of neoliberal capitalism, and clubs and national teams had found all sorts of unofficial ways to remunerate players, particularly to persuade the most talented not to move elsewhere. In 1995, exactly a century after rugby union and rugby league split up over the question of professionalization, major media conglomerates colluded with players, particularly members of the national teams of Australia and New Zealand, to put pressure on the IRB to professionalize the sport. Faced with the possibility that all top players could migrate to a competition that it wouldn't run, IRB (and subsequently most national rugby bodies) acquiesced to demands. New competitions and new teams emerged, while short-term player contracting resulted in a highly mobile workforce, as many players change their place and nation of employment five or six times over a career that often lasts less than ten years (McCarry 2013). At the same time, players are now considerably more accountable for their performances than ever before, competing with one another for the most lucrative and prestigious contracts. Traditional forms of nationalism are thus both explicitly protected in the professional system and complicated by its neoliberal structures.

It is in this context that leading rugby nations and the most important clubs battle for sporting talent from the entire rugby-playing world in order to maximize team performance, which in turn translates into financial gain in the form of media contracts and fan support.[3] Once established in a particular country, some players qualify for national representation in international matches, which are the sport's largest and most prestigious events and thus represent the pinnacle of players' careers. A crucial factor here is World Rugby's definition of "nationality," which differs from standard definitions, as well as from definitions by other sport-regulating bodies like FIFA and the IOC: a rugby player is eligible for a national team if he, a parent, or grandparent was born in the country, or if he has completed 36 consecutive months of residence immediately prior to selection, but he can only play for one senior national team in his lifetime (Grainger, Rick, and Andrews 2014). This regulatory framework, whose one-nation-in-a-lifetime clause is designed to protect the sanctity of nationality even if the latter is defined generously, is supplemented by the pre-eminence of national over club competitions, requiring professional clubs to release their players to play for national teams if selected during the international season.

Although somewhat counterbalanced by the protectionist policies that national governing bodies impose to cap the number of foreign nationals

Figure 3: The Fijian national rugby sevens team featured on an advertising billboard by the road between Nadi and Suva, February 2016.

PHOTO BY NIKO BESNIER

in a game at any given moment, the global power imbalance has created a system in which a player's national identification can be bought and sold, the countries with economic pull being able to attract talented players from marginal countries with the lure of professional contracts and nationality—the "brawn drain" (Bale 1991). Thus, in the 2015 Six Nations Competition, 46 players were born outside the nation they represented, although the players followed different trajectories before they ended up in the national squads (in addition to the fact that birthplace is not the best measure of national belonging). The most notably mobile players are those who arrived in a country with the specific aim of playing rugby rather than, for example, following their migrant parents as children.

Rugby nations seek to pursue a nationalism based on the success of their representative teams, although their ability to do so varies widely.

Economically powerful nations attract talent born and trained overseas, further reinforcing their dominance on the international stage through on-field victories, while economically disadvantaged countries struggle to compete, as their players pursue opportunities to play in wealthier countries or decline international representation to keep their contracting options as open as possible. Commentators often express concern that the Pacific Islands are being exploited for their rugby talent by the larger and more powerful rugby nations, namely New Zealand, Australia, and the Six Nations (e.g., Laban 2016). By this logic, rugby in the Pacific Islands is damaged by the absence of their stars, and national teams would benefit if all of their overseas-based players were available for selection to represent the nation. However, playing in another location does not sever the connection between players and the places they were born and raised. The example of Fijian rugby highlights the complexity of nationality in professional rugby—the battle for talent is not the only form of nationalism. To understand the dynamics of Fijian nationalism, one must investigate the role of rugby in the indigenous community and the hope that young men and their kin place on the prospect of professional rugby careers, whether this hope leads to them representing Fiji or one of Fiji's rivals in international rugby **(Figure 3)**.

The Politics of Rugby Nationalism in Fiji
The complexities of the entanglement of rugby and nationalism are perhaps best illustrated on the margin of the global capitalism that forms the context of the sport. Fiji, a nation of 875,000 inhabitants, was a British colony from 1874 until it became independent in 1970. Like its smaller and economically more deprived island nation neighbors Tonga and Samoa, it maintains a strong world presence as a rugby nation despite its relative political and economic insignificance. For most rugby fans around the world, "Fiji" represents an unproblematically homogeneous small nation that stands tall on the international rugby scene and produces some of the finest players in the world. However, these simplistic representations in fact contribute to the considerably more complex dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that we document.

Commentators both in Fiji and abroad commonly describe it as being made up of two ethnic groups, the indigenous Fijians or *i-Taukei* (currently 54 percent of the total population) and Indo-Fijians (38 percent, referred to

locally as "Indians"). The latter descend from South Asian migrants who either were brought to Fiji by the British as indentured sugarcane laborers in the latter part of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, or migrated freely before the mid-20th century. Under colonial rule, the two ethnic groups were kept separate and confined to distinct economic pursuits: i-Taukei led predominantly rural lives centered on the exploitation of land, the bulk of which is, to this day, legally reserved for inalienable indigenous ownership; while Indo-Fijians either cultivated leased land (particularly for sugarcane production) or engaged in commercial or industrial ventures in urban areas. This division of labor remains to this day, and Indo-Fijians are generally more successful than indigenous Fijians in both the agrarian sectors in the rural areas and commerce and industry in the urban centers. Indigenous Fijians are overwhelmingly dominant in the military, as well as the police force and the public service, although only recently in the case of the latter two (Ratuva 2013).

Dominant stereotypes naturalize the socio-economic separation between the two populations. Indigenous Fijians present themselves as kinship oriented and almost universally Christian citizens who live in hierarchical social structures and are deeply involved in long-standing structures of exchange.[4] In contrast, they represent Indo-Fijians as materialistic people living lives that are relatively free of kinship obligations and operating their businesses as individualistic and profit-driven enterprises. Indo-Fijians, particularly urbanites, return the favor: they see themselves as enterprising, egalitarian, and hard-working, and think of indigenous Fijians as idling their time unproductively by going to church, engaging in rank-based ceremonialism, and sitting around drinking grog (Fiji English for "kava").

The contrasting representations of these two groups are continuously maintained in spite of a reality that is far more complex. To begin, i-Taukei do not constitute a homogenous group, but rather lead vastly different lives based on their rank in traditional structures—the island or village they reside in, whether they live in cities or rural areas, and whether they are part of traditional churches or charismatic Pentecostal ones, among many other parameters of social difference. Similarly, Indo-Fijians range from humble farmers to relatively rich entrepreneurs; they may descend from poor Southern Indian indentured laborers or successful Gujarati businesspersons; and they may practice Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, or Christianity of various denominations. "Identity," in other words, is the result of historical and contemporary efforts to showcase the differences between ethnic

groups while overlooking their internal heterogeneities (Kelly and Kaplan 2001). In addition, Fiji's population includes numerous ethnic minorities, notably people from neighboring Pacific Islands who immigrated in prehistorical or historical times; descendants of early traders and settlers from Britain, continental Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and North America; people of Chinese ancestry and recent Chinese immigrants; people of Japanese ancestry; temporary migrants from many parts of the world; and the ethnically distinct population of the island of Rotuma (part of the Fijian polity, but located several hundred kilometers to the north). Inter-marriages have taken place over the centuries, resulting in even greater complexity, and the identities of "mixed race" inhabitants are determined more by their social circles and conduct than by their parentage. Ethnic distinctions are slowly being replaced by social class hierarchies, as evidenced, for example, in the way preschool aged children are socialized (Brison 2014).

There is a jarring contrast between inter-ethnic relations in ordinary life and in the public sphere. On the one hand, on a daily basis, many i-Taukei and Indo-Fijians lead lives side-by-side in uncomplicated ways—mixed families are not uncommon, and many people are bilingual in Fiji Hindi and Fijian to a degree, particularly in areas of the country where both ethnicities are well-represented. On the other hand, discourses of ethnic difference dominate people's self-representations and their representations by others and, as in other comparable situations (Barth 1969), boundaries between groups are continually reinforced just as they are erased in day-to-day existence. Four successive political coups led by indigenous Fijian military officers—the first of which in 1987 overthrew the first democratically elected Indo-Fijian-dominated government in the history of the country—have highlighted and exacerbated the economic, social, and ideological differences between the ethnic groups. Even though the coups were grounded in considerably more complicated dynamics than just inter-ethnic tensions (Lal 1992), they have generally resulted in diminished political and economic rights for Indo-Fijians, marginalized them, and exposed them to periodic violence. While Indo-Fijians had become a numerical majority by the late 1980s, the assertion of i-Taukei preeminence in the Fijian state and nation has motivated many to emigrate to New Zealand, Australia, the US, and Canada, leading to a significant decline in their number in Fiji (Connell and Voigt-Graf 2006, Trnka 2008).

The dominant i-Taukei form of masculinity is normatively constructed around three over-determined values that contemporary indigenous Fijian

society constructs as central: those of *vanua* (kinship, as symbolized in land and tradition), *matanitū* (united government through a hierarchy of chiefs and post-colonial rule), and *lotu* (one Christian God, community worship, and religious rites). These values powerfully define the identities and practices of indigenous men, as well as indigenous Fijians in general. Despite recent moves by the current government to secularize them, the formal institutions of the state continue to be entangled with both Christianity and indigenous traditions, as exemplified by the state motto, *Rerevaka na Kalou ka doka na tui*, "Fear God and respect the chief" (Teaiwa 2005:211). This has the effect, among others, of ensuring that Indo-Fijians are relegated to the status of spectator rather than agent in Christian and i-Taukei rituals, such as church services and the ritual presentation of kava (i-sevusevu). Even when Indo-Fijians occupy high-level

Figure 4: Men of different ages playing an informal afternoon rugby match at a neighborhood sports field in Fiji's capital, Suva, March 2016.

PHOTO BY DANIEL GUINNESS

government positions, they are unable to perform these rituals, which are central to the operations of the state and can only be performed by i-Taukei. The relevance of lotu, vanua, and matanitū goes beyond the realm of politics, to provide what Matt Tomlinson describes as "a metacultural formula through which Fijians describe, evaluate, and engage with a reified Fijian culture that has become hallowed as traditional" (2009:23). Of the many different forms of masculinity that could theoretically emerge from this cultural milieu, an image of the Fijian man as a warrior has gained precedence. Symbolically, the dominant indigenous identity draws upon a traditional imagination of younger men as warriors, ordered by older chiefs, acting with bravery, boldness, strength, and discipline to engage with outside threats and bring sustenance and protection to their family, clan, village, and country.

Rugby was originally introduced to Fiji by British colonial agents, including military officers, police commanders, and schoolmasters and principals. Prestigious all-boys' schools run by the colonial administration and the various churches were designed to educate the indigenous children of high rank and the offspring of the European and part-European elites who controlled commerce and plantations, to the exclusion of Indo-Fijian boys. This played an important role in constructing rugby as an indigenous sport. These schools include Queen Victoria School (established in 1904), Rātū Kadavulevu School (established in 1924), and Marist Brothers High School (established in 1949), all of which continue to play a prominent role in the reproduction of the country's elites and in the national rugby scene. From its elite origins, the sport trickled down the indigenous social hierarchy to rural villages and urban neighborhoods, and today it is profoundly intertwined with the chiefly system, the established churches, the military, and the police (Presterudstuen 2010). There is historical evidence that rugby has not always been Fiji's preferred sport, nor was it always deemed to have the "natural fit" with indigenous identity that it is often thought to have today.[5]

Today, rugby has been indigenized by i-Taukei to such an extent that it now plays an important symbolic and social role in the performance and naturalization of a particular "Fijian" way of being. Fijians regard rugby as founded on and showcasing indigenous values (Dewey 2014). As in neighboring Tonga (Besnier 2012) and Samoa (Clément 2014), village greens and urban spaces are the daily scene of impromptu and loosely structured games of "touch" rugby involving most boys and young men of the village,

Figure 5: Age mates posing after training in their village in inland Viti Levu, the main island of Fiji, February 2016.

PHOTO BY DANIEL GUINNESS

games that are important sites of gendered socialization in which younger boys learn what it means to be a man from their older brothers and cousins **(See Figures 4, 5, and 6)**. On the global stage, the entanglement of rugby, masculinity, and indigenous Fijian identity was affirmed in particularly spectacular fashion by Fiji's extraordinary debut at the Rio Olympic Games in August 2016, where the men's rugby sevens team, with the entire world as witness, won the gold medal with a 43–7 win over its former colonial master, the United Kingdom (Besnier and Brownell 2016b). The event was particularly significant because it was the first time that rugby was played as an Olympic sport.

In Fiji, alongside rugby, the military has a strong naturalizing effect on the incommensurability of ethnic difference. In both historical and contemporary settings, service in the military is a bastion of indigenous masculine

identity and a source of prestige and social mobility. During the colonial era, the British administration encouraged i-Taukei men to enlist in the armed forces of the Empire, in which they played significant roles in the various wars that Britain waged in the 20th century, from the Fiji Infantry Regiment's involvement in fighting in the Solomon Islands during World War II and in the 1948–1960 Malayan Emergency to the visible presence of Fijians since the late 1970s in United Nations peacekeeping missions. The British colonial administration actively discouraged Indo-Fijians from enlisting, particularly as the Quit India campaign was gaining traction in India (Lal 1992). Indigenous Fijians routinely use the virtual absence of Indo-Fijians in the armed forces to question the latter's masculinity and allegiance to the nation-state (Teaiwa 2005:206, 210). Overall, "being a man" for an indigenous Fijian is bound to a corporeal idea, the prototype for which is the traditional warrior of myth and folklore, which finds its modern incarnation in both the military man and the rugby player (who in many cases are one and the same). Histories of indigenous warfare and cannibalism associated with the warrior of the past are constantly reified in contexts like interactions with tourists (Pigliasco 2015). Warriorhood, war, and cannibalism are ethnic Fijians' source of "cultural intimacy" (Herzfeld 2004), self-stereotypes that are at once embarrassing, in this case because they are incommensurable with the enlightened Christian present, and a source of pride, because they demonstrate that i-Taukei men are "real men." In certain contexts, they also serve to strategically deploy a potentially lucrative or self-aggrandizing image.

For i-Taukei men, rugby is one of the focal activities for the construction of both masculinity and citizenship. In fact, it acts as one of the most visible markers of ethnic difference and of the exceptionalism of indigenous Fijians, providing a symbol around which national consciousness is formed. However, this national symbol does not encompass all citizens of Fiji. The national rugby team consists of men regarded as the prototypes of indigenous Fiji. History links them to the indigenous political leaders who established the nation-state along lines of indigenous ideals, with both explicit and tacit encouragement from the colonial administration. In pre-match rituals, the team performs a version of an indigenous war dance called *bole*.[6] Publicity images showcase the relationship between rugby players and indigenous warrior ancestors. The national team quite openly and proudly displays its Christian identity, with prayers and hymns before and after matches, and references to "Phil.

4:13" emblazoned on their jerseys: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Tomlinson 2009). These practices and symbols are reaffirmed and pushed to the forefront of national consciousness. The matches provide ritual occasions for the mass performance of nationalism, generally in family and friendship groups in front of the television. It is a national image that is masculine, indigenous, heteronormative, and Christian. It also excludes Indo-Fijians, women, and non-able bodied and gender non-conforming men of all ethnicities (see Presterudstuen 2014 and Teaiwa 2014 on the marginalization of transgender people). There are clear parallels to the central role of rugby in apartheid-era South Africa in creating and legitimizing an Afrikaner masculine nationalism predicated on moral and physical superiority (Black and Nauright 1998; Grundlingh, Odendaal, and Spies 1995; Rubin 2014).

Figure 6: Young men of different ages training in their village in inland Viti Levu, the main island of Fiji, February 2016.

PHOTO BY DANIEL GUINNESS

While Fiji rugby creates ethnic identity by highlighting some parameters of difference and obscuring others, particularly at times of social turmoil and political struggle, there are other moments when its indigenous associations are backgrounded and idealized as a unifying force for the nation. Rugby has many fans among ordinary Indo-Fijians, many of who take part enthusiastically in the national project of asserting the nation's presence on the world scene through the sport **(Figure 7)**. Furthermore, the sport has long-benefited from the financial sponsorship of the Punjas food conglomerate, an important Indo-Fijian company. Politicians like to extol the ability of the sport to cut across social divisions. Indo-Fijians can be explicitly invited to join in this national symbol, but it is a symbol of which they are not a part. Indeed, few play rugby. If they play any sport, they play soccer; and if they try to play rugby, as some of our research participants do, they are provided no facilities or funding and are laughed off the field. Thus the program of the conference for the 100th anniversary of the Fiji Rugby Union, held at the University of the South Pacific in July 2013, included a panel of "under-represented" constituencies, which brought together Indo-Fijians, women, and the disabled (*Fiji Sun* 2013). Unlike post-apartheid South Africa, Fiji has never pursued an affirmative action policy to increase the numbers of non-indigenous Fijians in the sport. Indigenous Fijians imagine Indo-Fijians' absence from rugby, just as the military, as a sign of the latter's corporeal and moral inferiority: they are unable to participate because they do not possess the warrior heritage, the Christian discipline, and the i-Taukei communal outlook on life. This discourse contributes to reducing the multiple forms of social difference operating in the country to ethnic differences (Kanemasu and Molnar 2013a). Attention to who is excluded from rugby nationalism, and why, is essential to our understanding of the local meaning of the sport.[7]

These dynamics play out at the elite level of the sport as well as in its local practice. Local non-elite rugby clubs are key sites for the convergence of rugby, masculinity, and ethnicity. For example, the amateur Baravilevu club (a pseudonym) in Suva, Fiji's capital, where the first author conducted ethnographic fieldwork in 2009, was established by the people of the area in response to the rising crime rates in the 1980s and 1990s, as a way of reining in the young i-Taukei men who were deemed to be the main cause of the violence. Located in a disused field, with crooked goalposts fashioned from tree branches, and devoid of basic amenities such as changing rooms or a clubhouse, Baravilevu is as far

Figure 7: An Indo-Fijian barbershop decorated with photos of rugby teams and Bollywood posters in Nadi, a major city in western Viti Levu, Fiji, January 2016.

PHOTO BY DANIEL GUINNESS

materially as it is socially from the professional clubs of Europe and New Zealand. It explicitly aimed to provide a space in which the young men, many of whom were internal migrants from the hinterlands and outer islands, could create social ties and learn to be productive members of society. Through rugby, the argument went, they could make themselves into good men according to the social values espoused by the household, village, church, and nation.[8]

The pairing of vanua and lotu remained at the forefront of the club's activities. Before and after games and training, players gathered in a quiet circle and prayed, led by a senior member of the team or the team's *i-talatala* (pastor). The most pertinent example of the importance of Christian discipline was that the honor of leading the hymns after training and games was not given to the captain, the coach, the best player, or the highest ranking player, but rather to the player who had best reformed from a life of

petty crime and alcohol to return to a rugby-centered life, proper community participation, and the Methodist Church. Through their on- and off-field participation, club members were re-introduced into society, and rugby became a means of gaining recognition and becoming adult men—of moving from the status of neophyte to that of experienced adult and later elder.

The Baravilevu club had a complicated relationship with the military and the police. On the one hand, several senior players had previously served in UN peacekeeping forces, many players were descendants of *bati* (warrior) lineages in their villages, and warrior images abounded. On the other, players had stories of themselves or friends being beaten up by soldiers or police officers in the context of the suburb's reputation for crime and violence. Many players also envied the better material conditions that the salaried soldiers and police officers enjoyed. The team's fiercest on- and off-field rivalry was with the military and police rugby teams. These matches were the most anticipated of the season and were occasions when the club encouraged on-field physical aggression (**See Figure 8**). The players had an ambiguous relationship to their (real and imagined) criminal past, constantly preaching against crime in training sessions, while simultaneously celebrating their reputation for being tough. Despite the antagonism between players and the local military and police contingents, the players consistently aligned themselves with the nationalist masculinity that suffuses these organizations, by describing themselves, for example, in terms of warrior ideology. While many players were aware of the social gulf between themselves and the military, they still imagined themselves and the soldiers as partaking in the same indigenous masculinity.

The rugby match gave the players a new role and a new set of expectations. Like other rituals of its kind, it established a powerful distinction between those who have undergone the ritual and those who never will. One interlocutor, TT, was articulate about what he felt tied rugby, masculinity, and ethnicity together. As a half-Fijian and half-Samoan boy, he was on the margins of the indigenous majority and acutely aware of it. At school, he 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:

> Boys are meant to play rugby…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 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…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.[9] 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. 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.

Figure 8: The first author at the center of a maul during a rugby match between Baravilevu and the Fire department, Suva, Fiji's capital, March 2016.

PHOTO BY NIKO BESNIER

This account reflects many of the sentiments that interlocutors put forward, of which we emphasize two for further consideration. First, TT's position in the social hierarchy was closely linked to his ability to prove himself in accordance with a certain archetype of masculinity. There is a clear division between masculine and feminine roles and images in the imagined nation, as is the case in nationalisms in general (Yuval-Davis 1997). Second, rugby offered TT the opportunity to prove himself as a certain type of man, to explicitly claim his indigenous Fijian identity and implicitly define himself against Indo-Fijian and Polynesian identifications. It is a method by which he could affirm his own belonging to the indigenous majority, rather than being classified as "part-Fijian" (*kai loma*, literally "person in between").

The ethnic binary is constructed out of a much more complex reality through practice, rather than descent. An indigenous man need not be the most talented rugby player (though talent does help), but he must exemplify particular attitudes and deportment at training and in matches. Hence, TT emphasizes the "rough stuff" of rugby, which proved that he had 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. In this sense, rugby in Fiji echoes some aspects of what wrestling means for Hindu nationalism in India—recuperating strong male bodies in the service of the nation in the resistance against de-masculinizing colonialism, while symbolically excluding the participation of women, Muslims, and those men who do not conform to the particularities of its body culture (Alter 1992). Nationalism in Fiji is the production of belonging through processes of exclusion (Mosse 1985, 1998).

At the same time, Fijian indigenous masculinity and nationalism are also profoundly outward looking and draw on supposedly universal values. Fijians bind themselves to international Christian communities through worship and shared belief, and use international military service to prove their inherent value as soldiers, as we will elaborate later. In the era of professional rugby, the sport also offers opportunities to exhibit i-Taukei value on the international stage. Playing rugby away from Fiji becomes a useful strategy for individual and familial social mobility, which further complicates narratives of Fijian rugby nationalism.

The Global Context of Fiji's Rugby Nationalism

Unlike neighboring Tonga and Samoa, Fiji did not become an emigrant society until very recently. The most enthusiastic migrants have always been Indo-Fijians, pushed away by the threat of political violence and marginalization. However, since the last decade of the millennium, i-Taukei have also been seeking to emigrate in increasing numbers, particularly in the context of political instability and a deteriorating economy aggravated by economic sanctions imposed by Australia and New Zealand. Increasingly, indigenous Fijian society is developing the "migratory disposition" that colors all aspects of life in neighboring island countries, where the future is synonymous with exile and emigrating is a sine qua non of proper social adulthood (Besnier 2011, Macpherson and Macpherson 2010). But Fiji does not have post-colonial alliances with industrial nations that facilitate migration, as is the case of the Cook Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, among others, which maintain open-border relations with their current and former colonial masters, New Zealand and the US respectively. Because Indo-Fijians have a longer history of migration to destinations like Australia and Canada, they have access to more legal avenues of emigration than indigenous Fijians through family reunification immigration policies.

For i-Taukei men, rugby and the military represent rare avenues for both geographical and social mobility. Men who lack rugby talent or who fail to be in the right place at the right time to be scouted for an overseas rugby team may seek a career locally in the armed forces, the police, the fire department, the corrections department, or the British military, which has long recruited Fijians (Teaiwa 2008, 2014). A career in these other fields is considerably less glamorous and materially remunerative than a successful rugby career overseas, but it does provide a degree of security and opportunity. The armed forces and other law-enforcement departments not only have locally visible rugby teams into which they seek to recruit players, but they also allow employees to go on extended leave if they manage to land a professional contract overseas. In addition, the military in particular centralizes the same values as rugby, exalting an image of warrior-like indigenous heteronormative masculinity (male soldiers vastly outnumber female soldiers), fighting for a Christian God (particularly when deployed in the heathen Middle East), country (where

the former colonial power easily acts as a substitute for Fiji), and in the case of the British military remittances back home (Teaiwa 2005).[10]

Like sport migrations in general (Besnier 2014, Besnier and Brownell 2012), rugby migration is gendered and contingent on careers that are fragile and ephemeral. Yet the convergence 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 since the beginning of the millennium. Today, Fijians can be found at all levels of the sport's international hierarchy, from the top tiers occupied by Britain, Wales, France, and New Zealand, to countries in the lower tiers, such as Japan, Romania, Sri Lanka, and the US (Schieder 2014). Indigenous Fijian rugby players see their migration not as "brawn drain" but as a source of national pride, as they show what they are capable of achieving on a global scale (Kanemasu and Molnar 2013b). These opportunities reinforce the supposed naturalness of indigenous Fijian moral and physical strength, and many understand successful migration as the result of a mixture of genetic endowment, God-given talent, and Fijian history, values, and communalism. These mobilities are often not individual projects, but rather the culmination of years of training supported materially and emotionally by extended kin. In this alternative form of nationalism, migrant players are not seen as leaving and betraying the Fijian nation, but rather as carrying its prestige abroad as they accumulate resources and perform a powerful but disciplined Fijian masculinity.

Yet, for talented Fijian athletes who gain recognition in the global rugby world, tensions arise between national representation and professional careers. For those who are already part-way into the New Zealand or Australian rugby development systems, accepting an invitation to play for Fiji in the open age-group national representative teams drastically reduces their ability to gain future contracts. In particular, because of World Rugby nationality regulations, it excludes them for the rest of their professional lives from representing another country with greater rugby visibility and promises of material returns. Most young players are intensely aware of this drawback and refuse the approaches of Fijian coaches, and even sign contracts that prohibit them from representing Fiji. For example, in 2007, having played in Fiji's under-19 and under-20 teams, the 19-year-old winger Henry Speight, from a family with both indigenous and local European elite roots, moved to New Zealand to repeat his final high school year at Hamilton Boys' High School, a well-known rugby school. His family gave

him an ultimatum not to return without either a professional contract or a school diploma. He performed well in school rugby and was given an opportunity with the regional semi-professional team to play in the NPC competition, the largest domestic competition in New Zealand at the time. This competition is a showcase of the best New Zealand talent, a shop window for the fully professional teams in New Zealand and Australia, and a rite of passage for would-be professionals. Here they compete against the best non-professional talent in the country, and performing here guarantees a young player many overseas contract offers.

Speight made the most of his opportunity and in 2011 he was offered a contract with an elite Australian team, the ACT Brumbies. While Australian teams are only allowed to recruit players eligible for the Australian national team, each team is allowed two exceptions, "project players" born and raised overseas who show potential and a willingness not only to play for the team but also to make Australia their permanent home. These players may be offered three-year contracts with the condition that they work towards satisfying Australia's citizenship requirements and World Rugby's nationality rules. Players born, raised, and trained overseas are not only accepted into the national team, but are also actively recruited into it. The explicit aim 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; Speight was willing to start down the path towards becoming an Australian citizen and national representative— a path that continues to bring him success as he was selected for the Australian national team for its 2014 tour of Europe and the national rugby sevens squad for the Rio Olympics. Even before representing Australia, Speight's time at the Brumbies had significantly increased his value by making him "less Fijian." Foreign discourses about Fijian players invert the Fijian understanding of their players as being the perfect development of masculinity: rather, agents, managers, and coaches regularly depict them as undeveloped raw talent in dire need of the disciplining influence of the more developed rugby nations (Besnier 2015). In the words of one prominent international agent, significant experience in Australian or particularly New Zealand rugby disciplines Pacific Island players from unreliable and difficult-to-sell "coconuts" into serious professionals. Representing the national team of Australia or New Zealand solidifies this perception of professionalism.

Speight continues to closely identify with Fiji. He remains Fijian in his inclinations and through his ongoing engagement with his high-profile family. For instance, he proudly carried out the traditional mourning ritual of not cutting his hair for 100 days after the death of a cousin, growing it into a large Afro style that highlighted his Fijian origins. Yet, at the same time, he actively develops connections with the local and national Australian populations, volunteering his own time in a soup kitchen (rather than taking part in team publicity activities) and making public statements about his commitment to and enjoyment of Australia. He aims to be both Fijian and Australian, as well as an elite sport professional. His decisions are framed by a complex interplay between the local constellation of values, including the ongoing support for foreign-based players, and the macro-level structures of the international game.

Rather than seeing men such as Speight as turncoats for moving overseas, Fijians embrace them as national heroes. In fact, many Fijians have developed a strong loyalty to particular foreign national teams because a Fijian is part of the squad, most commonly the national teams of New Zealand or Australia. Among the most famous and beloved Fijian players are many who have represented other nations—sport superstars who have reached the top level of the game. Their faces are displayed on billboards in Fiji, and villages proudly notify visitors that these stars were born there. The financial benefits are well-understood by the bulk of the Fijian public, and certainly by the players' families, who have come to depend on regular remittances and can achieve a level of wealth and prestige they could not have otherwise hoped for. The best players remain the country's poster boys, imagined as continuing to embody the values of lotu, vanua, and matanitū, even though they themselves might have to live other values in their day-to-day lives. The continued support for Fijians abroad complicates ideas of nationality, allowing Fijians to see their own national glory enhanced by the success of other national teams.

However, migration is also the opportunity for the expression of discontent, as young men who move overseas escape the authority of chiefs and their responsibilities towards their family. Away from Fiji, they are no longer subjected to the gaze of their villages and become part of a professional system in which key Fijian values are of little relevance. Migrant players do not always nurture a strong relationship with their country of origin and its dominant indigenous social structure and values. Many are happy to have left behind not only political and economic problems, but

also a communal system that constantly monitors and restricts their behavior as young men. One international star began refusing all requests for money from his siblings after one of his brothers crashed a car that he had bought for the family while drunk driving. He explained this shift in terms of his siblings' failure to fulfill their obligations to maintain and work with the family property. Another star player moved the site of the family home he had planned to build away from his Fijian village after all the building materials were requisitioned to build other houses on two separate occasions. All experienced Fijian rugby players in New Zealand and Australia engage in social strategies for avoiding the demands of their extended kin networks, many of whom are distant cousins who only emerge at the first sign of rugby success. One major bank in New Zealand had developed, in cooperation with New Zealand professional clubs, a special banking instrument that provides access to only part of the account, designed specifically to conceal Pacific Island players' salaries from their extended families. These changes are just part of a broader pattern of movement away from the control of their kin towards individual and nuclear family projects.

Currently, the international success and cosmopolitanism of Fijian rugby migrants are understood in Fiji as a validation of a particular conception of the Fijian nation. However, this will not necessarily continue to be the case. For example, in Papua New Guinea, rugby league has failed to provide a coherent and uniting nationalism, despite the sport's huge popularity and the international success of some players. Thus the public celebration of one extremely successful international star, Marcus Bai, is not seen as an affirmation of the PNG nation, but rather as a way for people to transcend it through a utopian vision of an "imagined cosmopolitanism" (Foster 2006:747). In a nation rocked by ongoing violence between different clan groups and a patronage system that places kinship before citizenship, rugby league offers the dream of escape. In contrast, the dominant ideology of rugby in Fiji is based on the politics of autochthony, which erases rank, class, and other inequalities among indigenous Fijians by excluding other groups, particularly Indo-Fijians. In this context, overseas players validate i-Taukei masculinity and values, their cosmopolitanism taken as evidence of the global worth of indigenous men.[11] Little is made of the geographical and cultural separation that rugby players experience, and of the fundamental economic and political instability of the Fijian nation that produces their migration in the first instance.

Rethinking Nationalism through Sport

Traditional accounts of nationalism have generally sought to understand the everyday production of the nation through institutions, ideologies, and other large-scale dynamics. Here, we have proceeded differently: we have analyzed nationalism through sport as a matter of both inclusion and exclusion—the identification of a particular definition of the nation with a politically dominant group to the exclusion of others, and the identification of this definition with purportedly universal values of what it means to be a man, a Christian, and a cosmopolitan citizen. At the same time, the forces of neoliberal capitalism in global sport coerce both athletes and fans to extract their celebration of nationalism from the confines of the local, because it could never survive as such. The particularities of the nationalism produced are the products of both global and local forces.

Sport remains a powerful means by which people imagine themselves and their communities. However, the changing realities of nationality, and its apparent lack of import for certain forms of sporting nationalism, poses the question of what exactly is being imagined. Returning to Anderson's (1991, 1998) classic conception of nations, some contemporary forms of sporting nationalism defy the limited and bounded nature of the imagined national communities. The inclusive nationalism of powerful sporting nations, which aims to absorb talent from overseas, seems to some commentators to reflect a new, cosmopolitan, and diversity-based form of the nation-state. Indeed, some athletes share little of their culture, history, or language (Anderson's preeminent producers of nations), but rather are drawn to the opportunities and lifestyles that a nation-state offers. Boundaries are not just marked, they are incorporated into the lives of individuals. Mosse's (1985, 1998) account of nationalism makes it seem less like an exceptional characteristic pertaining only to nations, but rather as part of a broader set of social boundary making and marking activities. In this process, the emphasis on gender norms and on the production of gendered individuals is key. These dynamics allow us to understand the incorporation into the Fijian nation of i-Taukei who live outside the geographic boundaries of the nation and the simultaneous rejection of others who have been part of the nation-state for generations. ∎

Endnotes:

[1]Rugby union is one of half a dozen codes of rugby football, as well as the most widespread throughout the world. Its main competitor, rugby league, is the result of a fission that occurred in Britain in 1895 as working-class players in the industrial North insisted on getting compensated for the work time they sacrificed to training and games, while middle- and upper-class players in the South wanted the sport to remain an amateur sport whose players were unremunerated (Collins 2006). The Northern game became rugby league, while the Southern game became rugby union. The two codes follow different rules, the most visible of which being the fact that rugby league is played 13-a-side while rugby union is played 15-a-side. Other rugby football codes, such as Australian Rules football and Gaelic football, have largely local relevance, with the exception of rugby sevens, a shorter game played by seven-a-side, which has gained international popularity in the last couple of decades.

[2]In his posthumously published autobiography, Benedict Anderson fully realizes the limitations of his original formulation:

> It was not until much later, in fact after I finally retired, that I began to recognize the fundamental draw-back of this type of comparison: that using the nation and nation-states as the basic units of analysis fatally ignored the obvious fact that in reality these units were tied together and crosscut by global po-litical–intellectual currents such as liberalism, fascism, communism, and socialism, as well as vast reli-gious networks and economic and technological forces. I had also to take seriously the reality that very few people have ever been solely nationalist. No matter how strong their nationalism, they may also be gripped by Hollywood movies, neoliberalism, a taste for manga, human rights, impending ecological disaster, fashion, science, anarchism, post-coloniality, 'democracy,' indigenous peoples' movements, chatrooms, astrology, supranational languages like Spanish and Arabic and so on. (Anderson 2016)

[3]Since the end of the 20th century, corporate entities in many sports have been increasingly looking far and wide for promising, young athletes with the intent of recruiting them at the cheapest moment in their career (often with an eye on reselling them as soon as they have acquired sufficient athletic capital). In soc-cer, the most visible evidence of these efforts are the "football farms" that dot the landscape of countries like Ghana and Nigeria, academies established by major European teams and other entities designed to sort through the young hopefuls who flock to them (Darby 2000; Darby, Akindes, and Kirwin 2007; Esson 2013). Since the 1980s in the industrial world, these dynamics have led to a remarkable increase in the number of foreign-born or ethnically marked athletes employed in athletic workplaces, particularly those emerging from developing countries. The composition of many prominent sports teams, including those that represent the nation-state in international circuits, is racially or ethnically marked. A fact that com-mentators have seen, depending on the context, as a symbol of the success of the state's immigration and integration policies as easily as they have lamented it as evidence of the complete failure of these policies (Beaud 2011, Silverstein 2000). Paradoxically, sport teams continue to symbolize a masculine identity that remains spatially grounded in cities, regions, and nations, which is central to their marketing.

[4]Christianity was introduced to Fiji by Tongan and British missionaries in the middle of the 19th century and was instrumental in facilitating the unification of the island group under one paramount chief and its subsequent cession to Britain in 1874. The main denomination, Methodism, is deeply implicated in the structure of rank, state, and everyday life (Tomlinson 2009). Other established denominations are Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Baptism. Pentecostal and charismatic churches, which are making rapid inroads, are somewhat subversive of the establishment (Brison 2014, Morgain 2014).

[5]In the late 19th century, one colonial officer posted in Fiji remarked, with a spectacular lack of prescience, "The native constabulary took keenly to Rugby football for a time, but as they wore no boots the sick-list after every match was unduly swelled with men suffering from injured toes, and the game was not encouraged. In a temperature of 80 degrees in the shade, where passions are apt to rise with the thermometer, football is unlikely to become a national game" (Thomson 1908:332–333). In his address at the 2013 Centenary Conference of the Fiji Rugby Union, the then-President of Fiji Rātū Epeli Nailatikau reminisced being puzzled as a young man by the photographs hanging on the wall of the rugby club he belonged to, which depicted teams of 11 players, one of whom was dressed differently from the rest. Clearly, the "natural fit" of indigenous Fijian men's constitution and "temperament" for rugby has historically not been as "natural" as it is alleged to be today.

[6]This performance is inspired by the well-known rugby *haka*, or men's group dance, that the All Blacks and other teams in Aoteaoroa New Zealand have appropriated from the indigenous Māori minority. Since the early years of the 20th century, New Zealand rugby teams have staged this crowd-pleasing performance at the beginning of games as a spectacular challenge to the opposite team. The practice became the object of a political controversy when a Māori tribe, Ngāti Toa, filed a lawsuit alleging indigenous intellectual property infringement, which was finally upheld by the courts in 2009, although in largely symbolic fashion (Hokowhitu 2004, Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002). Tongan and Samoan teams perform their own version of a "war dance," the *sipi tau* and the *siva tau* respectively, in a context of an increasingly brand-conscious world sporting scene. These dances are performed mostly for overseas audiences, who invariably respond to them with great enthusiasm, although in complete ignorance of their political context.

[7]French anthropologist Sébastien Darbon (2003) proposed that Indo-Fijians' lack of involvement in rugby was due to their abhorrence of contamination through body contact between people of different castes. This hypothesis overlooks the fact that caste, and the proscriptions of which it is constitutive, disappeared very early in the history of Indian immigration in Fiji, aided by a good dose of authoritarian "encouragement" from the British masters (Kelly 1991, Lal 1983). In any case, not all Indo-Fijians are Hindu, and many Hindu Indians around the world play kabaddi, a contact sport that involves players from different castes (Alter 2000). This culturally reductive hypothesis, while seemingly holding some explanatory power, in fact, contributes to the obliteration of socio-political factors and to the naturalization of the relationship between sport and identity.

[8]During our 2016 fieldwork, this club had gained considerable prominence and its facilities were greatly improved thanks to the current populist government headed by Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, who seized power in the 2007 coup.

[9]Number seven is a position on the rugby field that involves considerable tackling and competing for the ball in physical contests.

[10]This situation finds many commonalities with the enormous importance that the US military has acquired in American Sāmoa, in parallel to gridiron football in that context (Kahn Taylor 2011).

[11]There is an interesting contrast between the popularity of rugby players and that of Vijay Singh, an Indo-Fijian golfer who enjoyed over a decade of international professional success in the late 1990s and 2000s. Despite his success, Fijians generally did not regard Singh as a national hero, even though the media publicized his success in golf regularly. His lack of resonance with Fijian communities can be related to the facts that golf is an individual and elite sport, with very little popular uptake in Fiji. Fijian national heroes are not revered for their individual prowess, but instead for what they can contribute to the collectivity, and Vijay Singh's success in an elite, individual sport seems to reinforce the indigenous Fijians' characterization of Indo-Fijians as individualistic (Teresia Teaiwa, personal communication).

References:

Alter, Joseph S. 1992. *The Wrestler's Body: Identity and Ideology in North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Alter, Joseph S. 2000. "Kabaddi, A National Sport of India: The Internationalization of Nationalism and the Foreignness of Indianness." In Noel Dyck, ed. *Games, Sports, and Cultures*, 81-115. Oxford: Berg.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991 [1983]. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

_____. 1998. *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*. London: Verso.

_____. 2016. "Frameworks of Comparison." *London Review of Books* 38(2):15-18. Accessed from lrb.co.uk/ v38/n02/benedict-anderson/frameworks-of-comparison, on July 1, 2016.

Applebaum, Binyamin. 2015. "Harry Kane, Globalization, and the Push to Limit Foreign Players in the Premier League." *New York Times*, April 2. Accessed from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/02/up-shot/globalization-under-attack-on-the-soccer-field.html on May 22, 2015.

Bairner, Alan. 2001. *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Bale, John. 1991. *The Brawn Drain: Foreign Student-athletes in American Universities*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Barth, Fredrik. 1969. "Introduction." In Fredrik Barth, ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, 9-38. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Beaud, Stéphane. 2011. *Traîtres à la nation? Un autre regard sur la grève des Bleus en Afrique du Sud*. Paris: La Découverte.

Bernal, Victoria. 2014. *Nation as Network: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and Citizenship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Besnier, Niko. 2011. *On the Edge of the Global: Modern Anxieties in a Pacific Island Nation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

_____. 2012. "The Athlete's Body and the Global Condition: Tongan Rugby Players in Japan." *American Ethnologist* 39:491-510.

_____. 2014. "Pacific Island Rugby: Histories, Mobilities, Comparisons." *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science* 3:268-276.

_____. 2015. "Sports Mobilities Across Borders: Postcolonial Perspectives." In Stanislas Frenkiel, Thomas Riot, and Nicolas Bancel, eds. *Postcolonial Sports: International Perspectives, Special issue, The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32:849-861.

Besnier, Niko and Susan Brownell. 2012. "Sport, Modernity, and the Body." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41:443-459.

_____. 2016a. "Are You Cheering for an Illusion? In Today's Globalized Society, Many Athletes Are More Citizens of the World than of One Country. *SAPIENS, August 4*. Accessed from http://www.sapiens.org/culture/olympics-brawn-drain/ on August 4, 2016.

_____. 2016b. "The Untold Story behind Fiji's Astonishing Gold Medal: While Fiji's National Identity Is Deeply Entangled with Rugby, not Everyone Is Invited to Play." *SAPIENS*, August 19. Accessed from http://www.sapiens.org/culture/fiji-rugby-racial-sexual-politics/ on August 19, 2016.

Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.

Black, David and John Nauright. 1998. *Rugby and the South African Nation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Brison, Karen J. 2014. *Children, Social Class, and Education: Shifting Identities in Fiji*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chernilo, Daniel. 2011. "The Critique of Methodological Nationalism: Theory and History." *Thesis Eleven* 106(1):98-117.

Clément, Julien. 2014. *Cultures physiques: Le rugby de Samoa*. Paris: Éditions de la rue d'Ulm.

Collins, Tony. 2006. *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture, and the Origins of Rugby League Football*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Connell, John and Carmen Voigt-Graf. 2006. "Towards Autonomy? Gendered Migration in Pacific Island Countries." In Katarina Ferro and Margot Wallner, eds. *Migration Happens: Reasons, Effects, and Opportunities of Migration in the South Pacific*, 43-62. Vienna: LIT Verlag.

Cronin, Mike and David Mayall, eds. 2005. *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*. London: Routledge.

Darbon, Sébastien. 2003. "Pourquoi les Indo-Fidjiens ne jouent-ils pas au rugby? Diffusions géographiques et propriétés formelles." *Études Rurales* 165-166:103-121.

Darby, Paul. 2000. "The New Scramble for Africa: African Football Labour Migration to Europe." *European Sports History Review* 3:217-244.

Darby, Paul, Gerard Akindes, and Matthew Kirwin. 2007. "Football Academies and the Migration of African Football Labor to Europe." *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 31:143-161.

Dewey, Robert F., Jr. 2014. "Fiji and Pacific Rugby Research: The State of the Game." *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science* 3(3):186-201.

Esson, James. 2013. "A Body and a Dream at a Vital Conjuncture: Ghanaian Youth, Uncertainty, and the Allure of Football." *Geoforum* 47:84-92.

Fiji Sun. 2013. "Special Supplement: Fiji Rugby Centenary Conference: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future." *Fiji Sun*, July 27.

Foster, Robert. 2006. "From Trobriand Cricket to Rugby Nation: The Mission of Sport in Papua New Guinea." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 23(5):739-758.

Glick Schiller, Nina. 2005. "Long-distance Nationalism." In Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember, and Ian Skoggard, eds. *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, 570-580. New York: Springer.

Glick Schiller, Nina and Georges Eugene Fouron. 2001. *Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long-distance Nationalism and the Search for Home.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Grainger, Andrew, Oliver Rick, and David Andrews. 2014. "Bound to the Nation: Pacific Islands Rugby and 'One-Country-for-Life' Eligibility Rules." *Sport in Society* 17(7):977-991.

Grundlingh, Albert, Andre Odendaal, and Burridge Spies. 1995. *Beyond the Tryline: Rugby and South African Society*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Herzfeld, Michael. 2004. *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge.

Hokowhitu, Brendan. 2004. "Tackling Māori Masculinity: Genealogy of Savagery and Sport." *The Contemporary Pacific* 16:259-284.

Jackson, Steven J. and Brendan Hokowhitu. 2002. "Sport, Tribes, and Technology: The New Zealand All Blacks *Haka* and the Politics of Identity." *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 26:125-139.

Kahn Taylor, Rachel, dir. 2011. *Warriors Born: American Samoans in the US Military*. Documentary film, 23 mins. Rachel Kahn Taylor, producer. Accessed at http://vimeo.com/15806815 on July 31, 2014.

Kanemasu, Yoko and Gyozo Molnar. 2013a. "Problematizing the Dominant: The Emergence of Alternative Cultural Voices in Fiji Rugby." *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science* 2:14-30.

_____. 2013b. "Pride of the People: Fijian Rugby Labour Migration and Collective Identity." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 48:706-719.

Kelly, John D. 1991. *A Politics of Virtue: Hinduism, Sexuality, and Countercolonial Discourse in Fiji*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kelly, John D. and Martha Kaplan. 2001. *Represented Communities: Fiji and World Decolonization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Laban, Fauono Ken. 2016. "Ma'a Signs off in Style." *Spasifik Magazine* 66(2):16-17.

Lal, Brij. 1983. *Girmitiyas: The Origins of the Fiji Indians*. Canberra: Journal of Pacific History Monograph.

_____. 1992. *Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Macpherson, Cluny and La'avasa Macpherson. 2010. *The Warm Winds of Change: Globalisation in Contemporary Samoa.* Auckland: Auckland University Press.

McCarry, Patrick. 2013. "Average Career for Professional Rugby Players Is Seven Years – Survey". The 42, October 24. Accessed from http://www.the42.ie/professional-rugby-career-seven-years-1145445-Oct2013/ on October 6, 2016.

Miller, Toby, Geoffrey Lawrence, Jim McKay, and David Rowe. 1999. "Modifying the Sign: Sport and Globalization." *Social Text* 17:15-33.

Morgain, Rachel. 2014. "Living Water: Christian Theologies and Interethnic Relations in Fiji." *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 15(1):65-84.

Mosse, George. 1985. *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe.* New York: Fertig.

_____. 1998. *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pigliasco, Guido. 2015. "From Colonial Pomp to Tourism Reality: Commodification and Cannibalization of the Fijian Firewalking Ceremony." *Pacific Studies* 38(1-2):140-181.

Porter, Dilwyn and Adrian Smith, eds. 2013. *Sport and National Identity in the Post-war World*. London: Routledge.

Presterudstuen, Geir Henning. 2010. "The Mimicry of Men: Rugby and Masculinities in Post-colonial Fiji." *Global Studies* 3:237-248.

_____. 2014. "Men Trapped in Women's Clothing: Homosexuality, Cross-dressing, and Masculinity in Fiji." In Niko Besnier and Kalissa Alexeyeff, eds. *Gender on the Edge: Transgender, Gay, and Other Pacific Islanders*, 162-183. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Ratuva, Steven. 2013. "Coerced Preferences: Affirmative Actions and Horizontal Inequalities in Fiji." In Edmund Terence Gomez and Ralph Premdas, eds. *Affirmative Action, Ethnicity, and Conflict*, 95-125. London: Routledge.

Rubin, Joshua. 2014. "Making Art from Uncertainty: Magic and its Politics in South African Rugby." *Cultural Anthropology* 29(4):699-719.

Schieder, Dominik. 2014. "Fiji Islander Rugby Union Players in Japan: Corporate Particularities and Migration Routes." *Asia-Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science* 3:250-267.

Silverstein, Paul A. 2000. "Sporting Faith: Islam, Soccer, and the French Nation-state." *Social Text* 18:25-53.

Teaiwa, Teresia K. 2005. "Articulated Cultures: Militarism and Masculinities in Fiji during the Mid-1990s." *Fijian Studies* 3:201-222.

_____. 2008. "On Women and 'Indians': The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Militarized Fiji." In Barbara Sutton, Sandra Morgen, and John Novkov, eds. *Security Disarmed: Gender, Race, and Militarization*, 111-135. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

_____. 2014. "Same Sex, Different Armies: Sexual Minority Invisibility among Fijians in the Fiji Military Forces and British Army." In Niko Besnier and Kalissa Alexeyeff, eds. *Gender on the Edge: Transgender, Gay, and Other Pacific Islanders*, 266-282. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Thomson, Basil. 1908. *The Fijians: A Study of the Decay of Custom*. London: William Heinemann.

Tomlinson, Matt. 2009. *In God's Image: The Metaculture of Fijian Christianity.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Trnka, Susanna. 2008. *State of Suffering: Political Violence and Community Survival in Fiji*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Wimmer, Andreas and Nina Glick Schiller. 2002. "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration, and the Social Sciences." *Global Networks* 2(4):301-334.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1997. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage.