The Mimicry of Men: Rugby and Masculinities in Post-colonial Fiji

Geir Henning Presterudstuen
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Geir Henning Presterudstuen, University of Western Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Abstract: While the literature on post-colonialism and modernity in post-colonial societies is vast, perspectives on gender performances in this context remain scarce. As a part of a larger study of masculine performances in Fiji, this research paper draws upon historical material and ethnographic case studies to discuss contemporary constructions of Fijian masculinities in light of Bhabha’s notion of colonial mimicry. By focusing on the specific case of rugby union football as a constitutive masculine practice, I will argue that contemporary Fijian masculinities are shaped by mixing ideals from the particular colonial experience of Fiji with culturally specific notions of manhood. As a case of colonial mimicry, rugby will thus be discussed as a gendered practice through which Fijian men are producing discourses and playing out series of “ironic compromises” between an imposed, colonial masculine ideal and a notion of a Fijian masculine identity post-colonialism.

Keywords: Mimicry, Post-colonialism, Masculinity, Ethnography, Fiji, Rugby

STUDIES WITHIN THE relatively new theoretical framework of post-colonialism have despite their pre-supposition with identities, cultural transformations and nationalism more often than not focused their attention on text rather than social practice. As a result, the liminal space suggested by theorists like Homi Bhabha has often remained a privileged discursive space in which post-colonial subjects have only had minimal enunciatory possibilities.

By focusing my study on “the emergence of the interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference” in which the “intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (Bhabha 1994: 2) I will attempt to not only add to the understanding of how the interplay between British colonial authorities and the local subjects in Fiji historically negotiated cultural identities through rugby football, but also use ethnographic material to highlight how Fijian rugby today happens within a social field of “complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” (Bhabha 1994: 2).

The ethnographic data was collected as part of my larger fieldwork on masculine performances in contemporary Fiji and will elaborate on my argument that while the game itself is played in Fiji as in Britain according to international standardised rules, the cultural significance of the game has taken on different meanings in Fiji. Rugby has always been linked to elitism, Christianity and the grooming of young men, but while this was often implicit in British tradition, I will argue it has become a central and explicitly stated part of the game in Fiji.

What for Bhabha is the great paradox in the relationship between colonial powers and colonised; the fact that no transmission of cultural traits or ways of living can be perfect,
but is shaped by the dualism of power which sees cultural practice being wrought both by the original provider and the receivers who can adopt and imitate it, is effectively illustrated through rugby union in Fiji. While introduced as a part of the British civilising mission to make Fijians “Britisher”, the practice took on new meanings within the Fijian cultural logic as Fijians took control of these messages and narratives at the very moment they accepted them as part of their social life. Indeed, while Fijians playing rugby maybe a series of mere imitations and mimics, the paradox is that no mimicry is ever completely successful in replicating the original, but become inscribed with the agency of the imitator. Hence, rugby in Fijian is almost the same as its British original, but not quite.

Discrepancies from the colonial performance demonstrate the capacity of power which is implicit in any act of cultural adaptation. Emphasising the potential agency the colonial subjects have to ascribe new meaning to and alter learnt practices, Bhabha holds that mimicry is a disruptive force with significant implications on power relations (1994). As imitations of a dominant idea, cultural practice in the colonial context “demands an encounter with ‘newness’” which cuts through the historical binary of past and present to create a “sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation” (Bhabha 1994: 10) and such art “does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates interrupts the performance of the present” (Bhabha 1994: 10).

It becomes obvious then, that if we are to utilise Bhabha’s notion of colonial mimicry in ethnographic studies, we ought to look beyond the mere textual and symbolic representations of identity. Indeed, I will argue that in order to realise the full theoretical potential of these ideas, colonial and post-colonial mimicry must be viewed as an integral part of certain social practices through which subordinate subjects can transgress and negate the colonial paradigm.

Indeed, as Lahiri (2003) has pointed out in a landmark work on colonial mimicry as social practice, that rather than being merely an ironic performance of resistance, the mimesis of an Anglo-Western lifestyle has often been rooted in a desire to become an insider in the privileged world and its success in some occasions reliant upon an ability to “insinuate himself into elite and political circles” (418). Mimicry is of course highly selective and often centred around specific behaviours, practices or ideologies that are associated with power, privilege and status. Rugby union, as I will argue later, consequently came to be at the centre of this cultural negotiation as it was perceived as a practice in which substantial social status was invested on many levels.

The links between constructions of masculinity, manhood and male domination and rugby union is well documented. Schacht’s findings that “rugby players situationally do masculinity by reproducing hierarchical images of what a “real man” is” (1996: 562) mirrors the conclusions of Fine (1987) and Gruneau and Whitson (1993) who established the connection between masculine performances in particular sports and the wider society’s prevailing notion of gender roles.

Kane and Snyder found that contact sports like rugby foster gender perceptions and initiate masculine performances which not only reproduce and reflect male-dominated social hierarchies, but also strengthen their validity in the larger social order by acting as a “glorified reminder that males are biologically, and thus inherently superior to females” (1989: 77, Schacht 1996: 562). A part of these performances appears to include direct expressions of the abhorrence of subordinate masculinities, which in effect becomes the point of reference to highlight what a man is and what it is not (Schacht 1996). In other words, the rugby field
is a social arena that provides room for particular aspects of masculinity to be emphasised in order to communicate, and perhaps celebrate, a wider system of male domination.

To understand these dynamics it is useful to look at the emergence of rugby as a football code and the various ideological investments that has been made in it in different contexts. Postcolonial sports are often analysed in terms of being parts of practices of resistance; performed through dramatic body language, local arrangements of imported sport’s space and time and, perhaps most importantly, a manipulation of the conventions of sport (Gilbert and Thompkins 1996). However, while sport arguably is a part of the colonial legacy and an arena where such manipulations are used to negotiate power, “the ways in which sport can be transformed to represent the postcolonial are in many ways actually quite limited” because most sports are defined according to shared, international rules and administered by global governing bodies (Bale and Cronin 2003: 5).

Moreover, as resistance, contravention of sport conventions may not be particularly effective as it, if it involves creative negotiations of the way to play a game, undeniably often “invites the risk of defeat” (Bale and Cronin 2003: 6). The notions of Pacific Islander rugby being more free-flowing but less organised, emphasising great passing but is soft around the ruck and chaotic in the scrum and is full of flair but little consistency compared to its Western counterpart are long standing perceptions which emphasise not only a legacy of colonial racial discourse in contemporary analyses of the game, but also the limited adequacy of the discourse of such appropriation to be effective resistance. In fact, while Western viewers and commentators highlight these areas as charming and entertaining, rugby players and administrators I interviewed in Fiji would frequently argue the importance of eradicating these presumed elements from their games.

Hence, “what might often appear to be resistance may be more akin to transgression – that is, being ‘out of place’” (Bale and Cronin 2003: 6), and, indeed, be more effectively related to sport as a spectacle where what really counts is the construction and communication of values and identities. The manipulations of sporting conventions then, is not limited to bending the rules or change the dynamics of the game in itself, but to ascribe new meanings to the game in a wider social context.

One of the main reasons sport “offer a potentially more fruitful vehicle for considering postcolonialism than literature” is precisely because “they are mass happenings made ‘real’ through performance” (Bale and Cronin 2003: 2) and thus provide a space in which myriad social identities can be constructed and articulated.

Fijian rugby is an effective performance of colonial mimicry, not mainly because Fijians alter the tactical and technical conventions of the game, but because how rugby as a game and the practice of playing rugby is understood in relation to the Fijian social system at large and how this is played out and ‘made real’. The important aspect is consequently to understand how rugby union has been understood and appropriated within the Fijian cultural logic.

The game of rugby had significant symbolic value, as it was ideologically rooted in British upper-class morality and what has been labelled muscular Christianity. Muscular Christians held the belief “that a man’s body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men” (Hughes 1861: 83), and furthermore that participation in games and sports facilitating physical strength and toughness had inherent value for young men, both immediately and later in life (Ladd and Mathisen 1999: 16).
Like the other favoured sports of the British Christian elite, rugby was consequently seen as an inherently highly valued activity and a particularly efficient way to teach young men the ways of gentlemanly conduct and moral earnestness. But implicit in rugby is a particular duality; being “a collective sport of contact which emphasises rough masculinist traits of stamina, strength, speed and courage” it was also considered an ideal way of grooming future servants of the empire, both as leaders and more particularly as military personnel (Grundlingh 1996: 186; Stoddart 1988).

This idea had a longstanding tradition in Britain, where rugby appeared central to the education and grooming of young men both in the exclusive public school system and in the military from the emergence of the sporting code, largely because it was considered to have specific properties which gave it special significance within this larger ideological project of muscular Christianity which also came to be ensconced in the colonial project.

Consequently, colonial administrators appeared to early realise rugby’s potential as an integral part of the ‘civilising project’ also in the colonial context (Bale and Cronin 2003). In many colonial settings, “a game of football in the afternoon was played for moral benefit as much as recreational relief” emphasising the ideological overtones to rugby union as integral to colonialism. Moreover, the idea that it was particularly suited “to stiffen the backbone of these boys by teaching them manliness, good temper and unselfishness” had a long standing tradition in the British military forces, and were now viewed as qualities that eventually could also make the colonial subjects “Britisher” (Bale and Sang 1996: 77).

I will suggest then, that Fijian acceptance and appropriation of rugby ought to be understood at least partly in terms of Mitchell and Epstein’s findings, that the emulation of European cultural expressions and activities in the colonies was framed by a social hierarchy where whites formed a “reference group against which black status was measured” (1959; Ferguson 2002: 552). In the racialised and polarised social order of colonialism, it is obvious that British sports codes and the moral values associated with them, much like European style clothing, appeared as artefacts through which the colonised others could avow their claims to “a civilized status, comparable to that of the Europeans” (Wilson 1941: 19-20).

Rugby in Fiji emerged in this context, as the local elites were anxious to find arenas where they could prove their physical prowess in ways resonated well with the colonial administration, and as was the case in colonial and post-colonial South Africa (Farred 2003), rugby in Fiji was early viewed as a gentlemanly and prestigious cultural practice that could eventually serve to consolidate the local elite with the colonial superiors.

When rugby was first played in Fiji, it was between British and locally recruited soldiers at the Native Constabulary of Ba already in 1884, and the first club competition in starting in the early 1900s was largely comprised by teams from different military divisions and the constabulary. At first rugby remained racially segregated, and all teams, including the Fijian national team, containing expatriates from Britain, England or New Zealand. Naturally, the development of the sport in Fiji was an Anglo-Saxon enterprise and closely tied to the ideological notion of muscular Christianity, manhood and militarism.

For Fijians, rugby was consequently absorbed and understood as an integral part of the new social order which was accepted when taking on Christianity and becoming a part of the British empire. The links between Christianity, militarism and manhood were thus implicit from the dawn of modern Fiji.

The development of the native game, leading to a native competition and later an all-native national team from 1924, was eventually led by highly placed, British educated representatives...
of the new Fijian elite under the indirect rule scheme, arguably as a potential means to groom leaders and soldiers from the native ranks. Early administrators and players included Ratu Lala Sukuna; a native nobility from Bau directly descended from the Cakobau clan who would later gain prominence as a founding father of modern Fiji and holder of a series of official positions, but first proved himself as a successful rugby player and later took part in World War 1 enlisted for the French foreign legion.

The link between traditional Fijian ethno-national identity and the core ideas of militarism, masculine identity and rugby was affirmed when the Fijian team toured New Zealand in 1939 under the leadership of Sir George Cakobau and performed a traditional war dance challenge originating from his native Bau, the *cibi*, as a challenge to the Maori haka. Undeniably, this was one of the most significant and clearly pronounced of the Fijian appropriations of the European sport which formed the notion of Fijian rugby.

The integration of the *cibi* into the performance of rugby made these links between militarism and rugby explicit. By connecting the game of rugby with a long standing Fijian martial tradition, Fijians showed not only a willingness and ability to engage in the British elites’ sport of choice; they also claimed their right to be considered for service in the direct defence of the crown in wartime. This was of course not a link only made by the Fijians; prominent colonial administrators had pointed out that “the same qualities, discipline and combination, were equally necessary in good soldiers and football players” (Lord Roberts, in The Englishman, October 5 1892, in Stoddart 1988), making rugby union the preferred game among British military officials.

Hence, when Fijian rugby players willingly embraced the British construction of rugby as an initiation of the right skills and the right morals to be successful in military service, they did it on their own terms in a way in which the ideology is appropriated to take on culturally specific Fijian meanings. Performing the *cibi* prior to rugby matches is undoubtedly a recognition of the intrinsic association between rugby skills and military prowess, but the mimicry of this idea is not perfect, but as an “ironic compromise” highlights it as a Fijian quality rather than purely British.

Rugby then early emerged as a way for indigenous Fijians to negotiate the new colonial order which, albeit designed to protect indigenous Fijians way of life, threatened their traditional social structure and worldview. The combat-like features of the game, which I have discussed before came to play a crucial role in rugby’s early development in Britain, and the emphasis on extreme physical qualities made it a suitable one for Fijian men who themselves had a strong martial tradition which valorised men’s strength and aggression. Like the New Zealand Maori leaders, the Fijian elites early saw rugby football “as a way to embellish their own culture while integrating themselves into the dominant society” (Hokowhitu 2004: 209).

Tradition in the Fijian sense is understood through the concept of *cakacaka vakavamua*, often translated as “acting in accordance with the land” in this extended sense (Toren 1988: 712). Contrary to Western perceptions of tradition, it refers to culturally appropriate behaviour rather than a notion of “objectified structures” in the past (Toren 1988: 696). The ability and willingness to fit the ethos of rugby into this ideological framework was thus crucial to the social construction of rugby as intrinsic to Fijian society.

The Fijian ideal rugby player is at once imitating the ideal of the British gentleman sacrificing his body and displaying strength in service of God and country and embodying the traditional notion of the courageous, selfless and loyal warrior. Indeed, more than anything
rugby has come to symbolise the reconstituted Fijian notion of tradition and ethno-national identity in which the pre-modern and the colonial have merged into a Fijianess which encapsulates all these values.

These ideological connections were often clearly pronounced and played out in the villages in western Fiji which I frequently visited during my eleven months long ethnographic fieldwork in 2009. The following discussion is based on observations of, and conversations with respondents from three different village-based rugby union teams on the Western side of Fiji’s main island, Viti Levu in August 2009. Respondents were young adult men from the fringes of urban Fiji who played rugby on an amateur basis.

While I made observations and conducted interviews in the villages it was impossible to avoid noticing the importance of rugby, particularly in the socialisation of young boys and men. The high premium put on hardness and strength as virtues for Fijian manhood must arguably be viewed in relation to the violent nature of pre-modern Fijian society where men’s combat skills were crucial to the prosperity and survival of a village or province (Lasaqa 1984; Derrick 2008), and while tribal warfare was eliminated after unification and colonisation in the late 1800s, the notion of turning boys into “Fijian warriors” remains prominent when men talk about socialisation and gender initiation in the village (Mondsell-Davis 2000).

Obviously a major reason for this continued importance of martial qualities in the constructions of Fijian masculinities is the increasing militarisation of the modern state. At the same time though, the link between militarism, masculinity and rugby was implicit from the introduction of the game in Fiji, and playing rugby has emerged as a symbolic link between pre-modern male virtues and post-colonial narratives about ethno-Fijian identities, Christianity and manhood.

In the villages I visited these links were often explicitly made. To play rugby was viewed as an important way to show commitment and sacrifice for ‘Noqu Kalou, Noqu Vanua’ (lit. My God, My Country), and thus considered a constitutive practice for Fijian men. “Rugby”, my respondent Esaia explained, “is the game of the Fijians...summing up everything Fijian” and an important “part of proper behaviour” (Fieldwork). Almost every village had at least one team, and rules and tactical knowledge were passed on from adults to younger boys as a way to instil “discipline and toughness” in the youngsters. For players, success on the field was an important way to gain status within the village as well as on behalf of their village. Indeed, another respondent, Sakkaraiah, maintained that “being good at rugby shows that you are proud of your vanua and are willing to fight for it” (Fieldwork).

The value of rugby then, is as an intrinsic part of the pact between God, the chiefs and the British crown which for most Fijians signifies the birth of modern Fiji. It is understood not merely as a sport which can be utilised for ideological means, but rugby players are modern equivalents of the traditional warrior class, the bati. The literal meaning of bati, teeth or sharp edge (Capell 2008: 5), emphasise their traditional role as first offense and aggressive protectors of the chief and the vanua. In the modern context this ideology has taken on wider and more symbolic meanings and refers to the responsibility to protect and fight for what is perceived as ethno-Fijian culture and tradition as a whole rather than merely

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1 This has semi-officially been adopted as the team motto of the Fijian National Rugby League side, popularly called the Fiji Bati after the traditional warrior class in pre-modern Fiji, but was widely used as a popular phrase to explain the social significance of rugby within contemporary Fijian society.

2 All respondents are referred to via pseudonyms.
the traditional villages. Rugby has thus become embedded in an ethno-political discourse where it is emphasised as a part of the protection line for chiefly authority and Fijian supremacy.

When several of my respondents emphasised that “Indians do not play rugby”, it consequently had significance way outside the sporting field. From a viewpoint of historical legitimacy it both emphasises that Indo-Fijians were “less British” than the Fijians as well as existing outside the realm of the Fijian vanua. More importantly though, in contemporary Fiji this statements imply that Indo-Fijians lack both the physical and spiritual traits entrenched in the game and consequently fall way short of being “proper Fijians”.

These complex articulations explicitly linking the game to the vanua, Christianity and Fijian ethno-nationalism made it also function as an effective social marker at once distinguishing the indigenous Fijian elites from the Indo-Fijian class of labourers and physically demonstrating the previous domination over the latter. Rugby then, effectively became an important social practice as it served to be an “articulation of ‘differentiatory’, discriminatory identities” (Bhabha 1994: 159) essential to establish at once a close relationship between a local, Fijian elite and the British colonists as well as a sharp distinction between these political elites and the Indo-Fijian peasant population; relationships which are continuing in the present repetition of rugby as a Fijian national sport and pastime.

By mimicking a construction of rugby union as an educational tool for men as prospective national leaders, soldiers and administrators, which was foundational for the development of the game in Victorian Britain, Fijians manifested their dominant position in modern Fiji. Rugby today serves as a means through which young men learn toughness and manliness, spiritual strength, discipline and combat skills, but also their position as hegemonic leaders, making it obvious that while rugby, as other sports, on many levels appears to unite men, it is also a practice that contributes to cementing profound divisions between men (Whannel 2008: 10). However, these political and ideological dimensions of the game are more overt and clearly pronounced in Fiji than it ever was in Britain.

Similarly, while muscular Christianity in the British understanding was first and foremost an internal, personal moral process of the individual, Fijian rugby players play out and perform prayers in communion before and after rugby test matches, as well as display bible quotes and references visibly as part of their gear. The links between belief, devotion and rugby as a social practice are thus explicit; a notion which soon becomes obvious in my discussions with young, rugby-playing Fijian men.

While Christianity has become an integrated part of life for the vast majority of Fijians, it is simultaneously a practice which is required to be pronounced and played out in everyday life in order to be effective. For Fijian men, the notion of manhood is deeply rooted in this religious practice, a link which is never more clearly emphasised than when playing rugby union.

Rugby is constructed not only as a social activity which facilitate righteous behaviour and right morals, but moreover as a practice intrinsic to men’s Christian devotion. But for many of the respondents in this research, playing sport and practising Christian belief are not merely compatible factors that comprise their identity; rather playing rugby is seen as a crucial part of their active devotion. Long standing captain and coach for the Fijian rugby 7’s team, Waisale Serevi, famously always has Psalm 27:1; The Lord is my light and my...
salvation; whom shall I fear?”, printed on his jersey, a practice often discussed and indeed mimicked by many of the respondents I interviewed.

Samuel, a 20 year old player of a prominent provincial team in Fiji, had the same verse written on his football boots, explaining that it gave him strength, confidence and “reminded him that God is always first” and instrumental in success on the field. These sentiments were not unique. National representative player Timoci Nagusa, then playing professionally in Ireland, previously used a newspaper interview to advise his former provincial teammates of Tailevu, eastern Fiji, to remember true devotion was the key to win an important game; “I only hope that they keep Him first always in their preparation because only He will ensure the trophy remains in Tailevu” (FijiRugby, 15 August 2008).

Isikeli explained that “looking after my body and using the talent God gave me is how I praise the Lord and show my devotion”, sentiments mirrored by Sika whose “personal relationship with God...is through training and playing”. While these ideas arguably corresponds well with the Victorian ideals of muscular Christianity, the direct embodiment of belief and the physical aspect of religious devotion these rugby players profess is extraordinary, and only makes sense within the cultural logic in which strength, toughness and courage are not only valued as intrinsic qualities of proper manhood, but as highly valorised skills needed to maintain the social order.

Of all the virtues achieved by closeness and undivided devotion to God, strength is the one which appear most highly valued and emphasised by Fijian men. Often quoted bible verses among my respondents emphasises these notions. Psalm 18 seemed particularly popular both to quote, read out and display on sports gear; “the lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalm 18: 2) and “it is God who arms me with strength” (Psalm 18: 32). In fact, these extracts from the bible was actively used as discursive tools both to signify the link between Christianity and the Fijian traditional social protocol as well as to prescribe emotive and ideological meaning to particular everyday behaviours and activities.

Both the selection and interpretation of Bible verses were thus culturally determined, as these Fijian men emphasised sections of the scripture which reinforced Fijian values and practices. Indeed, Christianity was read in a way where current and contemporary constructions of masculinity found justification, encouragement and guidelines in the religious ethos. I consequently suggest that Fijian men are constructing and articulating their Christianity through social practices which at the same time affirm, strengthen and exhibit ethno-Fijian nationalism, tradition and manhood. In fact, looking after one’s body and utilising it to express strength, toughness and courage were viewed as ways to serve God and devote themselves to Christian ideologies.

Rugby then, was not narrowly valorised because of its intrinsic moral value; the skills and physical qualities encouraged and enhanced through the games takes on similar symbolic values also when they are applied outside the sporting field. Many of my respondents pointed out that rugby prepared them for their role as physical and symbolic protectors of their kinship group and their village, and that they sometimes needed to utilise their physical attributes when fighting. This ideological construction is arguably reliant upon a similar logic as the one which made direct links between rugby and British militarism, but not quite the same as it has the very culturally association with the bati ideology.
Sakkariah explained that his actions in these occasions were wholly a question of social control; as “these guys were out of line”, presumably meaning that their actions had violated accepted social protocols between members of the two kinship groups. The explanation and justification of these altercations were thus derived from a notion of “doing the right thing” in terms of the larger social ethos, and, as Sakkariah explained to me, with reference to Proverb 28: 1, “while the wicked flee, the righteous is bold as a lion”. The biblical notion of righteousness takes on more elaborate and wider meanings in these contexts; and the verse is generally interpreted as a justification of using physical strength to enforce social protocol and conventional behaviour. To stand up against and challenge insults, physically punish inapt behaviour and fight are doubly valorised; both as culturally appropriate responses to deviance and as Christian virtues.

In fact, it is assumed that there is a divine justification for any act which is traditionally condoned, a point which is emphasised by how some of my respondents used Psalm 46: 1, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble”, in association with fighting. Sakkariah for instance, interpreted this as God giving him strength to justly use when he was in trouble, and the fact that he had the strength to deal with an issue was consequently evidence of the divine approval of the act. Showing weakness, backing down or even losing a fight or a physical altercation is, from this quasi-religious justification, evidence of a lack of just cause, effectively putting the moral responsibility on the losing part of all conflicts.

Rugby in Fiji, as is well documented has been the case in places like Southern England, South Africa and Australia, was always an effective mean of preserving, reaffirming and reproducing “rigid and complex social distinctions” on myriad of levels (Chandler and Nauright 1996: 247). While arguably first serving as a public display of European domination it soon developed into a tool to instil leadership skills, strength and the right values in the Fijian elite and secure the ideological continuity of the Fijian administration under the concept of indirect rule. The tradition of making strong, ideological investments in the game of rugby football is long standing, and rugby was as I have shown intrinsic to the British colonisation project in Fiji.

The direct links between ethno-Fijian identity and the traditional notions of manhood as well as the idea that playing rugby is a way to show Christian devotion are perhaps rooted in the colonial construction of the game. However, by mimicking these notions and understanding them within a Fijian cultural logic, the contemporary Fijian rugby players and administrators interviewed here have significantly altered the ideological properties of the game.

References


About the Author

Geir Henning Presterudstuen
I am currently completing my PhD thesis on ‘Performances of Masculinity in contemporary Fiji’. The project is conducted in happy disregard of traditional academic boundaries and is drawing upon methods and methodologies from anthropology, sociology, history and development studies. I previously have a Master of Development Studies with Merit from University of Sydney, and have a long standing interest in the Pacific region, interdisciplinary work on social theory, class and gender studies. Previously published, peer-reviewed papers includes a research paper on hegemonic masculinity at the Australasian Political Science Association’s Annual Conference in 2008.
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