World Heritage at Chief Roi Mata’s Domain

The global-local nexus of community heritage conservation and tourism development in Vanuatu

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For Fonu

3 Feb 1970 to 20 Apr 2011
This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my great friend and brother Douglas Markfonulolowia Kalotiti. Fonu’s enduring legacy is Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage area. As long as I knew him, Fonu was passionately committed to the betterment of his community through World Heritage and its associated conservation and development activities at Chief Roi Mata’s Domain. He worked selflessly and tirelessly toward his vision of a community revitalising their traditional culture and customs while expanding their sustainable economic development opportunities. Neither this thesis, nor the World Heritage project itself, would have been possible without Fonu.

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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is original unless otherwise indicated. I declare that I have not submitted this material for a degree at this or any other institution.

Adam M. Trau – March 2013
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australian Government’s Overseas Aid Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYAD</td>
<td>Australian Youth Ambassador for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRMD</td>
<td>Chief Roi Mata’s Domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAG</td>
<td>Chief Roi Mata’s Domain International Advocacy Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICOMOS</td>
<td>International Council of Monuments and Sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICCROM</td>
<td>International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDV</td>
<td>International Development Volunteering</td>
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<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>LWHC</td>
<td>Lelema World Heritage Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUV</td>
<td>Outstanding Universal Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPT</td>
<td>Pro-Poor Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>VKS</td>
<td>Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta / Vanuatu Cultural Centre</td>
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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the entwined processes of globalisation and localisation as they occur within two Indigenous landowning communities in the southwest Pacific island nation of Vanuatu, Mangaliliu and Lelepa island (known collectively as ‘Lelema’). The Lelema community own and manage Vanuatu’s first World Heritage site, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain (CRMD), which was inscribed in July 2008 as a continuing cultural landscape. Alongside multiple other forces, means and agents, and in the face of intensifying global-local pressures, Lelema villagers are trying to mobilise the World Heritage listing of CRMD to both increase economic development opportunities (primarily through tourism) and augment locally congruent heritage conservation measures. The primary aim of this thesis is to critically examine the Lelema experience at this intersection of development and conservation, and in so doing, suggest appropriate ways forward for World Heritage at CRMD.

The contemporary processes, interactions, and flows of globalisation are commonly depicted as one-way and top-down - from the global level to the local level. It is not the purpose of this thesis to dispute the truism that globalisation is leaving many local Indigenous communities such as Lelema behind. Rather, I argue that local responses and reactions within polities such as Vanuatu are more imprecise, convoluted and even contradictory than typical globalisation theory implies (particularly as applied to the fields of heritage and tourism). Furthermore, that the resultant contemporary shapes, forms and models of World Heritage and affiliated heritage and tourism initiatives at this global-local nexus require flexible assemblages of local, national and global support and advocacy to be effective and sustained.

Utilising my previous and ongoing engagements at CRMD as both development worker and activist, I extend this central argument over four discrete yet tightly interwoven analytical streams, which are broadly: World Heritage, buffer zones, pro-poor tourism, and international development volunteering. Each of them are situated at the forefront, even extend the bounds, of current multi-disciplinary studies into World Heritage. These four lines of inquiry draw out an important range of specific, practical ways in which World Heritage at CRMD can maintain relevance and importance – both as an imagined entity, and as a tangible reality – to the lives of the Lelema villagers. They also unpack and explore some of the new ways in which heritage and tourism scholars, practitioners and policy-makers alike can begin to view and conceptualise World Heritage as it expands and strives for greater applicability throughout Melanesia and the Pacific islands more broadly.
A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

The majority of my work in Vanuatu (formerly the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides) has been conducted in Bislama, also known as Bislaman and Bichelamar (the term usually used in French). The Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu specifies that both English and French are the official languages, but that Bislama is the national language. This makes Bislama the only English-lexifier pidgin in the world to have been given the status of national language (Tryon & Charpentier, 2004).

Bislama has risen in popularity and usage ever since Vanuatu achieved independence in 1980 (Miles, 1998), and it is now spoken by the vast majority of the population (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009b). Renowned for its various and idiosyncratic phonetic spelling, Bislama is also increasingly written despite the lack of a reading tradition in Vanuatu. Recognising this emerging trend in the early 1970s, the Vanuatu Christian Council translated a range of evangelical literature including the complete Bible. This orthography has grown to become a de facto official spelling, although competing systems do exist (Tryon, 1987; Tryon & Charpentier, 2004).

I have translated Bislama words and phrases in this thesis according to the general principles of this de facto official spelling, but also taking into account contemporary nuances and colloquialisms. Bislama entries are italicised and are in most cases accompanied by the corresponding English translation. There are some Bislama words and phrases that are used repeatedly and are hence widely distributed throughout the thesis, such as Wol Heritij / World Heritage and bafa zon / buffer zone. In most instances, these are translated only in their first appearance.

The local language of the Lelema region, Nafsan, is also employed on occasion to demonstrate the depth or difference of local meanings and understandings. When it is, similar to the Bislama text, it is always accompanied by a translation which has been given by key olfajas / elders or jijs / chiefs in the communities who are well known for their adeptness in Nafsan.

Lastly, the term ‘ni-Vanuatu’ is used throughout the thesis in reference to the Indigenous peoples of Vanuatu.
PART I: INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: MOVING BEYOND BINARIES

1. Introduction

This thesis focuses on two of the major tributaries of globalisation as experienced by two Indigenous landowning communities in the southwest Pacific island nation of Vanuatu (see Figure 1): heritage conservation and tourism development. The Republic of Vanuatu is spread across an exclusive economic zone of 530,162 km² – or an area roughly the size of France – and carries the inauspicious United Nations ranking of being a ‘Least Developed Country’ or ‘LDC’ (UN, 2013). Like most Indigenous landowning communities in Vanuatu and other independent Pacific island states, the village communities of Mangaliliu and Lelepa island (known collectively as the ‘Lelema’ community – ‘Lele’ derived from Lelepa, and ‘ma’ from Mangaliliu) are attempting to confront and adapt to globalisation in its myriad of contemporary configurations and coercions. Village life is increasingly typified by new and complicated blends of individual, family and community responsibilities, obligations and aspirations; not least of which is ensuring that there is enough customary land, and subsistence agricultural output derived from it, to provide adequate shelter and nutrition. It is within this context that the Lelema community are attempting to navigate the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities relating to World Heritage.
The Lelema community own and manage the sites associated with the life and death of Chief Roi Mata, which collectively, along with much of the surrounding landscape, constitute Vanuatu’s first World Heritage site, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain (CRMD). Alongside multiple other forces, means and agents, and in the face of complex global-local pressures, Lelema villagers are essentially and concomitantly attempting to utilise the World Heritage listing of CRMD to strive for increased economic development opportunities (principally in the form of tourism) in conjunction with locally congruent heritage conservation measures. The primary aim of this thesis is to critically examine the Lelema experience at this intersection of development and conservation. In so doing, I draw attention to new conceptual understandings of, and practical implications for, community heritage conservation and tourism development beyond the current prevailing international discourses and systems.

Given the strength and pace of globalisation, and the exploitative development and detrimental cultural changes that are precipitating within ni-Vanuatu society (De Burlo, 1989; Kalotiti, Trau, Wilson, & Ballard, 2009; Rawlings, 2011, 2002; Simo, 2008; Slatter, 2006; Wittersheim, 2011-12), it is tempting to portray the Lelema community and others like them as largely powerless in the face of...
the hurtling juggernaut of modernity, taking out everything old and replacing it with the new. Indeed, this is the founding philosophy and self-fulfilling prophecy of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage system, which seeks to defend universally important cultural and natural heritage sites from the destructive, unwieldy and homogenising forces of globalisation writ large (Askew, 2010; Hall, 2011; Huxley, 1947). It is not the purpose of this thesis to dispute the truism that globalisation is leaving many local Indigenous communities such as Lelema behind, but rather to argue that local responses and reactions within polities such as Vanuatu are more imprecise, convoluted and even contradictory than typical globalisation theory implies (particularly as applied to the fields of heritage and tourism). Furthermore, that the resultant contemporary shapes, forms and models of World Heritage and affiliated heritage and tourism initiatives at this global-local nexus require flexible assemblages of local, national and global support and advocacy to be effective and sustained.

While focused firmly on the Lelema community and their experience with World Heritage at CRMD, the findings of this thesis have wide applicability. This thesis speaks to a range of pertinent questions and issues related to community conservation and development broadly, including: how do contemporary ideas and initiatives associated with development and conservation play out locally? What do local villagers interpret these to mean in the context of the geography and social space of UNESCO World Heritage? What is the resonance of localised articulations and notions of World Heritage affiliated development and conservation initiatives? What are the global-local drivers behind community attempts to (re)interpret and (re)construct - and in effect, internalise what are deemed to be locally important and applicable - external ideas and concepts? How are the resultant 'glocalised' manifestations best supported, complemented and enhanced?

It is important to make clear from the outset that this thesis has been approached from a non-traditional avenue, a ‘thesis as a series of papers’. The presentation of this volume thus differs from the ‘standard’ dissertation format. It comprises four published papers (or ‘in press’) that compromise Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. The papers are introduced by the present integrative chapter, which contextualises and conceptualises the thesis as a whole. Each paper then addresses a different question regarding Lelema’s World Heritage and progresses current understanding of the global-local nexus of community heritage conservation and tourism development in Vanuatu. These four papers are followed by concluding remarks where I suggest potential ways forward for World Heritage at CRMD, and within Vanuatu and the Pacific islands more broadly.

In this chapter, I aim to give the reader directions for understanding and interpreting the following papers together, presenting the context, conceptual underpinnings and contributions of the overall
investigation. In this first section, I begin by introducing UNESCO World Heritage as it occurs within the unique social, cultural, political, and economic circumstances of the Pacific islands, and then more specifically within Vanuatu and the Lelema community. I then canvass the influences and impacts of local community autonomy in Vanuatu, namely, along the lines of the central theme of this thesis: the need to move beyond what are commonly perceived within the literature to be antagonistic binaries: conservation-development and global-local. It is through this much more intricate and entangled way of thinking about both conservation and development, and globalisation and localisation, that this thesis depicts World Heritage at CRMD.

In section 2 of this chapter I seek to contextualise contemporary events and experiences as they have played out at CRMD by providing a brief history of Vanuatu, from taem bifo / time before to taem naoia / time now. From the initial migration and settlement of the islands some 3,500 years ago, to contemporary village lifeworlds in present-day Vanuatu, this section helps lay the groundwork for the contentions of this thesis.

In section 3 I describe the unique methodological approach of this thesis, which is fundamentally a critical self-reflection, though unorthodox in the sense that it is my multiple previous and ongoing positions as development worker and activist at CRMD that form the basis of my examinations. I recount how I came to CRMD, and how my earlier studies and work/volunteer experience prepared me for the journey and relationship I began as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) deployed on a 12-month posting to Vanuatu between July 2008 and July 2009. I then go on to detail the work that I carried out at CRMD predominately as an AYAD, but also since the end of my posting, as a member of the CRMD International Advocacy Group (or IAG). The majority of my work since arriving back in Australia has been voluntary (general counsel and advocacy, such as grant writing), but I have also been employed as a consultant with the World Bank’s Jastis Blong Evriwan / Justice for the Poor program and Stepwise Heritage and Tourism Pty Ltd. In light of my various roles and responsibilities at CRMD, I discuss how I collected the data that is used in this thesis and the methods I employed to interpret and analyse it.

I draw on a range of research methods and information sources utilised throughout all of my CRMD engagements with the explicit permission of the community, who has had full knowledge of my research interests and purposes from the outset. The relevant community authorities, namely the local chiefs and World Heritage committee, have given me full approval for the recording of meetings, interviews and conversations and the use of these various materials for the production of this thesis. The research presented in this thesis has also been approved by the Vanuatu National
Cultural Council, which is required under chapter 186, 6(2)(e) of the Laws of the Republic of Vanuatu.

Finally, in section 4, I introduce the published papers that make up Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 and show how the central aim and arguments of this thesis progress and unfold across all four of them.

1.1 UNESCO World Heritage in the Pacific Islands

The UNESCO World Heritage system represents the world’s foremost effort in the identification, protection, presentation and transmission of cultural and natural heritage that is considered to have Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) for future generations. These activities are expressed in an international treaty called the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (henceforth referred to as, ‘World Heritage Convention’), adopted by UNESCO in 1972 and put into effect after ratification by 20 countries in 1976. As of September 2012, the year of its 40th anniversary, a total of 189 countries have ratified the World Heritage Convention, which is more than any other international treaty for cultural or natural heritage preservation in the world. The World Heritage Committee, the main body in charge of the implementation of the Convention, has developed strict criteria for site inscription and management which are contained within the 2012 Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 2012a). Although in terms of international law, neither the Convention nor the Operational Guidelines have any real effect unless they are formalised by national and/or local regulatory measures in the host country (Gillespie, 2012; O’Keefe, 2004).

There are currently 962 properties on the World Heritage list which the World Heritage Committee considers as having OUV, including 745 cultural, 188 natural and 29 mixed properties in 157 states parties (UNESCO, 2013a). There continue to be significant geographic imbalances on the World Heritage list, however, with the vast majority of sites located in developed regions of the world, particularly in Europe. In 1994, the World Heritage Committee adopted the ‘Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List’ in an attempt to rectify this geographical unevenness. While there have been some notable advances, major disparities persist (Labadi, 2005; Steiner & Frey, 2011; Rao, 2010).

Despite spanning a quarter of the globe and being home to one of the most culturally and biologically rich and distinct areas on earth, the Pacific islands is the most under-represented region on the World Heritage list. There are many reasons for this poor representation, not least of which is
the region’s sparse geography. But also, perhaps more critically, is the region’s incredibly unique social, cultural and political characteristics. The region has the highest proportions of Indigenous peoples within national populations, and more land and sea under the control of local traditional governance regime than any other inhabited place on earth. Moreover, the elevated power and recognition of local customary systems and techniques of heritage management by most independent Pacific island countries has largely resulted in an absence of national legislation concerning World Heritage protection, not to mention an inability of governments to resource existing judicial administration and enforcement (Ballard & Wilson, 2012; Smith, 2012; UNESCO, 2012b).

The Republic of Vanuatu is located within the Pacific sub-region of Melanesia - stretching roughly from Fiji in the east, New Caledonia to the south, and Solomon Islands and New Guinea to the north and west - where over one thousand languages are found among a population of approximately eight million people. This represents approximately one quarter of the total languages spoken in the world today (Dutton, 2006). In Vanuatu alone, some 115 languages can be found among a population of approximately 260,000 dispersed throughout 65 inhabited islands (or 83 habited and uninhabited islands in total) in the archipelago (Lynch & Crowley, 2001; Tryon & Charpentier, 2004; Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2013). Yet there are merely three World Heritage sites from independent Melanesian countries, only two of which are listed for cultural values. The first inscription, East Rennell (World Heritage Reference 854) in the Solomon Islands, was nominated under natural criteria in 1998. This was followed by Chief Roi Mata’s Domain in Vanuatu and Kuk Early Agricultural Site in Papua New Guinea which were both inscribed under cultural criteria in 2008\(^1\).

All three of these sites are held under local customary ownership, and are managed traditionally by the resident and/or surrounding Indigenous village communities. They all benefited from the inclusion of cultural landscapes as a discrete category for inscription in 1992, which was marked by far-reaching changes to the Operational Guidelines that for the first time recognised the role of traditional protection and management systems in safeguarding World Heritage (Rossler, 2005). The IUCN technical evaluation of East Rennell prior to its inscription drew attention to the significance of the subsequent decision by the World Heritage Committee, by stating that the “nomination breaks new ground in terms of nominating a natural site that is under customary land ownership, that has no formalised legal basis and for which the objective is sustainable resource use” (IUCN, 1998, p. 83).

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\(^1\) Independent Melanesian countries have submitted multiple sites to the World Heritage Centre for inclusion on their respective tentative lists. Vanuatu had five sites registered on their tentative list in 2004-2005, Fiji registered four sites in 1999, Solomon Islands registered two sites in 2008, and Papua New Guinea registered seven sites in 2006.
1.2 The Lelema Community and World Heritage

The World Heritage nomination process for CRMD began in 2004 at the request of the Lelema community and was conducted in collaboration with the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta / Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VKS), which in turn engaged several Australian heritage consultants and volunteers for technical assistance. On the 8th of July 2008 the Outstanding Universal Value of CRMD was recognised by the 32nd Meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Quebec City, Canada and the property was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list as a continuing cultural landscape under criteria (iii), (v) and (vi) (Decision 32 COM 8B.27). The inscription of CRMD recognised the enduring links between a sixteenth-century paramount chief, Roi Mata, the landscape of his chiefly domain, and the living local descendent community, Lelema (Republic of Vanuatu, 2007). The OUV of CRMD was expressed as follows:

The continuing cultural landscape of Chief Roi Mata’s Domain, Vanuatu, has Outstanding Universal Value as an outstanding example of a landscape representative of Pacific chiefly systems. This is reflected in the interaction of people with their environment over time in respecting the tangible remains associated with Chief Roi Mata and being guided by the spiritual and moral legacy of his social reforms. The landscape reflects continuing Pacific chiefly systems and respect for this authority through tabu prohibitions on use of Roi Mata’s residence and burial that have been observed for over 400 years and structured the local landscape and social practices. The landscape memorializes the deed of Roi Mata who still lives for many people in contemporary Vanuatu as a source of power and inspiration. (Decision 32 COM 8B.27)

Many stories throughout Central Vanuatu are told about different Roi Matas - a title which was probably held in succession over several centuries by a series of individuals - but the most legendary was the last holder of the title. The last holder of the title, Roi Mata, is still revered throughout the region for his exploits, and particularly for his part in bringing to an end a long period of major wars that had raged throughout the region. To do this, he held the first of the great peace feasts, at which he introduced a system of tribal or totemic clans (based on natural species, such as octopus or coconut) known as naflak, binding people together through maternal links and providing the basis for a social structure still observed today (Republic of Vanuatu, 2007)².

² For more detailed accounts on the story of the life and death of Chief Roi Mata, see: Luders (2001), Garanger (1972) or Guiart (1973).
Roi Mata lived at the ancient village of Mangaas on mainland Efate, drew his last breath at Fels Cave on Lelepa island, and was buried – along with as many as 300 live subjects of his family and court – on the island of Retoka (also known as Hat, Artok or Eretoka island) in about 1600 AD which has been abandoned ever since (see Figures 3 and 4). The World Heritage property of CRMD consists of a rough triangle containing these kastom\(^3\) sites and the stretch of sea that enables travel between these areas, delineated by the shaded grey area in Figure 4. The surrounding buffer zone - designed to provide greater protection for the OUV of the World Heritage property - encompasses the two main villages of Lelema: Mangaliliu (Efate), and Natapau (Lelepa). The total population of the Lelema community is approximately 700, or just over 80 households. Titles to land within the buffer zone are claimed by approximately 200 members of the Lelema community, which extends slightly further northeast beyond the buffer zone boundary on Lelepa island. The CRMD buffer zone also takes in a large portion of Lelema’s most productive arable land and intensely utilised fishing areas.

\(^3\) In Bislama, the term ‘kastom’ is generally synonymous with local customary principles and practices. It is, however, a multifarious term open to an enormous range of variations and interpretations all over the country. The basis of kastom and its contemporary meanings and inferences has been the subject of much public debate nationally in Vanuatu, and also academically (see for example: Bolton, 2003; Jolly, 1994a, 1994b; Lindstrom, 2008; Macclancy, 1988; Tonkinson, 1982).
Figure 3: Map of Vanuatu locating Chief Roi Mata’s Domain in northwest Efate (Republic of Vanuatu, 2007, p. 11).
The cultural landscape of CRMD endures through the lives of the community that resides within it. For the Lelema community, the real value of the CRMD landscape is embodied through the local concept of *nafsan natoon* / the talk that is, which provides the basis for a moral guide to village life and walking *naflan Roi* / in the footsteps of Roi [Mata]. The respect shown by the community towards
Roi Mata can be seen in ceremonies involving the beating of *tamtam* drums and drinking of kava at Mangaas, through cultural expressions and traditional performances depicting Roi Mata and his great feats (such as seen in Figure 5), and by listening to dream specialists recounting lengthy narratives of their encounters with Roi Mata’s spirit. Apart from their inseparable familial connections, the union of the Lelepa and Mangaliliu people as a community, as well as their collective links and meshed claims to their land, largely hinge upon the figure of Roi Mata (Wilson, 2006; Wilson & Ballard, 2012; Wilson, Ballard, Matanik, & Warry, 2012).

Figure 5: Lelepa Islander, Joel Kalotiti, enacting the role of Roi Mata with Artok in the distance (Source: Alison Fleming).

### 1.3 Managing Chief Roi Mata’s Domain

#### 1.3.1 The Local Level

The management of CRMD takes place primarily at the local village level through the Lelema World Heritage Committee (or LWHC; until 2011, this committee was known as the World Heritage and Tourism Committee or WHTC). The LWHC is currently comprised of six individuals from Mangaliliu and Lelepa, including two men and four women, who work on behalf of the three landowning chiefs of the World Heritage property, as well as the Lelema Council of Chiefs more
generally. Members of the committee were selected by the community on the basis of their relationship to the landowners and their demonstrated interest in the future of the proposed World Heritage property. In addition, most LWHC members had demonstrable experience in the fields of heritage and tourism and had already gained certain stature within the community as a result. For instance, the Tourism Managers had held a variety of positions (including managerial) in some of Vanuatu’s largest hotels and resorts, while the Vice-Chair had been the President of the VKS Women’s Fieldworker program working to promote and preserve cultural heritage in Vanuatu. To ensure equal representation, two men and two women were selected from both Lelepa island and Mangaliliu to fulfil the roles of the committee. Each position within the committee (such as the Tourism Manager) has a representative from both Lelepa and Mangaliliu (see Table 1) whose roles and functions are defined within a Constitution written in Bislama.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Mangaliliu representative</th>
<th>Lelepa representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair/Vice-Chair</td>
<td>Leisara Kalotiti (Vice-Chair)</td>
<td><em>vacant</em> (Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Managers</td>
<td>Topie Warry</td>
<td>Richard Matanik (Acting Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Managers</td>
<td><em>vacant</em></td>
<td>Hellen Maika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Managers</td>
<td>Lekaka Dolsi</td>
<td>Salome Kalsong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Structure of the Lelema World Heritage Committee.

In its previous incarnation as the WHTC, the committee served two main functions: (1) as a heritage monitoring body to ensure the protection of CRMD World Heritage property and its buffer zone, and (2) as a tourism management team, whose aim was to develop and grow the community-owned tourism enterprise, Roi Mata Cultural Tours (Greig, 2006; Wilson, 2006). The day to day functions of what is now the LWHC, as well as the small amount of site works and maintenance that can be afforded, is primarily funded through the limited and irregular profits generated by Roi Mata Cultural Tours, which is the focus of Chapter 4. The tour is a small-scale enterprise designed to maintain and promote the cultural values of CRMD and to provide an alternative source of income and land-use activity for the both Mangaliliu and Lelepa. The guided tour follows the nafian / footsteps of the life and death of Roi Mata and visits the three main sites of the World Heritage property, including a dramatisation of the distribution of naflak at Mangaas, entry into Fels cave on Lelepa island and a boat trip to Retoka island. The committee is responsible for ensuring that benefits accrued from the tour – namely village-level casual employment opportunities and the investment of occasional profits in communal goods and services - are shared and distributed equally throughout the community.

Under the relatively new banner of the LWHC, in addition to holding their previous roles (Chair, Vice-Chair, Tourism, Human Resource and Finance Managers) and responsibilities (managing Roi
Mata Cultural Tours and presiding over site monitoring and maintenance), the six members are also tasked with overseeing an increasingly diverse range of small project areas associated with CRMD World Heritage (listed below):

1. **Longore**: a ranger program for looking after the cultural and natural values of CRMD.
2. **Tupirou**: an interim committee appointed by the Lelema Council of Chiefs to plan for the first construction phase of 'World Heritage Bungalows' located in the CRMD buffer zone.
3. **Craft Revitalisation**: a project to revive the practice of traditional weaving and carving in Lelema. Specific artefacts produced through this project are marketed under the World Heritage banner and sold through the Roi Mata Cultural Tour and at the VKS museum.
4. **Nuwae**: a water-security project on Lelepa island that is designed to increase the availability of fresh water to the 400+ people residing on the island.

These extra responsibilities are divided among LWHC members, broadly, under the fields of 'heritage management', 'tourism management', and 'community economic development', each of which has two designated LWHC member overseers. In their early stages of development, each project requires considerable extra time and effort from all six LWHC members, on top of their initial WHTC roles and responsibilities. Indeed, the fact that there are eight positions available on the committee, but only six current members, is indicative of the LWHC’s small financial remuneration (in the form of irregular sitting allowances and tour guide work, rarely earning more than AUD20 a day for either) yet growing responsibilities and workload. With the resignation of one member in February 2009 (Difate Kalotiti) to seek employment in Port Vila and the untimely death of the former chair (Douglas Kalotiti) in April 2011, no replacements have been forthcoming despite repeated attempts to advertise and advocate the positions within the community. Even now, more than four years post-inscription, LWHC members have to regularly weigh up the personal and family sacrifices associated with carrying out their World Heritage related duties. Each committee member works tirelessly under enormous pressure to implement management strategies on a voluntary basis, with no other regular source of income, and with limited to no resources. Time spent by LWHC members attending meetings or maintaining general bookkeeping, therefore, is time not spent preparing or harvesting crops for both subsistence and/or meagre income to pay for their children’s’ school fees⁴.

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⁴ This is most evident during the month of January in the lead up to the start of the school year. Almost every family within the Lelema community is scrambling to put together enough money to pay for their children’s’ school fees during this period, LWHC members included. Typically, therefore, World Heritage related work is put aside for the most part until enough money is raised.
Figure 6: Members of the LWHC at Mangaas, Efate in July 2009 (From left to right: Douglas Kalotiti, Richard Matanik, Hellen Maika, Leisara Kalotiti, Lekaka Dolsi, Topie Warry, Salome Kalsong) (Source: Alison Fleming).

Figure 7: LWHC meeting in June 2009 with government officials from the Department of Tourism (Source: Douglas Kalotiti).
The LWHC is just one of many komuniti okanaesesons / community organisations that come under the authority of the Lelema Council of Chiefs. All chiefs (big and small in terms of stature) of the region comprise the Lelema Council of Chiefs, which meets regularly to convene and discuss a whole range of village issues, including land disputes, heritage protection and community development. Despite being a committee made up of Lelema community members, appointed by the community and sanctioned by the Council of Chiefs, the LWHC does not have absolute decision-making power with regards to what happens on the individual landholdings of customary owners (as the quotes below bluntly assert). This includes the 200+ buffer zone landowners, but also the three chiefs who own the core World Heritage property. In order to maintain the OUV of CMRD, therefore, the LWHC has to delicately (and often, precariously) manage a power-sharing arrangement, not only with the chiefs of Lelema and forms of communal governance through their Council, but with every individual customary landowner from the two communities claiming land inside the CRMD World Heritage property and buffer zone, along with an increasing number of foreign investors and companies who have leased buffer zone land from them (the system by which customary land is surveyed, registered and leased to foreigners is elaborated at length in the following section).

\[
WHTC \text{ I no gat raet long graon blong mi / WHTC has no rights over my land (CRMD buffer zone landowner, Lelepa island community meeting, February 2009)}
\]

\[
Mi nomo mi mekem disison long saet blong graon blong mi / Only I make decisions relating to my land (CRMD buffer zone landowner, LWHC landowner survey, Lelepa island, May 2009)
\]

1.3.2 The National Level

The Government of Vanuatu provides very little in terms of managerial, budgetary or regulatory support for World Heritage management, due in part to a shortage of revenue and resourcing, but more substantially to the fundamental autonomy of local communities. Vanuatu does not have any legislation specifying World Heritage or buffer zones and government funding has been typically piecemeal, erratic and unreliable. This lack of overall government assistance also applies to community-based tourism and other economic development initiatives associated with World

\[5\] Only with substantial lobbying, for example, was government funding forthcoming for the Australian visas for two LWHC members to attend an Indigenous tourism conference in Australia in March 2009. On another occasion, and to a lesser extent, transport and accommodation for the chair of the LWHC to attend the Vanuatu Environment Unit's workshop on community conservation in September 2008 was supplied. Basic office equipment such as paper and stationary as well as a computer and printer have all been provided by the meagre profits of the Roi Mata Cultural Tour and administration fees of international aid funding for CRMD-based projects.
Heritage as demonstrated in Chapter 4. These businesses are inadequately supported by sufficient market regulation or seed money that would allow greater ni-Vanuatu participation and recompense within this largely expatriate dominated industry marred by inequity (De Burlo, 2003; Rawlings, 2002; Slatter, 2006). However, there are both national and international agents, networks and institutions that have played significant and crucial supporting roles since nomination.

Since the nomination process began in 2004, the VKS has been by far the most critical supporting national institution for the LWHC and the Lelema community. The VKS is effectively the administrative hub for CRMD, assisting the LWHC with everything from international correspondence with the World Heritage Centre to the facilitation of the provision of external advisory and funding assistance. The VKS is a statutory body whose primary function under chapter 186 of the Laws of the Republic of Vanuatu is "the preservation, protection and development of various aspects of the rich cultural heritage of Vanuatu" (Vanuatu Cultural Centre, 2013; Vanuatu National Cultural Council & Vanuatu Cultural Centre, 2013). In practice, the principal role of the VKS since its establishment in 1956 has been to document and record the culture and cultural history of Vanuatu. The VKS is an umbrella organisation which incorporates a museum, library, and archives, and is widely acknowledged throughout the Pacific as one of the most effective and successful post-colonial cultural institutions in the region (Alivizatou, 2011; Bolton, 2006).

While it is a statutory authority, the VKS is a quasi-government institution with considerable independence. With very limited government funding and resources - which sometimes results in the inability to afford electricity bills and structural repairs to its building - the VKS relies heavily on international aid funding for much of its project work. This includes World Heritage, although it is yet to be officially recognised as a World Heritage Focal Point or have a designated 'World Heritage Officer'. Despite the continuing absence of this formal recognition, the Manager of the Vanuatu National Heritage Section, Brigitte Laboukly, has taken on this role. It is widely acknowledged by all CRMD stakeholders, including, most importantly, the Lelema community and landowners, that the VKS’s supporting role continues to be invaluable to overall CRMD administration and management.

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6 It is worth noting that the National Commission for UNESCO resides within the Ministry of Education, although this has proved of little use to the Lelema community or the VKS since the World Heritage nomination process began. This is despite each member state, under the terms of Article VII of the UNESCO Constitution, undertaking to form a National Commission and ensure that it plays an active role publically promoting the World Heritage Convention and leading official networks responsible for World Heritage sites (UNESCO, 2007).
Recently, however, there have been encouraging signs from the Government of Vanuatu, and with funding from the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage, the Lelema Chiefs and the LWHC are now represented on the national-level within a newly established 'Vanuatu World Heritage Advisory Group'. It is hoped that this advisory group will encourage further community-government dialogue and, in particular, provide a practical means for community and government representatives to discuss pressing issues associated with the World Heritage area that are difficult to resolve solely at the community level. Critically, this group is not intended to override local level community decision-making; rather, it seeks to provide the context for open discussion on a range of challenges in which government departments may have specific knowledge or experience in, such as land leasing, the registering of cultural sites and tourism marketing. The challenge, of course, will be ensuring that this important forum does not suffer from the fickle nature of government funding discussed earlier. Not to mention the typically poor internal communication and coordination within and across Departments; the generally under-staffed, under-resourced and over-worked public service; systemic corruption across all levels of government; political instability and resultant frequent changes of government; and the regular, public and politicised disputes that often
target personnel within Departments, particularly within the Ministry of Lands (Cox, et al., 2007; Kalotiti, et al., 2009; Ligo, 2011; Regenvanu, 2008).

1.3.3 The International Level

International level assistance for CRMD is the primary focus of Chapter 5, but here I briefly introduce the nature and scope of this support. Since the nomination process began in 2004, the Lelema community, the VKS, and most recently the Department of Tourism, have engaged the services of a number of international consultants and volunteers. International assistance for heritage conservation and tourism development at CRMD has been focused on a variety of areas, such as applying for additional aid funding, upgrading community facilities and infrastructure, honing the financial and administrative capacity of the LWHC, building and maintaining community confidence, improving marketing strategies for the Roi Mata Cultural Tours and facilitating a community land-use planning process. A total of nine international development volunteers (AYADs and others) on 3-18 month postings, working primarily through the VKS as their host organisation, have thus far been engaged. All of the volunteers have worked closely with the LWHC (most of them have lived within the Lelema community) toward the ultimate goal of the committee being able to independently manage both the heritage and tourism components of CRMD. While it is important to recognise that there have been (and will no doubt, continue to be) significant setbacks and difficulties, these collaborative efforts have seen a marked increase in the LWHC’s self-reliance.

Most past and present international consultants and volunteers are now members of the Chief Roi Mata's Domain International Advocacy Group (IAG; until 2012, this group was known as the International Advisory Group), which serves as an international support and advocacy group for the project. The IAG was established in 2009 in response to a growing number of volunteers and consultants wishing to continue to be involved in the project beyond the completion of their initial contract or posting. The work of the IAG is fundamentally driven and defined by the LWHC and the Lelema community. Since its formation, the IAG have agreed upon a set of roles and responsibilities for all members, in addition to formalising communication channels and mentoring relationships with local and national agents and organisations. Most IAG members have forged strong personal, and what have also become family, relationships with the LWHC in particular, but also the broader Lelema community.
1.4 Local Community Autonomy of Chief Roi Mata’s Domain

As touched on previously, a distinctive feature of CRMD - although common within Melanesia and the Pacific islands more broadly - is the dominion that the Lelema community collectively hold over their customary lands, which include the World Heritage property and its buffer zone. I discuss the historical origins and contemporary manifestations of this local-level power and agency in much greater detail in section 2, as well as analysis included in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, but for now it is important to introduce the influences and impacts that local community autonomy has on heritage conservation and tourism development at CRMD, as well as the central role it plays throughout the thesis in demonstrating the need to move beyond viewing them as irreconcilable binaries in the context of World Heritage.

The independence Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu declares that all land “belongs to the indigenous custom owners and their descendants” (Government of Vanuatu, n.d., Article 73) and that “the rules of custom formed the basis of ownership and use of land” (Government of Vanuatu, n.d., Article 74). These Constitutional provisions have been one of the leading factors contributing to the limited reach and power of the Government of Vanuatu beyond the major centres, putting local landowning villagers in the unique position of being largely self-autonomous political agents. Village-level control over what is permitted on their lands, and how initiatives, projects and enterprises take shape over time within their communities through a process of localisation, is greater in Vanuatu and other independent Pacific island countries than in any other part of the world (Regenvanu, 2008; Rodman, 1995). The ongoing maintenance of World Heritage at CRMD can only be sustainably achieved, therefore, under rules set collectively at the village-level. Such rules can often change daily (“yes today, no tomorrow” is a well-known saying in the village) and at times be ruled upon in seemingly chaotic conditions shrouded in local community politics, such as during stormy community meetings. These distinguishing circumstances of ni-Vanuatu village-life are the central platform for the arguments put forward within this thesis and form the basis of my critical analysis of the unique challenges, but also tremendous opportunities, they pose for World Heritage at CRMD.

This level of local community autonomy and control diverges strikingly from international standards, practices and norms of heritage protection. In the first instance, it is at odds with international expectations of the primary role of the nation-state, which in accordance with the World Heritage Convention, is obliged to maintain and protect World Heritage sites within its territory. As explicated in Chapter 2 in relation to World Heritage generally at CRMD and Chapter 3 specifically in regard to the CRMD buffer zone, it is certainly not the norm, nor the acceptable practice internationally with regards to World Heritage conservation, to rely solely on, for example, local-level verbal
commitments made in community meetings in local language; agreements on rough paper written in Bislama and signed by all relevant parties; or sketches of critical site maintenance such as weed removal and bush regeneration such as the one displayed in Figure 9. While customary management and protection is increasingly recognised and supported by UNESCO, including within the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines (Rossler, 2006), the successes and failures of management strategies at these sites are still determined using a fairly rigid set of international (read Western) standards of management systems and reporting (Byrne, 2008; Smith, 2006). Yet local customary principles and practices and the ongoing village-level negotiations that surround them, are far more valuable and important to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage in Vanuatu than any well-produced management plan in English that is only vaguely understood locally, or even a national legislative provision for heritage protection which is unlikely to be adequately implemented.

Figure 9: A sketch of work carried out to eradicate weed infestation (kasis tree) on Retoka by the former chair of the LWHC, Douglas Kalotiti, in October 2008.

Local community autonomy also goes well beyond how the international heritage profession and scholarship currently theorise community-based heritage conservation, emphasising comparatively pale notions of understanding, respect and involvement in order to promote a sense of community
ownership (Logan & Smith, 2010). The Lelema community and others like them in Vanuatu already possess far more than just a ‘sense’ of ownership. They are, on the contrary, the sovereign decision-makers with regard to everything on their customary lands. This remarkable power inversion – from the nation-state to local customary landowners – is in many ways an affront to the conventional social efficacy of, not only UNESCO, but also its cultural advisory bodies, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) (Hay-Edie, 2004). In this context, where the powers and capacity of the State Party to manage and protect World Heritage are severely limited, the participation and support of Government is actually actively sought and desired, particularly in the form of financial, technical and regulatory backing in order to augment local efforts spearheaded by the LWHC. Although, critically, only to the extent to which the resource (in this case, World Heritage) is still under the sovereign ownership and control of the local chiefs and communities, as is evident in the draft constitution of the Vanuatu World Heritage Advisory Group.

The literature abounds with cautions of the theoretical and practical incompatibility of heritage conservation and tourism development (Hall, 2009a; Russo, 2002; Shackley, 2006; Tourtellot, 2007). Indeed, there has long been competition at UNESCO World Heritage sites between the interests of heritage preservation and tourism development; commonly treated as “separate worlds” or “separate realms of enquiry” (Winter, 2004, p. 3). Adams (2004, 2006) attributes this to the often chasmic differences between the ways World Heritage is conceptualised and rationalised at the global and local levels. At the global level UNESCO strives to preserve traditional lifestyles from transformative external forces, while at the local level World Heritage is viewed as an opportunity to mobilise culture for poverty alleviating development. This is certainly the case at CRMD, although I argue particularly in Chapter 2 but also in Chapter 3 that the on-ground reality for the Lelema community is more nuanced. Tourism and other forms of economic development are clearly and indelibly tied to the wishes of most Lelema customary landowners, but crucially, so is the imperative of securing greater protection for locally important cultural practices, materials and sites.

During the CRMD nomination process, Lelema chiefs and their communities agreed that World Heritage conservation would only be allowed to occur alongside associated tourism development and other commercial activities that capitalised on the World Heritage status of CRMD, which at the time was solely in the form of Roi Mata Cultural Tours. Time dedicated by villagers to World Heritage directly translates to time away from their garden crops and other potential income-raising activities. The basic requirements of modern and increasingly monetised village life, elucidated in Chapter 4, will always dictate that a mix of individual, family and community economic remuneration for committing time and resources (primarily, their land) to the World Heritage property and buffer zone
is paramount. But to reiterate this key point, the preservation of local *kastom* associated with Roi Mata's legacy was, and continues to be, a key driving force behind the majority of community members’ desire for the World Heritage nomination, and the added attention and scrutiny it brings in terms of cultural heritage protection and wider sustainable land-use for future generations.

Local community level power and agency in Vanuatu means that heritage conservation and tourism development are not, and will never be, viewed as antithetical at CRMD. Moreover, assuming that locally administered and managed community heritage and tourism combinations are discretely global or local entities ignores the more complicated and convoluted true nature of contemporary village-life. The decisions that local customary landowners make over their individual portions of the CRMD World Heritage area are numerous and diverse, but if they have one thing in common it is that every decision is made for different reasons (some in the interests of heritage conservation, some in a desire for tourism development, and some with a mixture of both) and under a myriad of new and old influences (some global, some local). This is explored further in the following subsection.

To date, this complicated and complex global-local nexus of conservation and development as it is manifest through UNESCO World Heritage has been under-theorised at what is clearly the most crucial level, the local community, particularly in Vanuatu and the Pacific islands. Being so new to the region, with inscribed sites few and far between, very little is known overall about how World Heritage is perceived and enacted by Indigenous landowning communities. More specifically, there is a critical lack of knowledge and know-how necessary to attain the depth of understanding required to adapt and adjust systems and processes in favour of, and more aligned with, the extraordinarily distinct social, cultural, political and economic circumstances that exist locally in the Pacific. For these reasons and more, Kreps (2008) argues that the Pacific islands currently lies at the forefront of innovation within cultural heritage theory and praxis. But even more generally in other parts of the world, there is a critical need for more, as Di Giovanni (2009, p. 6) puts it, “bottom-up ethnographic analysis of how locals perceive of heritage claims and touristic processes”. All in all, this makes the central questions of this thesis all the more relevant and pressing for not only the Pacific, but developing countries around the globe attempting to achieve the twin goals of heritage conservation and tourism development. I contribute to this gap within the World heritage literature, and the interrelated fields of heritage and tourism more broadly, by uncovering these often ignored (and sometimes concealed) bottom-up forces and processes at work within community-led projects such as CRMD.
1.5 Globalisation and Localisation: Merging Contemporalities

A notoriously fluid and all-inclusive theory, globalisation, as Munck (2004, p.84) puts it, "can mean anything, everything or nothing". One of the key concepts of the early 21st century, globalisation is hotly debated and contested. Many authors are quick to caution that its wide conceptual breadth and popularity can lead to vague and fuzzy interpretations and applications restricted to the macro-level (Eriksen, 2007b; Harrison, 1997; Robertson, 1995). Most agree, however, that the enormous and broad attention given to the phenomena, in what is a growing and highly multi-disciplinary field of study, is clearly reshaping the way we see and understand the world today (Appelbaum & Robinson, 2005; Steger, 2003).

Given that globalisation is inherently multi-dimensional and rarely contained within one thematic framework, it is not surprising that there is no straightforward or widely accepted definition within the literature. Robertson (1992, p. 8) describes it as “the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole”. Bauman (1998, p. 1) quite simply calls globalisation “the intractable fate of the world, an irreversible process”. What these and most other definitions have in common, is that they narrate globalisation as an inevitable process and portray the present moment as one of unprecedented crisis. Perhaps a more freer and holistic description of globalisation comes from Ritzer (2010), who states:

Globalisation is a transplanetary process or set of processes involving increasing liquidity and the growing multidirectional flows of people, objects, places and information as well as the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows. (p. 2)

Scarcely referred to before the 1980s, Appelbaum and Robinson (2005) argue that globalisation emerged as a separate field of enquiry from international studies of the 1950s; evolving from the compartmentalised view of the world as a set of discrete nation-states to one that identifies the world as a ‘single interactive system’. More specifically, Harrison (1997) has linked globalisation literature to previously disparate themes, from modernisation and underdevelopment perspectives. No matter how one chooses to define its scope or view its origins, it is clear that globalisation theory poses important questions for our unfolding and entwined transnational realities.

The concept of globalisation is applied and analysed here through the prism of CRMD World Heritage, and in particular, as it forges meaning within contemporary Lelema lifeworlds through affiliated community heritage conservation and tourism development activities. In keeping with the central theme of this thesis, I resist the urge to place responsibility for social change purely on
external agencies, as this tends to ignore, or at least underplay, the significance of local agency. The contemporary transnational processes, interactions and flows of globalisation are commonly depicted as one-way and top-down - from the global level to the local level - in a whole range of subject areas including the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and ecological (I provide specific evidence of this within all of the published papers, although particularly within Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in relation to the fields of heritage and tourism). The on-ground realities in Vanuatu suggest that the situation is much more complex. Dirlik (1999) describes a 'double process', whereby the forces of globalisation and localisation combine to influence and impact on each other. Robertson (1995) talks about transcending the debates about homogenisation versus heterogenisation, stating that the processes and actions of globalisation cannot be reduced to such a simple dualism. In cultural terms, Friedman and Friedman (2008) refer to it as the 'spaghetti principle'; the tendency of localities to transfer and integrate foreign products, materials and models in ways that makes them useful. Jackson (2004, p. 165) more generally, declares the need to think about globalisation as “a site of struggle rather than as an established fact”. Hall (2009b) captures this overall sentiment well:

In this globalization ‘game’ there are no absolute winners and losers. Neither homogenization nor diversity can capture its contradictory movement and character. We lose everything if we force the contemporary forms of creativity and cultural expression into one or other end-point of this binary schema. Cultural globalization, like other aspects of the process, is profoundly and unalterably contradictory. We must continue to ‘speak it’ in this way. (p. xii)

The CRMD experience suggests the need to move beyond thinking about globalisation as top-down, domineering and purely exogenous, but also, equally, and this is where this thesis diverges from and expands on current theory and practice, no longer view localisation as straightforward, unitary and solely endogenous. The Lelema community is utilising its authority over customary lands to actively select and adapt global and local principles of both heritage conservation and tourism development according to local needs, interests and know-how in order to cast its own distinct ideal of World Heritage. Globalisation in Vanuatu is neither top-down nor bottom-up, but rather, a continuous process operating simultaneously in both directions which is highly characteristic of what Robertson (1995) has called ‘glocalisation’. In thinking about the Lelema villagers as critical and powerful agents blending the useful aspects of both globalisation and localisation (a process that I will now refer to as glocalisation), this thesis draws attention to new conceptual understandings of heritage conservation and tourism development beyond the current prevailing international discourses. It brings into question how we might begin to re-think, re-fashion and re-vision the complex global-local
intersections of conservation and development for CRMD’s, but also more broadly, Vanuatu’s future.

Critically, however, the increasingly porous border between the global and the local by no means guarantees a smooth and harmonious transition to some form of unified and utopian local reality where collective agreement is assured and the best elements of both globalisation and localisation are harnessed and utilised to no ill-affect. In addition to identifying this ‘double process’, and on a somewhat cautionary note, Dirlik (1999) emphasises that the globalisation of the local often outweighs and outbalances the localisation of the global in terms of politics, economy and culture. The interweaving of the global and the local at CRMD is not enough in and of itself to achieve the goals of the community. As CRMD World Heritage, with all of its associated heritage conservation and tourism development ideas and initiatives, becomes more and more glocalised it is increasingly faced with the dilemma of being subject to multiple benchmarks of success. Glocal heritage conservation at CRMD is, for instance, on the one hand, evaluated by the codified international system of UNESCO World Heritage operating through the nation-state and the state’s apparatus, and on the other, valued for its consistency with the complex and ever-changing pluralities of local everyday life in the Lelema community. Similarly, glocal economic development at CRMD is appraised by, and competes within, the international capitalistic market economy on the one hand, and judged locally by the Lelema community in relation to locally valued measures of poverty reduction on the other. The fundamental point being that hybrid formations of World Heritage related conservation and development born from grassroots Indigenous perspectives and lifeworlds are not inherently ubiquitous or valued within either the dominant capitalist market economy or heritage discourse and system.

Consequently, throughout this thesis emphasis is placed on the need to develop and maintain broader support structures, mechanisms and networks with input from all levels - local, state and international. Chapter 5 expands on this, concluding that if the benefits of glocalised business models and heritage management systems are to be realised by ni-Vanuatu communities, then such transnational scaffolding in the form of technical, financial and regulatory assistance must be engineered. The sensitive and continuing input of friendly national and transnational agents at CRMD (such as the VKS and the IAG) are shown to be critical in augmenting local agency and promoting alternate grassroots development and conservation narratives. Such an approach is comparable to what Appadurai (2000) refers to in his seminal text as ‘grassroots globalisation’, or ‘globalisation from below’. He contends that non-government organisations and transnational advocacy networks “are the crucibles and institutional instruments of most serious efforts to globalise from below” (p. 15).
Building on the theory of grassroots globalisation, this thesis utilises the CRMD experience to raise several new and critical theoretical and practical points of distinction and qualification, and generate a more nuanced and independent approach to development and conservation through World Heritage in Vanuatu. This local or grassroots approach to World Heritage and all of its associated activities and initiatives are promulgated throughout all of the published papers that are the basis of Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 in order to create junctures in the development and conservation discourses. Indeed, fundamentally, this thesis challenges the universality of Western models of both heritage conservation and tourism development and promotes local reconfigurations that better represent and utilise kastom in all of its multiple, varied and continually changing everyday interpretations and applications at the confluence of both.

If the broad benefits of UNESCO World Heritage are to be realised by the Lelema community now and into the future, I contend that such an approach to heritage conservation and tourism development (emphasising grassroots perspectives and promoting local cultural reconfigurations through an ongoing process of glocalisation) is an imperative. Although, as this thesis also lays bare, it is important to acknowledge that this process of glocalisation at CRMD will probably never cease or come to any consolidated or congratulatory end-point. Lelema’s conservation and development strategies will require constant readjustment and recalibration well into the future. Indeed, the shape and scope of this truly ‘glocal’ entity that is CRMD World Heritage is now still only in very early stages of becoming apparent, more than four years post-inscription. Keeping abreast of rapid changes across this increasingly mercurial global-local interface (particularly as the LWHC and other community members become more computer literate and start regularly emailing, even joining Facebook) will no doubt require carefully managed transnational assistance of this nature for many more years to come, if not in perpetuity.

Finally, before providing more context for this discussion by presenting a brief history of Vanuatu, I want to again emphasise that this thesis is dedicated to attaining a greater understanding and appreciation of local articulations, notions and manifestations of both development and conservation as they are rendered through World Heritage at CRMD. At the heart of my motivation, is my desire to help the Lelema community and others like them in Vanuatu and elsewhere, by attempting to provide some potential signposts and even pathways to achieving a more sustainable and prosperous future. This is a daily talking point for everyone I know in the Lelema community (albeit in a myriad of different imaginings and semblances), whether it be over a shell of kava at the nakamal / local kava bar at dusk; during local weaving exercises and lessons at the weekly mama’s group meeting; at youth group gatherings coordinated by representatives of the community church; in the open and
clamorous community meetings chaired by the local chiefs council; or simply with the family over a quiet meal of *aelan kakae* / local food.

2. A Brief History of Vanuatu: *Taem Bifo, Taem Naoia* / Time Before, Time Now

The first section introduced the overarching aims and scope of this thesis. This section situates the experience of CRMD World Heritage within the broader context and history of Vanuatu. The sovereignty restored to local villagers over their customary lands at independence is the main platform used to argue the findings of this thesis. Indeed, the make-up and status of local customary tenure systems and structures are pivotal factors in determining the success or otherwise of community-based heritage conservation and tourism development initiatives in Vanuatu. I therefore seek to explain some of the historical origins (*taem bifo*) of the current situation regarding land in Vanuatu, leading up to the present moment (*taem naoia*). The key point to make within this section is that contemporary transformations of conservation and development at CRMD are just one in a long line of global-local encounters and experiences dating back to initial human settlement of the islands. To do so I outline a short history of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times in Vanuatu, with particular emphasis on the island of Efate and the Lelema region.

While the published papers contain various elements of this background in short, even cumulatively they do not provide enough of a contextual backdrop for the thesis in its entirety. This section bolsters background areas that, while not necessary for the individual and discrete arguments of each paper respectively, are essential in order to grasp the argument of this thesis as a whole.

2.1 Migration and Settlement

It is generally accepted that the ancestors of present day ni-Vanuatu arrived in at least three waves of prehistoric settlement. Approximately 3,200-3,500 years ago Austronesian peoples from South East Asia migrated in dug-out ocean-going canoes across and among the isles of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands and along to Vanuatu. These early migrants carried with them animals and crops central to life both pre and post European contact in Vanuatu, such as yams, taro, bananas, maize, breadfruit, pigs and fowls. This was followed by the appearance of seafaring people with chiefly titles most likely from Western Polynesia, who began colonising and settling parts of Vanuatu including
Efate around 1,000 years ago, or perhaps even earlier. More recently, although to a lesser extent and more sporadically, other smaller Polynesian voyaging groups also made the journey (Ballard, 2008; Bedford, 2006; MacClancy, 1980; Spriggs, 1997).

Despite the presumably singular ancestral cultural form and language of the early Austronesian people, the populations of Vanuatu have since experienced a metamorphosis to over 115 languages and a myriad of cultural complexes (Bedford, 2006; Bellwood, Fox, & Tryon, 2006; Tryon, 1996). Citing the great diversity of both language and physique in Vanuatu today, MacClancy (1980) argues that it was the centre of a region where different peoples intermixed and interrelated. Contemporary ni-Vanuatu cultural practices and principles, including land tenure, are a mixture of these earliest sources of the archipelago’s migration and settlement.

2.2 Early European Contact

Early European contact also fundamentally and indelibly impacted ni-Vanuatu life, albeit through subversion and tragedy. The islands of Vanuatu were first sighted and visited by the Spanish in 1606, as the South Pacific entered the European ‘Age of Discovery’. Led by the Spanish explorer Fernandez de Quiros, the island of ‘Espiritu Santo’ was briefly settled and named. However this was only a short-lived encounter, and it was not until 1768 that the French, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, sailed into the archipelago and named the islands of ‘Pentecost’ and ‘Aurora’ (later renamed ‘Maewo’) (Lal & Fortune, 2000; Van Trease, 1987).

It was not until 1774 that Captain James Cook charted most of the other islands and subsequently named them collectively the ‘New Hebrides’, apparently in reminiscence of the Scottish highlands (Field, 2003). The name ‘New Hebrides’ carried all the way through to independence in 1980. Providing an enduring legacy, this early British explorer, through the sheer act of naming this diverse and disparate group of tropical isles in dedication to such a distant and dissimilar natural and cultural landscape, imparted what Miles (1998) describes as a “novel cognitive unity”, or the mental boundaries necessary for the institution of state-hood for the future island nation state of Vanuatu.

Unlike these early explorers who came and went, the subsequent traders, missionaries and blackbirders had much more regular contact from the early 1800s with the people of New Hebrides, but with very different intentions. Traders introduced the cash economy to New Hebrides, a place where the pattern of traditional life and economies had until then been disturbed very little.
Sandalwood trees grew wild and prolifically, sea-slugs highly valued in China were in abundance, and whaling vessels plied the waters freely (Campbell, 1990; Shineberg, 1966).

Beyond material items, by the mid 1800s the Queensland sugarcane plantations were expanding and in need of cheap labour. New Hebridean men were seen as prime candidates, and the ‘blackbirding’ period commenced. Between 1863 and 1904 some 62,475 contracts of indenture were (mostly involuntarily) issued to Pacific Islanders – predominantly Melanesian – for poorly paid hard labour work usually lasting over a period of three years. In a man-made diaspora akin to slavery, the human populations of New Hebrides were dislocated and forced to work mercilessly on the plantations. Most islanders were repatriated, albeit inconsiderately and often not to their original home village or even island. With their meagre savings in hand upon return, Melanesians also returned with a new language: Bislama (MacClancy, 1980; Miles, 1998; Munro, 1995).

In contrast to the relatively ‘easy’ evangelisation of Polynesia by the early missionaries, Melanesia was to prove vastly more difficult for a variety of reasons. From the 1830s onwards, missionary attention began to focus westward. New Hebrideans were objects of rescue and salvation as ‘heathens’. Yet this was a time when cannibalism was still common throughout the region. Many missionaries were killed, but there were also many that succeeded in penetrating and embedding themselves within and among villages. Ultimately they did succeed, though not without considerable loss and hardship among missionaries and families (Campbell, 1990; MacClancy, 1980). Missionary influence was so great that post-independence Christianity continues to sit ambivalently beside kastom in everyday life and even in the Constitution of Vanuatu (Douglas, 1998). Indicative of the enduring and preeminent role of the church in Vanuatu, Biblical texts are regularly included in the preambles of Vanuatu government reports (Crossland, 2000).

Early European contact also precipitated rapid and dramatic depopulation throughout much of Vanuatu including the Lelema region, during what has been referred to as ‘the century of population decrease’ between 1820 and 1920 (Lightner & Naupa, 2005). The result of introduced disease, conflicts and blackbirding, this mass death led to the abandonment of the village settlements in the interior of Efate. The major coastal villages that exist today including those within Lelema are descendants of the survivors who assembled with kin at the few remaining villages on the coast or the offshore islands. Prior to this colonial-era amalgamation, naflaks generally associated with marine species (crab, octopus, etc) had origins, settlements or land holdings along the coast, while naflaks with terrestrial associations (coconut, yam etc) were based in the interior of mainland Efate. Hence, by the beginning of the 20th century, the structure of traditional ni-Vanuatu life had been irreversibly altered (Ballard, 2008; Lightner & Naupa, 2005).
### 2.3 New Hebrides and the Independence Movement

Being geographically situated almost midway between French-ruled New Caledonia to the south and British-ruled Fiji in the east, New Hebrides was the source of somewhat awkward geopolitical manoeuvrings by these two colonial powers. In 1878, the British and French governments agreed not to unilaterally annex the territory of New Hebrides without the agreement of the other. Eight years later the two governments were close to agreement that would have meant French annexation. However, the Australian colonial government rejected this proposition, aggressively lobbying the British government against greater French influence in the region (Kele-Kele & Plant, 1977; MacClancy, 1980; Thompson, 1980).

Eventually, under pressure from their respective constituent settlers, France and Britain entered into a unique and unlikely colonial arrangement – known as the ‘Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides’ – initiated in 1906 and formalised in 1914. The Condominium was almost uniformly condemned and continually ridiculed, castigated as a ‘tragic compromise’, ‘a system of joint neglect’, and ‘inefficient and cumbersome’ (MacClancy, 1980; Miles, 1998). The protocol of the Condominium authorised the making of duplicative laws and institutions (such as police force and schools) and during its rein was a force of Anglophone and Francophone division; divisions that have permeated ni-Vanuatu society even post-independence. Rampant alienation of land from traditional owners and communities also occurred under the joint administration of the Condominium, which provided the legal machinery to process such claims on behalf of the settlers (Bresnihan & Woodward, 2002; Rodman, 1987; Van Trease, 1995). Rawlings (2002) found, for instance, that by 1972 a white minority compromising a mere 3% of the total population were in possession of one third of the territory's land mass.

Approaching this threshold in the late 1960s, coordinated political movements calling for independence gained momentum, principally in response to this large-scale European land alienation. Arguably the two most prominent independence movements, while similar in the primary motive of reclaiming customary land and reviving traditional way of life, were divided along Francophone and Anglophone lines. Putting aside battles regarding the lingua franca, the Francophone-dominated party of ‘Nagriamel’ led by Jimmy Stevens and the Anglophone-dominated ‘New Hebrides National Party’ (later renamed ‘Vanua’aku Pati’ or ‘Our Land Party’) led by Walter Lini, both invoked *kastom* in the pursuit of national sovereignty (Bolton, 2003; MacClancy, 1980). This revolutionised *kastom* beyond the pidgin language from which it derives – itself a by-product of the colonial experience – to an instrument of nationalism, and what Miles (1998, p. 71) has described as “a unifying element of national consciousness”.

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2.4 Post-Independence and the Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu

After achieving Independence in 1980 with little bloodshed, the ideology of *kastom* was enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu – particularly in relation to land ownership. The new constitution effectively abolished freehold title and, overnight, restored all land (apart from a very limited amount of public land) previously alienated during joint British and French colonial rule to “the indigenous custom owners and their descendants” (Government of Vanuatu, n.d., Article 73). All non-Indigenous people were obliged to either relinquish the deeds to their property/ies (with recompense for any improvements made) to the local customary owners, or to obtain renewed leases in order to continue to occupy or use it (Miles, 1998). As a result, 98% of all land in Vanuatu is held under customary tenure, which is accessed by 92% of all households in rural communities (where 75% of the population reside) and provides housing and nutrition for all but 5% (AusAID, 2008; Malvatumaauri National Council of Chiefs & Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2012).

As a result, Vanuatu has placed greater emphasis on customary land tenure systems in its constitution, legislation and the building of its national psyche since achieving independence in 1980 than any other island state in the world (Miles, 1998; Regenvanu, 2008; Rodman, 1995). As noted by Jolly (1992), all of the major symbols of the Republic of Vanuatu - including its name, coat of arms, its flag, and its anthem – draw attention to the timeless attachment of ni-Vanuatu to land and place.

Indeed, as Peter Taurokoto - a founding member of the Vanua’aku Pati, and himself a Lelepa Islander - described in a book launched in the year of Vanuatu's independence:

"Vanuatu" originates from a word commonly known in over one hundred Melanesian languages, meaning land. "Tu" indicates the existence of the "Vanua" or land which existed from time immemorial to the present and into the future. Thus Vanuatu means the islands, the people that existed, that still exist and will always exist. Long live the Republic of Vanuatu! (Taurokoto, 1980, p. 11)

This national ethos around the concept and ideal of both *kastom* and of *manples* (a condensation of person and place), along with the constitutional provisions related to land, have bestowed a tremendous amount of power and political agency to local landowning villagers and the values and practices associated with their various local customary laws. Thus, Vanuatu is paradoxically and somewhat remarkably, a country where systems of *kastom* and state exist in extraordinary parallel. However, the political and legal ambiguity and uncertainty plaguing the relationship between state law and local customary laws in Vanuatu is overall a source of great confusion, not only on the ground in local communities but also within government and the legal profession (Care, 2001;
Regenvanu, 2008). For instance, during a week-long workshop in July 2009 in the Lelema community funded through a World Heritage Centre International Assistance grant, many landowning villagers publicly expressed a view that is widely held inside and outside the community: that it is extremely unclear as to how their customary law articulates with state law, and vice versa, and which holds the greater influence in certain contexts.

Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that Vanuatu is immensely linguistically and culturally heterogeneous and, as a result, does not have a single dominant or codified system of custom or customary law (Farran, 2002). The formal state regime co-exists (on occasion, turbulenty) with a multitude of informal traditional systems of economy, law, governance, judiciary and land tenure which differ from island to island and even village to village. Under such circumstances the national market economy exists alongside multiple local variations of kastom ekonomi / traditional economy, and national state legislature exists alongside all manner of locally and regionally discrete traditional collective judiciaries (or vilej kots / village courts) (Forsyth, 2009; Regenvanu, 2009; Regenvanu & Geismar, 2011). Each and every local individual village’s custom and customary law is, in effect and to varying degrees, interacting and contending with the state’s written constitution and parliamentary legislation in addition to the provisions of any ratified international conventions (Farran, 2010).

One consequence of this national-local political and legal precariousness together with the weakness of the state generally, is that local villagers in Vanuatu are, in effect, completely sovereign over their own lands. Another consequence of this broad recognition of local sovereignty is that powers commonly perceived as intrinsic to the state - such as the ability to impose or enforce restrictions on land-use for the purposes of World Heritage conservation - are radically curtailed. Instead of a central government bureaucracy administering and controlling land-use planning and development, local landowning villagers have the power to swap, trade, plunder, develop, cultivate, or whatever else they see fit to do with their land, without obvious state interference. Their decisions and actions are final and they often feel very little obligation or duty to the state (Kalotiti, et al., 2009). Despite ratifying the World Heritage Convention, the Government of Vanuatu has so far been unable to guarantee the protection of the only World Heritage area within its own territorial boundaries, CRMD. This has led Cox et al. (2007, p. iii) to call Vanuatu ‘the unfinished state’, for “apart from primary schools and first aid posts, most ni-Vanuatu have little contact with the state”. Miles (1998, p. 187) expresses a similar sentiment: “[f]or autonomous garden-plot growers throughout much of the archipelago the government of the sovereign Republic of Vanuatu will continue to mean little more than the politics of Port Vila”.
In contrast to other parts of the world, the ongoing maintenance of any development and conservation initiative within ni-Vanuatu communities can only be sustainably achieved if it is in accordance with the wishes of local landowners and their communities. Those responsible for their ongoing management (such as the LWHC in the case of CRMD World Heritage) must always be responsive and adaptive, not only to change in internal community politics, but also the shifting global-local needs, desires and influences of individuals, families and the community at large. As the Vice-Chair of a recently established community committee for the development of CRMD’s World Heritage Bungalows (Tupirou) recently commented during a committee meeting:

*Projek we yumi stap wok long hem naoia yumi mas tekem tingting blong yumi I go festaem, I go bihaen, I go long saed, I go long saed. Yumi stap long middle, blong yumi stadi long evri samting. Taem we yumi getap wetem be evri samting I ko wan. / In order to manage our project effectively we must cast our awareness forward, backward and either side of us. We are in the middle, from where we can study everything. When the bungalows then become fully operational everything will fall into place.* (Max Kalsong, Tupirou Committee Meeting, August 2011).

### 2.5 Salem Graon / Land Sale

Despite the prominence of local-level power and agency in Vanuatu, local practices, beliefs and values broadly associated with the holding, controlling and transferring customary land are increasingly under challenge from a state-sanctioned system of land leasing. Simo (2010, p. 42) has referred to it as the systematic “de-customisation of land in Vanuatu”. While it is not possible for customary land to be alienated outright (only Indigenous citizens can hold freehold title), the registering and leasing of customary land is permitted. There are several pieces of legislation that are concerned with the leasing of land, the most prominent and applicable of which is the Land Leases Act 1981, which permits leases of up to 75 years (the life of a coconut tree) to foreigners. The tenuous dichotomy at present in Vanuatu between, as Rawlings (2002) states, the written *loa blong waet man* / white man’s law of Government and the diverse and fluid *kastom blong ol manples* / custom of the people of the place is not only leading to confusion and uncertainty, but also to wide-scale and long-term land alienation. Local customary landowners are not afforded adequate protection when leasing their land to (often unscrupulous) foreigners and entering the formal system.

The Government of Vanuatu must consent to all lease transactions to foreigners. Once the pen hits paper, so to speak, and leases are registered and signed, the land comes under the control of national legislation (Farran & Paterson, 2004) and is administered by the government rather than by
landowners and chiefs at the community-level. There are estimated to be approximately 13,815 registered leases in Vanuatu, covering 1,141.6 square kilometres of land, and covering 9.5% of Vanuatu’s total land area (Scott, Stefanova, Naupa, & Vurobaravu, 2012). While the independence constitution definitively protects local customary land tenure systems, successive governments have failed to legislate, institutionalise or enforce adequate national land laws in order to ensure fairer land lease dealings (Haccius, 2011). As Lunnay et al. (2007, p. ii) assert, "[t]he twenty-six years after independence were marked not by land policy development, but by land policy decline". Since independence, the frequency and scale of land disputes and overall contention surrounding land ownership in Vanuatu has increased. There is considerable backlog in the courts – many cases, dating back to Independence in 1980, are still pending.

The leasing of customary land has led to substantial growth in the real estate industry, which is perpetuating a particularly pervasive and sinister form of land alienation in Vanuatu, marginalising ni-Vanuatu from their primary life-source, cultural asset and leverage in the cash economy (Simo, 2008). Foreign speculators and real estate agencies (often Australians or New Zealanders) are rushing to snap up relatively cheap waterfront blocks from uninformed and cash poor landowning villagers, to be subdivided into multiple smaller plots and on-sold for considerable profit (Rawlings, 2002; Simo, 2010; Slatter, 2006). Taking advantage of local-level uncertainty, misunderstandings and vulnerabilities generally with regard to their legal status and economic situation, these foreign investors often intimidate villagers and their communities into submitting to their demands:

I remember that time on the very first day Transpacific [real estate company] came out. They brought some food out like twisties, biscuits, breads, wine, beer. He brought them out at this time. Cigarette, kava… (Chief Murmur, Mangaliliu village, personal communication, January 2009)

In what at the time was the most detailed field enquiry available into contemporary customary land issues at a grassroots level in Vanuatu, Douglas Kalotiti and I collated all of our extensive research into land-lease negotiations, the surveying and registration of customary land, the creation of leasehold titles, and the various intentions and activities of foreign investors and companies to put together a report on ‘land sales’ within the CRMD buffer zone for the World Bank’s Jastis Blong Evriwan / Justice for the Poor program in Vanuatu (Kalotiti, et al., 2009). The findings of our research are still one of the few sources of detailed and accurate information regarding land leasing in CRMD by the Lelema community. I will discuss the methodologies of this research and of the broader thesis in the following section, but for now I refer to these findings to reveal the extent and nature of land leasing within CRMD.
Since the first instances of land leasing by the Lelema community began in 2002 (Peter, 2009), at least thirty-one customary landowners have leased their (buffer zone) land to foreign investors for the maximum period of seven-five years (see Figure 10 for an indicative map obtained from the Department of Lands in May 2009 of all titles affecting CRMD). Lease premiums are often less than a third of the total property worth\(^7\) and the only recurrent payment to the landowner is the annual rent that - as many landowners and their families are beginning to find - does not supplant the subsistence value of such land (average annual rent paid by expatriates to customary landowners in the buffer zone is 42,919 Vatu, or approximately AUD450). An additional seven customary landowners have established leasehold title within their immediate family whereby, for example, a father surveys and registers his land then leases it to his son for a small annual rent (average of only 2,000 Vatu or roughly AUD22, which is often only token and not paid) and no lease premium. There are several reasons why a family may decide to take such measures and enter the formal state land tenure system: in an attempt to secure their family’s claim to a piece of land; use of the property as collateral to obtain a loan; or simply to allow a more educated sibling to formally negotiate a transfer or selling of the title to an expatriate investor. All of which, significantly, signals a dramatic move away from long-standing customary rules, laws and economies of land, and poses new and complex global-local challenges and dilemmas for the managers of World Heritage at CRMD at the nexus of conservation and development, the LWHC.

\(^7\) The average ‘total property worth’ has been deduced from several informal conversations with real estate agents and private investors during the course of my involvement at CRMD.
The great majority of traditional landowners in the Lelema region who have leased land did not have copies of full lease agreements at the time of signing and were not subsequently issued with a personal copy. The handful who were in possession of their lease agreements could neither read nor understand the ‘strong’ or technical English in which it was written. At a series of general community meetings and workshops in both Mangaliliu and Lelepa it was claimed by several community leaders
that when negotiating lease agreements with foreign investors, landowners only looked at the amount that they would be paid upfront as a premium. Lease conditions and other aspects of their contract were never assessed. Others were uninformed that lease agreements are legally binding. Some landowners have clearly learned from their experience and sharing stories with other community members, about their subsequent sense of dispossession and alienation of customary lands. Their families retain few or no rights to the leased land and premiums have long since disappeared.

Yet as a sales manager from a prominent Australian-owned and -managed real estate agency based in Port Vila commented: “we have up to 10 landowners per week from all over Vanuatu entering our office here in Port Vila asking us - some pleading or begging us - to help them sell their land leases” (personal communication, October 2008). The immediate payment of comparatively large sums of money or assets (such as cars or TVs) in village terms to customary landowners by often unscrupulous foreigners for lease contracts continues to prove irresistible for many villagers living in conditions of cash poverty. Enhancing ways that ni-Vanuatu can participate in economic development, particularly in the form of one of the country’s primary industries, tourism, while at the same time preserving their full status and rights as customary landowners is therefore a key motivation and focus of this thesis, as well as the CRMD World Heritage project overall.

2.6 Contemporary Village Lifeworlds

While there is little prospect of change in its status as a ‘Least Developed Country’ in the near future, Vanuatu is one of the fastest growing economies within the Pacific. Within the last five years or more Vanuatu has experienced strong and sustained foreign investment primarily in the industries of real estate, tourism, agriculture and construction. It is also one of the highest per-capita foreign aid recipients within the region (AusAID, 2009) and, for better or worse, acceded to the World Trade Organisation in August 2012 (World Trade Organisation, 2013). Macro-economic indicators such as the Gross Domestic Product (or GDP), however, are not an accurate measure of the quality and standards of life in Vanuatu for reasons discussed in detail in Chapter 4. In a clear case of economic growth not translating into economic equity, only a small minority of ni-Vanuatu are able to access or take advantage of these recent economic gains, as expatriates continue to be the main beneficiaries of business development in Vanuatu (Slatter, 2006; Wittersheim, 2011-12). As of 2011, Vanuatu's Gross National Income (or GNI) per capita was $2,870, which is only marginally better than other

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8 Wallis (2010) provides a compelling analysis into the pros and cons of the World Trade Organisation accession process in several Pacific island countries including Vanuatu. The findings of Wallis’s study essentially show that the costs of membership outweigh the benefits for small island developing states.
countries suffering from acute poverty such as Cote d'Ivoire ($1,100) and the Republic of Congo ($2,270) (The World Bank, 2013). The vast majority of Vanuatu’s population - currently almost at 260,000 with an average annual population growth of 2.3% - resides in rural village communities. Due to the distances between the islands and the unreliable and expensive nature of most transport, rural communities are often very isolated from urban centres. As a result, people in rural areas are also less likely to send their children to school, less likely to be employed in salary-earning work, and have less access to basic medical care. By far the greatest source of household income across the country, as defined by the 2009 Vanuatu national census, is the sale of fish, crops or handicrafts (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009a, 2013). As little as a quarter of the population actively participate in the expatriate-dominated cash or market economy, with fewer than 20% of ni-Vanuatu owning bank accounts (Asian Development Bank, 2012; Gay, 2009).

Similar to other independent Melanesian states labelled as either less-developed or least-developed, Vanuatu does not experience the kind of extreme poverty that is so synonymous with other developing countries around the world. While materially most ni-Vanuatu and Melanesians generally are considered ‘cash poor’, few live in poverty; for example, 77% of ni-Vanuatu never miss or reduce their meals for lack of food (Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs & Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2012). Rather, most live fulfilled and contented lives within local and nationally conceived traditional cultural systems in what has been termed ‘subsistence affluence’ (Cox, et al., 2007; Miles, 1998; Sillitoe, 2010). As further indication of this, despite being in the bottom third of the world’s economies, in 2006 the New Economics Foundation’s deemed Vanuatu the ‘Happiest Country in the World’ as measured by subjective well-being, life expectancy, and ecological footprint (New Economics Foundation, 2012).

Like most other rural and semi-rural communities in Vanuatu, village life within Lelema is still largely dominated by, and dependent on, traditional subsistence farming and fishing. Most villagers (who have not sold their land) have very few modern-day possessions and still live in houses constructed using coconut leaves, bamboo and other plant material. However, the rapid expansion of the Port Vila township and recent infrastructure projects such as the construction of the Efate ring-road in 2009 - shortening a very bumpy 40–50 minute journey from the Lelema community to Port Vila to a 15-20 minute smooth ride - has resulted in major changes to village life. Prior to the 1970s Lelema was largely a self-sufficient community in terms of food production, with very limited need, or

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9 GNI per capita is a calculation of the purchasing power parity (PPP) of each inhabitant of a country. It is represented by international dollars that have the same purchasing power as $USD.
opportunity, to make money. Since this time, there have been increased pressures and greater opportunities to earn a cash income. Today, the Lelema community is well within the bounds of monetisation, and villagers now have the ability to make money, attend schools and have basic medical care (Tarisesei & Novaczek, 2005).

However, these modest benefits of becoming increasingly part of the peri-urbanised community are being nullified by unsustainable land leasing activity. There are numerous small community stoas / shops and nakamals / kava bars and other family and community business initiatives scattered throughout the Lelema community upon which families depend for paying these education and medical services. With the increasing loss of families’ ability to catch or grow their own food on their own land, compounded by a rapidly growing population¹⁰, the risk of these initiatives failing (whether it be caused by poor returns or a downturn in the national economy) and people then going hungry or without shelter is growing. In a survey of 108 buffer zone landowners and their families from both Mangaliliu and Lelepa drawn up and conducted by myself and the LWHC in May 2009 (methodologies for collecting this data are detailed in the following section), over 80% of respondents stated that there will not be enough land in the future. Within what is referred to as the kastom ekonomi / traditional or subsistence economy, there is always the garen / garden or the solwota / sea for adequate sustenance, but the loss of more and more land to foreign real estate agencies and private investors is putting this critical safety-net at dire risk.

“Mi wan mi wantem developem nomo” / “I want to develop my own land” is another statement expressed by the majority of respondents to the buffer zone surveys, and is a sentiment that is raised consistently within Managliliu and Lelepa island community meetings. This statement is linked to wider and growing calls from within Vanuatu to utilise kastom as the basis for both contemporary development and conservation activities (Hickey, 2006; Johannes, 2002; Regenvanu, 2009; Regenvanu & Geismar, 2011). Kastom is fluid and ever-changing, however. While it is still framed by many as it was during the independence movement, that is, as an oppositional force against everything identified as coming from the outside (Bolton, 2003), it has also taken on new meaning as a neo-traditional concept less bound by static external-internal/global-local dualisms and dichotomies (Eriksen, 2007a; Rio & Hviding, 2011; Rousseau & Taylor, 2012; Taylor, 2008; White, 2007). For Sahlins (2000), the grassroots-level legitimacy, flexibility and adaptation evident within contemporary Melanesian lifeworlds more broadly, is embodied by the term develop-man (a creolisation of the English word, ‘development’); a form of cultural persistence that suggests “the strongest continuity may consist in the logic of the cultural change” (p. 419).

¹⁰ The 2009 National Population and Housing census data shows the population of Lelepa island increased by 20% between 1999 and 2009 (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009b)
This section has established the historical and contemporary context for CRMD World Heritage. It has demonstrated that current social-cultural changes and transformations occurring within ni-Vanuatu communities including Lelema, are simply the most recent adaptations and manifestations since people first settled the archipelago some 3,500 years ago. Following the LWHC and the Lelema community on their way to negotiating more desirable and appropriate forms and models of heritage protection and tourism enterprise in this thesis, reveals that the constantly shifting global-local intersections of contemporary village lifeworlds are more complicated and complex than is often portrayed.

3. Methodological Notes

The approach and construction of this thesis did not involve typical research timelines, processes or methods. I did not go out into ‘the field’ as a researcher and conduct a series of interviews or engage in participant observation per se. My primary objective and commitment throughout all of my CRMD engagements has never been one of passive observation or research, but to actively participate in promoting and fostering locally desirable development and conservation outcomes, as I understood them, through the rubric of World Heritage. There is no position from which I can analyse the intricacies of the CRMD project that does not place me within it, either as a volunteer (both as an AYAD in Vanuatu, and upon return to Australia continuing to help with grant writing, correspondence and general advocacy within the IAG) or as a paid consultant travelling back to Vanuatu for short periods. I did maintain a personal diary throughout my AYAD posting with the intention of using it within this thesis. But by far the majority of material collated and analysed in the process of writing this thesis has come from the informal and formal conversations, interviews, community and focus group meetings, surveys and questionnaires that I have conducted both individually and collaboratively with the LWHC from my multiple positionalities (see Table 2 for a list of my former and present positions at CRMD). In Chapter 5 I analyse the nature of international development volunteering (IDV) involvement, and the active participation and collaboration of outsiders generally, in the CRMD World Heritage project more closely. But for now, the key point I wish to make in this section is that my journey into, and ongoing role with, CRMD has always been primarily as an actor and activist.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member, Chief Roi Mata's Domain International Advocacy Group</td>
<td>Provide strategic technical and financial support and general advocacy for CRMD and the Lelema community.</td>
<td>Jul 2009 – ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant, Stepwise Heritage and Tourism Pty Ltd.</td>
<td>Developed and conducted a community-wide skills audit with the Tupriou Bungalows Committee.</td>
<td>Aug 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Former and present positions at CRMD and my role associated with each of them.

Methodologically, therefore, this thesis - with its basis in my various development worker or activist positions - is heavily aligned and comparable with what Mosse (2005) has referred to as ‘ethnography from within’, Wood (1998) calls ‘participant comprehension’ and Gastel and Nuijten (2005) describe as ‘participant ethnography’. Utilising what Morris (2006) describes as ‘critical proximity’, Byrne (2013) demonstrates the advantages of humanities scholars embracing intimacy and closeness with their subject matter, rather than striving for the usual ‘critical distance’ from it. Similarly, and specifically from within Vanuatu, Bolton (2003) conveys the positive nature of her experience in terms of participant engagement rather than participant observation. Indeed, many international development volunteers who have worked in Vanuatu have gone on to write about their experiences in an academic context, or use their established collaborative in-country relationships to conduct further research in a variety of areas (Jolly, 2011). Ethnography and research generally tends to engage only in the passive observation of the social and cultural circumstances of a community or group, avoiding actively assisting with locally desired changes to it (Bolton, 2003; Byrne, 2013; Laws, Harper, & Marcus, 2003). Much like my experience at CRMD, Bolton (2003, p.xv) goes on to express her own experience: “I, on the other hand, participated in community life in Vanuatu generally, and especially in Ambae, with the express objective of making changes”.

There are difficulties, however, associated with the writing-up of these changes from the position of actor. It is difficult if not in many ways impossible to take a step back, and as best as one can, keep an objectifying distance to assess the circumstances of what are undeniably highly personalised and influenced events and situations (Heron, 2005; Rose, 1997). As Kondrat (1999, p. 464) explains, “[t]he self is ineluctably insider not only to his or her own immediate ‘worlds of meaning’ but also to the larger social world accomplished together with others”. For this reason, this section describes how I went about collecting data, and the methods I employed to critically self-reflect on my
experiences from the multiple positions I have held, and continue to hold, in relation to CRMD (for further and deeper methodological critique, particularly in regard to the personal and ethical dilemmas of ‘doing development’, see Chapter 5). To describe how I went about collecting and interpreting every single piece of information that I sought or was given while serving as an AYAD and since, however, would be well beyond the scope of this thesis. Through community meetings and informal group conversations alone, I have indirectly and directly interacted with the vast majority of Lelema community members, all of whom have influenced my understandings.

Ultimately, there can be very little lasting effect or materialisation of any change if there is not a strong desire, endorsement and support for it at the community level. Scheyvens (2003) extends this argument to development fieldwork generally, stating that local developing communities regularly resist research agendas by withholding or censoring information, for example. In this section I also describe the nature and depth of my relationship to the peoples and places of CRMD, and show that while I understand the indelible influence and impact of my involvement on the thinking and actions of many in the Lelema community, no one was ever passive in the process of articulating or enacting World Heritage. At times it would be difficult to know how others in the community felt: for instance, they would let me or the LWHC know in a roundabout or indirect way that the project was steering the wrong course, or that the methods that I (both individually and collaboratively with the LWHC) had employed to promote awareness or attempt to get consensus on an issue were “no stret” / “not appropriate”. These indirect means of communicating displeasure and dissent would include avoiding me in person or evading the topic while in conversation until such time that I had worked it out myself; although mostly LWHC members would let me know before this point. At other times community grievances would be blatantly obvious: such as the time when the small toilet block that I used near my traditional house in Mangaliliu was padlocked and items inside were broken with the message that the Roi Mata Cultural Tour was not providing sufficient benefits to enough community members. On the question of method, these indirect and direct objections would disturb my impressions and understandings, forcing me to rethink and reanalyse issues or situations. This process of critical self-reflection affirms my belief that my account here is reasonably well-founded.

Throughout this thesis, and my critical examination of the global-local nexus of community heritage conservation and tourism development associated with CRMD World Heritage, I hope it is apparent that all of my experiences from my variety of capacities at CRMD offer a rare profundity. Rather than viewing my engagement as an IDV and consultant as disadvantageous to the research process and outcomes, I strongly believe that turning a self-critical lens onto my position as actor and agent within the project allows me, as Mosse (2005, p. 11) also advocates, to ‘speak from within’, and analyse the inner circuitry of the CRMD project which would otherwise be inaccessible. The sheer
amount of material alone could never have been collated, let alone even accessed, without my status and contribution as Kal Mele (the development worker and activist) within the Lelema community. As Mosse (2011) more recently points out, the complimentary roles of active participation and critical analysis provide a strong empirical basis for development studies broadly.

In terms of ethics, my position as an insider to the project has allowed me the opportunity, indeed the duty, to ‘give back’ to my participants rather than simply extracting information and taxing the already limited time and resources of local villagers. My time as an AYAD in particular has provided me with a locally valued avenue and basis (while taking into account the challenges and dilemmas I discuss in Chapter 5) to provide mutual and shared benefits for the Lelema community. Moreover, it allowed me the opportunity over a long period of time to explain my research (albeit at a very early stage) in more depth to core stakeholders such as the LWHC than would otherwise have been possible.

3.1 Coming to Chief Roi Mata’s Domain

My focus over the last 10 years has been on the simultaneous development of theoretical understanding and practical experience in the fields of community development, heritage management and tourism. During my undergraduate studies, I volunteered and worked within each of these fields across much of Southern Africa (for six months in 2003) and India (for five months in 2005). I also spent extended periods of time in Far Western NSW during 2004, completing a final year research project on an Indigenous tour guide training program at Wilcannia. These experiences, along with my degree in environmental management and tourism, led me to enrol in an honours research project. My honours research into poverty alleviation through tourism involved residing in a central Australian Aboriginal community, Titjikala, for one month in 2006 (Trau, 2006). The findings of this research were published in the 2nd edition of McCool and Moisey’s edited volume, ‘Tourism, Recreation and Sustainability: Linking Culture and the Environment’ (Trau & Bushell, 2008).

I commenced my PhD candidature in March 2007. My initial research was focused on the joint management of protected areas in Australia, that is, where Aboriginal communities and Commonwealth or State governments jointly represent and manage national parks including those inscribed on the World Heritage list. I was invited to investigate the challenges and issues of joint management broadly by the traditional owners of two national parks, Booderee and Mutawintji. However, for various reasons, the research was heavily delayed. At the start of 2008 I still had no indication when I might be able to begin conducting fieldwork at either park.
When an email forwarded by my supervisor, Robyn Bushell, arrived in my inbox in February 2008 advertising a 12-month AYAD position in Vanuatu as Project Coordinator of Sustainable Cultural Tourism and World Heritage at CRMD, it was opportune timing. Although initially quite wary of this shift in focus of my doctoral research - not to mention my life (leaving my chickens, goats, bees and cow) to live in Vanuatu for a year - I quickly chose to apply and was lucky enough to be offered the position shortly after. The main objectives of my AYAD position were to assist the LWHC under my host organisation, the VKS, with the management and protection of the newly inscribed CRMD World Heritage area and the development of the associated community tourism enterprise, Roi Mata Cultural Tours. One year and five months since officially beginning my doctoral research, I deferred for a period of 12 months (between July 2008 and July 2009) and set off for Vanuatu.

3.2 Being the Activist: ‘Doing Development’

The day after I first arrived in Vanuatu as an AYAD, on the 8 July 2008, CRMD was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. From that day, until I returned to Australia on the 11 July 2009, I had the privilege of becoming a central part of an incredibly worthwhile cause and embracing community. Indeed, the Lelema community - and in particular those that became my local family, the LWHC - have a very special and enduring place in my heart. I mention this because, above all else, this thesis has been forged through my relationship with the peoples and places associated with CRMD. A relationship that began as an AYAD living in Mangaliliu village with my local host family (Papa Topie and Mama Thelma), working hand-in-hand with the LWHC and the VKS as their national support organisation, then continued upon my return to Australia as one of several volunteers and consultants in the IAG.
Most of my days as an AYAD would start before dawn and then go well beyond dusk. The issues, pressures and expectations felt as immense as they were diverse. Sweaty, exhausted, unkept and often walking or scootering (on what my ni-Vanuatu colleagues called my ‘rabis moto’ / “decrepit scooter”) at blistering pace along the roads and back alleys of Port Vila often at least triple the pace of the average pedestrian or motorist more strictly adhering to ‘Vanuatu time’. Always by my side was my local counterpart, friend and brother, and the stem of everything World Heritage at CRMD, the late Douglas ‘Fonu’ Kalotiti. Douglas was first and foremost man Lelepa / a person of Lelepa island. Among his many credentials and affiliations, he was founding Chairperson of the L.WHC, President of the VKS Men’s Fieldworker program, and Vice-Chairman of the Lelema Council of Chiefs. His personal and family associations with the place of Roi Mata’s burial, Retoka Island, one of the three
core sites of the World Heritage property, was especially profound. He would often passionately remark of his depth of connection to Retoka, as well as the two other sites associated with Roi Mata’s life and death within the World Heritage property, Mangaas and Fels Cave: “Mele mi rili konekted wetem saets ia” / “Kal Mele I am so connected to these sites”. I make special mention of Douglas to emphasise that even since his untimely passing in April 2011 his presence is still and will always be ubiquitous within CRMD and therefore also this thesis, not to mention my life.

Figure 12: Douglas and I having a quick breakfast before heading off to a Lelepa community meeting in January 2009. Douglas was managing two phone calls at once, one of which was to an Australian journalist from ABC’s 7.30 Report who did a story on an illegal real estate development in the buffer zone (Ritchie, 2009).

As alluded to earlier in this section, within this thesis I draw on a range of methods, most of which (aside from my personal diary) were not engaged for the express purpose of my doctoral research. Rather, they were part of my own and the LWHC’s combined efforts to manage the World Heritage area and Roi Mata Cultural Tours. Most of the information that I have used in the production of this thesis derives from my time as an AYAD. However, I have also utilised information collected through two separate consultancies, for the Justice for the Poor program and Stepwise Heritage and Tourism Pty Ltd, as well as a volunteer on the IAG. The methods that I have primarily utilised as sources throughout the thesis run across all of these positions that I have broadly labelled here as ‘doing development’. In the remainder of this sub-section, then, I provide a brief explanation of
these key sources conducted in both oral and written Bislama: the buffer zone landowner surveys, Mangaliliu and Lelepa community meetings, LWHC meetings and informal one-on-one and group conversations.

The buffer zone landowner surveys were conducted over a two month period (May-June 2009) as part of ‘CRMD Buffer Zone Land-Use Planning and Heritage Management Project’ led by the LWHC, with the help of the VKS, using funding from the World Heritage Centre’s International Assistance program. Over a series of meetings the LWHC and I discussed the content and design of the survey, the issues and sensitivities associated with conducting the survey and the strategies to deal with them. The main objective of the survey was to attain a greater understanding of the thoughts and intentions of individual customary landowners and their families with regard to land-use and development within the buffer zone. Each member of the LWHC was allocated a select group of households within the two communities (Mangaliliu and Lelepa Island) to survey. The total number of surveys completed was 108 – 50 from Mangaliliu and 58 from Lelepa. This is less than the total number of landowners in the buffer zone (approximately 200), because in some cases families with two or more landowners insisted on completing only one survey together. Every effort was then made to encourage every landowner within these small family ‘focus groups’ to voice their opinions. All comments were noted by the LWHC member acting as group interviewer and survey questions were directed to all individuals present. Due to the high rate of illiteracy, most notably among the elderly, in many cases LWHC members would carry out structured interviews using the survey so as not to exclude any landowner. Interviewee responses were recorded by the committee member and then read aloud to ensure validity.

Mangaliliu and Lelepa Island community meetings are held regularly, and are typically organised and chaired by the respective community’s Council of Chiefs. Combined community meetings also take place, called for by the Lelema Council of Chiefs, and are held alternately in both Mangaliliu and Lelepa. Most community meetings are organised in advance, others are called for on the day. All of them begin with the blowing of the bubu shell, which signals that the chiefs have called and are about to commence a meeting. Meetings have on occasion been called specifically to discuss matters to do with World Heritage, but mostly they are a forum for airing and solving a whole range of community and family issues and disputes at the village level. Most people within Lelema admit that disputes are more often than not described and adjudicated fairly and transparently by the chiefs, in front of the

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11 During some community meetings, however, the local language Nafsan would be used. In these instances other community members (usually LWHC members) would translate key points into Bislama for me.
12 In a legal sense, and mainly with regard to land disputes and subsequent adjudications, community meetings are also referred to as vilej kots / village courts, a local-level judicial system based on kastom (Forsyth, 2009; Kalotiti, et al., 2009).
community and in a way that the community understands. In informal conversations and unstructured interviews conducted as part of a short-term consultancy contract for the Justice for the Poor program that I shared equally with Douglas Kalotiti, people of Lelema overwhelmingly expressed that they understand and respect the proceedings and the decisions made at community meetings by the Council of Chiefs. Two pictures of different community meetings are displayed as Figure 13.

Figure 13: Top Left: Speaking at a combined community meeting held on Lelepa island organised by the Lelema Council of Chiefs, January 2009. Bottom Right: Douglas Kalotiti disseminating recently collated leasehold title information at a Mangaliliu community meeting organised by the Mangaliliu Council of Chiefs, May 2009.
LWHC meetings are typically held on a monthly basis. They are called by the chair and are held alternately at Mangaliliu and Lelepa Island. Occasionally when the situation warranted, there would be two meetings called in the same month in order to discuss urgent matters that needed immediate attention. I attended every LWHC meeting over the year I was present as an AYAD. Each one would go long into the evening, and even then there would usually be several items on the agenda that we would not have adequately addressed. I recall (and several remarks in my personal diary affirm) often wishing that we would have the whole day just to discuss problems and issues related to Roi Mata Cultural Tours, or the bookkeeping and budgeting of the LWHC, for example. Alas, we never did, and meetings would always cover a wide range of areas to do with the overall management of the World Heritage area, including buffer zone developments, site maintenance and all manner of other development and conservation related efforts and initiatives affected by or under the umbrella of CRMD World Heritage. At the first LWHC meeting I attended in August 2008 I explained to the committee that I was in the middle of a PhD and that with their blessing and permission I would like to shift topics and case study areas to CRMD World Heritage. I also asked if I could record all of the LWHC meetings I attended in order to use the recordings as a source of data in my thesis. They agreed, and over the course of the entire year I was there as an AYAD I was able to explain to them in greater detail what I was intending to do for my doctorate and also, more importantly, what they wanted me to do in terms of the messages that I should convey and the topics that I should address.

Informal one-on-one and group conversations with the majority of the Lelema community since my AYAD posting have been without doubt the most prolific and underlying source of information used in the production of this thesis. While not explicitly evident in the number of direct quotes used, for example, this rich source of information comes through my personal diary and my process of self-reflection (also discussed in Chapter 5). Living within Mangaliliu village and regularly travelling the 15 minute boat ride to Lelepa island (even paddling it in a traditional Lelema canoe, see Figure 14), I would very rarely have a quiet moment. There was always someone or a group of people that would call out to me while I was walking along the village paths for storian / a chat. Other times, in between meetings or workshops, I would find myself chatting without pause to chiefs, church leaders, men, women, teenagers, kids and just generally everyone from the community present. There were also countless targeted one-on-one conversations with people, such as the over 100 community members casually employed by Roi Mata Cultural Tours. Lekaka, the LWHC financial manager, would often need to speak with mamas who prepared lunch for the tourists or kastom performers who depict the time of Roi Mata for tourists, for example, about pay discrepancies or delays. I would accompany her and help with explanations, but often these discussions like most others generally in the community would very quickly broaden out to problems and issues associated with CRMD World Heritage.
3.3 Leaving Vanuatu and Arriving Back in Australia

It has taken me the better part of the past three years to come to terms with not being on the ground in Vanuatu; not being in the Lelema community and helping with the everyday decisions and actions of the LWHC. So much so in fact that upon arriving back in Australia just over 12 months since originally boarding my flight to Vanuatu as a newly anointed AYAD, I had the strange and overwhelming feeling of being an outsider in my own home country. As I stepped out from the arrival gates at Sydney airport, I felt as though my very being and purpose had been stripped away from me. As I walked towards my loved ones that I had so missed, I was numb to what was going on around me. My consciousness was still back in Vanuatu, refusing to be without the people and places that I had come to so love and call home. Over the ensuing months, imagining I was still there or on the way back very soon, was the only way I could console myself from not actually being there and still helping in my previous capacity as an AYAD. So deep had been my connection; so strong had been my commitment.
I have only just begun to accept that my role in the project has shifted and changed, and that I am no longer one of the key pivot points or core drivers on the ground. My ongoing role has become more of an advisor and advocate through more considered and in-depth analysis, which was a luxury I simply could not afford while in the village and constantly juggling and attempting to address the multitude of day-to-day ups and downs, and ebbs and flows, that so typified my work and that of the LWHC. Indeed, it is only since engaging in this critical self-reflection upon arriving back in Australia and recommencing my PhD, that I realised it was erroneous to simplify the situation as if we were all in, and everything could be reduced to, a dualistic global-local struggle between the Lelema community and the outside world.

My continued involvement with the project and the regular contact I maintain with the LWHC members and others in the Lelema community since returning to Australia, has also provided the opportunity to clarify my interpretation and analysis of events and experiences. On many occasions I have made lengthy phone calls to LWHC members in order to corroborate conclusions that I have drawn through my process of self-reflection. Moreover, whenever LWHC members had the opportunity to travel to Australia for conferences or workshops, it would provide the opportunity to have informal face-to-face conversations about CRMD World Heritage\(^\text{13}\). This enabled me to further substantiate the contentions of this thesis, and also to update and amend my understandings of the various problems and issues facing CRMD World Heritage.

This thesis represents an attempt to reflect on, and make sense of, the CRMD experience from my multiple positionalities at the global-local nexus of development and conservation in Vanuatu. It is hoped that, by critically analysing events and experiences as they have played out at CRMD since my involvement began as an AYAD, other local communities within or surrounding World Heritage sites elsewhere in the country, region and more widely in the developing world, can learn from and better respond to their own comparable challenges and opportunities on their respective paths to developing their economies and conserving their heritage. Moreover, that my findings may inform the interconnected global missions of increasing the number of World Heritage sites in under-represented regions, as expressed in UNESCO’s Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2013b); alleviating the conditions of poverty through sustainable tourism development, as advocated by the UN-World Tourism Organisation in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals (UN-World Tourism Organisation, 2013);

\(^{13}\) For instance, on his way to a UNESCO workshop on sustainable tourism at World Heritage sites in Magao, China in late September 2009, Douglas Kalotiti had a stop over in Sydney and stayed with me at my house for four days. On another occasion I secured funding for Douglas and a group of 10 Lelema kastom performers to come over to Australia and take part in 'The Dreaming Festival' at Woodford in June 2010.
and recognising the rights of Indigenous peoples worldwide, as enshrined in the UN’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN, 2008).

4. Introducing the Published Papers: Wol Heritij, Bafa Zon, Turisim, Volantia

As noted in section 1, this thesis is made up of four discrete yet unified and tightly interwoven streams of inquiry, represented by the published papers that make up Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. Within this final section of the Introduction, the order of the four published papers and the specific literary areas that each one speaks to and builds on is outlined. I also describe how the central theme of the thesis introduced within this chapter - moving beyond binaries - progresses across the four papers, helping them to fit together as a coherent, gradually unfolding thesis at the global-local nexus of heritage conservation and tourism development in Vanuatu. Taken together, these four papers begin to present a more nuanced and complicated picture of CRMD World Heritage.

As depicted in Bislama in the title of this section, the four papers correspond to the following broad themes: Wol Heritij / World Heritage, bafa zon / buffer zones, turisim / tourism, and volantia / volunteering. While these are direct translations from their English counterparts - building on discussions in the first section of this chapter about the merging of the global and the local - as they appear and are articulated locally in Bislama, they are effectively reframed and recast as glocal entities. I write them in this way here, and for the most part throughout the published papers, to point out that as these terms (along with the ideas and practices associated with them) enter the local lexicon and become glocal, they gain greater appropriateness and efficacy within contemporary village life.

These four lines of inquiry draw out an important range of specific, practical ways in which World Heritage at CRMD can maintain its relevance and importance – both as an imagined entity and a tangible reality - to the lives of the Lelema villagers that are collectively the custodians of it. They also unpack and explore some of the new ways in which heritage and tourism scholars, practitioners and policy-makers alike can begin to view and conceptualise UNESCO World Heritage as it operates in the context of Vanuatu and the Pacific islands more broadly. Below, I briefly introduce how each one will do so.

Chapter 2: contributes to the emerging field of critical heritage studies, and more specifically that of World Heritage globalisation, by highlighting the need for much greater
appreciation and examination of the more complex and ambiguous bottom-up local forces at work, beyond those of more conventional top-down global perspectives.

Chapter 3: is situated specifically within the relatively small opus of literature that focuses on World Heritage buffer zones. As a result, I draw on the protected area literature more broadly regarding the theory and praxis of buffering to show how local contestation over the CRMD buffer zone has led to a complete rethinking of its shape and form.

Chapter 4: is pitched at the intersection of tourism and development literatures, which in recent times has been examined under the rubric of Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT). This chapter utilises the experience of Roi Mata Cultural Tours in an attempt to fundamentally (re)interpret globalised tourism-based approaches to poverty alleviation in terms of notions that reflect on-ground Lelema realities.

Chapter 5: contributes to critical development literature, specifically in relation to international development volunteering (IDV). As the primary nature of international support to CRMD has been in the form of IDV, I critically examine the nature and significance of participation and collaboration by volunteers (and outsiders, generally) in the CRMD World Heritage project.

This mode of ‘thesis as a series of papers’14 demands the highest of research standards, although it also allows for greater flexibility in research design. A thesis as a series of papers is particularly suited to research investigations that tackle a number of related though potentially separate empirical or conceptual issues (Dowling, Gorman-Murray, Power, & Luzia, 2012). In light of the multi- and inter-disciplinary nature of this thesis, the arguments put forward here are presented with their most potency and effectiveness by separating them into distinct papers.

There is a foreword at the beginning of each chapter that contains a published paper. This effectively links the chapter to the previous chapter as well as situating it within the thesis as a whole. The four papers appear exactly as they were accepted for publication. In order to enhance the readability of the overall thesis document, however, I have streamlined the various formatting and referencing styles.

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14 Also referred to as ‘Thesis by Publication’ in other Australian Universities such as Curtin and Monash University.
PART II: THE PUBLISHED PAPERS
CHAPTER 2: THE GLOCALISATION OF WORLD HERITAGE AT CHIEF ROI MATA’S DOMAIN, VANUATU

Publication Details


Foreword

This chapter builds on the central theme of this thesis broadly established within the introduction chapter - moving beyond binaries - by illustrating how globalisation and localisation in the context of World Heritage at CRMD combine to produce the process of glocalisation. Through this chapter, I extend the theory of glocalisation into the emerging field of critical heritage studies by arguing that at CRMD the most useful global-local elements of both development and conservation are being amalgamated to form Lelema’s own distinct brand of World Heritage. I argue that UNESCO World Heritage - and the protection of CRMD’s OUV - is at its strongest within the Lelema community when it is viewed and understood locally as being representative of their effectively hybridised needs and desires. This chapter therefore lays the groundwork and provides the footings for the construction of the main contention of this thesis: that, like everything within the contemporary Lelema village lifeworld, World Heritage at CRMD is becoming ‘glocal’.

Abstract

This paper calls into question prevailing arguments within the critical heritage literature that present World Heritage globalisation as an inherently top-down process that overrides locality. Drawing on the author’s ongoing engagement with the Indigenous landowning community of Vanuatu’s first World Heritage site, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain (CRMD), it is demonstrated that global and local forces are in actuality being interpreted and applied simultaneously in a process characteristic of
glocalisation. World Heritage at CRMD (or Wol Heritij, as it is rendered in Vanuatu’s national language) is increasingly understood and valued at the village level because of the extent to which it can be transitioned and transformed into new glocalised ideas and expressions which place local economic development opportunities at the heart of World Heritage management. Given that it is the local Indigenous community – and not the state – that is primarily responsible for World Heritage in Vanuatu, it is vital that this glocalised brand of CRMD’s Wol Heritij (with all of its complexity, fluidity and unpredictability) is seriously recognised and adequately supported by the heritage scholarship and UNESCO.

1. Introduction

There is a tendency within the growing critical heritage literature to view the globalisation of World Heritage as a process that overrides locality. The prevailing argument is that a singular Western elite set of cultural values associated with heritage preservation is being naturalised under the guise of universality. Drawing on the author’s ongoing engagement with the Indigenous landowning community of Vanuatu’s first World Heritage site – Chief Roi Mata’s Domain (CRMD) – this paper seeks to unsettle this narrative by arguing that global and local forces are in actuality being interpreted and applied simultaneously. The author’s involvement at CRMD began as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development on a 12 month posting between July 2008 and July 2009, and has since continued as one of several volunteers on the CRMD International Advisory Group.

That the globalised heritage discourse is increasingly affecting local cultural expressions and heritage management measures is beyond doubt. However, as exemplified here through the experience of CRMD, equally beyond doubt is that World Heritage (or Wol Heritij, as it is rendered in Bislama, the national language of the Republic of Vanuatu) is continually and reciprocally constructed and reconstructed through intercultural encounters across the global-local interface, and that this is simply part and parcel of the ways in which villagers are negotiating the complicated and multifaceted (and somewhat contradictory to the outsider) push and pulls of contemporary hybrid village life. The global and local are in a constant state of merging, a process of cultural borrowing, that is characterised here as glocalisation (Robertson, 1995).

The principal contention of this paper is that World Heritage is increasingly understood and valued at the local level, not so much because (as the prevailing discourse suggests) the local community has absorbed the global doctrine of World Heritage and its central emphasis on heritage protection, but
because of the extent to which it can be glocalised; combining ideas and expressions of both development and conservation in terms of the local idiom, *Wol Heritij*. Due to the extraordinary constitutional power bestowed upon local customary landowners in Vanuatu post-independence – which has made local landowning villagers largely self-autonomous political agents, beyond that of the nation-state and the state's apparatus – the ongoing maintenance of World Heritage at CRMD can only be sustainably achieved under rules set collectively (and at times tumultuously) at the village level. The landowning communities of CRMD are actively selecting and adapting global and local principles of both economic development and heritage conservation according to their local aspirations, interests and knowledge. Like every exogenous project, agent and force relating to development or conservation, the landowning chiefs and communities of CRMD are actively employing UNESCO’s World Heritage to express and forge new glocalised cultural identities.

These emergent glocalised cultural identities principally manifest via the tremendous agency local villagers have and exert over what is effectively their own sovereign lands. They are exemplified in the relationship that community members hold with World Heritage at CRMD, which is concurrently defined and recognised by its current and future local economic potential as well as its role in serving to augment protection of the local cultural values and places associated with Roi Mata. Rather than viewing UNESCO World Heritage and local cultural values as uncompromisingly incompatible, community members’ interaction with their heritage is, as ever, gaining importance in new ways and typified by continuous change and adaptation. A key focus of the ensuing discussion, therefore, is the complex and often ambiguous ways in which the resultant local form of *Wol Heritij* is mediated by these highly distinct, and just as discursive, local terms. The question of whether there is scope and willingness by UNESCO and the international heritage profession to accept and support these aberrant but efficacious local level divergences from and co-options of World Heritage is also considered.

### 2. Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Area

CRMD is a continuing cultural landscape located in northwest Efate, Vanuatu. The Domain consists of three main cultural sites – the former settlement of Mangaas, Fels Cave and Artok Island – that are all associated with the life and death of the paramount chief Roi Mata (see Figures 15 and 16). Roi Mata is renowned for shaping the social and political landscape of the central islands of Vanuatu during the 16th century through the institution of a system of matrilineal *naflak* totems (Wilson, 2006). In July 2008, the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of CRMD was recognised by the 32nd
Meeting of the World Heritage Committee and the property was inscribed on the World Heritage list. CRMD is one of just two properties (together with the Kuk Early Agricultural site in Papua New Guinea) from an independent Melanesian state that has been inscribed on the World Heritage list for its cultural values (UNESCO, 2012a).

Figure 15: Map of Vanuatu locating Chief Roi Mata’s Domain in northwest Efate (Republic of Vanuatu, 2007, p. 11).
The Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu vests the ownership of all land with “the indigenous custom owners and their descendants” (Government of Vanuatu, n.d., Article 73). The World Heritage property and surrounding buffer zone of CRMD are, as a result, collectively held under customary tenure by the village communities of Mangaliliu and Lelepa island (known together as ‘Lelema’). The Lelema community has a combined population of approximately 700 people, most of
whom rely heavily on a traditional or subsistence economy for their day-to-day needs. Given Lelema’s close proximity to the nation’s capital Port Vila, however, villages are well within the influence of monetisation. While opportunities to make money do exist, wages for ni-Vanuatu are typically extremely low: a family on one working parent’s income barely suffices to pay for a single child’s school fees. It is not surprising therefore that a key prerequisite to the Lelema community’s World Heritage nomination bid was the ability to use this international recognition to provide alternative and sustainable income generating activities, principally through community-based forms of tourism (Trau, 2012; Wilson, Ballard, & Kalotiti, 2011). This is the primary responsibility of the Lelema World Heritage Committee (LWHC), the overarching community-based management body appointed by Lelema chiefs and community to manage the heritage and tourism components of CRMD.

3. Beyond World Heritage Globalisation

Concerns have long been professed that the spread of a singular Eurocentric approach to archaeological heritage management is a perpetuation of western imperialism (see Byrne, 1991; Murray & White, 1981; Sullivan, 1993; Trigger, 1981, 1984; Trigger & Glover, 1981). More recently, a growing number of interdisciplinary commentaries and critiques have come to scrutinise what is now more broadly regarded as the globalisation of Western modes of heritage management and protection, with particular attention directed toward the practices, programmes and procedures of UNESCO World Heritage. By far the most dominant contention within this emerging area of inquiry – and one that continues to underpin much of the contemporary debate – is that UNESCO and its system of World Heritage is a top-down, powerful, even pervasive, agent of cultural globalisation. The works of several critical heritage scholars serve as an indication of the general tone and direction of this debate, as well as its propensity to overlook the ability of the local to adapt and persevere.

Byrne (1995, 2008) asserts that non-western heritages are managed and preserved worldwide according to Western elitist values and needs, which are spread through coercive universalisms and familiar internationalisms. Logan (2001), Turtinen (2000) and Wall and Black (2004) claim that there is an inherent and incompatible conflict between local traditional cultural identities and global universal heritage values within the UNESCO World Heritage system. UNESCO World Heritage criteria and grammar, so their arguments go, likely result in the standardisation and homogenisation of heritage management, and as Logan (2001, p. 51) states more generally, “replace local cultures with a bland, global culture”. Smith (2006, 2007) has put forward the popular thesis of the
‘authorised heritage discourse’. Smith argues that the globalising authorised heritage discourse subversively validates and legitimises Western heritage theory and praxis, and by so doing undermines, even expunges, alternate subaltern notions of heritage. Waterton (2005, 2010) builds on the work of Smith through rigorous critical discourse analysis which reifies the implicit and explicit power of the authorised heritage discourse by proving that ways of seeing and using heritage in Britain are heavily sanitised via the language, ideology and power of the heritage ‘experts’.

The preeminence of local customary tenure in Vanuatu is the overwhelming basis for what is described here as the glocalisation of World Heritage at CRMD. It is also where this paper diverges from, and goes further than, these prevailing arguments of the critical heritage scholarship. Much of the critical heritage literature assumes that World Heritage is principally the issue and responsibility of states, and not local Indigenous communities. As Douglas Kalotiti unequivocally affirms below, in countries such as Vanuatu where the majority of land is held under customary tenure, it is in fact local traditional governance and judicial structures that hold greater power and legitimacy than those of the state (see also Cox et al., 2007; Forsyth, 2009). Just as being integrated into the global capitalist system does not equate to being dominated by capitalist logic (Escobar, 2001; Friedman & Friedman, 2008; Sahlins, 2000), the inscription of CRMD onto the World Heritage list has not resulted in the Lelema community being dominated by UNESCO’s heritage system.

Unlike all other World Heritage sites where Government is at the top of the hierarchy, at Chief Roi Mata’s Domain the communities are at the top. The government is nothing. (Douglas Kalotiti, late chair of the LWHC, personal communication, 2 October 2009)

Many globalisation theorists (for example Dirlik, 1999; Swyngedouw, 1997; Tsing, 2000, 2005) have long questioned the usefulness of framing globalisation as a dualism between the global and the local, predictably spruiking familiar macro-narratives of static oppositions between the universal-particular, homogeneity-heterogeneity and modern-traditional etc. Notwithstanding prevailing arguments, the critical heritage scholarship is beginning to recognise the importance of moving beyond heritage framed by global-local dualisms. Winter (2011) and Winter and Daly (2012) have argued that the global and local are ‘mutually constitutive’ and urged heritage scholars to move away from often casual and overly simplistic polarisations of the global and local. While elsewhere Logan (2002, 2008) has acknowledged that heritage protection does not solely depend on global and national interventions. Logan has instead referred to the emergence of a ‘counter-tendency’, or the potential synchronicity of globalisation and localisation through the increased involvement of local Indigenous communities within all aspects of the management of World Heritage.
However, as the highly common response from a CMRD buffer zone landowner serves to illustrate, World Heritage management in Vanuatu goes far beyond the concession by external agents (whether the state or international parties) to “take into account” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 4) or “understand, respect, encourage and accommodate” (UNESCO, 2004, p. 9) local Indigenous communities within existing heritage processes and frameworks. Local community control of land is the starting point for World Heritage management planning in Vanuatu, and for that matter, throughout all of independent Melanesia (Ballard & Wilson, 2012). It is therefore essential that heritage scholars and practitioners move beyond current understandings of World Heritage as a purely globalising force and attempt to unpack and comprehend some of the more powerful localising forces also at work. This means acknowledging World Heritage as an inherently glocalised entity; or in other words, as much a global force for heritage protection, as it is a local force for economic development, and vice versa. The reality is that World Heritage status is being drawn upon in support of a range of locally important conservation and development ideas and initiatives at CRMD, such as buffer zone conservation measures congruent with locally acceptable land-use practices and cultural heritage tourism calibrated in an attempt to maximise improvements to community living standards (for further information, see Trau 2012; Trau, Ballard & Wilson 2012). So while it is irrefutable that Western heritage theory and praxis pervades the adoption of or labelling as ‘World Heritage’, it is equally true that the Lelema communities are actively using, even manipulating, UNESCO’s global agenda to further their own interests and desires particularly in the form of increased economic development, though also somewhat ironically as a tool to revitalise *kastom* (a Bislama term diversely referring to local customary principles and practices). This is precisely where arguments of binary global-local oppositions by those who Askew (2010, p. 32) rather frankly refers to as “self-appointed representatives of the ‘subaltern voice’” tend to oversimplify or obscure these more complicated and difficult to comprehend on-ground realities.

4. Translating and Transforming World Heritage

_It’s us, we are World Heritage now_ (CRMD buffer zone landowner, Mangaliliu community meeting, June 2009)
In the same way that global products undergo transformations in local marketplaces – in what Classen and Howes (1996) and Kraidy (2005) among others refer to as the creolisation or hybridisation of consumer goods – World Heritage is being creatively and resourcefully translated and transformed by the Lelema community into something which they value and can use (as the quote above suggests). This is principally being achieved by actively employing the branding of important aspects of their *kastom* as World Heritage to increase local tourism development. The following discussion demonstrates that for UNESCO’s World Heritage to wholly transition into CRMD’s *Wol Heritij*, and be accepted and respected by the Lelema communities into the long-term, development and conservation must be integrated and complementary features of locally appropriate models of World Heritage management (however counterintuitive and contradictory this may appear to the international heritage profession). This is not to say that the Lelema communities do not value their *kastom* and the international recognition of its OUV, but rather that for most community members income generation to support schooling, health and transportation, is the overwhelming priority. That is, decisions taken by communities, living in cash poverty, to become part of the World Heritage system are strategic and pragmatic, driven by the need for enhanced standards of living as much as they are conservation-driven, despite the intent and purpose of the World Heritage Convention. As an illustration of the closely interwoven and glocalised nature of tourism development and cultural heritage conservation in particular at CRMD, Figure 17 shows youth from the Lelema community learning how to be tour guides to (hopefully) earn income for themselves and their families while also reviving the stories of and their associations with Roi Mata.
The reconciling of capitalist forms of economic development within models of World Heritage protection – fundamentally intertwining tourism activities in particular into the heart of the local form of CRMD’s Wol Heritij – is at odds, however, with UNESCO’s universal ideal of World Heritage. As Huxley (1947), and more recently Hall (2011), has affirmed, the very legitimacy of UNESCO is predicated on its role as the defender of the world’s cultural and natural heritage in the face of likely contamination, even ruining, through the imposition of industrial capitalist globalisation. This ties into, and is also due in part, to a long-standing dualism more generally within the heritage scholarship between heritage preservation and tourism development (for further discussion see, for example, Hughes & Carlsen, 2010; Staiff, 2003; Winter, 2010). Tourtellot (2007) is a case in point, having stated that tourism is the ‘biggest threat and benefactor’ of World Heritage sites.

While the imposition of development restrictions from either an international agency or the nation-state at CRMD has very little chance of being accepted locally, the act of not directly financially or technically supporting key development opportunities and aspirations of customary landowners has a similar effect in that very few Lelema owned and managed tourism businesses without external
assistance have achieved even short-term revenue consistency (Trau, 2012). The majority of the tour guides in Figure 17, for example, were and are still unable to find consistent paid work within CRMD, with some even taking up work in the foreign owned and managed hotels of Port Vila under extremely poor employment conditions. While UNESCO has clearly recognised the importance of World Heritage status to sustainable development and poverty alleviation opportunities particularly in Africa (UNESCO, 2002), strictly speaking, both the published guidelines (UNESCO, 2012b) and relevant articles within the World Heritage Convention (articles 13.1, 13.2 and 19 to 26) concerning UNESCO’s international assistance clearly state that funds are to be used to help state parties protect the world cultural or natural heritage, not support development projects or initiatives. As Bushell and Staiff (2012) attest, while development and poverty are clearly on UNESCO’s public agenda, the language employed by UNESCO suggests a lack of straightforwardness in terms of meaning and usage. This surely adds further credence to Breen’s (2007, p. 355) call for World Heritage “to become embedded within the international development framework where it can become an advocacy voice for community and for poverty alleviation”.

For many World Heritage sites around the world this may be less of an issue considering the state’s clear jurisdiction over its territory. But given the supremacy of local customary tenure in Vanuatu, and Lelema villagers’ increasing need for supplementary cash income to pay for basic services such as schooling and health care, and other necessities such as clothing and kerosene, anything short of the provision of tourism development at levels desired by CRMD customary landowners makes UNESCO’s World Heritage quite simply untenable. Several corroborative studies from Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands have confirmed that local customary landowners prefer to talk about Western development know-how and their own potential pathways to economic prosperity rather than muse over international forms and methods of heritage conservation and resource management (Filer, 2004; Foale, 2001; Ketan, 1998; Stewart & Strathern, 1998). Experience from CRMD has repeatedly demonstrated that customary landowners unsatisfied with the lack of development or externally driven development restrictions will either simply disregard, or in some severe cases even threaten to expunge, World Heritage. In the past when this has occurred, it has precipitated moves by some customary landowners toward unsustainable land-uses (in terms of both local livelihoods and environs) such as foreign-owned and managed commercial residential developments (Trau et al., 2012; Wilson et al., 2011).

It would be disingenuous to portray the Lelema community as a single and uniform voice, however. While many Lelema customary landowners value World Heritage as an instrument to provide increased heritage protection and sustainable land-use planning particularly given the rise of new modern foreign-led development threats, for many others, equally, it is only as strong as the
perception of its development potential. Herein lays the crux of the glocalisation process at CRMD: that it is as much about the interaction between local and global as it is about the encroachment of the global on the local. As discussed earlier, and in what some influential theorists such as Escobar (2001) and Sahlins (2000) regard as an affront to local power and agency, too often the critical heritage literature simply ignores the former and is concerned only with the latter.

The translation and transformation of World Heritage at CRMD to a more glocalised entity – where a mixture of locally desired and sustainable land-use practices and developments associated with the community’s interaction with their heritage exist – is extremely important to not only individual landowners but also the LWHC. In addition to ensuring their own families have sufficient crops in the ground to both feed themselves and earn a small income for education and health services, the LWHC must work with extremely limited resources to maintain and conciliate both UNESCO’s and CRMD’s idea of World Heritage within a highly porous global-local interface. This gives the LWHC the unenviable task of having to perpetually satisfy the demands of customary landowners over their World Heritage land on the one hand, while also having to continually justify management decisions and actions against strictly defined international criterion and guidelines on the other. The result being that most often the LWHC struggles to simultaneously uphold the expectations of either customary landowners or UNESCO.

Across the entire less-developed world, vastly inadequate resourcing from the State in addition to the highly intermittent and patchy nature of international aid funding means that Indigenous heritage managers such as the LWHC are routinely faced with having to simultaneously make World Heritage management financially viable while also reducing poverty at the village level (Reddy, 2009; Timothy & Prideaux, 2004). Regardless therefore of international will and desires, one could argue that a certain level of World Heritage glocalisation – that is, the merging of tourism and heritage into one and the same through local manifestations of World Heritage – is happening across the less-developed world to various degrees in order to maintain World Heritage, not to mention community economic viability. At CRMD these processes and pressures are only intensified due to the extraordinary political and legal status of local customary landowners, which highlights the imperative of better understanding, supporting and sustaining what is referred to here as the Wol Heriti brand.
5. The Imperative of the *Wol Heritij* Brand

*Wol Heritij* bem i wan gudjala samting we i save karem inkam i kam long komuniti. Be yufala we yufala i stap long komiti i mas mekem plante turis i kam / World Heritage is a good thing that can bring income to the community. But those that belong to the [Lelema World Heritage] committee must make sure tourist visitation increases to high-levels. (Mangaliliu community member, community meeting, February 2010)

It is now clearly apparent that the ongoing maintenance of World Heritage at CRMD can only be sustainably achieved at the local level under rules set collectively by the customary landowners, and that these rules are influenced by both global and local forces and agents in a rather tumultuous process characterised here as glocalisation. It is therefore imperative, as the quote above insinuates, to incorporate and then maintain what is essentially the glocalised brand of CRMD’s *Wol Heritij*, or the merging of ideas and expressions of both development and conservation, within local conceptions of World Heritage. As long as World Heritage at CRMD is understood locally as having assumed its local form of *Wol Heritij*, then the customary landowners of CRMD World Heritage property and buffer zone are accommodating of UNESCO’s external claim to their land as having OUV and of being World Heritage. The word ‘brand’ is used here to not only illustrate a tangible representation or sign value of Lelema’s unique localness (see Figure 18), but also begin to depict a more complicated conceptual self-representation of the Lelema community’s glocality as imagined and constructed using locally recognisable and useful elements of UNESCO’s World Heritage.
Since the nomination process and the resulting inscription of CRMD, it is Wol Heritij that is becoming increasingly important to many customary landowners of CRMD; with this glocalised brand of World Heritage now associated with numerous small but critical projects and initiatives within the Lelema community from infrastructure projects such as water securitisation to livelihood initiatives through a variety of tourism associated enterprises such as craft selling, tours, picnic and camping areas and bungalow accommodation. While all of these projects and initiatives are at very early stages of development – many only just beginning to provide tangible benefits and doing so in a staggered and slow-moving manner (Trau, 2012) – it is the local perception of Wol Heritij’s ability to achieve these desired outcomes that is increasingly felt and articulated by customary landowners. It is this brand of World Heritage and its essential hope for a better future through increased economic development opportunities for the Lelema community that has been and will continue to be
imperative to maintain at CRMD. Brand maintenance is achieved through not only the provision of tangible benefits but also, due to the protracted nature of community development, by the LWHC constantly advocating within community meetings and other local forums the potential of CRMD’s Wol Heriti. and the need, therefore, to accommodate the rudiments of UNESCO’s World Heritage.

Although relatively small and staggered in terms of contribution, national and international subsidies of the community’s tourism business costs such as advertising and insurance has provided a lifeline to the LWHC in this regard. For many customary landowners, particularly those in the surrounding buffer zone, World Heritage only has relevance and use while it is a successful selling point and tourist-marketing tool. In other words, the community is confident (whether accurately or otherwise) about its ability to conserve the cultural landscape of CRMD, so UNESCO’s World Heritage is tolerated only as long as it sustains the local configuration of Wol Heriti. and is able to be mobilised freely by landowners to attract and enhance economic opportunities.

The Wol Heriti. brand must also be incredibly versatile and adaptable in order to maintain prominence within the community, consistently responding to the day-to-day ever-changing and non-constant global-local hybrid lifeworld of the Lelema villagers. Indeed, the sheer inevitability of ruptures, disagreements, even conflicts, at World Heritage sites collectively held under customary tenure such as CRMD – where each and every customary landowner is in effect the sovereign authority over his or her landholding – is constant. When measured against UNESCO’s operational guidelines and the World Heritage Convention, the glocalised brand of CRMD’s Wol Heriti. may therefore appear to be chaotic, in disorder and even occasionally on the verge of ruin. Blaser (2010, p. 2) has described such radical global-local differences as “ontological conflicts” that ultimately lead to the reshaping of the forces of modernity according to “the uniqueness of peoples’ experiences of place and self and in their rejection of visions that claim to be universal”. While Friedman (2002, p. 15) and Isar (2011, p. 50) respectively have described this process of appropriating Western products outside of Western cultural logic as the forging of “Melanesian contemporaneities” and “multiple modernities” based on global-local interrelations.

At CRMD this is all quite simply judged locally to be the essential nature of collectively owned and managed resources in all of its complexity, fluidity and unpredictability. This is not to say that international heritage scholarship, guidelines and conventions do not have a vital role to play in protecting World Heritage, but that the system and organisations within it must recognise the supreme power and agency of locality in countries such as Vanuatu and the unstoppable emergence of glocalised forms of Wol Heriti. that are a consequence. Borrowing from Appadurai’s (2000) concept of ‘grassroots globalisation’, or the critical analysis of globalisation from below, Robertson’s (2008) concept of ‘heritage from below’ is extremely pertinent here. Robertson (2008, p. 143)
describes it as “the recognition of the possibility of the expression of alternative forms of heritage that ‘work’ from below and within, conceived for, from and by local communities with minimal professional help from without”. The process of glocalisation at CRMD serves to slightly nuance this argument and to point out that while the local and national agents at CRMD are undoubtedly often facilitating the ‘local’ for the ‘global’, this by no means overrides or extinguishes local meanings, values and beliefs associated with their cultural heritage. The requisite of UNESCO and the heritage profession for lengthy and professionally written management documentation, for example, has had little affect on the LWHC or the Lelema community’s practice of managing their heritage via verbal commitments or handwritten reports or sketches in Bislama. In many ways, CRMD World Heritage is just another complex and subtle gameplay with external agents and actors in order to extort some economic benefit from an incredibly economically unequal world. Above all else, the glocalised brand of CRMD’s Wol Heritij has become just another important latching from which to leverage the Lelema community’s highly desired hybrid forms and expressions of development and modernity.

6. Conclusion

This paper has sought to develop a more critical and nuanced account of the discursive spaces of global-local interaction in the context of the inherently variable and fluid customary tenure regime of CRMD. In so doing, it contributes to the emerging field of critical heritage studies, and more specifically that of World Heritage globalisation, by highlighting the need for much greater appreciation and examination of the more complex and ambiguous bottom-up local forces at work, beyond that of simply top-down global perspectives. This has been by no means an attempt to debunk or discredit existing and prevailing arguments from within the critical heritage literature, but to illustrate how overemphasis on the global is often at the expense of the local, ignoring the critical role of Indigenous peoples as active agents in the processes of globalisation writ large. While globalisation is, as Bauman (1998, p. 1) states, “the intractable fate of the world, an irreversible process” equally unyielding (as the case of CRMD illustrates) is the ability and obstinacy of the local to creatively and resourcefully reconfigure their glocality in order to adapt and endure.

UNESCO World Heritage is just one of but numerous external brands, forces and agents that present the Lelema community with opportunities to further glocalise. By revealing the level and nature of World Heritage glocalisation taking place at CRMD it is hoped that this paper has brought attention to the urgent need for radical new ways of theorising and practicing heritage management in Melanesia. As others have variously advocated (Ballard & Wilson, 2012; Hay-Edie, 2004;
Robertson, 2008), this begins by acknowledging that ‘their reality’ (local Indigenous peoples) is of utmost importance for the protection of World Heritage and maintenance of OUV. Moreover, and perhaps more challenging for UNESCO and heritage scholarship, the maintenance and strength of the glocalised brand of CRMD’s Wol Heritage – with the innate amalgamation of global-local ideas and expressions of both development and conservation – must be viewed as intrinsic to sustainable models of World Heritage management. For if World Heritage is to be not only recognised and understood but also valued and protected in regions such as Melanesia, where properties are likely to be held under customary tenure, then it is vital that such naturally non-constant, unpredictable, unceasing, even occasionally unstable, reconfigurations of glocality be recognised, supported and sustained. In a practical sense, this can be broadly achieved by maintaining a mix of sustainable heritage-based financial revenue streams (from community-owned commercial activities and international aid and national government funding) as well as locally resilient and valued World Heritage governance structures and arrangements (such as that of LWHC and their real and emergent partnerships with industry and government).

7. Reference List


CHAPTER 3 – BAFA ZON: LOCALISING WORLD HERITAGE AT CHIEF ROI MATA’S DOMAIN, VANUATU

Publication Details


This paper is co-authored with two of my colleagues from the IAG. I made the decision to co-author this paper in recognition of Ballard and Wilson’s early involvement in the CRMD project, namely the successful nomination of CRMD to the World Heritage list. It is important to note, however, that I contributed to over 90% of the paper’s overall development in terms of the concept, data collection, analysis, and writing (see Appendix 1 for a signed ‘statement of contribution of others’).

Foreword

The previous chapter argued that Wol Heritij at CRMD is simultaneously an embodiment of both economic development (principally in the form of tourism) and heritage conservation. This chapter extends this argument to the CRMD buffer zone surrounding the World Heritage property, or as it is becoming known locally, the bafa zon. It picks apart and analyses more closely the convoluted process of World Heritage localisation at CRMD - introduced in sub-section 1.4 in the context of local community autonomy - which is most clearly exemplified in the design and implementation of the buffer zone.

The buffer zone at CRMD has been marred by conflict and contestation since the time of inscription. In a need to satisfy international standards of World Heritage buffering as well as protect the community from unscrupulous and unsustainable forms of development, the LWHC with the assistance of the VKS attempted to impose limits to, and restrictions on, development on all land within buffer zone. These were largely viewed as arbitrary and exogenous by many of the 200 or so
Lelema villagers who claim ownership over portion/s of land within the buffer zone – particularly those that had leased, or were in the process of leasing, their buffer zone land to foreign real estate companies and private investors for development.

This chapter traces these initial encounters between the LWHC and all of the some 200 affected buffer zone landowners immediately post-inscription. It closely analyses the new and emerging definitions, roles, forms and even boundaries of the buffer zone that have come under increasing debate in the community to the point where, as this chapter outlines, it is being rethought and remodeled locally as the 'bafa zon'. We look at the use and adoption of World Heritage concepts, and how they are largely by-products of contemporary community engagement with Roi Mata. We explore the bafa zon at CRMD in relation to the concepts of ‘raets’, ‘manples’ and ‘kastom’ as understood through the works of several scholars from Vanuatu including Rodman, Jolly and Taylor. This discussion, in conjunction with discussion throughout the entire chapter, proves that these concepts are as much about resistance to externalities as they are internalisations of them. Moreover, it helps to establish that similar to the Indigenous articulation of ‘Wol Heritij’ in the previous chapter, the ‘bafa zon’ at CRMD is fundamentally different to the ‘buffer zone’ as imagined by UNESCO. Taken together, chapters 2 and 3 put forward the central argument of this thesis: that the processes of globalisation and localisation are occurring simultaneously at CRMD.

Abstract

This paper critically examines local reactions and responses to the design and implementation of the buffer zone for a World Heritage property held under customary tenure, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain (CRMD) in the Republic of Vanuatu. The primary goal is to consider the apparent contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the highly dynamic and contested process of rendering the globalised theory and praxis of buffering in a local context. Our case study brings to light some of the ways in which this process has enabled the landowning community of CRMD to rethink, and begin to remake, the buffer zone as an entity that incorporates both development and conservation concepts under the terms of the local idiom of bafa zon. Internal and external voices compete for influence in determining the local form and further evolution of the bafa zon at CRMD, and the first phases of this contested process are charted here. By supporting locally valued and accepted buffering measures, it may prove possible to realise simultaneously the objectives of World Heritage conservation and local economic development.
Keywords

Buffer zones, World Heritage, customary tenure, community development, localisation, Vanuatu

1. Introduction

Vanuatu’s first World Heritage site, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain (CRMD) was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2008 as a continuing cultural landscape on the basis of criteria (iii), (v) and (vi) (Decision 32 COM 8B.27). This was in recognition of the enduring links between a sixteenth-century paramount chief, Roi Mata, the landscape of his chiefly domain, and the living local descendent community (Republic of Vanuatu, 2007). The central features of this landscape include Roi Mata’s residence, at Mangaas, on the mainland of Efate, the site of his death in Fels Cave on Lelepa island, and his burial with up to 300 retainers on Artok Island, which was subsequently declared forbidden or tapu, and abandoned for the following four centuries (Figures 19 and 20). An unusual feature of this site, acknowledged in the site’s statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), is the central role played in the conservation and management of that value by the local landowners, resident in the villages of Mangaliliu and Lelepa island and known collectively as the Lelema community (Wilson, Ballard, & Kalotiti, 2011; Ballard & Wilson 2012).
Drawing on our long-term engagement with the landowning community of CRMD, this paper critically examines the experience of conceptualising and implementing a World Heritage buffer zone held under customary tenure. Buffer zones are most commonly defined as those areas adjoining or surrounding a core area or zone, where various forms of development that are not detrimental to the values of the core area are permitted. Our primary objective is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the apparent contradictions and ambiguities underlying local reactions and responses to the globalised theory and praxis of buffering World Heritage. While the concept of World Heritage buffer zones has increasingly achieved high-level attention in recent years (see e.g.
UNESCO, 2009), understanding and critical analyses of the application of buffer zones particularly at the local community level are largely absent. The process of localisation exemplified here through the CMRD buffer zone offers insight both as an example of village-level cultural change and an avenue for understanding the complex social and economic contexts within which local communities operate. Our account of these processes is grounded in the experience of informal and formal conversations, focus groups, community meetings and household surveys in the Lelema community over the past eight years, since the World Heritage nomination process began in 2004. Several key questions are addressed here: How do the buffering strategies of UNESCO differ from those of the Lelema community? What are the local reactions and responses to these differences? And what are some of the ways in which global buffer zone theory and praxis are being rethought locally?
While the people, places and stories encompassed within the current buffer zone area are critical to the maintenance of the OUV as well as the local cultural values of the World Heritage property, the concept of the buffer zone is viewed locally as arbitrary and exogenous. The landowning villagers of CRMD are engaged in a process in which they are renegotiating and reworking the very notion of a buffer zone under the terms of the local idiom of bafa zon (as it is rendered in Bislama, the national
language of Vanuatu), through what Bainton (2010, p. 7) describes as a ‘creative synthesis’ between local and global discourses. While Western notions of buffering are incorporated into World Heritage nominations in countries such as Vanuatu, there has been significant translation and modification of the notion of the buffer zone at CRMD. However, this process of localisation is rarely simple, unitary or straightforward. There are a range of competing and often influential internal and external perspectives on how the CRMD buffer zone might be organised and managed. Through attention to the details of local reactions and responses to these perspectives, this paper seeks to initiate debate on the long-term viability and sustainability of World Heritage buffer zones in developing countries such as Vanuatu and other neighbouring independent Melanesian states.

2. Buffer Zones in Heritage Theory and Praxis

While the principle of buffering critical resources is not unique to Western heritage theory and praxis (DeBoer, 1981), the conceptual roots of the term ‘buffer zone’ are indelibly Western. The term ‘buffer zone’ was first incorporated into the design and management of protected natural areas by the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme launched in 1970 (Batisse, 1982; UNESCO, 1996), which signalled a shift away from exclusionary models of fortress conservation. From the 1980s, there was a proliferation in the range of buffering strategies that aimed to forge links between the needs of nature conservation and local economic development (Wells & Brandon, 1993; Adams et al., 2004; Roe & Elliot, 2010). The 1990s marked a turn toward a ‘new conservation’ that linked conservation and development goals and changed the emphasis of protected areas from the protection of nature alone, to the protection of nature through sustainable economic integration (Adams, 2004). Three related forms of what can broadly be defined as buffering strategies have subsequently emerged: community-based natural resource management, community-based conservation and integrated conservation and development projects (Naughton-Treves, Holland, & Brandon, 2005). The essential rationale – that conservation and development are mutually interdependent – is intrinsic to all of these forms of buffer zone.

Definitions and conceptions of buffer zones vary considerably in natural and cultural heritage conservation discourses; consequently, planners have little to guide them in the initial definition and implementation of buffer zones (Kozlowski & Vass-Bowen, 1997). Nonetheless, to synthesise discussion within the protected area literature more generally, buffer zones (also referred to as ‘multiple use’ or ‘transitional’ zones) are defined as areas of land adjacent to a core protected area (such as a park or reserve) demarcated for the dual purpose of maintaining the conservation values of
the core area, while also providing economic development opportunities to local communities (Neumann, 1997; Martino, 2001; Lynagh & Urich, 2002; Budhathoki, 2004; Stræde & Treue, 2006). More specifically in relation to World Heritage, the current Operational Guidelines (2011, Sec. II.F, Para. 104) state that “[f]or the purposes of effective protection of the nominated property, a buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the property”. Buffer zones are also referred to more generally within the World Heritage discourse as ‘zones of influence’, ‘areas of concern’ and even ‘neutral areas’ (UNESCO, 2009).

In his foreword to the UNESCO volume on ‘World Heritage Buffer Zones’, the former Director of the World Heritage Centre, Francesco Bandarin, states that “[b]uffer zones are an important tool for conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List” (Bandarin, 2009, p. 7). He goes on to point out that “[a]ll along the history of implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the protection of the ‘surroundings’ of the inscribed properties was considered an essential component of the conservation strategy, for cultural and natural sites alike” (p. 7). The positions on buffer zones adopted in this volume by the three advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee: International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, 2009), International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM, 2009) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2009), largely echo these sentiments.

Indeed, the use of buffer zones as a tool for the added protection of World Heritage properties has grown steadily in emphasis since the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention were first produced in 1977. Early appearances of the buffer zone concept in the Operational Guidelines state that they “may be applied where appropriate and feasible” (UNESCO, 1977, p. 10), and “should be foreseen and should be afforded the necessary protection” (UNESCO, 1980, p. 4). While buffer zones are not yet mandatory for World Heritage sites, the current Operational Guidelines recommend that “[w]here no buffer zone is proposed, the nomination must include a statement as to why a buffer zone is not required” (UNESCO, 2011, Sec. II.F, Para. 106, emphasis added). For World Heritage nominations, as for protected areas more generally, buffers of varying degree and definition are now increasingly either recommended or required by legislation, non-statutory policy and agreements, management plans and scientific literature worldwide (Kozlowski & Peterson, 2005).

The few critical studies of the implementation or praxis of World Heritage buffer zones appear to be limited to cases from the (Western) developed world (e.g. Foster & Linge, 2002; Jane, 2005), or from developing countries where the state has functioning (however limited) regulatory frameworks and
enforcement mechanisms for the protection of World Heritage (e.g. Gillespie 2009, 2012). Much of the prevailing international discourse on buffer zones originates from Western science-based approaches to the protection and management of natural areas under dominant government ownership or control. However, the adoption of this universal approach to the buffering of lived and fluid aspects of different local or Indigenous cultures across diverse political and administrative contexts worldwide is inherently precarious (ICOMOS, 2009). Gillespie’s (2012) recent analysis of the application of the buffer zone concept at Angkor confirms that standardised international approaches to buffering fail to enhance World Heritage property conservation. The World Heritage-listed Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras also demonstrate the importance of the local. Villalon (2012) has identified that it was only with the adaptation of western conservation principles by local government in conjunction with the local community that effective conservation measures have been achieved. Similarly, in the case of the continuing cultural landscape of CRMD, it is the local custodians of the stories, beliefs, practices that are interwoven within the landscape who substantially define the nature and the scope of the buffer zone. Roe, Regenvanu, Wadra and Araho (1994, pp. 128-129) concur, stating that “[b]ecause culture is defined by people living in the local communities, the input of local communities in the formulation and definition of all spheres of policymaking at all levels of administration is one of the most effective means for ensuring cultural conservation”.

Critically, however, in Vanuatu and other independent Melanesian states, power and control over both natural and cultural World Heritage management and protection resides with local communities, and not any form of central government, for two distinct reasons: (1) the majority of land is held under customary tenure systems, the sovereignty of which is recognised in national constitutions and (2) the state is chronically weak and largely absent from the day-to-day lives of rural villagers. Despite ratifying the World Heritage Convention, it is not clear that the governments of these Melanesian nations are able to guarantee the protection of World Heritage properties and their buffer zones within their own territorial boundaries. Instead, World Heritage areas in Melanesia rely on the continuing cooperation and support of rural landowning communities and individuals. In this context, state-based processes and mechanisms for the protection and management of World Heritage buffer zones are only effective when aligned with or augmenting existing local customary practices and provisions. The decisions of landowners (even where these involve input from outside agents such as loggers, miners, real estate agents or tour operators) are effectively sovereign, and the legislative or regulative armoury administered by the state has little effect without their consent (Ketan & Muke, 2001; Muke, Denham, & Genorupa, 2007; Kalotiti, Trau, Wilson, & Ballard, 2009).
Several case studies (Neumann, 1995, 1997, 2002; Heinen & Mehta, 2000; Ryan, 2008) have established that buffer zone demarcation tends to dilute local control over land-use and resources and increases the power of external stakeholders such as government, international non-government organisations (NGOs) or private capital investors. The works of Neumann (1995, 1997, 2002) in particular explicitly frame buffer zones in Tanzania and other African countries as neo-colonial land alienation implemented by international conservation NGOs and sanctioned by the state. Indeed, during the implementation of World Heritage management provisions at CRMD by community-appointed World Heritage managers, the buffer zone has been perceived by some local customary landowners as a World Heritage land grab – an area over which the government and UNESCO and local World Heritage managers have been seeking to impose restrictions on the development choices of individuals within the community (Kalotiti, 2011). However, – and this is where this article expands on previous buffer zone studies – there is more to this tension than a simple opposition between national or global logics of protection and systems of governance on the one hand, and the reaction of local interests.

3. Buffering CRMD

The wider buffer zone extends over almost the entire area of Chief Roi Mata’s original territory and that of his wider court of minor chiefs (certain areas along the margins of the original territory have been excised to reflect the practical realities of land by non-indigenous residents, and so as not to entirely encompass the lands of the Lelepa and Mangaliliu communities). (Republic of Vanuatu, 2007, p. 76)

In the context of a continuing cultural landscape, in which the livelihood of the resident community is integral to the conservation of the heritage values of the site, the appropriate form for a buffer zone must of necessity reflect ‘practical realities’ and leave room for the community to retain a strong sense of its own autonomy. As a requirement of nomination, the CRMD World Heritage property (otherwise known as the core area) and surrounding buffer zone are delineated by fixed boundaries (see Figures 19 and 20). During the early stages of the nomination process in 2004–2005, local landowning chiefs and community members agreed that the proposed World Heritage property boundary should encompass the three principal or core sites associated with the life and death of Chief Roi Mata – Mangas, Fels Cave and Artok Island – together with the triangle of seascape that linked these sites. All three locations have been the subject of local conservation strategies for the
past four centuries, and their inclusion within the core area made sense both in local understandings and in terms of the integrity of the site nomination.

The CRMD ‘buffer zone’ was defined on the basis that it served both as a ‘contextual landscape’ and as a ‘visual catchment’ for the World Heritage property. Narratives about Roi Mata are most commonly retold from the settlements of Mangaliliu and Lelepa, and often in view of Artok Island. The ‘visual catchment’ for CRMD thus included most of the areas from which Artok Island can be viewed, and much of the territory associated with the present-day community and corresponding to the former chiefly domain of Roi Mata, capturing much of the OUV of the property. For pragmatic reasons, a number of areas were then excised from the visual catchment, reflecting their long-term alienation from the community through leases to foreigner investors, some dating to the late-nineteenth century. The buffer zone thus encompassed most but not all of the area associated with Roi Mata and most but not all of the territory claimed and used for settlement or subsistence by the modern-day Lelepa and Mangaliliu communities.

The Advisory Body evaluation produced in 2008 by ICOMOS recommended that the World Heritage Committee defer the inscription of CRMD at its 32nd session. Among other issues, ICOMOS recommended that the buffer zone boundary be extended “to cover all of the view shed from Roi Mata’s grave”, and that the World Heritage property should be “protected from commercial leases” by including more of the Efate coastline (UNESCO, 2008, pp. 97–98). On behalf of their community, and reflecting the depth of feeling surrounding land in Vanuatu, the Lelema Council of Chiefs, which meets regularly to convene and discuss a whole range of village issues, strongly rejected this recommendation. The solution to this apparent impasse was to reconsider the way in which the relationship between the community, Artok Island and vision were conceived; rather than a site-based understanding which would insist on protection of the view from Artok, it was the view from the storytelling community across to Artok that lay at the heart of the values that required conservation. While the buffer zone has proved vital for the physical protection of the locales of Mangaas, Fels Cave and Artok Island, equally as important has been the way in which it has protected and sustained the integrity of the community and its field of vision towards Artok.

The critical agents of conservation at CRMD will always be members of the Lelema community, and particularly those individuals who choose to serve on the Lelema World Heritage Committee (or LWHC; until 2011, this committee was known as the World Heritage and Tourism Committee or WHTC). The LWHC is tasked by the Lelema Council of Chiefs with the day-to-day management of the conservation of the property, as well as the management of the community-owned and -staffed tourism enterprise, Roi Mata Cultural Tours (Trau, 2012a; Wilson, Ballard, Matanik, & Warry, 2012).
LWHC members have also played a crucial role in promoting World Heritage, and heritage conservation more generally, within the community, balancing the contest of desires within the community between swifter forms of income generation, such as land sales, and slower and more sustainable forms of benefit through heritage tourism.

Whereas the Western concept of ‘heritage’ (in the case of CRMD, represented by the World Heritage Property) can be interpreted – however tenuously – by the chiefs and customary landowners of CRMD via near equivalents in the local Lelepa language such as *laktan* / the stem of everything, and in Bislama as *kastom/fasen blong jumi* / our customs/ways, the LWHC was heavily reliant initially on international definitions and meanings of buffer zones to explain to the landowners and the community what exactly the buffer zone was and why it was needed. Through a process of community awareness workshops in both Mangaliliu and Lelepa villages, public presentations at other community events, church and meetings, individual surveys and interviews with 108 buffer zone landowners and their immediate families and the supply of translated copies of the 2008 CRMD Buffer Zone Management Plan to every household, the nomination team sought to present its understanding of UNESCO’s buffer zone requirements. However, community understandings and uptake of the concept took its own form.

4. The Buffer Zone Contested

The nature of the transition of the buffer zone concept from the interpretation of UNESCO World Heritage and its advisory bodies to the locally congruent form of *bafa zon* can be directly attributed to contemporary community contestation over land. Since European contact, customary tenure systems within CRMD, and indeed throughout Vanuatu, have undergone dramatic changes. Traditionally, decision-making with regard to land-use within the Lelema region was vested in the chiefs. Under this chiefly system, members of the community generally respected the opinions of ‘paramount’ chiefs. In an informal conversation with Trau, the LWHC chair Douglas Kalotiti remarked that the chiefs would say, for example, “You go and work on this land” or “You can make your garden on this plot of land” (personal communication, 6 July 2009). In this sense the land was held communally, even if individuals identified strongly with particular garden plots and household yards. Since independence in 1980, however, community members have increasingly asserted their rights to individual ownership of demarcated plots. This individualisation has opened the gates to piecemeal acquisition of substantial areas by foreign investors, particularly from about 2004. The immediate payment in cash or acquisition of assets (such as trucks, boats or televisions given directly to the
customary landowner by the investor in exchange for a long-term lease) has proved irresistible to many CRMD buffer zone landowners, as elsewhere in Vanuatu (Simo, 2005; Lunnay et al., 2007; Kalotiti et al., 2009; Scott, Stefanova, Naupa, & Vurobaravu, 2012). The overwhelming majority of Lelema landowners now express strongly held notions of individual land ownership (referring to land as “blong mi” / “mine”). The authority of the Lelema Council of Chiefs has been radically curtailed as a result of this increasing individualisation and commoditisation of land. The customary tenure regime of CRMD is now fundamentally different to that of the past, with new notions of individual land ownership precipitated primarily by land leasing activity:

\textit{Jif hemi no bos long wanwan kastom lanona / The chief is not the boss of individual customary landowners. (CRMD buffer zone landowner, Mangaliliu community meeting, February 2010)}

This is the context for the current contestation over land within the CRMD buffer zone, and for the process through which a more acceptable form of \textit{bafa zon} is emerging. On the one hand, there are those within the community who see the buffer zone as a force which might inspire or elicit communal approaches to land similar to those of the past, while on the other, there are those who want to continue to move towards individual land ownership in order to capitalise on the economic opportunities currently associated with land leasing. This difference of opinion should not be seen in terms of two distinct factions within the community, but rather two opposed tendencies to which the same individuals subscribe if different ways at different times and in different contexts. The implications for the CRMD buffer zone are complex, with some campaigning for the \textit{bafa zon} to stay closely aligned with UNESCO’s idea of buffering, and its primary function in protecting heritage values; for some, this approach has the additional attraction of slowing or even completely stopping the process of land leasing by individual landowners. Others advocate for the \textit{bafa zon} to be more inclusive and adaptive to all local needs and desires including land leasing – although in more sustainable manifestations. Then there are those within the community who continue to regard all forms of buffering as an attempt to impinge on and limit their constitutional rights as customary landowners – in particular, and in most cases, on their right to lease their individual parcels of land. On occasion, this position produces statements that directly challenge the very existence of the buffer zone:

\textit{Mi wantem bafa zon i finis / I want the buffer zone removed. (CRMD buffer zone landowner, Lelepa island, May 2009)}

Community contestation over the emergent form of the CRMD buffer zone – and the process of renegotiating and remodelling it in terms of the local idiom, \textit{bafa zon} – is rarely simple, unitary or
straightforward. Yet community-managed World Heritage and protected areas are often idealised at the international level as consolidated and widely sanctioned conservation spaces. At the local level, however, buffer zones and other protected areas are characterised by ever-fluctuating levels of contestation and conflict over suitable levels and forms of development and conservation (Van Helden, 1998; Hviding & Bayliss-Smith, 2000; Hviding, 2003; West, 2006). “Ol kutkutfala pipol blong mifala oli save talem yes te de no talem no tumoro” / “All of the good people of our community can say yes today and no tomorrow” (Douglas Kalotiti, in a letter to a Port Vila-based real estate agency, May 2009). As Kalotiti suggests, local views and stances on matters concerning land-use and ownership are subject to frequent and sometimes dramatic shifts, and community contestation over the configuration of the bafa zon is likely to persist well into the future.

Similar to the ways in which other Bislama terms such as manples / people of the place and kastom / custom or tradition have been, and continue to be, recruited for various and multiple political purposes in Vanuatu (Miles, 1998; Rodman, 1987, 1992; Jolly 1992), the CRMD bafa zon is being employed by a number of actors and agents as a tool to obtain greater political ownership and control over land. Rodman (1992) describes this construction and differentiation of place as a highly dynamic and contested social process whereby both competing and overlapping narratives are simultaneously grounded and represented. This notion of place construction is highly illustrative of the CRMD buffer zone and the perpetual contest of a range of different and changing views within the Lelema community on how the CRMD buffer zone should be organised and managed.

Communities are highly amorphous entities, and Ortner (1995, pp. 178–179) has highlighted the dangers of smoothing out ‘ambivalent complexity’ and sanitising our representations of community, describing this impulse as essentially romantic. Fernando (2003) takes this argument further by suggesting that romantic portrayals of Indigenous or local communities and Indigenous knowledge are often generated and exploited by donor agencies and non-government organisations for political and social capital gain. However, the experience of CRMD leads us to argue that the idea and status of the World Heritage buffer zone will always be mobilised and enacted to serve a range of internal and external interests – whether it is a foreign real estate company harnessing World Heritage status as a marketing tool for the promotion of their property portfolio, or the LWHC and a group of community members rallying against pro-leasing landowners within the community. Representations of community consensus – whether positively or negatively aligned with an issue such as the World heritage buffer zone – must always be treated as political statements themselves.
5. The Buffer Zone Rethought

The different ways in which the Lelema community has responded to globalisation, in the form of a World Heritage buffer zone, are inevitably complex and multifaceted. In many respects, they follow closely the ‘combined strategies’ identified by LiPuma (2001) in his study of the Maring community’s responses to external interventions in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea, and the ‘contemporary entanglements’ elucidated by Taylor (2008) in his contextual analysis of gender relations and rights in Luganville on the island of Espiritu Santo in Vanuatu. LiPuma (2001, p. 305) contends that, for the Maring, “[t]o capitulate would lead to an effacement of identity; to resist would condemn them to economic and political marginalization”. Instead, ‘combined strategies’ emerge which encompass aspects of both accommodation and self-creation. Similarly, Taylor (2008, p. 2) argues that the concept of human ‘rights’, or raets as articulated in Bislama, are the result of a “contemporary entanglement of indigenous and exogenous epistemologies and values”. It should be clear from the discussion of conditions at CRMD that such ‘combined strategies’ and ‘contemporary entanglements’ are not produced through a smooth and harmonious transitional process. Indeed, the locally driven process of translating the CRMD buffer zone into terms and forms more representative of local kastom continues to be contested within the Lelema community. In this section, we examine the distinct ways in which this contestation has led the Lelema community to rethink and begin to remake globalised World Heritage buffering strategies in terms of notions that reflect local realities.

Narratives of both development and conservation promulgated by external actors and agents in the context of the CRMD buffer zone – such as foreign-owned real estate companies or those promoting the World Heritage project – are regularly translated and employed by individuals and groups within the Lelema community and, in the process, localised. Informal conversations in August 2011 with several buffer zone landowners who are against the leasing of customary land reaffirmed this point, with all of them citing their support for the World Heritage buffer zone as one of the primary reasons for fighting against developman blong waet man or white man development in the region; mindful of our earlier observations on expressions of consensus as political statements, it should be added that none of these defenders of the buffer zone were opposed to development per se, and that their support of World Heritage remains inextricably linked to internal political contest within the community. Localisation is often marked by irony and contradiction, as at CRMD where the anti-leasing villagers are mobilising the globalised Western heritage notion of a buffer zone to promote more sustainable forms of development and to protect local kastom. Indeed, the CRMD buffer zone, which represents a large and (in terms of cash and farming subsistence) valuable portion of the greater Lelema region, has served as an effective instrument with which the LWHC and their
supporters within the community have sought to thwart the large-scale and long-term leasing of customary land. World Heritage status has created a window of opportunity for the facilitation of alternative cash-based livelihoods, principally through community-based tourism initiatives, that do not undermine but rather complement customary tenure systems and, in turn, the crucial subsistence livelihoods of the Lelema community in the buffer zone (Trau, 2012a).

![Figure 21: Road block being established by a customary landowner to prevent real estate access to the CRMD buffer zone, January 2009 (photograph taken by Trau).](image)

In the terms of protected area discourse, Tumusiime and Svarstad (2011) describe this contested process as the production of local ‘counter-narratives’ constituted in response to externally generated constructions. The experience of the Lelema community differs critically, however, because the views and opinions of each and every customary landowner carry equal weight. Lelema strategies appear to be motivated by a desire not simply to maintain “a modicum of the ‘local’ within the more broadly ‘global’” as Adams, Centeno and Varnerx (2007, p. 81) suggest, but to completely subsume the global within a framework that is more representative of local cultural values – to couch understandings of both development and conservation in the CRMD buffer zone in terms of the local idiom of bafa zon, and to enlist or oppose it for reasons that do not always pertain to heritage conservation. If the
views of customary landowners are not adequately addressed, dissatisfaction may manifest in the form of demands to remove or to reduce the World Heritage buffer zone, the erection of road blocks to obstruct developer access to customary land (Figure 21), the arbitrary inflation of the prices of amenities or services on customary land or any other means of reasserting the paramountcy of customary control over land.

International systems are based on written materials and documents [such as laws, regulations or plans]; that is what they value. Whereas kastom speaks to you: if it says don’t touch it, you don’t touch it. (Douglas Kalotiti, WHTC [LWHC] Chair, personal communication, 12 October 2009)

Within the community, written and signed formal agreements are accorded little value, weight or respect. In this context of local sovereignty over customary land, signatures on paper (such as those from key community representatives and chiefs, and government figures endorsing the 2008 CRMD Buffer Zone Management Plan) are largely ineffectual, particularly while the financial, technical and legal apparatus that might guide the ongoing needs of both conservation and development within World Heritage buffer zones remains inadequate. Crucially, neither landowning communities nor government agencies are in a position to offer binding guarantees for the protection in perpetuity of proposed World Heritage areas and their OUV. Even if it were possible to obtain the signatures of every one of over 200 customary landowners within the CRMD buffer zone on a legally binding document that restricted the forms and levels of economic development in this area, the national and provincial governments lack the capacity either to administer or to enforce protective regulations of this nature. The protection of the CRMD buffer zone and the World Heritage property is reliant on the verbal commitments and social practices and principles (in other words, the kastom) of the customary landowners, both individually and collectively as the various community groups and forces ebb and flow in terms of majority opinion. Highlighting the acute challenges of maintaining localised representations and materialisations of the CRMD bafa zon in this regard, Dalsgaard and Otto (2011) discuss how common definitions of kastom are exchangeable, relational and partible intellectual property. In other words, the bafa zon of CRMD will be subject indefinitely to renegotiation, alteration and modification in response to local interests and priorities. As opposed to World Heritage buffer zones in other parts of the world where nation–states have the capacity (however variable) to protect World Heritage in line with their obligations under the World Heritage Convention, there are few means – moral or material – available to the state in Vanuatu to enforce its obligations (Ballard & Wilson, 2012).
With this in mind, buffer zone chiefs and landowners, in consultation with the LWHC (some of whom have previously been highly resistant to the idea of a buffer zone) have begun to discuss a possible partition of the buffer zone that reflects local concepts of resource management. This has been achieved principally via lengthy community meetings chaired by local chiefs. One current proposal from the chiefs is to create an inner area around the World Heritage property at Roi Mata’s residence of Mangaas, and an outer area encapsulating the rest of the buffer zone area, to be named Nakoro, the term for a traditional fence for livestock. This community decision-making process both reflects and engenders much wider support from customary landowners for local land-use regulation and enforcement. But these are indicative or emergent trends, at best, and the ongoing tension between appeals to customary or to legal rights and interests will continue to unfold and further evolve as UNESCO’s buffer zone assumes its more fluid local form at CRMD, as the bafa zon.

6. Conclusion

The current enthusiasm for community within international heritage discourse is substantially predicated on the assumed homogeneity of local meanings, desires and dispositions (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Noyes, 2006). Yet any meaningful understanding of a given situation must also take into account the nuances, ambiguities and fluidities of wider intra- and inter-community relations and interactions, including those with government, UNESCO and private investors. Noyes (2006) suggests that the collective negotiation of intra-community conflict is one of the most important ways in which living cultural heritage is both used and maintained. However, very little of the way of life of the Lelema community is immune to the influences of globalisation. The challenge for international heritage conservation organisations such as UNESCO lies in understanding and acknowledging the nature and dynamics of local or Indigenous ownership and management of cultural heritage, and allowing for flexibility in any collective negotiation over resource use and economic development (see also, Trau 2012b).

The heterogeneity of local or Indigenous communities and the multiplicity of their ideas and interests sits uneasily within global imaginings of community-based heritage preservation. This somewhat untidy (and to the outsider often confusing) reality has implications for the ways in which community-owned and -managed World Heritage buffer zones are portrayed and understood internationally. Instead of papering over local differences in opinion or anticipating unified and decisive responses from local communities with regard to their World Heritage, international emphasis would be better served by acknowledging and supporting ongoing local community
decision-making processes and outcomes. Scholze (2008) and Wall and Black (2004) argue that there is a long way to go, given that international heritage experts (for a range of reasons including organisational setting and time available for field missions) are rarely able to comprehend local and often delicate political and cultural complexities and ambiguities.

Views and decisions from within the Lelema community concerning heritage rarely, if ever, coincide uniformly with international (Western) heritage preservation agendas. The reactions and responses of many local customary landowners to the prospect or perception of limits or constraints to development being imposed (whether from government, international NGO, private capital investors or others) are often swift and decisive. Nonetheless, the experience of major real estate development has been fundamental in transforming the CRMD buffer zone into what Bonta (2005, p. 96) calls a “new type of local space”. Almost four years after inscription, the CRMD buffer zone remains a work in progress, continuing to be constructed and reconstructed by the ebbs and flows of intra-community contestations, as well as by community responses and reactions to external agents such as government, UNESCO and private investors and others. For World Heritage areas under customary landownership such as CRMD, the phrase ‘work in progress’ is especially pertinent given the extraordinary power of local customary landowners, and the intrinsic unpredictability of their responses and reactions to globalisation writ large, depicted in this article through World Heritage buffer zones.

The situation for customary landowners of the CRMD buffer zone engaged with World Heritage is clearly more nuanced or ambivalent than is often portrayed in the literature. Conservation measures and development activities do not exist as global–local binaries, but simply as part of the way in which the Lelema community is continually refashioning the CRMD buffer zone as resourcefully and as pragmatically as they can. Throughout this process of reconceptualising the CRMD buffer zone there is cross fertilisation between Western and Indigenous ideas about how both development and conservation might be imagined and organised. The success of these measures and activities within buffer zones is best gauged by the extent to which they are regarded simultaneously as both global and local, Indigenous and Western, modern and traditional. The CRMD buffer zone has increasing significance at the local level, not because the members of the Lelema community have thoroughly internalised the global doctrines of UNESCO and other international conservation agencies, but because they possess sufficient cultural and political autonomy to recast notions of buffering, and to accept them on their own terms.

The challenge for the international heritage discourse and UNESCO is to move beyond buffer zones as conceptualised and implemented within globalised Western heritage and protected area theory and
praxis and to take account of alternate ways of engaging with, and reconfiguring, notions of World Heritage buffering. By working towards incorporating locally valued and accepted decision-making processes and buffering measures within the design and designation of World Heritage buffer zones, the dual objectives of conserving the OUV of World Heritage properties and attaining the levels of economic development desired by the community might simultaneously be realised; however, complex and extended the process.

The considerable benefit of World Heritage status – to the local community and to the wider national community of Vanuatu – must also be recognised. This newly gained status has provided the Lelema community with an expanded range of options for pathways toward self-development, while retaining the rare ability to control and plan for the maintenance of its heritage and cultural values. The CRMD buffer zone has become another screen on which to project the development myths and aspirations of customary landowners; another political or developmental tool to be mobilised in the pursuit of highly desirable, if elusive, hybrid expressions and forms of modernity.

7. References


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CHAPTER 4 – BEYOND PRO-POOR TOURISM:  
(Re)INTERPRETING TOURISM-BASED APPROACHES TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN VANUATU

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Foreword

It is clear from the findings of the previous two chapters that economic development has to be addressed in tandem with heritage conservation in the Lelema community. In this chapter, I explore and analyse the critical factors and measures of success for tourism development at CRMD through the case of Roi Mata Cultural Tours, the principal independent revenue base for the IWHC and for the community that is associated with World Heritage. Further understanding the unique market conditions and business models that are required for growing community tourism businesses such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours is critical to the maintenance of World Heritage. This paper therefore explicates potential support mechanisms and operating models for Roi Mata Cultural Tours so that World Heritage at CRMD can be, as this thesis argues it must be, an embodiment of both community heritage conservation and tourism development concerns. Further to the central theme of the thesis, this chapter also demonstrates how community tourism development, similar to community heritage conservation as discussed in the previous two chapters, is often neither discretely local nor global, but a fluid combination of the two. In a way similar to the forms of glocalised heritage management discussed in the previous two chapters, glocalised business models, such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours, often struggle to be judged a success when measured in either global or local terms.
Abstract

In Vanuatu - a least developed country in the south-west Pacific region - the villages of Mangaliliu and Lelepa island in the north-west region of Efate (known collectively as the Lelema communities) are attempting to alleviate conditions of poverty through a communally owned and managed tour enterprise known as Roi Mata Cultural Tours. This paper critically examines the ways in which the Lelema communities are (re)interpreting globalised tourism-based approaches to poverty alleviation - addressed here under the rubric of pro-poor tourism (PPT) - in terms of notions that reflect local realities and locally valued measures of poverty reduction. The approach advocated in this paper adopts a more local or grassroots perspective on PPT as a means of generating a more nuanced understanding of the scope for PPT initiatives within Vanuatu. The current international discourse of PPT fails to address or comprehend the more complicated and contingent forces operating at the local level in polities such as the independent Melanesian states. An approach to PPT which emphasises grassroots perspectives is proposed that promotes local cultural reconfigurations of tourism through a process of glocalisation. However, without the implementation of broader support structures, mechanisms and networks, these glocalised business models will struggle to compete in the global market economy and to meet local community expectations.

1. Introduction

The influences and impacts of development and globalisation on ni-Vanuatu communities (the indigenous peoples of Vanuatu) are usually measured against indicators of international macro-economic frameworks. By way of contrast, this paper critically examines the way in which local communities are (re)interpreting globalised tourism-based approaches to poverty alleviation - addressed here under the rubric of pro-poor tourism (PPT) - in terms of notions that reflect local realities and, more specifically, locally valued measures of poverty reduction.

In Vanuatu - a least developed country (LDC) in the south-west Pacific region - the villages of Mangaliliu and Lelepa island of the north-west Efate region (known collectively as the Lelema communities) are attempting to alleviate conditions of poverty through a co-owned and co-managed tour enterprise, Roi Mata Cultural Tours. Roi Mata Cultural Tours commenced operation in 2006 and is the exclusive operator within Vanuatu’s first World Heritage site, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain (CRMD), which is held under the collective ownership of individual chiefs and customary landowners of the Lelema communities (see Figures 22 and 23).
This paper draws on the author’s long-term engagement with the Lelema communities; first as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development on a one year posting from July 2008 to July 2009, and then on a continuing basis as one of several volunteers in a recently established CRMD International Advisory Group. Sources of data include - but are not limited to - informal and formal conversations, focus groups, community meetings and household surveys in both Mangaliliu and Lelepa island since the author’s involvement began in July 2008. Roi Mata Cultural Tours, like any other community development project located in rural Vanuatu, or in most other small island states in the Pacific, exists in a highly complicated, contradictory and tumultuous nexus of global–local economic relations. This paper seeks to unpack and expose the nuances and ambiguities of this interaction between local customary economic norms and global (Western) international development agendas as expressed through PPT initiatives such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours. In so doing, the author moves beyond prevailing conceptions of PPT from within the international development discourse and highlights local alternative perspectives of the success and failure of tourism-based approaches to poverty alleviation in Vanuatu.
Figure 22: Map of Vanuatu locating Chief Roi Mata’s Domain in northwest Efate Source: (Republic of Vanuatu, 2007, p. 11).
Drawing on the seminal work of Appadurai (2000) and the concept of ‘grassroots globalisation’, or the critical analysis of globalisation from below, the idea of a more grassroots approach to PPT within Vanuatu is introduced as a means of generating a more nuanced and independent understanding of the scope for PPT initiatives within Vanuatu. It is argued that the current international discourse of PPT belies the more complicated and contingent forces operating at the
local level in polities such as the independent Melanesian states. A more local or grassroots approach to PPT is therefore promulgated in order to create a juncture in the PPT discourse and challenge the universality of Western development models by promoting local reconfigurations of tourism that better represent and utilise kastom (a multifarious term in Vanuatu’s pidgin language Bislama, generally in reference to local customary principles and practices).

This process is also characteristic of the complementary theory of ‘glocalisation’ (Robertson, 1995) which, together with grassroots globalisation, is used to illustrate the ways in which Roi Mata Cultural Tours is attempting to simultaneously utilise principles of both local kastom and global commerce (with all of the inherent complexities, ambiguities and paradoxes). If the benefits of tourism are to be realised by ni-Vanuatu, the author contends that an approach to PPT which emphasises grassroots perspectives and promotes local cultural reconfigurations of tourism through a process of glocalisation - or as Sahlins (2000, p. 417) eloquently explains, “integrate[s] their experience of the world system in something that is logically and ontologically more inclusive: their own system of their world” - is imperative.

2. Beyond Pro-Poor Tourism: Reconfiguring Glocalities

Research into the effectiveness of tourism as a tool for pro-poor economic development began with the works of Peters (1969) and de Kadt (1979). Only in the late 1990s, however, did debates concerning the relationship between tourism and poverty alleviation intensify. This coincided with the emergence and subsequent popularity of new moral or ethical approaches to tourism, such as PPT, under the broad rubric of ‘sustainable tourism’ (Harrison, 2008). PPT is defined loosely as any form of tourism that accrues net economic benefits for the poor (Goodwin, 2008). The term PPT was first adopted by the UK Department of International Development (DFID) (1999) and a UK-based collaborative research group known as the Pro-Poor Tourism Partnership (Ashley, Goodwin, & Roe, 2001) which involved the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (Hall, 2007; Goodwin, 2008). PPT initiatives are regularly funded by aid agencies and non-government organisations from around the world, which are increasingly favouring new forms of alternative tourism that place greater importance on local economic benefits for destination communities (Butcher, 2003; Harrison & Schipani, 2007; Trau & Bushell, 2008).
However, there are a growing number of critics of PPT: Hall and Brown (2006, p. 110), for instance, describe the arguments of the UK development agencies which dominate the PPT discourse as “simplistic”, and elsewhere describe the advent of PPT as simply shedding a more positive light on tourism than it deserves (Brown & Hall, 2008). Harrison (2008, p. 865) invites PPT proponents to move in from the “academic fringe” and into the mainstream. Even PPT proponents such as Mitchell and Ashley (2010, p. 2) concur, recently revealing that a large amount of the PPT literature is of “variable quality” due to the lack of formal peer-review processes. But more fundamentally, many critics argue that the growth of tourism - even through new or alternative forms of tourism such as PPT - is bound by a globalising neoliberal capitalist economic system driving increasing wealth disparity between exogenous agencies (e.g. foreign-owned tourism companies) and local Indigenous communities. This is the crux of most criticisms of PPT, and even more broadly, of the multifaceted interface between tourism and development; i.e. that essentially, as a globalised capitalist endeavour, tourism is unable to provide proportional benefits to the poor (see Chok, Macbeth, & Warren, 2007; Scheyvens, 2007; Schilcher, 2007).

Yet from all sides of the overlapping theoretical debates for and against PPT praxis worldwide, arguments have a tendency to frame cash-poor Indigenous communities as largely powerless in the face of neoliberal globalisation agendas. Indeed, international PPT debates are often predicated on the notion of global capitalistic hegemonies, which ignores local alternative cultural conceptions of and controls over tourism development from the periphery (Cupples, Glynn, & Larios, 2007; Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). Transposing the global PPT discourse to the Pacific islands ultimately results in the production of international development narratives of project success and failure as defined by Western culture-laden economic indicators.

Escobar (2001) and Dirlik (1999) argue against this ‘globalocentrism’ and instead call for greater attention to and recognition of subaltern place-based struggles and strategies of localisation. Sahlins (2005a, 2005b) argues that in Melanesia these critical arguments from the ‘left’ are often counterintuitive and work to reinforce Indigenous dependency and capitalist hegemony. Instead, he calls for greater appreciation of Indigenous peoples as ‘active agents’ in the processes of development, asserting that so-called ‘peripheral peoples’ are too often portrayed as passive recipients of development and globalisation (Sahlins, 2000). Local traditional notions of communalism are commonly (mis)represented as being dominated by, or in binary opposition to, global capitalist principles of individualism. This ignores the more nuanced experiences of local community businesses, such as the Roi Mata Cultural Tours business considered here, which attempt to negotiate the two, not as opposing cultural binaries, but complementing (however counterintuitive and contradictory this may appear from the outside) features of locally appropriate business models.
For this and other reasons, Swyngedouw (1997, 2004) and, more specifically in relation to tourism, Salazar (2005, 2006) argue that the process of globalisation should be revised instead as a process of ‘glocalisation’. Glocalisation can be seen as a process of ‘cultural borrowing’ resulting in hybrid global–local cultural reconfigurations of development (Steger, 2003). Glocal development merges the local and the global, so economic activities are simultaneously more localised/regionalised and transnational. As Bainton (2010, p. 11) aptly contends in the case of the Lihir islands of Papua New Guinea, “globalisation develops apace with localisation”. The question, then, is not one of dualistic confrontation between the global and the local, but of different configurations of ‘glocality’. In other words, it is not a question of either globalisation or localisation, but more a question of the degree to which change is mediated from the ‘bottom’, i.e. from the needs and aspirations of local communities, as opposed to agents from the ‘top’, such as the big international non-government organisations or BINGOs (aid donors, international financial institutions, banks, investors and the like)? Whether the binary is global-local, modern-traditional or individual-communal, the key point is that from the perspective of glocalisation they are negotiated in relation to each other.

However, the valorisation of glocalisation and grassroots globalisation can also be problematic, particularly in academic discourses, to the extent that they have the unwitting effect of abetting predatory multinational commercial interests by ignoring more resistant forms of difference at the local level and by naturalising the forces and processes of capitalist globalisation (Thornton, 2010). Hence, while the following discussion will illustrate the glocalisation of Roi Mata Cultural Tours beyond current international development conceptions of PPT, it is also demonstrated that without the implementation of broader support structures, mechanisms and networks, glocalised business models struggle to compete in the global market economy and to uphold local community expectations.

3. Pathways in the Periphery: the Vanuatu Economy

Of the 65 inhabited islands that make up Vanuatu, economic activity is mostly concentrated on the two main islands of Efate and Espiritu Santo. Only approximately one quarter of the population regularly engages with the formal cash economy, which leads economists such as Gay (2009, p. 108) to describe Vanuatu as on the “periphery of the world economy”. Most rural ni-Vanuatu communities score badly when measured against international development indicators, yet acute poverty as experienced in many other LDCs is virtually unknown. The prevalence of the traditional
economy, or *kastom ekonomi* in Bislama, is often held up as the principal basis for this resilience. If the nation’s economy experiences turbulence or there is a global market crisis, local communities still have their *garen* (gardens, a Bislama term in reference to subsistence agriculture) to provide them with everything from food to housing material (Regenvanu, 2009). While not beyond the influence of monetisation, most ni-Vanuatu identify, rather, as living in ‘subsistence affluence’, with bountiful natural resources available for cropping, fishing, etc. (Cox et al., 2007).

The continuing reliance of rural communities on their local traditional subsistence economies is due in large part to Vanuatu’s Constitution, which grants an extraordinary proportion of power and political agency to local villagers. Since gaining independence in 1980, the Republic of Vanuatu has placed particular emphasis on customary land tenure in its constitution, legislation and the building of its national psyche (Rodman, 1995; Regenvanu, 2008): all freehold land ownership was abolished upon gaining independence; land previously alienated during joint British and French colonial rule was returned to “the indigenous custom owners and their descendants”, and tradition *or kastom* “formed the basis of ownership and use of land” (Government of Vanuatu, n.d., Articles 73 and 74). The majority of land outside of the major urban centres in Vanuatu is still managed under local customary tenure systems which are inherently - and to the outsider, incredibly - locally variable and fluid (Cox et al., 2007).

Powers commonly perceived as intrinsic to the state, such as the ability to impose or enforce restrictions on land-use or to ensure security of development initiatives or investments are radically curtailed in Vanuatu. Statutory land laws hold little sway beyond the capital centres, and national legislation is rarely understood by local customary landowners. Minutes taken by the author in a meeting between Lelema customary landowners and the directors of a foreign owned and managed real estate company in Port Vila in November 2008, illustrate the point: “there was broad consensus in the room that the Constitution of Vanuatu allows landowners to develop the land as they wish”. Most rural ni-Vanuatu communities rely heavily therefore on local customary and informal governance structures and mechanisms, rather than those of the state (Cox et al., 2007; Forsyth, 2009).

Yet despite this extraordinary constitutional devolution of power in Vanuatu, from the nation-state to the customary landowner, there are also multiple forces acting to undermine or subvert local sovereignty. While land in Vanuatu cannot be owned by foreigners, it can be leased for up to 75 years. The leasing of customary land has led to substantial growth in the real estate industry; an industry that is effectively alienating ni-Vanuatu from their land, and hence their primary life-source, cultural asset and leverage in the cash economy (Simo, 2008). Foreign speculators and real estate
agencies (often Australians or New Zealanders) eager to cash in on this land boom take advantage of local-level uncertainty and misunderstandings with regard to land transactions; snapping up relatively cheap waterfront blocks from unknowing landowning villagers, to be subdivided into multiple smaller plots and sold on for considerable profit.

With villagers increasingly in need of supplementary cash income to pay for public services such as schooling and health care, and other necessities such as clothing and kerosene, the seemingly lucrative (in local monetary terms) one-off lease premiums offered by foreigners are irresistible for many. Over 90% of coastal land on the main island of Efate has been leased - or rather, through various and insidious lease clauses, alienated - to foreigners by customary landowners for the maximum period of 75 years. Tragically for most, the acceptance of these seemingly larger lease premiums consequently reduces the amount of annual rent to usually only a few hundred US dollars (Cox et al., 2007; Kalotiti, Trau, Wilson, & Ballard, 2009; Tahi, 2007).

The tourism industry is indelibly tied to the land leasing system in Vanuatu, and is similarly both inequitable and undermining of local agency while being lauded by the international development establishment and the Government of Vanuatu as the key driver to the country's economic growth (Government of Vanuatu, 2004; IFC, 2010; National Tourism Development Office, 2009; TRIP Consultants, 2007). Although Vanuatu's investment laws do reserve some tourism-related economic occupations and investments specifically for Vanuatu citizens, they are restricted to relatively low earning occupations and low turnover investments. Moreover, correlative to Vanuatu's labour laws (concerning contracts, equipment, clothing, holidays and redundancy pay), they are often wilfully ignored due to a critical lack of effective government monitoring and enforcement (Rawlings, 2002; Slatter, 2006; Cox et al., 2007). Hence, even though the tourism industry generates close to 20% of Vanuatu's GDP (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2011), in the absence of greater government regulatory intervention needed to glocalise the national economy, transnational companies and entrepreneurs are able to utilise their skills, resources, and capital to reap large financial gains. As a Lelema customary landowner remarked in a community meeting in May 2009, “Waet man i skul gud, i gat mani” / “Foreigners have good schooling and have money”. As a result, foreign investors continue to be the primary recipients of tourism profits in Vanuatu (De Burlo, 2003; Milne, 1996; Slatter, 2006), and income levels for foreign expatriates employed within the tourism industry are extraordinarily high compared to those of ni-Vanuatu staff in equivalent positions (Rawlings, 2002).

In summation, the development process in Vanuatu is clearly neither top-down nor bottom-up; rather, it operates simultaneously in both directions. In a similar fashion to many other Pacific island countries (Firth, 2000) glocalisation is taking place at the local community level, aided in large part by
the constitutional sovereignty awarded to local customary landowners. But at the same time, the Vanuatu government’s neoliberal market policies, coupled with a lack of regulatory monitoring and enforcement, are accentuating social inequities between expatriates and ni-Vanuatu. The people and institutions of Vanuatu are indeed, as Westoby (2009, p. 50) notes, “negotiating the complex push and pulls between what remains a reasonably rich subsistence (or exchange) economy and the market economy (both legitimate and shadowy)”.

4. The Lelema Communities and Roi Mata Cultural Tours

Despite having only a small population of approximately 700 people, or just over 80 households, several prominent national leaders have emerged from the Lelema communities, including an ex-prime minister, an ombudsman, a national moderator for the Presbyterian Church, and presidents of both the men’s and women’s fieldworker programmes of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (2007). Moreover, with the rapid expansion of the capital Port Vila township and recent infrastructure projects such as the newly constructed Efate ring-road - shortening a 40-50 minute journey from the Lelema communities to Port Vila to a mere 20 minutes - the villages of Lelema are now largely peri-urban. Villagers have the synchronic ability to make money, attend schools and have medical care, while simultaneously respecting kastom and their community-based roles and responsibilities.

The development of the Roi Mata Cultural Tour in 2004-2005 was, upon the insistence of the landowning chiefs and communities of the Lelema region, made a core component of their World Heritage nomination for the ‘continuing cultural landscape’ of CRMD (Republic of Vanuatu, 2007). The benchmarks of tour success were twofold: 1) the employment of as many able individuals and households in the communities as possible and 2) the investment of profits into community health and education services. It should be noted that while Roi Mata Cultural Tours was not conceived or conceptualised locally as being PPT, these community-defined objectives are seen as largely in line with other PPT initiatives across the world (Ashley, 2002). Community members articulated their vision for the Roi Mata Cultural Tour in the following ways:

It [the tourism project] is a dream that each person gathered here shares, just like we share our Church, our school and much more. It will make us have more respect for our own cultural strengths. This gathering brings every household in the community together, and we will make sure that we pass this dream on to the upcoming generations. (Mangaliliu Tourism Vision Statement, translated in Greig, 2006, p. 6)
The Tourism project that goes ahead in the Lelepa region must benefit the community and each household within the community. It must be a sustainable (long-term) project. We want to make sure that we look after all of our cultural and natural places, as well as all of our sacred (tabu) places. (Lelepa island Tourism Vision Statement, translated in Greig, 2006, p. 6).

Figure 24: The winning design in a community-wide competition to create the now official logo of Roi Mata Cultural Tours.

The World Heritage and Tourism Committee (WHTC) was formed to oversee the management and administration of both the proposed World Heritage area and Roi Mata Cultural Tours. The WHTC is composed of four men and four women, with equal representation from both Mangaliliu and Lelepa island communities. The Vanuatu Cultural Centre facilitates the provision of external advisory and funding assistance for the WHTC. The Vanuatu Cultural Centre has the reputation of being one of the most active and effectual cultural institutions in the Pacific, and has pioneered the exploration of the use of indigenous economic systems as the basis for contemporary development (Bolton, 2006). Since 2005, the Roi Mata Cultural Tour has also successively engaged the services of four Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development, each of whom has assisted in strengthening the capacity of the WHTC and members of the Lelema communities to independently manage Roi Mata Cultural Tours (Wilson, 2009). Moreover, most recently, several Australian heritage and tourism professionals have come together with successive youth ambassadors to make up the voluntary CRMD International Advisory Group, which in conjunction with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, provides critical technical and financial support to the WHTC and Roi Mata Cultural Tours.
As part of the full-day Roi Mata Cultural Tour, tourists are guided to all three sites within the World Heritage property for approximately $US100 - slightly above the price of similar tours available elsewhere in the region. The WHTC is responsible for all financial and operational aspects of the tour business and ensuring local villagers are involved in every aspect of the tour, including guiding and interpretation, catering, and a dramatic performance of Chief Roi Mata’s life and death. Locally owned transport (mini-vans and boats with a maximum capacity of twelve persons) is also used when available. The WHTC has also decided to make local wages approximately 20% higher than the income that villagers might derive from comparable work in Port Vila. Tour guides, for instance, receive approximately $US15 per tour. Each tour caters to an average of between five and six tourists, which allows the WHTC to cover costs and generate a small profit.

Prior to the inscription of CRMD, tours were run irregularly, with only a handful of pre-arranged package tours occurring during the first two years of operation. Immediately after inscription, between July and December 2008, 31 tours were undertaken with a total of 323 tourists. Since then, tour numbers have waxed and waned, creeping up during the peak tourist season (June-July) and then dropping to only a handful over the summer months (December-February). The following discussion focuses on the period since World Heritage inscription in July 2008; the period most illustrative of the glocalisation of Roi Mata Cultural Tours. The sheer necessity of having to concurrently satisfy the tour desks of foreign-owned hotels and resorts from where over 90% of all international tourists hail, and the powerful expectations of wealth redistribution within the Lelema communities, highlights the difficulties associated with glocalising a business model such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours within the nexus of global-local economic relations.

5. The Imagined and Lived Community

In the following discussion, illustrations of the glocalisation of Roi Mata Cultural Tours are examined and the case for greater emphasis on local or grassroots perspectives toward PPT is established. However, beforehand, it is important to note that communities are naturally highly amorphous entities (Mowforth & Munt, 2009). There are a range of perspectives within the community on what successful glocalisation of Roi Mata Cultural Tours can or should look like. Ortner (1995, pp. 178-179) highlights the dangers of smoothing out “ambivalent complexity” and sanitising our representations of communities, describing this impulse as essentially romantic.
There is never a single, unitary, subordinate if only in the simple sense that subaltern groups are internally divided by age, gender, status, and other forms of difference and that occupants of differing subject positions will have different, even opposed, but still legitimate, perspectives on the situation. (Ortner, 1995, p. 175).

There is indeed an enormous plurality of local concepts, desires, and dispositions within the Lelema communities, which in turn ultimately result in untidy internal competition, friction and politics. In an effort to counter the romantic idealism and generalities commonly associated with advocates of local interests and agency, the following discussion canvases the full spectrum of views and stances from within the Lelema communities by drawing on the author’s long-term engagement with the communities since 2008. Of particular use is the author’s 12-month volunteer posting between July 2008 and July 2009, throughout which the author resided in the Lelema communities and worked hand in hand with the WHTC as they developed the Roi Mata Cultural Tours business.

In order to fully appreciate local realities - or the lived rather than only the imagined community - it is important to recognise the multiplicity of projects at the local community level, and the multiplicity of ways in which these projects reciprocally interact, constrain, undermine and reinforce each other (Ortner, 1995). Roi Mata Cultural Tours is neither the first nor the only tourism business to be controlled or operated by the Lelema communities. The spectre of several past and current enterprises lingers large in people’s minds and serves to highlight some of the more abrasive elements of the various Lelema business models. In findings similar to those of Westoby (2010), the great majority of community members will openly profess to the lack-lustre and seeming inevitability of community projects; that they will always eventually fail, either by being co-opted by an individual or family, or by sheer neglect because it is “blong komuniti nomo” / “only of the community”. Many other Lelema villagers have suggested community projects are nothing more than a “headache”.

But in the same vein, and with findings that differ from those of Westoby (2010), individual or family owned and run tourism businesses are regarded with similar harshness by community members. Individual or family businesses are seen as profiteering from the community’s common resources, and as being able to do so only by firewalling themselves within the community and thereby centralising tourist activities within just one immediate or slightly extended family. Roi Mata Cultural Tours is in many ways attempting to forge a new glocality or middle ground between these two extreme poles of the local business model spectrum; Individual or family ventures on one side and community ventures on the other.
It is important to note that individual or family ventures are often viewed as largely successful when measured against global economic indicators of PPT development, but often produce mixed reactions in relation to local *kastom*. Western notions of individualism drive market economies, are favoured by the laws and regulations of national and global markets, and are central to notions and values associated with (tangible or intangible) commodity ownership (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). Fundamentally (re)interpreting PPT from a more local or grassroots perspective therefore requires moving beyond the perceived inescapability of Western economic development models and glocalising economies and industry to accommodate what are locally seen as valuable attributes of a cash-generating business. Lelema conceptions and measures of development success through Roi Mata Cultural Tours, such as paying for the school fees of all community children or supplementing aid post supplies, are just as important locally as the provision of full-time employment and increases in personal and household income levels.

6. Perceived Binaries—Real Glocalities

_Yumi traem bidemap yumi wan wan, yumi mas wok tugeta tu blong mekem se wok blong yumi bae I save go ahead gud olsem we yumi desar em / Let’s try and help each other to grow, we must work closely together to make sure that we move forward in a good way, in a way that we desire._

(Douglas Kalotiti, WHTC Chairman, WHTC meeting, February 2009)

There are numerous operational and functional aspects to Roi Mata Cultural Tours that are indicative of the nuances, and indeed contradictions, of the glocalisation process. This section examines the ways in which the WHTC is negotiating a middle path through glocalised notions of individualism and communalism, which are increasingly and synchronically (and often tumultuously) influenced by both exogenous and endogenous forces. The tourism literature, in contrast, typically associates local cultural manifestations of individualism as reproductions of a domineering and powerful Western capitalist culture, forcibly transforming local subsistence economies into Western economic models (see for example: Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008; Mbaiwa, 2011).

Pitting individualism against communalism in an antagonistic categorical global-local binary, however, ignores the more nuanced experience of glocalised businesses such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours. The WHTC and the Lelema communities are constantly reshaping and hybridising notions of both individualism and communalism through Roi Mata Cultural Tours and other businesses and projects with which they engage and encounter. This process of glocalisation is indicative of Lelema’s
broader experience with modernity, in which they are attempting to control the way that they are engaged by the imperatives of development.

Currently, however, the traditional or subsistence economy of Vanuatu is invisible to (and undervalued by) contemporary mainstream economic and development indicators (Regenvanu, 2009). Local cultural factors such as wealth redistribution within the community or familial and communal ritual obligations are commonly perceived by the ‘development establishment’ as barriers to PPT development (Crewe & Harrison, 2005). Hence, when glocalised businesses such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours are measured against global individualistic development indicators, the complete business as viewed and judged locally is only partially represented; local cultural measures of success such as community solidarity and wealth redistribution are rendered invisible to the international PPT development discourse and ignored.

Community insistence upon the equitable redistribution of benefits from Roi Mata Cultural Tours sits comfortably within traditional economic practice in the Pacific and specifically in Melanesia, where people’s cultural identity derives from membership in and contribution to social groups or communities (Bonnemaison, 1985). As Sillitoe (2010, p.41) remarks, “They are not material maximisers but reciprocal maximisers”. However, the success of PPT enterprises internationally is currently measured against international development indicators based on increased individual wealth accumulation and profit-maximising rationality. Contrary to this notion of a single, ultimate or universal local or global ‘development’, Roi Mata Cultural Tours illustrates the multiplicity of development forms and models that are continually and reciprocally constructed and reconstructed through intercultural encounters across the global–local interface. This experience is part of what Bainton (2010, p.177) describes in the case of Lihir in Papua New Guinea as “an ongoing process of cultural reflexivity characteristic of the experience of modernity”.

Yet, as Appadurai (1996, p.179) aptly contends, “locality is an inherently fragile social achievement”. The WHTC is increasingly aware that given the current neoliberal macroeconomic conditions in Vanuatu, community over-emphasis on the equitable distribution of tour benefits (both income and profits) is fundamentally reducing the efficacy of the tour and the capacity for Roi Mata Cultural Tours to remain competitive, especially against foreign competitors not bound by local cultural concepts or rules. Maintaining a large labour force of over 100 villagers within such a small business keeps operational costs high, limits reinvestment into infrastructure and marketing materials, and results in an inherently variable tour product. It also makes for complex accounting for the two WHTC financial managers. As observed by a WHTC member in a WHTC meeting in October 2008, “Hemi karem tumas pepa mekem se hed blong hem i stap kranke” / “She (the tour’s financial manager) has
too much paperwork which is making her very confused”. Nonetheless, crucially, employing the maximum number of villagers and paying relatively high wages is judged locally to be more important than maximising operational and cost efficiency.

7. Conclusion

It is clear that the Lelema communities are not only translating the globalised discourse of PPT development into local cultural terms, but through Roi Mata Cultural Tours are attempting to (re)interpret these very notions so that the business is synchronically reflecting both global and local values. Simplified arguments of globalisation as a one-way top-down force increasing worldwide homogeneity, and expunging traditional subsistence-based economies by imposing Western capitalist ones, largely ignore these more complicated and contingent forces operating at the local level. The experience of Roi Mata Cultural Tours illustrates the fact that there is clear cross-fertilisation between Western and Indigenous ideas about how PPT development is organised, and that indeed the success of glocalised ventures is best gauged by the extent to which they are simultaneously both global and local. LiPuma (2001, p. 299) echoes this sentiment: “[t]he argument and evidence from Melanesia expressly repudiates those theories that assume that globalization and increasing locality are antithetical phenomena. They are more like brothers-in-arms”.

This paper is not a case for business as usual, however. Almost three years after the inscription of CRMD on the World Heritage list in July 2008, the possibility of increasing profit margins remains as elusive as ever. While Roi Mata Cultural Tours has generally managed to fund the expenses of the WHTC, including transport, stationery, and a nominal sitting allowance, even this becomes difficult during the low tourism season. The key indicators of poverty reduction for the Lelema communities - increase in incomes for individuals and households and the provision of services such as schooling and health care for all community members - are clearly not yet attainable, and indeed seem remote in the short to medium term.

Despite the seemingly ubiquitous nature of Indigenous or local power and agency through the process of glocalisation - and as evocatively illuminated through the works of Sahlins (2000, 2005a, 2005b) - this paper contends that the supporting role and scope of an approach to PPT which emphasises grassroots perspectives is imperative for the growth of glocalised PPT endeavours. The experience of Roi Mata Cultural Tours demonstrates that hybridised modes and measures of PPT struggle to fulfil either individualistic capitalist indicators of economic development (e.g. individual or
household income levels) or the community’s own indicators of a more traditional communalistic economy (e.g. wealth redistribution within the communities). Instead, the tour business currently occupies something of a development no man’s land, failing to satisfy or be deemed a ‘success’ in relation to either international mainstream economics of poverty alleviation or local community expectations and cultural values.

It is therefore argued that the necessary technical, financial and regulatory scaffolding for glocalised business models such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours must be engineered if the benefits of tourism are to be realised by rural ni-Vanuatu communities. In the case of Roi Mata Cultural Tours, technical (advisers, expertise) and financial (aid donor funding) scaffolding is achieved through friendly national and transnational agents such as the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the CRMD International Advisory Group. The careful and continuing maintenance of these broader support structures, mechanisms and networks is critical in augmenting local agency and promoting alternate grassroots development narratives. These findings correspond with those of Appadurai (2000, p.15), who states that non-government organisations and transnational advocacy networks “are the crucibles and institutional instruments of most serious efforts to globalise from below”.

However, in contrast to Appadurai’s (2000) theory of grassroots globalisation and its urgings of technical and financial scaffolding independent of corporate capital and the nation-state system, the experience of Roi Mata Cultural Tours reveals that grassroots perspectives and efforts also critically depend on the glocalisation of national economies. The lack of more comprehensive investment laws in Vanuatu, and the effective monitoring or enforcement of even existing economic policy and regulation, directly contributes to the inability of Roi Mata Cultural Tours and other more grassroots PPT enterprises to expand and grow (see also Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008; Sharpley & Naidoo, 2010). Without the necessary reconfiguration of a more glocalised policy and regulatory environment instituted and enforced by the Vanuatu government, the benefits of an approach to PPT which emphasises grassroots perspectives will simply fail to eventuate for ni-Vanuatu.

8. References


CHAPTER 5 – CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT VOLUNTEERING: A CASE STUDY FROM VANUATU

Publication Details


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Foreword

This chapter critically examines the key challenges and dilemmas of international development volunteering (IDV), as one of the principal external support mechanisms for community heritage conservation and tourism development initiatives at CRMD. The previous three chapters - focused on three separate though interdependent areas of CRMD’s World Heritage, including World Heritage itself, the buffer zone, and Roi Mata Cultural tours – have all concluded that to adequately sustain new and emergent glocal manifestations into the future, a careful and considerate blend of transnational support and advocacy is required. In this chapter, therefore, I use my previous experience as an AYAD and ongoing involvement as a member of the IAG to scrutinise the nature and significance of participation and collaboration by volunteers (and outsiders, generally) in the CRMD World Heritage project. I draw on relevant elements from a growing body of critical development literature – specifically in relation to international volunteering – to discuss the complex and sometimes fraught global-local spaces in which IDV associated relationships and projects exist.

As I mentioned in the methodologies section in the introduction chapter, this chapter expands on previous discussion by engaging in a deeper critique of the personal and ethical challenges and dilemmas associated with ‘doing development’. In so doing, it not only builds on and extends the critical and unique methodology of this thesis, but finds that the cumulative effect of successive
volunteers engaged within a community project can be an effective way of scaffolding locally congruent forms of conservation and development. As the previous three chapters have clearly established, World Heritage related initiatives at CRMD will forever take on different permutations as a result of variegated social, cultural and political drivers coming from both within and outside the Lelema community. In the absence of broader state and international recognition and support, glocalised forms of heritage management and touristic enterprise will continue to require assistance from international development volunteers and their affiliated transnational networks. Hence, this chapter constructs the case for sensitive, mutual, but ultimately, pragmatic approaches to the involvement (and, crucially, the eventual discontinuation) of international development volunteers within local Indigenous community projects.

Abstract

This article takes a close look at the key challenges and dilemmas of international development volunteering (IDV) as experienced within a community project in Vanuatu. By focusing on the nature and significance of IDV engagements at the local community level, it offers critical insights into roles and relationships among international development volunteers and local host communities, together with the complex global-local interface in which projects are negotiated and constructed. I conclude that in the absence of adequate support from the state, IDV can be an effective way of helping to address the needs of modern hybrid village life.

Keywords

International development volunteers, local community, Vanuatu

1. Introduction

International development volunteering (IDV) is a distinct form of volunteerism. It is state-sponsored and typically engages professionals for an extended period of time at the request of local communities, organisations or government agencies in developing countries. The broad objectives of IDV, as espoused by many of the agencies responsible for volunteer recruitments and placements, are capacity building, poverty reduction and sustainable development. The aim of this article is to provide insights into the major challenges and dilemmas associated with IDV through a community
project in Vanuatu, a least developed country in the southwest Pacific region (see Figure 1). International development volunteers have been heavily involved in providing on-ground support to the two Indigenous landowning communities (Mangaliliu and Lelepa Island; known collectively as ‘Lelema’) of Vanuatu’s first World Heritage site, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain (CRMD), since the nomination process began in 2004 (see Figure 2). A total of nine volunteers under AusAID (the Australian Government Overseas Aid Program) funded volunteer programs have been mobilised for periods of between 3 - 18 months to assist the Lelema community on a range of development and conservation initiatives associated with World Heritage.

Figure 25: Map of the Pacific region showing the location of Vanuatu (Republic of Vanuatu 2007: 11).
I draw on my own experience and auto-ethnographic research as one of these volunteers on a 12-month posting between 2008-09, in addition to my ongoing involvement as one of several returned volunteers in the CRMD International Advocacy Group, to critically examine the nature and significance of participation and collaboration by volunteers (and outsiders, generally) in the CRMD World Heritage project. A number of scholars have drawn attention to the limited understanding of the positive and negative impacts of IDV generally, and particularly as these are experienced at the local community level (Devereux 2008; Georgeou & Engel 2011; Sherraden et al. 2008; Tiessen}
This article seeks to address this gap in the critical development literature by investigating the views and perspectives of the Lelema community on IDV engagement at CRMD and reflecting critically on my volunteer experience.

I begin by providing a brief description of my position within the CRMD World Heritage project and a background review of the literature concerning IDV. This is followed by analysis of the relations of power between international development volunteers and local counterparts and their communities, and how this manifests (and can be potentially assuaged) in everyday happenings. I then examine the ways in which volunteer projects are negotiated and constructed at this global-local interface, which is revealed to be a coalescence of global and local forces, means and agents. Finally, it is contended that given careful consideration of the challenges and dilemmas of external participation and collaboration at CRMD, and in the absence of adequate capacity, regulatory, budgetary and other scaffolding by the national government, volunteers and their affiliated transnational networks are relatively well-placed to help the Lelema community meet the constantly shifting needs and demands of modern hybrid village life.

2. The Position of Kal Mele

My volunteer position at CRMD was funded through the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) program in response to community requests for further international volunteer assistance with the CRMD World Heritage project. Launched in 1998, the AYAD program is one of a number of AusAID volunteer programs sending willing and skilled recruits overseas to “make a difference and contribute to development”. It targets volunteers between the ages of 18 and 30, and assignments are associated with a range of sectors including education, environment, health, infrastructure and trade within developing countries across Asia, the Pacific and Africa (AusTraining International 2012a).

I lived within Mangaliliu village for the duration of my 12-month posting and was adopted by a local family, who gave me the local name Kal Mele. I worked hand-in-hand with the community-elected and chief-appointed World Heritage and Tourism Committee (now Lelema World Heritage Committee, or LWHC), which was formed in 2005 to oversee the management of the CRMD World Heritage project. The LWHC has eight allocated positions (four men, four women) selected by, and equally representing, the villages of Mangaliliu and Lelepa Island. The broad objectives of my AYAD assignment were to assist the LWHC with the management and protection of the World Heritage
area and the sustainable development of the associated community tourism enterprise, ‘Roi Mata Cultural Tours’. This included, for example, applying for additional aid funding, building the financial and administrative skills of the LWHC, improving marketing strategies for the tour, and facilitating early discussions regarding land-use planning. By the time I arrived in July 2008, the Lelema community had already hosted several international volunteers, researchers and consultants as part of their World Heritage nomination bid. The role and tasks (as well as the desired cumulative effect) of international volunteers at CRMD have thus been fairly clearly defined by local chiefs and the LWHC and continues to revolve around the ultimate goal of independent management of every aspect of the project by the Lelema community.

I would also regularly travel into the capital, Port Vila, to work alongside colleagues from my national host organisation, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. While the Government of Vanuatu has provided very little in terms of capacity, budgetary or regulatory support for community heritage conservation or tourism development at CRMD, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre has consistently assisted the LWHC with their administrative and managerial responsibilities. Despite being a statutory authority, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre has a great deal of independence as it relies heavily on international aid funding for much of its project work including World Heritage.

While the basis for this self-reflexive study was prepared prior to arriving in Vanuatu, I did not travel with preconceived research questions or hypotheses. It was certainly my intention to conduct this study - subject to the community’s consent - but with an adaptive research design that allowed for the continual negotiation of specific aims, objectives and methods in response to local needs and circumstances. I did not seek to go out into the ‘field’ and prescribe and conduct, for example, a series of structured interviews or passive observation techniques separate from my commitments and duties as a volunteer. Rather, I strived to integrate the research and volunteer processes by actively participating in and critically reflecting on the promotion of locally desirable development and conservation outcomes through the rubric of World Heritage. My position as Kal Mele was (and still is) foremost articulated within the Lelema community as “wan volantia” / “a volunteer”, but it is also understood and accepted as coinciding with my role of researcher.

The methodological approach of this article is therefore highly comparable to what Mosse (2005) refers to as ‘ethnography from within’, Gastel and Nuijten (2005) describe as ‘participant ethnography’, and Bolton (2003) distinguishes as ‘participant engagement’. I maintained a personal diary throughout my AYAD posting – in line with human ethics requirements of the Australian Government - for the purposes of critical self-reflection. But by far the majority of data collated from CRMD has come from informal and formal conversations, interviews, community and focus
group meetings and questionnaires that I conducted both individually and collaboratively with the LWHC. I have drawn upon this material to corroborate my personal diary recounts with the explicit permission of the community, who has had full knowledge of my research interests and purposes from the outset. The relevant community authorities, namely the local chiefs and the LWHC, have given me full approval for the recording of meetings, interviews and conversations and the use of these various materials for the production of research publications, some co-authored with community members.

In accordance with the integrated research and volunteer processes explained earlier, the two major themes of this article - ‘roles and relationships’ and ‘the global-local branding of projeks’ - emerged from my on-ground experience and were then explicated through the literature. The problems and issues that underpin these research themes occurred most regularly throughout my personal diary entries and were also raised repeatedly by members of the Lelema community in conversations, interviews and meetings. A combination therefore of my personal diary, data collected from the community, and the critical development literature affirmed that these two themes were not only the most significant to the CRMD World Heritage project, but more broadly, to IDV theory and practice.

The task of documenting events and experiences from the position of actor or insider can be problematic, however. It is difficult to detach from one’s subjectivity and critically reflect on what has transpired with impartiality. Heeding the cautions of Rose (1997) and Heron (2005) and acknowledging the limits and complexities of critical self-reflectivity, I seek to emphasise the self-conscious nature (in terms of my subjectivity and subject positions) of my analysis of IDV engagement at CRMD. Nonetheless, it is beyond the scope of this article to describe how I went about collecting, interpreting and analysing every single piece of information attained over the course of my involvement. In the process of ‘doing development’ at CRMD, I have indirectly and directly either spoken with or heard the opinions of the vast majority of the over 700 Lelema community members, all of whom have influenced my understandings in various ways.

Scheyvens (2003) has argued with respect to development fieldwork generally that it is well within the means of local communities to resist research agendas. I extend this argument here to IDV practice, by insisting that ultimately there can be very little depth to one’s understanding of a situation (or for that matter, lasting effect or materialisation of any change) without strong endorsement from the local community. While I indelibly influenced and impacted on the thinking and actions of many in the Lelema community, no one was ever passive in the process of articulating or enacting conservation and development initiatives at CRMD. Lelema community members would
use both indirect and direct means of communicating their disapproval of methods that I (both individually and collaboratively with the LWHC) employed to, for example, gain further understanding or consensus on an issue. These moments of resistance would disturb my established impressions and understandings, forcing me to critically reflect and alter them in light of community responses and reactions.

This process of critical self-reflection affirms my belief that my accounts are valid within the context of CRMD. Turning a self-critical lens onto my position as Kal Mele within the project has allowed me, as Mosses (2005: 11) advocates, to ‘speak from within’, and delineate and deconstruct the major challenges and dilemmas associated with IDV at CRMD from a depth otherwise unreachable.

3. A Background to International Volunteering

The broad practice of volunteering has a long history in a multitude of forms and fora: from nineteenth century missionaries, doctors and teachers through to today’s highly organised and mobile development and humanitarian practitioners, and even ethical tourists willing to purchase the opportunity to help with development or conservation initiatives (Georgeou & Engel 2011; United Nations Volunteers 2011). Among all of these more recently ascendant and discernible types of international volunteer, a multitude of definitions of ‘volunteering’ exist throughout the media, public policy and academic literature.

At its most rudimentary, as Hodgkinson (2003: 38) asserts, “[v]olunteering means conducting work with no pay”. However, deeper analysis reveals a rather complex phenomenon unable to be clearly delineated from the wide range of activities, services, organisations and sectors it is associated with. Hustinx (2010) argues that definitive parameters of what actually constitutes volunteering are elusive, and those that are put forward are inherently permeable. Nonetheless, several common elements are evident within the more general literature on volunteering: that it is non-obligatory, unpaid (though stipends for living expenses are not uncommon), can take place in both an organised and unorganised context, and critically, is primarily carried out in order to aid others as well as contribute to society at large (Butcher 2010; Musick & Wilson 2008; Pearce 1993). A recent report by United Nations Volunteers (2011) affirms that volunteerism is a universal human trait, integral to every society, and exhibited all over the world in a variety manifestations.
Georgeou and Engel (2011) claim that IDV is unique simply because fostering development outside the volunteer's home country is the core aim of their engagement. Devereux (2008) is more explicit, arguing that the term ‘international development volunteering’ concentrates specifically on state-sponsored volunteers such as AYADs that work in developing countries only at the request of local communities, organisations or government agencies for an extended period of time and under local conditions. International development volunteers are also more likely to be professionals and have considerable academic or employment experience in their area of service given the highly competitive nature of the recruitment process (Roberts 2004).

Since the 1950s, a number of IDV agencies have emerged in developed countries including: the UK’s Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO); the Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO International); the US Peace Corps; the Australian Government Volunteer Program consisting of AYADs, Australian Volunteers International (AVI), Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) and Volunteering for International Development from Australia (VIDA); the New Zealand Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA); the United Nations Volunteer program administered by the United Nations Development Program; and the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. These agencies typically employ the aid money of governments earmarked for poverty alleviation and development to manage their respective volunteer programs across a diverse range of fields including business management, accounting, community development, education, natural and cultural heritage conservation, sport development, engineering and more. While budgetary allocations are comparatively small - in the Australian Government’s 2012-13 budget, for example, only US$63 million will be spent on volunteers out of a total aid budget of US$5.2 billion (Australian Government 2012) - IDV programs and agencies in Australia and around the world continue to experience strong demand in terms of recruitment numbers (Kwitko & McDonald 2009; Lewis 2006; Sherraden et al. 2008; Tiessen & Heron 2012).

Despite their popularity, quite harsh anecdotal critiques of IDV - such as that from Illich (1968) who delivered a conference paper entitled ‘to hell with good intentions’ - go back as far as the first IDV programs themselves. More recently, a growing body of literature dedicated to volunteer tourism, otherwise referred to as ‘voluntourism’, has discussed at length the numerous likely negative impacts of this type of new tourist. While voluntourism is distinct from IDV for several reasons - it is generally not funded by governments, engages both skilled and unskilled tourists, involves only very short-term placements (often around two weeks in duration), and is more associated with forms of charity than development work (Tiessen 2012; Vodopivec & Jaffe 2011; Wearing 2001) - the challenges and dilemmas are similar and serve as useful comparisons.
Guttenburg (2009) argues that without constant critical evaluations followed up by well-directed mitigating actions, voluntourism can neglect local needs, slow work progress, complete work at an unsatisfactory standard, disrupt local economies, reify simplistic perceptions of the ‘other’, and initiate negative cultural change. As much of the literature dedicated to voluntourism attests, these negative impacts typically result in the sending organisations and the voluntourists alike benefiting much more than the volountoured. Harsher criticisms from other quarters of the voluntourism discourse state that the industry sector often disguises rather than mitigates such negative impacts, and is merely another form of western neo-colonialism and imperialism (Roberts 2004; Simpson 2004). Moreover, Salazar (2004) argues that too often voluntourists are more concerned with their own personal development and self-realisation than that of the development of their host communities. The same has also been observed of short and long-term IDV placements, which leads Tiessen (2012) to question the very rationale of IDV being included within government aid budgets.

Nevertheless, on the positive side, Devereux (2008) argues that some of the central characteristics of IDV offset many of the recognised failings of conventional aid delivery and development orthodoxy, such as the often highly costly and cursory nature of overseas technical assistance provided by private consultants. IDV is capable of providing a form and depth of local capacity development - otherwise referred to as the people-centred development approach, or the humanising of what is conventionally viewed as discrete technical, structural or managerial processes - that can only be achieved by working hand in hand with local counterparts for extended periods (Devereux 2008; Lewis 2006). Indeed, Delano (1970: 122) recognised that the extended contact, continuity and support that IDV provides at the local level is its “greatest contribution to development”. The key findings of McWha (2011) reaffirm this point: that foreign volunteers working under local conditions are able to build closer relationships with local staff than foreign consultants or permanent staff, and that, given such, are much more effective in fostering capacity development. A recent review of Australian aid to Papua New Guinea also revealed that there is strong local support for an expanded volunteer program (Kwa et al. 2010). The average annual cost per volunteer (about US$40,000) is a small fraction of the cost of a technical consultant, and that therefore “one has to consider the former as substitutes for the latter” (Kwa et al. 2010: 44). Finally, and perhaps most fundamentally, in contrast to the vast majority of bi-lateral or multi-lateral projects that are controlled by aid donors and consultants, IDV places much greater power in the hands of the local host organisation (Devereux 2008).

Rather than attempt to discuss all of what Epprecht (2004: 693) describes are the “truly endless” ethical dilemmas of sending students or volunteers from the developed world into host communities and organisations within the developing world, for the remainder of this article I focus on two major
themes emerging from my experience at CRMD. They are the roles of, and relationships between, international development volunteers and local host communities, and the global-local tussle over the projects that they work on together.

4. Roles and Relationships

In this section the remunerative differences between volunteers and their host communities are elucidated, demonstrating the pronounced and long-standing structural inequalities underlying all IDV engagements in Vanuatu. The obstacles to social justice and sustainable development within host communities and organisations are not simply addressed, however, by narrowing the gap in remuneration or material terms, but also in cultural terms. As Epprecht (2004: 693) has stated, “unequal relations are structured into society at profound, even subconscious levels”. The ways in which volunteers and volunteer agencies can to a greater extent address such enduring and formidable challenges are outlined here.

Despite the ‘volunteer’ title, IDV typically attracts a sometimes sizeable stipend, particularly when compared to average local wages in most developing countries (see for example: AusTraining International 2012b). While in 2008 the legislated minimum wage in Vanuatu increased by 30% to VT26,000 (or approximately US$280) per month (Prime Minister’s Office 2010), informal conversations with Lelema villagers and other ni-Vanuatu (Indigenous peoples of Vanuatu) residing in Port Vila confirm prevailing wage rates at least half of this minimum. Furthermore, in relation to CRMD, the LWHC are largely voluntary and receive no other source of regular income - with the occasional exception of short-term casual wages via limited aid grants. They principally rely, instead, on their subsistence agriculture. This is in stark contrast to Vanuatu AYADs who receive a total annual tax-free payments of US$26,400 (or US$2,200 per month) for living and accommodation, then a further US$1,000 and US$1,200 for settlement and resettlement allowances respectively.

This supports Pearce’s (1993) argument that suggests that being called ‘volunteers’ falsely represents their assumed unpaid status. The term ‘volunteer’, as she counters, has been appropriated by government aid-funded volunteer agencies marketing symbolic and emotional meanings ahead of the ostensible meaning of volunteering as unpaid labour. However, as Roberts (2004) points out, the allowances paid to international development volunteers such as AYADs impacts on the quality of the services provided. This is one critical distinguishing element of IDV that attracts candidates with more professional experience and qualifications than other forms of international volunteering such
as voluntourism which are not state-sponsored. Sherraden et al. (2008) reiterates the point, arguing that such remuneration or compensation for international development volunteers encourages high calibre applicants as well as increased effort in the field. But this raises important questions: is this indicative of wider and deeper power differentials between international development volunteers and local counterparts? How can these begin to be addressed? And as I discuss further in the following sections, who is more important to, or has more influence over, community development projects?

Due to the close nature of our collaboration, together with the LWHC I was effectively part of the public face of the CRMD World Heritage project at the village-level and, as a result, equally implicated in all decisions and actions both directly and indirectly associated with it. Yet no matter how fraught the situation or tough the challenge as an AYAD I always had a 'departure date', and I always had the ability to leave if the situation warranted for health, security, emotional or other reasons. Moreover, while truly fortunate enough to be adopted into an encompassing familial structure within the Lelema community, my relationships with community members that were opposed to, and even outright angered by, the direction of the project were significantly different than those of my host family and LWHC members. The LWHC could not go back to their respective houses and immediate families and expect to seclude themselves from the project and community. I could. LWHC members had children that would be teased, or worse, because of their role in the project. I did not. Moreover, some of the women LWHC members had a spouse who would lose his temper at their long hours of unremunerated involvement in a project that at the time did not have widespread support in the community. Once again, I did not.

Shielded from so many of the potential negative ramifications locally, therefore, international development volunteers are effectively able to co-drive projects with a level of immunity which if ignored (or worse, abused) can have dire consequences for local counterparts and their families. To this end, the same can also be said of outsiders generally participating or collaborating in community development projects. Emanating from her study into Canadian women development workers in Africa, Heron (2007: 153) has called for “a politics of accountability” to be inculcated before any such engagement. Tiessen (2012) builds on this by arguing for the provision of more rigorous pre-departure training courses and return debrief sessions for Canadian youth participating in learn/volunteer abroad programs.

The CRMD experience confirms the need for enhancing such measures at the volunteer end, but also illustrates the often ignored multiple levels and forms of existing community agency that is regularly exercised to call attention to specific cases of inequality as well as mitigate the negative impacts of development practice more broadly. This may take the form of direct confrontation (such
as the instance described in the following paragraph), or indirect and even subtle means of resistance, such as abstaining from a workshop run by a volunteer or simply waiting until they have returned home before resuming normative community practices and processes. The challenge for volunteers and other international development practitioners scantily mentioned in the literature is to be attuned to, and in a position to augment, these more elusive (and often more prevalent) culturally specific forms of local agency and capacity. In addition to engendering ethical approaches (Heron 2007) and enhancing formal training and debriefing methods (Tiessen 2012), the CRMD case study highlights the merit of fostering transnational networks or alliances of returned volunteers and other professionals with local cross-cultural knowledge and experience to among other things mentor new volunteer recruits so they can at least begin to grasp such local grassroots forces.

Yet as much as we (as relatively privileged volunteers) try to comprehend and put aside the economic and cultural differences and historical circumstances linked with our positionality, there will always be more intimate or intense encounters where they shall permeate and even be outright asserted. This is best exemplified by a budget negotiation meeting held with life-long friends - a LWHC member and a Vanuatu Cultural Centre colleague - for an aid grant we were on the cusp of receiving. The meeting was called specifically to discuss the amount to be paid as wage for the LWHC member for the following three months. It was tense from the outset, and quickly boiled over to a point where my close friend, the LWHC member, cried out (expletives omitted): “yu yu no save! Yu yu wan waet man nomo!” / “You don’t know anything! You’re just another white man!” (personal communication, 04 Apr 2009). This exclamation was in response to my suggestion of possible wage reduction in keeping with the budget and the wishes of our superiors at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. The proposed reduction (or more precise, the meeting to discuss the possibility of such) was not significant - keeping the overall amount still above the legal minimum wage - yet the mere discussion of it by me as a waet man / white man was enough to trigger such a vehement response. In the end, there was no wage reduction.

This story is a personal one, yet it highlights wider challenges and dilemmas for IDV as well as outsider participation and collaboration within community development projects more broadly. For the LWHC member, at that moment of outburst I represented a symbol of the deeply rooted structural differences that surround all personal relations between international development volunteers and local host communities in a world plagued by extraordinary levels of social inequality and injustice. I also embodied, not a close friend or fellow colleague, but a waet man indelibly associated with the long legacy of past outsider contact and encounters with the Lelema community; from the early colonial explorers, missionaries and traders to modern-day investors, consultants and volunteers. The importance of carefully and considerately negotiating the economic, cultural and
political divides within such situations, but also generally throughout day-to-day project work, must never be underestimated on the part of the international development volunteer. At times when I have failed to do so at CRMD (due mainly to time pressures or a misreading of cultural signposts) it has been a primary reason for disengagement and demotivation by LWHC and other local community members.

5. The Global-Local Branding of ‘Projeks’

Although terminologically the Bislama word ‘projek’ is used in connection with ‘project’ in English, they are only superficially alike. As Hviding (2003) explains in relation to the Solomon Islands pidgin variant ‘porojek’, locally the word has come to represent initiatives that are fundamentally exogenous in origin and running. Highly coveted by local village chiefs, Hviding (2003) has observed porojeks being secured more for the status they bring to the chiefs and the money, goods and services that flow from non-government organisations to the community, than the specific goals of the porojek itself. The idea and mystique of projeks in Vanuatu is very similar, though, in a slight distinction from Hviding (2003), are not exclusively exogenous or endogenous, but a complex blend of both. Projeks undergo constant negotiation by a range of different people and groups competing for influence over, and affiliation with, community development processes and practices. It is within this complex global-local nexus that local communities - with their links to outside agencies, organisations, governments, and markets – are attempting to utilise the objectives, standing and resources of volunteer projeks for a wide variety of purposes. However, volunteers and the IDV agencies that sponsor them are also in broad contention for projeks.

International development volunteers have been observed being engaged in even the faintest trace of a projek in order to maintain a veil of legitimacy as a volunteer in a host community or organisation, while their primary purpose was clearly touristic. In the Lelema community alone, I have witnessed two volunteers from other state-sponsored agencies that were placed into the community under the veil of ‘having a projek’, when in reality there was no established initiative or supporting network and little need for the skills that those volunteers brought. A prominent Lelema community member once described the ineffectiveness of one of these volunteers as follows: “Hemi osem wan floting plastic” / “She/He is like a floating plastic bag” (personal communication, 08 Dec 2008).

Like development professionals more broadly, international development volunteers are known to occasionally overestimate their own importance and invoke a myth of altruism and progress (Heron
From my own personal experience and observations of other volunteers while in the field, over-inflation of self-importance can be best described as ‘statue-building’; a paternalistic, even egotistical, tendency within community development in particular where the volunteer’s focus on assisting others is surpassed by their desire to carve out their own legacy and enhance their own career path. In a sense, they are engaging in the branding of ‘their’ projek so as to ensure that it is always associated with their name and stature, as opposed to any tangible outcomes and achievements. The egoistic and self-oriented motivations of international volunteers are also more likely to reinforce, rather than rectify, inequalities in terms of class, citizenship and ethnicity (Epprecht 2004; Heron 2007; Tiessen 2012).

However, to expand on the findings of Hviding (2003) discussed earlier, such desires, actions and attitudes are not limited to international development volunteers. On many occasion, in what is commonly referred to as ‘big-man politics’ in Melanesia, I have also witnessed local chiefs and community leaders position themselves in order to be associated with the potential accolades or wealth of successful projeks to which they have previously contributed very little in terms of land, effort, money or otherwise. Moreover, the case of CRMD illustrates the importance of recognising that even if a volunteer is self-interested, the LWHC and the Lelema community are still more than capable of manoeuvring, even manipulating (both intentionally and unintentionally), the various outside actors and their affiliated networks to their advantage. Indeed, the desire of international volunteers and other foreigners to participate and collaborate in their development can bestow the community with significant power and leverage as the gatekeepers to the involvement, and even the credibility of, external actors. However, critically, within the Lelema community it has typically only been the strong, confident and empowered internal actors who are able to effectively champion their community’s concerns or needs regarding volunteer projeks.

But probably the most complex push and pulls that volunteer projeks experience (to the outsider at least) are caused by intra-community politics. Local community coordinators and managers of projeks have the ability to steer benefits away from individuals or families that are the subject of jealousies, disputes, conflicts or rivalries. By arbitrarily channelling the income or revenue flow from the CRMD World Heritage project (even if it is minor in village terms), LWHC members are able to reward community members who have been more supportive of the project than others, or simply favour members of their close family. Illustrating the potential consequences of such actions, Read (2011) has observed local communities on the island of Tetepare in the Solomon Islands subverting and even outright sabotaging projeks over less. This extra and highly complicated level that projeks operate on is more often than not totally unbeknownst to international volunteers, particularly those involved
in a one-off deployment (even if long-term) to a newly established projek with no supporting transnational agents, networks or organisations.

The relatively new currency of volunteer projeks therefore operates on and competes across both global and local levels; whether it be the volunteer’s personal statue, the IDV agency’s volunteer quota, a nation’s overseas aid objectives, a stepping stone for a local ‘big-man’ to a more advantageous social-political standing, or the machinations of intra-community politics. It is within this hybrid space that projeks are designed, implemented and branded, and that the international development volunteer is thrust-in upon arriving in country. The challenge for volunteers is to view such fluidity and fluctuations across the global-local interface as simply the inevitable and intrinsic everyday ups and downs of community development, as opposed to lamenting it as an unwillingness of communities to participate or achieve strict either internal or external measures of projek success.

6. Conclusion

It is clear that, as in development practice more broadly, volunteers are by no means a panacea. The contemporary processes, interactions and flows of globalisation continue to leave many local Indigenous communities such as Lelema behind, driving ever-greater levels of political, social and economic inequality around the world. However, local participation and control in and of itself has so far proved insufficient as a basis for the long-term independent management of the CRMD World Heritage project by the Lelema community. Independent of one another neither local communities nor international development volunteers have the knowledge, resources or alliances required to meet the ever-changing needs and demands of modern hybrid village life. While the Lelema community is not only best placed, but also more than capable, of utilising their own cultural and knowledge systems to reconfigure both conservation and development activities at CRMD (see: Trau 2012a, 2012b; Trau et al. 2012), often this alone is not enough to ensure a project’s success or longevity. As long as community projects (in all of their ambiguous and complex global-local permutations) are insufficiently recognised, valued or supported by the state, IDV can play a significant role at the local community level by bridging the capacity, regulatory, budgetary and other gaps.

Critically, this is not a case for the endless deployment of volunteers. Nor is it justification for paternalism or any other form of imposed or unnecessarily extended external intervention within the internal development processes and practices of local communities. Rather it is a call for pragmatism
based on mutual partnership with, and collaboration between, local communities and the outside agents, networks and organisations that support them with technical expertise and financial resources. International development volunteers are uniquely placed at the global-local nexus of *proeks* to augment and amplify the bottom-up approaches, expressions and manifestations of community development and conservation. The relative success of volunteers at CRMD in this respect is not in the individual achievements of any one volunteer, but the cumulative effect of multiple and successive volunteers supported by flexible alliances and networks of communication with input from international, national and local levels. Although by no means do I seek to place responsibility for social change purely on external agencies and ignore - or at least underplay - the significance of local-level power and agency. It is absolutely paramount that the Lelema community’s ultimate goal of IDV at CRMD mentioned earlier - the independent management of every aspect of the project by the Lelema community - never pales or fades.

7. References


PART III – CONCLUSION
CHAPTER 6 – THE FUTURE OF WORLD HERITAGE
AT CHIEF ROI MATA’S DOMAIN

1. Becoming-glocal

Through the four lines of inquiry extended via these published papers, this thesis has begun to present a more nuanced, complex and independent understanding of the multi-faceted project that is CRMD World Heritage. By critically examining the experience of the Lelema community at the global-local nexus of heritage conservation and tourism development I have explicitly addressed the key questions raised in the introduction of this thesis, all of which lie at the forefront of the current multi-disciplinary theory and praxis of UNESCO World Heritage, particularly as it expands and strives for applicability throughout Melanesia and the Pacific islands more broadly. These findings are consolidated and advanced here under the central theme of this thesis - the need to move beyond binaries - which I develop under two separate though interdependent sub-headings within the next section (‘Evolving Theories and Practices’).

A first set of implications emerging from the arguments and examples across the four published papers are addressed under the sub-heading: ‘World Heritage as both global and local’. From the formation of CRMD’s Wol Heritij brand (Chapter 2) and emerging conceptions of CRMD’s bafa zon (Chapter 3), through to the hybridised imperatives of the Roi Mata Cultural Tours business (Chapter 4), it is clear that the processes of globalisation and localisation are occurring simultaneously within the Lelema community. The resultant real and imagined conservation and development manifestations are constantly on the way to becoming-glocal; an ongoing, adaptive negotiation that is often marked by intra-community contestation and conflict as new and old factors compete for modern-day influence.

The second set of implications are captured under the sub-heading: ‘Transnational support and advocacy for grassroots glocalisation’. Each of the published papers has identified the importance of engineering careful and sensitive transnational networks that support and promote these local grassroots perspectives and imperatives. If glocalised heritage management and business development models at CRMD are to thrive and benefit the Lelema community, then it is critical
that local power and agency be augmented and amplified within national and global fora. Chapter 5 went further than the other papers and picked up this theme specifically in relation to the supporting role of IDV and international assistance generally to CRMD. I pick up the theme again here to expand the point and draw further implications for future conservation and development theory and practice at CRMD.

The implications of these thesis findings are followed by a section that identifies and discusses the future challenges and opportunities for CRMD World Heritage. Given that the LWHC lies at the heart of CRMD management, I focus especially on the core challenges facing them as a committee. This chapter and the overall thesis conclude with a final reflection on Lelema’s experience with World Heritage and my personal involvement within it.

2. Evolving Theories and Practices

Being very new to the region, this thesis represents one of the most substantial and detailed studies of the design and implementation of UNESCO World Heritage within an independent Melanesian country to date. This section elucidates the major findings and explains how they may inform and advance existing theories and practices. Throughout all of the published papers, emphasis has been placed on going beyond the current international discourse across four interrelated topic areas: World Heritage, buffer zones, pro-poor tourism and IDV. Following the order the papers appear, I elicit the contributions made to several related fields of enquiry, namely the new and emerging fields of critical heritage studies, World Heritage buffering within the protected area literature, the combined tourism and development literatures commonly represented through pro-poor tourism approaches, as well as the critical development literature and IDV specifically. This spread of disciplinary interests is reflected in the journals in which the articles have been published.

2.1 World Heritage as both Global and Local

From the early European explorers who first sailed through parts of the archipelago in 1606 and were followed by traders and missionaries of the 19th century, to the joint colonial administration commonly known as the Anglo-French Condominium of ‘New Hebrides’ established in 1906, external agents and actors have sought to control and exploit ni-Vanuatu for their land and resources, and in the process indelibly influence and change their customs and beliefs. Indeed, as shown in section 2 of Chapter 1, social effects and change within Vanuatu as a whole can be traced
back to the earliest sources of the archipelago’s migration and settlement. UNESCO World Heritage is just one within a long line of other global forces, institutions and agents vying for effect and influence within the Lelema community.

With this context established, the thesis has demonstrated that the Lelema community is faced with an increasing array of intensifying globalising pressures and influences. I have not sought to challenge the present on-ground reality that globalisation writ large is occurring to the detriment (economically, culturally, politically, ecologically) of ni-Vanuatu communities as attested here; rather I have tried to substantiate, through the experience of World Heritage at CRMD, that contemporary village lifeworlds are more nuanced and complex than is often portrayed. Within the multi-disciplinary studies of heritage and tourism within which this thesis is situated, depictions of globalisation as a top-down, one-way, monolithic process completely suppressing and subsuming weak and powerless localities ignores, or at least understates, the points of agency and vitality within communities that can be built-on and elevated with the right kinds of support. I must stress that while academics, policy-makers and practitioners alike must be aware of the potential domination of global institutions and systems operating at the local level, we must not be blind to people's capacity to select elements of importance and recombine them for their own purposes in their own way. Abundantly clear from the discussion in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in particular, World Heritage at CRMD is made up of global and local elements, and that this process - depicted here as glocalisation - is quite simply part of the necessary, inevitable and complicated negotiations that take place internally within the Lelema community today.

At CRMD, the glocalisation of local customary forms of heritage management and protection associated with World Heritage listing has been largely implicit, and greatly aided by the fact that the site resists being controlled by a central government authority and gazetted by a national legislature. As mentioned in the introduction, local community autonomy in Vanuatu is the basis from which the arguments of each of the published papers are constructed. Indeed, the vigour and strength of glocalisation taking place within CRMD today is directly attributable to the fact that rural and semi-rural Indigenous communities in Vanuatu are largely self-autonomous political agents and are effectively sovereign over their own lands.

While this is clearly an unusual set of circumstances, this thesis has also clarified the wider applicability and validity of these findings not only for the majority Indigenous citizens of other independent Pacific Islands countries, but also for local Indigenous communities around the world. For if international heritage scholarship and the heritage profession are serious about involving Indigenous peoples in the management of their own heritage, as Chapters 2 and 3 conclude, then
they must do away with the tendency to frame situations in terms of simplistic dualisms. Indigenous heritage management, on the model of CRMD, should include and utilise both global and local techniques, systems and values at the core of the design and implementation of conservation strategies. Moreover, the inclusion of economic development opportunities within these strategies, particularly in the form of tourism, are as integral to the protection of cultural heritage as the conservation strategies themselves. This leads me to suggest that recognising these glocal processes and permutations of Indigenous community heritage conservation (and, critically, their inherently unpredictable and fluctuating nature) by building on them through the design and implementation of World Heritage areas would be a far more effective way of involving communities and passing on the ‘sense of ownership’ that Logan and Smith (2010) and others including UNESCO (2004, 2012c) have called for, rather than portraying and expecting homogeneity, consensus and purity of tradition at the local level.

Acknowledging that the UNESCO World Heritage system is made-up of an array of different actors and processes – from the nomination stage and site inscription to implementation of management plans and monitoring the results – recognition of their glocalities may take the form of a shift in the rhetoric and expectations of sites under customary ownership or management. For instance, maintaining a certain documentary standard and legal threshold, the fundamental emphasis of management plans could shift away from the formation of glossy well-produced documents in English and instead be guided by and even include hand-written notes and sketches in the local language (such as the sketch by Douglas Kalotiti displayed as Figure 9 in Chapter 1, sub-section 1.4). Furthermore, while adopting (or rather, appropriating) World Heritage concepts and terminology, economic development opportunities must be well and truly imbricated with conservation strategies. As the case of CRMD illustrates, these are the fundamental and realistic expectations of World Heritage in the context of developing communities and customary management. Surely the relatively successful application of World Heritage conservation notions and measures under such circumstances is more important than an expensive report or plan developed and written by outsiders, no matter how familiar they are with the local context.

Winter (2012a) has recently suggested that without a more productive dialogue with the heritage conservation sector (itself now a billion dollar industry and growing) in terms of policies and practices, important considerations emanating from academics within the field of critical heritage studies risk being marginalised or even disregarded. Chapter 2 largely affirms this by demonstrating the need to move beyond emerging conceptions of World Heritage globalisation from within critical heritage scholarship, and to begin to accept and recognise the more complicated forms of glocal heritage management strategies which are concurrently defined by their current and future local
economic potential as well as their role in serving to augment protection of local cultural values and places. This multi-faceted grassroots view of World Heritage is also further rationale for post-disciplinary research, which Coles, Hall and Duval (2006) have advocated within tourism studies and Winter (2012b) and Ballard and Wilson (2012) within heritage studies. Indeed the critical examination of CRMD World Heritage within this thesis has not been confined by conventional disciplinary perspectives, suggesting the need for a particular cross-disciplinary focus on questions of local management of heritage and other resources.

Moving on to the protected area and heritage literature concerned with buffer zones and notions of buffering generally, I revealed in Chapter 3 how the landowning villagers of the CRMD buffer zone construe, and are beginning to recast in light of local realities (resources, economy, culture, politics), international standards of the acceptable or permissible levels of conservation and development. It is clearly evident from the buffer zone experience at CRMD that grassroots-level configurations of protected area buffering are more conflicted and complicated than portrayed in the protected area literature as well as policy documents of World Heritage including the operational guidelines. Current enthusiasm for community within the international heritage and protected area discourses are largely predicated on the assumed homogeneity of local meanings, desires and depictions. This fails to capture the multitude of important ways in which buffer zones are being operationalised and mobilised within communities such as Lelema, in addition to the flexibility and adaptability needed when dealing with and supporting these glocal approaches to buffering.

Chapters 2 and 3 established the importance of locally benefiting economic development (especially through tourism) to community heritage conservation at CRMD. However, Chapter 4 found that national governments trying to encourage greater local or Indigenous participation in the tourist trade, along with industry itself, need to work to glocalise the economy through targeted policies and regulations that, rather than stifling the market and smothering foreign investment, aim to guide it toward paths of greater equity and fairness. Currently the scales are not just tipped in favour of foreign investment, they are in effect broken, and ni-Vanuatu are simply failing to benefit from the country’s past decade or so of economic growth. While the critical issue of raising ni-Vanuatu participation and remuneration within the cash or market economy is a complex one, and has been addressed previously by several authors (see for example: Milne, 1996; Slatter, 2006), Chapter 4 demonstrated that local business models require special kinds of scaffolding and underpinning, recognising both their individualistic and communalistic values and components. Local ni-Vanuatu businesses - and particularly those located in rural or semi-rural areas - are not just operating under expectations and competitions from within the market, but also under local cultural measures of success that have their basis in the kastom ekonomi, such as community solidarity and wealth
redistribution. Bridging these two economies (cash and kastom) for communities increasingly becoming-glocal, poses significant challenges in an economic context where few or no lower rungs exist for small ni-Vanuatu businesses such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours. Vanuatu’s investment and labour laws require significant reform but, like all laws of the Republic, also critically need backing up with effective administration and enforcement. This remains, regretfully, some way off.

### 2.2 Transnational Support and Advocacy for Grassroots Glocalisation

In order for local heritage conservation strategies and tourism business models to prosper, transnational support and advocacy funded by aid or philanthropy, or simply maintained via voluntary contributions, is of vital importance. Within this thesis I build on Appadurai’s (2000) theory of grassroots globalisation, utilising the CRMD experience to suggest that it would be more appropriate and indicative of local grassroots forces, movements and overall imperatives to refer to it as an instance of ‘grassroots glocalisation’. In Chapters 4 and 5 specifically, I also effectively broadened the thrust of Appadurai’s call for greater action and activism on the part of academia, specifically within the social sciences, to policy-makers and practitioners alike.

It is clear that community heritage conservation and tourism development initiatives associated with CRMD need to be glocalised in order to effectively function and prosper at the local level. But it is also evident that glocalisation is rarely simple or unitary, assured or guaranteed. Local community control and autonomy in and of itself is seldom sufficient as a basis for the long-term management of heritage or tourism under the banner of World Heritage given the intensifying pressures of modern-day globalisation. There is increasing community need for, and reliance on, regular cash income to supplement even basic services such as food and shelter that were typically provided under the subsistence or kastom ekonomi prior to the explosion in land sales, in addition to the requirements of modern health care and schooling.

The term ‘glocalisation’ does not fully capture the complete and often ugly ruptures, disagreements and outright conflicts that are fundamentally inherent to the negotiation of pathways through complicated contemporary lifeworlds of Lelema villagers. This is not to say that the Lelema community does not have strategies to deal with them and, in fact, this very cacophony is integral to reaching collective agreement on conservation and development strategies for the Lelema community. Rather, I seek to emphasise the point that expands on Appadurai’s notion of ‘globalisation from below’, which as he advocates, can take place independently of corporate capital and the nation-state. At CRMD it is clear that the administrative, budgetary and legislative support of
the Government of Vanuatu is critical to augmenting local grassroots efforts to conserve heritage and develop economically. Moreover, capital has already been and is continuing to be actively sought by the Lelema community (though yet to be obtained for anything beyond the construction of two new churches in Mangaliliu and Lelepa island) from ethical investors, philanthropists and organisations. For these reasons, and building on the conclusion of Chapter 5, I argue that strategies and frameworks that offer a range of flexible support mechanisms and alliances across the entire sphere of civil society are required to underpin glocal manifestations of heritage and tourism at CRMD. Finding the appropriate balance within these dynamic networks will be the primary and constant challenge for World Heritage management at CRMD.

Chapter 5 also reveals the extent to which all of these activities and support frameworks occur within a complex and hybrid glocal space. In order to appreciate something of the scope of this complexity, a range of professional expertise and experience is required. The cumulative effect of multiple and successive international development volunteers - as has been experienced at CRMD - is put forward as a positive example of such transnational support and advocacy. It is concluded that as local communities in Vanuatu and around the developing world increasingly desire and demand local and culturally congruous forms of alternative development and conservation, the ideas, relationships and initiatives that can be facilitated through IDV involvement will become even more applicable. This type and level of outside collaboration, as argued in the previous sub-section, is not meant to oblige community heritage and tourism activities to conform to international standards (whether espoused by UNESCO or the market), but augment and amplify their distinct glocal expressions and manifestations.

3. Future Challenges and Opportunities for World Heritage at Chief Roi Mata’s Domain

Even glocalised, there is a limit to which World Heritage can be viewed as useful to the everyday lives of the over 700 community members of Lelema. There will always be fluctuating numbers of supporters and opponents within the community, which will mean, undoubtedly, that certain types and levels of development take place that do not complement and may even degrade, the OUV of the property. This is quite simply the on-ground global-local reality of everything within Lelema. There are always going to be some who choose to follow the course of CRMD World Heritage, some who do not, and others who vacillate and only come onboard when it suits their personal interests or when the popular appeal of a project, initiative or enterprise is great enough to maintain
their enthusiasm. What this thesis has tried to convey is that rather than viewing these local-level ups and downs as fundamental, even irreconcilable, aberrations of World Heritage management in Vanuatu and the Pacific islands more broadly (which, for example, may lead to an unsuccessful nomination or inclusion on the List of World Heritage in danger), they should be accepted and recognised for what they are: that is, the necessary and inevitable trials and tribulations of contemporary hybrid village lifeworlds where a myriad of global and local (Chapter 1, section 1) and old and new (Chapter 1, section 2) factors and forces compete for influence. In the context of largely disengaged, ineffective and under-resourced state parties that are neither primarily responsible for, nor can guarantee the protection of, World Heritage sites within their jurisdiction, there is a need (at least in the short-term) for greater international flexibility and compromise over OUV thresholds and threats. Needless to say, local Indigenous community-based World Heritage committees such as the LWHC are unable (and, for that matter, unwilling) to maintain the OUV of World Heritage sites with the same rigour or rigidity as statutory management authorities in Australia or any other developed country.

The need for greater international and national recognition and support is particularly urgent for the LWHC, which since the untimely death of Douglas Kalotiti in April 2011 has only six members. These six LWHC members hold the entire World Heritage project, along with the hopes and dreams of those in the community that support it and see it as a potential pathway toward a brighter future, on their shoulders. Without them, World Heritage is merely a mental boundary, and one which would hold much less sway and pull locally in terms of its associated development and conservation efforts should any of the current six LWHC members lower their level of involvement, or worse, quit. Chapter 2 made clear that World Heritage as simply a conservation idea or practice is not enough of a reason for the customary landowners and community of CRMD to protect and maintain it. Associated, independent and successful (or even the perception or belief of imminent or future success) World Heritage development enterprises such as Roi Mata Cultural Tours are just as crucial to the maintenance of OUV as any conservation initiative.

As Read (2011, p. 155) observed on the island of Tetepare in the Solomon Islands with regard to combined conservation and development efforts: “we now recognised that this support could evaporate overnight if a better offer appeared”. Read also writes of strict locally imposed deadlines by which conservation-development projects must show adequate monetary returns to the community. In the case of Tetepare, this was a mere two years. The inherently slow and complicated nature of community development (as expressed in Chapters 3 and 4) means that World Heritage at CRMD is still currently more of an intangible idea or a dream of a better future rather than something tangible that provides regular and consistent benefits such as income generation. Given
that the World Heritage project - now over seven years since the nomination process began and four years since inscription - still relies heavily on the promise of more and better monetary returns, there is a real and current danger that support for the project may slump or even collapse at any time. CRMD World Heritage relies on local community members (the most dominant of whom in public at least are chiefs and landowners – particularly the boisterous type – from both the World Heritage property and the buffer zone) subscribing to the vision that one day in the future the project will reap greater benefits for them and their children. Although even with regular and multiple income streams flowing as evenly as possible throughout all sections of the community, there will always be some villagers and some families that find reason to be disaffected or oppositional.

Fundamentally, this highlights the need for a strong, resilient and adaptable local management system and structure - which at CRMD has the LWHC at its heart - that is adequately supported financially, technically and legislatively on both national and international levels. Well-equipped local management systems and structures play the most vital role in sustaining the levels of local commitment and enthusiasm necessary for conservation to remain a potent partner in the development process. The various national and international stakeholders of UNESCO World Heritage – broadly including the World Heritage Centre, the World Heritage Committee, the Advisory Bodies as well as state parties and their relevant government authorities – must think strategically and pragmatically in terms of the ways they can collaboratively support these local management efforts. Important reform efforts in this regard are currently underway to strengthen overall World Heritage governance within Vanuatu and CRMD – particularly via the recently established forum mentioned in the introduction chapter, the Vanuatu World Heritage Advisory Group - but only time will tell if it happens quickly enough and if returns to the community from these recent efforts meet their needs and expectations. The quote below is indicative of the general (and glocalised) terms by which the project is evaluated by the majority of customary landowners.

*Hemi mas benefitem wanwan lan ona mo komuniti semtaem / It [the World Heritage project] must benefit both individual landowners and the community at the same time (CRMD buffer zone landowner, Lelepa island community meeting, February 2009)*

The final challenge for CRMD World Heritage worthy of mention here, and on which all of the arguments made within this thesis rely, is the maintenance of the motivation of individual LWHC members as the core drivers and advocates of the project. Increasingly innovative and sensitive strategies led by LWHC members themselves will be required if the committee is to not only maintain existing levels of effort and time dedicated to the project, but increase them in the future. If individual members of the LWHC (particularly the tourism managers) for example are able to make
small amounts of money for themselves and their families (such as, on a commission basis), and to feel as though they are being financially rewarded for their input, then their input would likely increase. All of the LWHC members have said as much, but would this ever be accepted locally by the community under the dual terms expressed in the quote above? In other words, would Roi Mata Cultural Tours ever be deemed locally successful if LWHC members were to earn more than other community members for their effective managerial oversight? Perhaps, but only with greater financial transparency and by simultaneously ensuring that individual landowners also receive income and that tangible contributions are made to the community’s health and education services. Whatever the specific strategy or method, it is imperative that these delicate discussions and resolutions progress quickly, given that one of the tourism managers (Topie Warry) has just recently taken on employment in Port Vila to meet the income needs of his family.

These are some of the real and foundational paradoxes and conundrums that the LWHC (as they themselves have expressed) must openly work toward in their own way, but also with outside assistance; particularly financial assistance in the form of sitting allowances for as many meetings and days as is needed to work through these issues. Unfortunately, to date, this has not been forthcoming at the sustained rate required even though the payment of LWHC sitting allowances is one of the simplest, most direct, low-cost (roughly AUD20 per day) and effective forms of assistance that international agencies or the Government of Vanuatu could supply. As a result, as the responsibilities and workload of the LWHC continues to grow - particularly through the burgeoning number of new World Heritage-associated projects and initiatives - basic yet fundamental LWHC structural issues and problems are pushed to the side in order to keep up with everyday events and occurrences. The ongoing task of reinvigorating the LWHC, both for its current members and the overall Lelema community, lies at the very heart of the future challenges for World Heritage at CRMD.

4. A Final Reflection

My overall experience at CRMD has been, in short, life changing. I have developed relationships and connections that I shall treasure forever. I have also enhanced a research agenda and career path in which I can only hope to continue to aid the same people and initiatives, and those similar elsewhere, into the future. From my time as an AYAD to my ongoing work through the IAG, I have been able to meaningfully aid and advance a project that is capable of not only providing alternate and more sustainable development opportunities for the Lelema community at a time when dominant forms of development in the region (primarily land leasing) are clearly unsustainable, but equips them with
contemporary tools to reinvigorate and elevate their local *kastom* associated with Roi Mata. I was able to do so because of the knowledge, skills and experience I brought to the position, but even more crucially, because of the life-long relationships I was able to form with key members of the community, staff of my host organisation the VKS, and international advisors. These relationships and networks across multiple global-local levels are the linchpins of our collective past achievements and continuing engagements.

Writing about my experience for the AYAD Magazine back in September 2008, I concluded with the following passage that I use again here to illustrate both my sincere belief in the positive contributions the World Heritage project can make, and the reverence I hold for the work of the LWHC:

> While it has been extremely busy and challenging, I feel both honoured and privileged to be working with everyone involved in Chief Roi Mata’s Domain. I am in a state of perpetual awe at their heartfelt passion and selfless dedication, and have no doubt, that under the management and protection of the committee [the LWHC], the World Heritage listing will provide well deserved benefits to the beautiful people of the Lelepa region. (Trau, 2009, p. 19)

I hope that by concentrating on the processes at work in a community with which I am familiar, I have been able to shed some light on the critical bottom-up forces at play within other World Heritage areas within the region. In talking about the wider implications of this study, not only is it as CRMD goes, so goes much of Vanuatu, but as a long-time Vanuatu observer has remarked, “as Vanuatu goes, so goes much of the developing world” (Miles, 1998, p. 197). Nonetheless, I must stress that the way each community reacts to its own distinct combination of circumstances will be unique for a range of cultural, historical and political reasons, and it is always important to contextualise any broad generalisations about a region as diverse as the Pacific.

To conclude, then, I would like to recall my last visit to Retoka island with Douglas Kalotiti in July 2009 only days before I left for Australia at the end of my 12-month AYAD posting. In so doing, I evoke the memory of Douglas and his vision for World Heritage at CRMD which to the best of my ability I have sought to represent and advocate throughout this thesis:

> In one of the most powerful and spiritual moments of my life, on my last visit to Retoka island, Douglas said a blessing to Roi Mata that included me. After saying a short prayer and paying his respects to *olfala Roi* he asked me to come forward. As I did he handed me one of
the Namele leafs he was holding, a leaf of *kastom* symbolising among other things peace and respect. Then, together, we placed the leaves on the grave of Roi Mata and in language said *Bong wio / goodnight* for the final time. As we all then left the gravesite for shore and climbed into the boat taking us back to Lelepa, I could feel the tears welling. I quickly jumped to the nose of the boat staring forwards, the tears rolling down my face, the sadness of bidding farewell to this place that I have come to love and call home welling deep in my heart.

(Personal Diary Entry, 7 July 2009)


and Sustainability in Pacific island Fisheries (pp. 187-208). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific.


APPENDIX 1: STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Adam Trau, contributed to over 90% of the overall development (Concept 95%; Data Collection 100%; Analysis 95%; Writing 95%) of the research and paper/publication entitled 'Bafa Zon: localising World Heritage at Chief Roi Mata’s Domain, Vanuatu'. The table below lists the sections contained within the publication and the author/s responsible for their development in order of contribution.

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(Signature of Candidate)

I, as a Co-Author, endorse that this level of contribution by the candidate indicated above is appropriate.

(Co-Author 1: Christopher Ballard)  (Co-Author 2: Meredith Wilson)

(Signature of Co-Author 1)  (Signature of Co-Author 2)