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**Spring 2007**

# Fijian chocolate – what would it look like?

A study of the Fijian food culture, to find the specific attributes that might form the future Fijian chocolate culture.

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Larsson, Emma and Olsson, Amina (2007). *Fijian chocolate – what would it look like?* A study of the Fijian food culture, to find the specific attributes that might form the future Fijian chocolate culture. Kristianstad: Department of Behavioural Sciences, University of Kristianstad.

## **Abstract**

The cocoa produced in Fiji is exported to industrialized countries for processing of the raw material. The Swedish organization Cocoa Bello is involved in a project to provide the Fijian cocoa farmers with knowledge as well as resources to enable local processing and to attain added value of the cocoa crop. The purpose of this study is to discover a field of application for the Fijian cocoa among the rural population, using an ethnographic design. We spent one week in Namau Settlement, Fiji, where we applied in-depth interviews and participant observations in six families. We found a number of aspects affecting food choices, such as social, economical and cultural beliefs. The participants were to a great extent self-sufficient in food and because of the farm work they valued food rich in energy, especially the starchy plants grown on the farm. The crops grown on the farm are considered to be the real food. Hence it is important that the Fijian chocolate get the identity of the farm. The cocoa is among other things likely to be used in a beverage. Since the technology is limited, the Fijian cocoa should be underlined as being different from the commercial varieties of cocoa and chocolate, bringing out the properties unique to the local chocolate, such as the high content of nutrients and energy.

## **Key words**

culture, ethnography, Fiji, food, meals, cocoa, identity, values, beliefs

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## **Preface**

Our stay in Fiji was a great experience and we learned and experienced so much, from how to process the cocoa through the harvest, fermentation and drying stages to learning about the Fijian food culture and how to prepare and cook Fijian dishes. Further we found the task of developing a Fijian chocolate highly interesting. The great enthusiasm of the cocoa farmers was truly inspiring to us, as well as the fact that there are no existing traditions in Fiji of locally transforming cocoa beans into a refined product. For this reason we believe the Fijian chocolate will be unique.

We would like to show our appreciation of those who helped us in different ways to realize this study. Eva Svederberg, our supervisor at the University of Kristianstad, for the support, encouragement and invaluable advice of how to conduct this research. Senator Eminoni Ranacou and Mr. Joseva Serulagilagi, our field supervisors, for providing information, arranging contacts as well as helping with practical matters. The board of the organization Cocoa Bello for involving us in this project and providing invaluable information and contacts. While in Fiji we received a lot of help from the Tailevu Province Cocoa Growers and Producers Co-operative Association Ltd. Further we are very grateful to the cocoa farmers and their families in Namau. A special thanks to the family Niuvou, who invited us to stay with them and for sharing precious information with us, by letting us participate in their daily life and helping us arrange the interviews.

We are very thankful for the scholarship awarded by the local Minor Field Study committee at the University of Kristianstad and to the organization SIDA for the opportunity they are offering students by providing scholarships such as the Minor Field Study.

## Introduction

During our studies in the study programme Culinary Arts and Food Sciences, we have learned about food from a variety of perspectives, for example chemistry, microbiology, nutrition, and last but not least about the cultural aspects of food. In the main subject Food and Meal Science we have developed new food products by screening the market for consumer demands as well as consumer-oriented sensory analysis. During the development process we have learned that the social and cultural aspects of food are important subjects. Through studying the consumers and their culture and social setting, it is possible to discover new opportunities for product development. According to Kvale (2006, p. 71), when developing a product, it is important to uncover the concealed and symbolic meanings a product might have to potential customers. Unfortunately these aspects are sometimes forgotten and the developers are just so “sure” about the customer demands that they do not bother about studying the “voice of the customer”. This happens to be one of many reasons for product failure (Cooper 2001, p. 23).

Some time ago, we established contact with the Swedish organization Cocoa Bello. They are working with a project called, *Cocoa - from farming to retailing*, which involves an exchange programme through which representatives from Sweden and Fiji visit each other to learn more about the cocoa industry and related industries. The project is sponsored by SIDA (the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency) and Ungdomsstyrelsen (the National Board for Youth Affairs). The aim of the project is to develop the cocoa industry in the Fiji Islands.

## ***Presentation of the project in progress***

The organization, Cocoa Bello was founded in the spring of 2006, when Mr. Fabian Rimfors, the chairman of the organization, came back to Sweden from a vacation in the Fiji Islands. Before visiting Fiji, Mr. Rimfors spent some time working as a volunteer in Mexico, where he had the opportunity to learn about the Mexican chocolate culture. In Mexico cocoa and chocolate are common ingredients in ordinary dishes and beverages. For example, Mexicans use cocoa in a savoury sauce called, mole. The sauce is used as a condiment for many of their dishes. Chocolate as a beverage is used for breakfast, lunch or supper mixed with ingredients like oats or corn, water or milk and can be served hot or chilled. People in the Mexican countryside make their own chocolate out of cocoa beans grown in their gardens or bought in the market place. For preparing the chocolate a public mill is commonly used, where the citizens bring the cocoa beans for grinding. In some places they even grind cocoa beans into chocolate by hand on a mortar made out of volcano stone (Rimfors<sup>1</sup>; Johansson 2006, p. 24-25).

Samoa is a neighbouring island to Fiji. In Samoa they have a developed culture surrounding the cocoa and their national drink is “koko Samoa”, a chocolate drink prepared principally in the same manner as in Mexico (Rimfors 2006, p. 10).

During the vacation in the Fiji Islands, Mr. Rimfors visited some of the cocoa plantations and discovered that no one made their own chocolate, not even the cocoa farmers. After doing some research, he found out that the cocoa and chocolate-making knowledge had been forgotten over the years. He returned to Sweden and founded the organization, Cocoa Bello. He returned to Fiji in September 2006 to prepare the exchange and establish contacts for a Fijian “sister” group. During spring, 2007, Cocoa Bello went to Fiji to introduce the cocoa mill. They also arranged workshops with the cocoa farmers to teach them how to process the cocoa beans. If the project could re-establish the know-how among the cocoa farmers and make it possible to start producing organic quality chocolate, they could economize by not importing chocolate (Rimfors<sup>2</sup>) The exchange project between Sweden and Fiji aims to “promote and encourage a whole new culture surrounding cocoa and chocolate, and not only the products deriving from it”. (Rimfors 2006, p. 16)

## ***Background to the research area***

There has been little research concerning what kinds of cocoa products might be suitable for the Fijian market, i.e. the field of application. Instead the Samoan and Mexican cocoa cultures have been studied. To define a field of application of cocoa products and to distinguish sensory preferences, it is necessary to screen the market for possible target groups in order to study the targeted group’s food culture such as eating and drinking habits, the meaning of food and meals, the values and beliefs shaping their food choices. According to Rimfors<sup>3</sup>, we also have to consider the limited resources of knowledge and technology. In the present situation it is not possible to produce chocolate involving complex processing of the raw material. Since there is no such technology available for extracting the cocoa butter, it is not possible to make a cocoa powder similar to the commercial varieties. The cocoa product will also have a coarse texture due to the grinder. A positive aspect is that the cocoa will contain more nutrients than the commercial cocoa and chocolate.

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<sup>1</sup> Fabian Rimfors, chairman of Cocoa Bello, interview January 29, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Fabian Rimfors, chairman of Cocoa Bello, interview January 29, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Fabian Rimfors, chairman of Cocoa Bello, interview January 29, 2007.

## **Definition of concepts**

*Culture* – In social anthropology, culture is the scholarly study of cultures and societies as well as of humans as cultural and social beings (Nationalencyklopedin 2007c). In SAOL (2006), culture is defined as human activity within a certain area and a certain time. Furthermore Györki and Sjögren (2002a) describe the human activity in detail, emphasizing the humans' lifestyle, thinking as well as their actions.

*Identity* – Ottoson (2007) defines identity as an awareness of oneself as a unique individual. He claims that identity is primarily consciousness of one's true nature, the existence of a sharp boundary to others, the ability to decide one's own thoughts and actions. In Nationalencyklopedin (2007b) there is a further definition of identity as in social anthropology, where the identity is the individual's or group of individuals' own identification as belonging to a certain culture, ethnic group or nation. Thus one speaks of cultural identity, ethnic identity or national identity.

*Belief* – Györki and Sjögren (2002b) define the concept belief among other things as a person's tendency to have an opinion about something. Furthermore, in Nationalencyklopedin (2007d) a belief is also defined as holding something probable, a conviction.

*Value* – In Nationalencyklopedin (2007e) a value is defined as the action of valuing something, with the intention of attributing a negative or a positive value to that thing. Moreover, the result of doing this action, the result (value) is usually a judgement, an opinion or a conception. A conception is not seldom described as a value to indicate that it is a subjective or personal impression.

## **Literature**

We chose literature through reviewing the source, the origin, the interpretations and the usefulness (Holme & Solvang 1997, p. 130-138). The literature derives from the library at the University of Kristianstad and Libris. To find scientific articles, we searched the databases FSTA, Landguiden and Nationalencyklopedin at the library of Kristianstad University and the Internet at Google Scholar and CIA - The World Fact Book. We also used articles and literature belonging to the course literature in our study programme. In Fiji we did research in the Pacific Collection, at the library of the University of the South Pacific, in Suva, where we found literature concerning the Fijian food culture and cocoa.

# Literature

## *Human and food culture*

### **The development of a food culture**

According to Bringéus (1988, p. 11-23), it is important to examine the overall picture to see *why* we eat as we do. Caplan (1997), Svederberg (2002, p. 21) and Meigs (1997, p. 104) discuss how eating habits are formed by an interplay of parameters, for example where we live, the people we meet, economy, availability, historical moments, environment and technology. Rozin (2000, p. 153) and Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 8) state the texture and taste of the food depends on the way of cooking and the ingredients available, which shape the specific flavour of the culture. These are just a few of many factors affecting a food culture. As the parameters develop and change, the food culture adapts to the circumstances and becomes a part of our history and cultural identity (Caplan 1997; Svederberg 2002, p. 21; Mäkelä 2002, p. 14). Bringéus (1988 p. 11-23) writes that new influences on a food culture do not change the old traditions. Instead the food culture expands and the new food is adapted to the traditional pattern. For example it is common to add a part of one's own cultural taste to another food culture to make it fit in with one's values, like the hamburgers in South America spiced up with salsa instead of ketchup (Long 2004, p. 26; Kittler & Sucher 2004, chapter 1 p. 6).

Meigs (1997, p.104) claims our food is the strongest of all cultural matters, because it is the only matter one can experience with all one's senses. One can feel the food, see and smell it, and while tasting it, the food becomes part of oneself. In some cultures where people live closely together in small communities and the food is brought home by "blood, sweat and tears", the food improves the family spirit. This makes the food culture strong and hard to influence. Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 6) mention another contributory cause of preventing influences, which is when the meals are eaten in a "protected atmosphere", one's home, and has been cooked by the family.

In certain areas there is a marked difference in food culture between rural and urban areas. The urban population is usually more influenced by the surrounding world, while in rural areas people often grow their own food and are more isolated from the outer world. They do not for example get as much influences from restaurants, supermarkets and commercial organisations as the urban population (Bringéus 1988, p. 11-23). It also takes a rather long time for us human beings to adapt to another food culture. This is due to the long process of developing a personal identity, a process that takes a long time for most of us but is a little bit faster for others (Svederberg 2002, p. 19; Wilk 2002, p. 68).

Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 3) argue that some people believe our food habits are just about our personal taste, while in fact our food habits are influenced by our role models, for example teachers or older brothers and sisters. Bringéus (1988 p. 11-23) and Caplan (1997, p. 1) claim that we are shaped by our family eating habits, the eating habits common to the area we come from or live in, especially the food we eat at traditional events like Christmas. We *have to* eat a certain food on this special occasion every year even though we might not even like the taste of the food. Mäkelä (2000, p. 11) claims that food can prove one's belonging; for example one's group is verified by the way of using old family recipes.

Mennell (1992, p. 75-80) writes about the impact on food of colonialism and migration, how colonization caused people to move bringing their food preferences with them. In this way they made contributions to the diffusion of cuisines, as migrant groups established food shops and restaurant with their own native food. Bringéus (1988, p. 11-23) says it has been proved that Swedish immigrants in the United States still held on to certain food traditions long after they had forgotten how to speak Swedish. Mennell (1992, p. 79) states that a general conclusion is that immigrants and ethnic minorities try to maintain their own cooking and eating habits as long as possible.

Svederberg (2002, p. 19-21) carried out a survey about what kinds of food items make up the phenomenon of people not changing their original food habits in a healthy way when moving to a new country. By participating in daily cooking at the houses of the participants, Svederberg could investigate what kinds of factors influenced their food choices and made them hold on to their own food values. Svederberg found that the influence of a food culture depends on the level of importance of the food or the ingredients used in cooking. She calls it the “atomistic way”, which means that the way of thinking of food is not related to health. If a specific food or ingredient in people’s own culture has a high level of importance for them, it is harder to change the food habits. They also believe that their own food culture is the superior way to eat.

The meaning of health can also be different among communities and groups. In *Nationencyklopedin* (2007a) the meaning of health is defined, among other things, according to a medical anthropological perspective, where health both involves an absence of disease in a strictly medical sense and a more extensive meaning, depending of the cultural tradition. For example, in Sweden a single day does not pass without hearing or reading something about health or how to live a healthy life. When searching for the Swedish word for healthy at Google Scholar, the first article was about glycemic index and the following articles about overweight and diabetes (Google Scholar 2007). One of the articles was written by Schäfer Elinder and von Haartman (2007) in a web version of a Swedish medical magazine. In this article, healthy living is defined by eating the right healthy food and doing physical activities. They propose a decrease in consuming fat and sugar as necessary in the Swedish diet to reach this *healthy living*.

### **The definition of food and meals**

Food is defined in different ways depending on who is making the description. The meaning of food is always more than just nutrients (Kittler & Sucher 2004, chapter 1, p. 5). For some of us food is the tinned goods bought in the supermarket. For someone else food is the rabbit leaping over the meadow or the green leaves in the forest. Food can also be defined as something that is sold to make money. The meaning of the concept of food can be such things as feelings, fears, economy and solidarity. The food culture will be affected as soon as the meaning of one of the parameters changes (Meigs 1997, p. 104; Mäkelä 2000, p. 15; Beardsworth & Keil 1997, p. 51; Pollock 1985, p. 145-203).

Pliner and Rozin (2000, p. 24) claim that for most of us the meal is used telling stories as well as giving information about the happenings of a day. Sobal (2000, p.119, 128) points out that a meal is only a meal if you eat it with someone else. He thinks that there is such a strong connection between eating and the socialization of the group, that if the social part of the meal is taken away it is no longer a meal. In Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 10) a meal is depicted to be formed of certain elements, for example specific ingredients without which there is no meal.

In Fiji the meaning of the word food is a starchy crop, like dalo (taro root), vudi (cooking banana), yam (sweet potato), cassava (tapioca) and ota (breadfruit), compared to the English definition of food, which is related to meat (Pollock 1985, p. 145-203). Further the Fijian concept of food is defined as the produce of staple subsistence plants and includes only starchy food, while condiments comprise all other foodstuff as well as produce obtained from supplementary subsistence plants (Barrau 1958, p. 35; Pollock 1985, p. 199). The supplementary food is not supposed to be served on its own, because it is not considered sufficient as a meal (Pollock 1985, p. 199). Most of the starchy plants have been used for a long time in Fijian cooking. It is crops locally produced, usually deriving from peoples' own land, which is the food considered as the "real food" (Pollock 1985, p. 198) also mentioned as the "true food" (Turner 1984, p. 134).

### **Food as a definition of identity**

Food gives people an identity and through food we can distinguish certain rules and behaviour, such as "I belong to this group of people and we do it this way" (Rozin 2000, p. 137; Belasco 2002, p. 2; Kittler & Sucher 2004, chapter 1 p. 5). The identity becomes apparent particularly when investigating the rituals of a food culture, rituals such as what, where, when and how to eat (Mäkelä 2000, p. 7, 15; Meigs 1997, p. 95-96, 104; Wilk 2002, p. 69). Beardsworth and Keil (1997 p. 54) claim that "you are what you eat", and according to Long (2004, p. 24) and Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 3) food functions as a description of our ethnicity. That food has such a strong value in a culture is emphasized by Caplan (1997, p. 1-25) when talking about food culture in Britain. One of the headings is "Food as a language, food as a system" (Caplan 1997, p. 2).

Wilk (2002, p. 76-86) spent a couple of years in Belize to learn more about historical moments that he thought might have influenced the Belizean food culture. He discovered that food considered typically Belizean was in fact international and had been shaped over the years. According to Wilk (2002), a new era is coming over the world. There is no such thing as one's own food culture, since different cultures shape the ethnic food cultures.

"How come you can state that a dish belongs to a typical ethnic group when the same ingredients are used in other cultures all over the world?"  
(Burstedt 2002, p.12 our translation)

It is the way in which different ingredients are combined and the effect of the earlier mentioned parameters in the surrounding area that make the food "typical". The typical food acts like a representative of the culture. It makes the food we eat a way of telling what group we belong to and where we come from. It is one of a few things to show one's origin and nationality in a legitimate way. It is from the food habits one can distinguish the differences between cultures (Burstedt 2002, p. 12-13). Through a food culture, stereotypes of persons develop, as one expects typical food to be eaten by people with typical attributes, like their way of dressing and behaving (Kittler & Sucher 2004, chapter 1 p. 3).

### **Communication of a food culture**

Mäkelä (2000, p. 15) believes the food eaten in our time is rather communication than social solidarity, due to the development of cooking to save time, for example microwaves. Svedberg (2002, p. 19) and James (1997, p. 74) discuss how the old food habits are disappearing and food and meals are turning individualised. Family meals, eating together, are becoming uncommon, because members of the family choose different kinds of food according to their

new habits, like ethical evaluations or reasons of health. In this way, food is becoming a tool for expressing a person's values. Mäkelä (2000, p. 10) claims that through the ingredients and the size of the meal one can figure out what time of the day and what season of the year it is, or if it is a special occasion. Pliner and Rozin (2000, p. 24) think that meals are a way of giving structure to a day. Sometimes a certain meal as lunch represents a specific time, as in "see you after lunch".

According to James (1997, p.74), the food one eats tells people around one things such as one's age, nationality and sex. Beardsworth and Keil (1997, p. 53) talk about "strong food" and "weak food", and to eat this strong type of food is a way for men to consume strength and to get power, while the weak food satisfies the women. The same way of describing food is found when it comes to food suitable for children or food suitable for old people.

People use food to communicate by inviting friends at home for dinner as well as giving someone a taste of their packed food at work. In this way they give their friends an opportunity to taste their own culture and to learn about their values (Mäkelä 2000, p. 14; Long 2004, p. 21).

### **Food as a symbol of feelings**

Food as a gift can be a symbol of a reward and as proof of someone's appreciation. If food is given from only one of two persons, it may also be taken as a sign of dominance. Moreover, food can be a sign of consideration, for example, the mother making dinner for her family (Beardsworth & Keil 1997, p. 52).

As food is a part of one's soul, one's values and the taste in one's mouth, the gift of food possesses diverse meanings depending on the situation. It makes different food suitable for different purposes. One gives chocolate and red roses to one's love, but not to the unfamiliar neighbour, because what one gives is to be interpreted by the receiver. Some people regard food as luxury, while others relate food to health or morality (Beardsworth, & Keil 1997, p. 52).

### **Rules of a food culture**

One can find specific rules for what to eat, when to eat and how to eat in all cultures of the world. The meal is like a language with rules telling one in what order to serve different kinds of food. For example, when to eat the salad, is it before the meat and potatoes or after? Maybe one can eat it all at the same time or maybe in one's culture people do not eat salad (Mäkelä 2000, p. 7-99; Beardsworth & Keil 1997, p. 52, 55; Pliner & Rozin 2000, p. 36, 40). According to Pliner and Rozin (2000, p. 19, 39), there are surveys showing that people eat twice as much in a restaurant as in a café even though the café serves food. One's food culture tells one what kind of food is proper to eat at different meals during a day and how big the portion should be. The food culture one belongs to also has specific eating times during a day and one can only eat if it is the right time.

"In many cultures, feasting means simply more of the food consumed daily and is considered a time of plenty when even the poor have enough to eat".  
(Kittler & Sucher 2004, chapter 1 p. 11)

Rules show the difference between people in different cultures, for example the fact that we eat horse meat and others do not. Food that is unusual in one's own culture is strange and sometimes considered abnormal and even inedible (James 1997, p. 72; Beardsworth & Keil

1997, p. 51; Burstedt 2002, p. 13; Kittler & Sucher 2004, chapter 1 p. 13). Beardsworth and Keil (1997, p. 52) even claim that some people will rather starve than eat a food item that is “forbidden” within their group.

Cultural understandings of food are defined by the *National Research Council* in Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 13).

- “Inedible food”, this is the poisonous food or food connected to strong taboos, often meat/animals.
- “Edible by animals”, but not by me.
- “Edible by humans”, but not by my kind.
- “Edible by humans but not by me”, food accepted in one’s own cultural group, but not by oneself due to preferences or health reasons, even religious restrictions.
- “Edible by me”, accepted as a part of the dietary domain.

Among Fijians it is common to use the term edible instead of the term food, since food only denotes starchy plants (Pollock 1985, p. 198-199). Concepts of food and meals usually include rules for what, how, when and where to consume. For example, the Fijian concept “gunu ti”, refers to a beverage accompanying a starch usually made out of flour. It is not considered a meal, though “gunu ti” can be consumed on its own in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening. Other edibles considered non-meal are food eaten without processing, such as fruit and salad. This is one of the reasons why Fijians never serve fruits like papaya for breakfast, as raw fruit does not belong in a meal (Pollock 1985, p. 200). Also sweet foods, similar to our desserts, are never served as a part of a meal for the reason that they are considered non-meal eatables (Pollock 1985, p. 199).

### **Sensory attributes of a food culture**

According to Rozin (2000, p. 142) there are cultural rules deciding what taste suits a certain dish or meal. For example, in some dishes the taste of sweetness is considered more suitable than the taste of saltiness. According to Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 14-15) the rules of sensory properties are connected to people’s expectations established in their first contact with a food item or a dish. They also claim that the term taste is commonly used instead of other sensory properties such as colour, aroma and texture. Further they investigated what attribute is crucial to food choices. According to them the first motive is the *taste*, and number two is the *cost* of the food. This is proved to be true in poor communities where it is common to eat more starchy food than protein food. Further, the *convenience* of the food is the third motive.

Mäkelä (2000, p.13) mentions two ways of defining taste. The first is the taste of luxury, the “good taste”. She claims that “good taste” is connected to a higher social class. The second taste is the sensory feeling when one puts something in one’s mouth, the “taste of necessity”.

### **Trademark and target group**

#### **To build a trademark**

To build a trademark is to build stories about a product. The stories become the identity of the product and this is the way people are going to recognize the product in the marketing and sales points (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006; Holger & Holmberg 2002, p. 9). The value of a trademark is to some companies about 20% of the product value (Holger & Holmberg 2002, p. 9; Holmberg 2002, p. 83). Every time one meets a product, valuations and meanings

are built up in one's mind. It gives one expectations for the next meeting. The expectations can be connected to a particular quality (Bowallius & Toivio 2002, p. 13-14; Björkman 2002, p. 69). When the trademark is well-known by the consumers, the colour or pattern can be changed as long as the layout stays the same (Bowallius & Toivio 2002, p. 19-21).

According to Holmberg (2002, p. 83), the time of mass production is decreasing, and the focus of today is on products developed to suit the needs of the consumer, products suitable to a certain lifestyle. The consumption is no longer simply consumption, it is compounded with experiences. Holmberg (2002, p. 84-85) also emphasizes the connection between a product's identity and an icon, a person connected to the product, a person being one with the product. When someone is talking about the trademark, they will consider the icon and the product as one identity.

### **A target group**

Cooper (2001, p. 287) discusses the significance of an exact definition of the target group before designing the product and the launch plan. He states that it is important that you know the "object of your affection". According to Jarlbro (2004, p. 45-50), goals and target groups should be synchronized. If you do not know your target group, it is impossible to define the goals of a product. She explains the significance of a "detailed and realistic picture" of the target group in order to have the ability to decide how to use both internal and external communication. She also highlights the importance of people involved in a project, knowing the mission to be able to work towards the goals with equal ambitions.

### **Defining a target group**

Cooper (2001, p. 287) suggests that the first step, to define a target group, is identifying the market segments. The second step is selecting the appropriate segment to become the target group. Jarlbro (2004, p. 50) describes how to distinguish a target group in two ways. The most common way is to make a classification depending on parameters like sex, age or connection to a geographical area. Jarlbro also suggests making the classification as a description of the characteristics of the target group, because this makes it possible to find important parameters such as general values and attitudes within the group. Cooper (2001, p. 162) writes that it is necessary to study the target group closely to be able to distinguish unmet needs and new product opportunities. He suggests in-depth, on-site interviews and visits with customers, similar to an anthropological research.

### ***The Fijian community***

Due to the time of English colonization and the migration of Indian labour, the present Fiji is multicultural and has been shaped by the almost equal number of indigenous Fijians (Melane-sians with a Polynesian admixture) and Indo-Fijians. The traditional Fijian religion is based on ancestor worship, with strong beliefs in an after-life. Nowadays Christianity is practised by most Indigenous-Fijians, while most Indo-Fijians practise Hinduism and Islam (Lonely Planet 2006, p. 37-38).

Despite influences from foreign communities, ancient traditions and customs are still common. Parts of the Fijian community are composed of social hierarchy with strong relations to the family and the relatives. However, the traditional safety net in the villages, with the family taking care of one another, is dissolving and the young generation is more commonly searching for another lifestyle in the cities. The urbanisation and the political unrest with the coups have caused problems with unemployment and poverty both in the Indigenous-Fijian and Indo-Fijian population (Landguiden Oceanien-Fiji 2007; Lonely Planet 2006, p. 35).

## **The Fijian Food culture**

The Fijian food culture differs between the urban and the rural population. In the countryside people usually live in small villages with a chief, sharing their profits as one family. The villages are also to a great extent self-sufficient in vegetables and fruits (Lonely Planet 2006, p. 66; Turner 1984, p. 133; Baxter 1976, p. 8). While the population in the urban areas is multi-cultural, which affects the range of food, with restaurants with Indian, Melanesian, Polynesian, Chinese and western style food as well as ethnic food shops and supermarkets offering a wide range of imported groceries (Mellor & Hoskins 1986, p. 385; Baxter 1976, p. 1). In 1986 a survey was carried out concerning how western food caused unhealthy food habits among Fijians moving into the cities. In the rural parts of Fiji, food is prepared and cooked as a part of the daily process. In the urban areas, on the other hand, time is short and food needs to be easy to prepare and cook. As a result convenience food from bread shops and canned food replace fresh food, causing problems with diabetes (Mellor & Hoskins 1986, p. 385).

During one week in July 1976, Baxter (1976) conducted a study about food preference patterns in the Nailega village, Tailevu Province. Baxter underlines the importance of choosing self-sufficient food instead of the imported food, because the nutritional status of imported food is not satisfactory. He claims that the problem in Fiji is that the self-sufficient food is limited or not suitable for the needs of the consumers.

“While agricultural production may not be able to support non-rural populations and so food needs to be imported, an equally important influence on food supplies is food preferences. Indeed a central issue if the importing of food is caused by low internal productivity or a sign that consumer preferences are not met through local production.”  
(Baxter 1976, p. 2)

Baxter (1976, p. 2) claims that a primary factor, affecting the consumer food choice in Fiji, is the cost of the product. Another factor is the availability, because the eating habits change when people move to urban areas, where it is easier to find rice and flour than root crops and leafy vegetables. Seasonal varieties and the variation of units also “result in a high fluctuation of consumption levels”. Other factors affecting the choice of food are also taste and texture associated with ethnicity or cultural group, because each group has their own “ideal type diets” and the differences are particularly obvious in rural areas.

## **Fijian food**

The major agricultural products of Fiji consist of sugarcane, coconut, rice, sweet potato, banana and cassava. Fijians also have livestock with pigs, horses, goats and cows and a large fishing industry (Fiji Bure 2007; CIA 2006, p. 2, 7). A variety of fruits is grown in Fiji, like guava, pineapple, mango and breadfruit (Fiji Bure 2007; Mellor & Hoskins 1986, p. 385; Turner 1984, p. 134; Momoivalu 1985a, p. 18). The Fijians use approximately 22 different leaves in their cooking (Bailey, 1992). The Indian diet consists of staples such as rice, flour and lentils. In both the Fijian and the Indian diet it is common to consume bread, rice, canned fish, dalo, cassava and seafood. According to Baxter (1976, p. 3), a lack of animal protein is common in the rural diet.

## **Traditional dishes**

Traditionally both men and women made a contribution to the cooking. Women caught the fish and the seafood while men planted the crops (Momoivalu 1985a, p. 18). In the literature there are several descriptions of food under the term “traditional Fijian food”. In general the

Fijian cuisine is described as simple, containing spicy dishes accompanied with root vegetables, such as dalo, yam and cassava. It is also common to marinate and boil ingredients in coconut milk or to steam and smoke in the traditional lovo. Fresh fish and seafood are also common dishes in the Fijian diet, usually served baked or boiled. The root vegetable dalo is described as similar to artichoke and cassava resembles boiled potato (Fiji Bure 2007; Pollock 1985, p. 199-200; Momoivalu 1985b, p. 8). According to Turner (1984, p. 135), cassava is a relatively new crop in Fiji and does not possess the same symbolic meaning as the traditional crops dalo and yam. The harvest of dalo and yam is connected with ceremonies and myths, where dalo is associated with femaleness and yam is associated with maleness.

Kokoda and palusami are two dishes usually served on special occasions. Palusami is traditionally baked in the lovo and consists of dalo leaves (rourou) filled with canned meat, chilli, onion, salt and coconut cream. Kokoda is a dish that is served chilled, made of raw fish, cubed and marinated in lemon juice. Kokoda is also combined with onion, chilli, grated carrot, tomato and coconut cream. Duruka is the name of the Fijian asparagus usually cooked in coconut cream. Miti is a sauce of thick coconut cream combined with onion, chilli, lemon juice, salt and pepper and is used as a dressing of seafood (Fiji Bure 2007; Pollock 1985, p. 199-200; Momoivalu 1985b, p. 8).

### **A festive occasion**

There is a difference between the everyday food and the food served on special occasions. A feast is the only time to serve a great variety of “edibles” and the feast includes “real food”, enough for everyone to take home. Traditionally it has been of importance within the Fijian family to cultivate the right crops to be able to make contributions to feasts (Pollock 1985, p. 200). On a festive occasion such as family get-togethers, feasts, festivals and weddings, it is traditional to prepare food in the lovo, where fish, meat and vegetables are wrapped in coconut or banana leaves and slowly half baked, half steamed on red hot stones, in an oven dug in the ground (Fiji Bure 2007; Lonely Planet 2006, p. 67). Pollock (1985, p. 200) points out that the starchy plants are to be cooked whole according to the tradition. In the Lonely Planet (2006, p. 67) and Fiji Bure (2007) there are explanations of how to prepare a lovo. Dry husks from coconuts and wood are set on fire to heat up the stones, and when the stones are red hot, the remaining fire wood is set aside and the food packages, with meat and fish first and vegetables last, are placed on top of the stones. Then everything is to be covered with big leaves to keep the temperature up.

### **Fiji drinking**

According to Pollock (1985, p. 197) the concept of drink is used widely for products with soft texture, like fruits, boiled green leaves or anything sucked, for example sugarcane. In the Lonely Planet (2007, p. 66-67) common drinks are said to be water, long life milk, fresh fruit juice, water of green coconut and soft drinks. In Baxter’s study (1976, p. 7) tea is stated to be the most consumed beverage within his study group, though he does not tell what kind of tea.

### **The national drink of Fiji**

Fijian culture consists of important traditions and customs from the past, like meke, a dance telling stories about legends (Lonely Planet 2006, p. 35). While dancing, the national drink kava plays an important role (Granqvist & Jörneryd 1993, p. 115). In the past kava was a drink used only by the priests and chiefs. Nowadays, it is a common drink for relaxation, in welcome ceremonies and on ceremonial occasions such as weddings. It is even used as a drink for negotiation and important state visits (Lonely Planet 2006, p. 67; Granqvist & Jörneryd 1993, p. 115; KavaRoot 1999a, p. 2; Medicallink 2000, p. 1). Even today the kava

ceremony involves certain rituals, such as clapping one's hands in a particular way, and according to tradition it is not acceptable to say no to the first bowl of kava (Granqvist & Jörneryd 1993, p. 115; Lonely Planet 2007, p. 67). Kava is also used as a gift to show respect and as a token that a person has come in peace when visiting a village (KavaRoot 1999b, p. 2). The consumption of kava is common both in rural and urban areas and kava is often compared with beer drinking cultures (Lonely Planet 2006, p. 67; Granqvist & Jörneryd 1993, p. 115). The drink possesses an important social meaning and is sometimes called the "social drug" (Medicallink 2000, p. 1).

The drink is prepared from the roots of a pepper plant, and according to the Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2006), the drink has a bitter taste. The sun-dried and powdered root is wrapped in a cloth, mixed with water in a special bowl, called tanoa, and squeezed out until the liquid looks like muddy water (Kilroy travels 2006; Granqvist & Jörneryd 1993, p. 115; KavaRoot 1999a, p. 1). In the old days, when preparing kava, virgins usually first chewed the root and then spat it out in the water. One of the stories about the origin of kava belongs to a Tongan legend. It tells about a couple who had a leprous daughter. During a time of starvation they killed their daughter to feed the chief, although the chief told them to bury the body. Instead, they were told that if something started to grow where the daughter was buried, they should give that to the chief. It appeared to be a kava plant growing on the head of the daughter (KavaRoot 1999b, p. 1, 4-5).

## **Cocoa**

The commercial cocoa is concentrated to three varieties of cocoa beans, criollo, forastero and trinitario (Hanneman 1999, p. 99-100). Locally developed varieties are common (Shenet 2007, p. 1), and one of them is the amelonado, a hybrid of forastero, cultivated in Fiji (Hanneman 1999, p. 99-101; the Agricultural Commodity Committee 1985, p. 2). Beans from different trees have a large diversity of flavours depending on the origin and the environmental properties, which are so essential that if moving a tree from Mexico to Asia, the flavour of the beans will change (Hanneman 1999, p. 99-100; Douglas & Vosten 1995, p. 20).

In Douglas and Vosten (1995, p. 20), the properties of cocoa are described as coming partly from volatile components giving both aroma and flavour and partly from non-volatile components that only provide flavour. Cocoa combined with ingredients like sugar, vanilla and sometimes milk powder generate the properties usually described as the chocolate taste. To get the "right taste" it is essential to handle the critical process in the right way, from cultivation to the refining of the cocoa. Every step in the process, microbiological, technical and biochemical, affects the final taste.

A characteristic of cocoa beans in the South Pacific is the high level of acidity, which is sometimes so high that it conceals other flavours. Different techniques have been developed to eliminate the acidity, but the techniques add a cost to the processing and the cocoa farmers do not make as much profit from their crops (Douglas & Vosten 1995, p. 20). Another issue contributing to a loss of profit is the humid climate in the Tailevu province, which is too humid to be optimal for cocoa growing (Harwood 1959, p. 79). Because of the humidity the cocoa farmers sometimes have to use a hot drier to manage the drying stage of the cocoa beans, which causes a smoky flavour of the beans and a bad quality according to the retailers (Aivao 1995, p. 55).

## **Cocoa farming in Fiji in retrospect**

Cocoa was brought to Fiji by the British from Sri Lanka in the 1880s (the Agricultural Commodity Committee 1985, p. 1; Rimfors 2006, p. 6). Though it was not until the 1960s a more industrialized way of cultivating the cocoa was established. At this time the trinitario cocoa was planted in the Tailevu province (Rimfors 2006, p. 6; the Agricultural Commodity Committee 1985, p. 1). Samples of cocoa were sent to several chocolate producing countries to examine if there was an interest in importing the Fijian cocoa, but the flavour of the Fijian cocoa was not found to be strong enough (the Agricultural Commodity Committee 1985, p. 55). This resulted in the farmers changing to another variety of cocoa, a hybrid of the forastero, called amelonado, considered to have a stronger chocolate flavour (the Agricultural Commodity Committee 1985, p. 1). The change of the cocoa variety was successful leading to an increase in the Fijian cocoa production. In 1987 the production of cocoa had its peak producing 468 tonnes of cocoa beans a year. However, since 1993 a decline in the production has occurred due to several factors, among others tropical cyclones, black pod disease and aged trees (Rimfors 2006, p. 7-8). The Agricultural Commodity Committee (1985, p. 12) claim that bad marketing and advertising and a low price of cocoa beans have contributed to the decline.

## **Cocoa farming today**

In the present situation, the cocoa is mainly cultivated on small private family holdings with limited resources (Rimfors 2006, p. 5; the Agricultural Commodity Committee 1985, p. 9, 11). The total produce of cocoa beans goes for export, through a local exporter, to industrialized countries where resources exist for processing the cocoa beans, thereby adding value to the raw material. It is the farmers themselves organizing and managing the cost for the transportation of the crop to the retailer for export (Rimfors 2006, p. 5-6, 10). According to the Agricultural Commodity Committee (1985, p. 11), the low quantities of cocoa results in fine quality beans being sold as bulk cocoa, and the consequence for the farmers is a loss of profit.

McGregor (2006, p. 4) claims that one of the most necessary measures for promoting growth of the Fijian agriculture is to economize by increasing the use of Fijian resources, including the urban, rural and tourist market. One suggestion is to develop a partnership between small-scale farmers and the private sector.

In Fiji there is a lack of resources and also a poor knowledge of how to process the raw material of cocoa beans into refined products, like cocoa powder and chocolate. Instead there is an import of processed cocoa products considered to be of low nutritious value (Cocoa Bello 2006, p. 3; Aiavao 1995, p. 55). According to Rimfors (2006, p. 4), the Swedish-Fijian exchange project aims to contribute resources and knowledge concerning the processing of cocoa beans into refined products. He claims it would give the small-scale cocoa growers an opportunity to add value to their raw material. He believes that the processed cocoa can be offered to the local market, and in this way the nutritious cocoa can be affordable and enjoyed by people with limited means and not only for populations in developed countries. It would also give the tourists an opportunity to support the local cocoa industry by offering them exclusive Fijian made chocolate.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to discover a field of application for the Fijian cocoa among the rural population using an ethnographic design. The study will result in a cultural picture that can be utilised in the development of the Fijian chocolate.

## ***Research questions***

- ❑ What are the characteristics of the Fijian food culture among the rural population?
- ❑ What are their beliefs and values concerning food and meals?
- ❑ How do these beliefs and values shape their choice of food?
- ❑ What are their sensory/food preferences?

## ***Delimitations***

The study is delimited to exclusively concern the rural indigenous Fijians, connected to one of the cocoa growing areas in Fiji. The study is also delimited to study cocoa as a part of the studied group's food culture; hence this study does not emphasize cocoa in general.

## **Design**

### ***Methodology***

We used a qualitative approach and the field study was conducted in accordance with the ethnographic genre of qualitative strategy (Rossman & Rallis 1998, p. 83). The intention is explorative and, according to Kullberg (1996, p. 49), when research is done to explore, theories are created while conducting the research and presented as a result.

Ethnography has evolved to be the researcher's description of both the human and its physical and psychological development, as well as the development of ethnicities and nations (Kullberg 1996, p. 16). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 139) claim the main part of the ethnographic assignment is to obtain sociocultural knowledge from participants and to depict social behaviour understandably. Kullberg (1996, p. 15) claims that ethnographic research is when the researcher catches the participants' experiences through their ways of expressing themselves. This is done in order to be able to understand other peoples' way of life. The expressions of the participants exist both in their actions as well as in their statements. In our study, we were seeking to understand the food culture of the people we were observing, and through studying the food culture of a community, we hoped to identify their beliefs and values, which also affect and shape their food choices (Rossman & Rallis 1998, p. 67-68). According to Cooper (2001, p. 187), it is of great importance to study the user needs-and-wants for developing a product in which the "voice of the customer" is built in.

Our conception of ethnographic research is leaning towards the subjective approach. Aspers (2007, p. 26-28) writes that in subjectivism the participants' concepts and meanings are decisive for being able to understand their actions and activities. The researcher has to interact with the participants to understand their world and their thinking. The researcher considers the meaning of actions and purposes on the basis of the perspectives of the participants. This is in contrast to the objective approach where the researcher studies the research object through outside observations and describes the actions of the participants from the researcher's own perspective. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 139) also make a distinction between the emic approach and the etic approach, where the latter emphasizes recognition and understanding of the objective or the researcher's meaning and construction of a situation, while the emic approach is, in our view, where the assignment is to capture the subjective meanings positioned in situations by the participants.

## **Population – Selection**

### **Indigenous Fijians – rural**

The choice of population was based on in which area the processed cocoa is considered to have been first established. The Fijian cocoa production/processing will start on a small scale, produced by cocoa farmers and cocoa co-operatives themselves. According to Rimfors<sup>4</sup>, it is the cocoa farmers that will be the primary consumers of cocoa, *the target group*. After being established among the farmers connected to the rural area, the processed cocoa is thought to start spreading to the urban population.

The choice of population was also ideal for us to be able to build strong relations with the participants. According to Holme and Solvang (1997, p. 92), a natural intimacy to the research objects is of great importance for the qualitative interview. The cocoa farmers as participants had their own interest in the cocoa and they were also willing to support us in establishing contacts to make interviews (Rossman & Rallis 1998, p. 86).

### **Collection of data in the field**

To gather the field data we used open-ended techniques, which promoted the observations and helped the interviews to develop as the project unfolded (Rossman & Rallis 1998, p. 119). The collection of data was carried out in the natural environment of the participants. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p 138) state that social research should be conducted in natural and real world settings with as little interference as possible from the researchers.

Throughout the field study we were guided and supported by the Tailevu Province Cocoa Growers and Producers Co-operative Association Ltd. They made it possible for us to establish contact with the participants and they also arranged our transports to the study objects.

### **Participant observation**

We used field studies such as participant observations. According to Rossman and Rallis (1998, p. 136-137), observing makes it possible to explore the interactions among events, people and their actions. For us it worked as a tool to discover the complexity of food habits and meal patterns in a community and to get the overall picture. Aspers (2007, p. 108) claims that observing contributes to understanding what is told by a participant in an interview. He says that if the participant is explaining a series of actions, it is only possible to understand its full content, if the researcher has observed the action.

We applied conversations, as a method to gather data, while spending time with the study objects outside the scheduled interviews, i.e. during the participant observations (Rossman & Rallis 1998, p. 124). According to Kvale (1997, p. 94), in ethnographic studies, conversations work as an important tool to gather information. The information obtained through conversations was documented in our field notes. Depending on the observing situation, the field notes were either taken by hand or documented afterwards.

#### **□ Observing situations**

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<sup>4</sup> Fabian Rimfors, chairman of Cocoa Bello, interview January 29, 2007.

At our arrival to Namau we had a meeting arranged, for us to inform the families in the village about our assignment and to explain for the study. Thus the families could decide whether they wished to participate in the study or not.

The field study at the scene began with participant observations. The observing situations involved both activities connected to work as well as activities connected to leisure time. For example, we spent time in the field to learn about the cocoa production as well as the harvest of their crops. Further we participated in daily food preparations, cooking as well as other domestic work. We found these activities offered excellent opportunities for observing, since the conversations and the actions of the participants appeared in a natural and relaxed manner.

One activity regarded as leisure time was food shopping. By participating in food shopping, we could study how the purchase of groceries was carried out, and observe if the shopping activity differed from the stories we were told during the interviews. Moreover, another leisure activity we observed, was when the family we stayed with arranged a picnic by the river.

Further examples of observing were activities connected to daily meals, as breakfast, lunch and dinner. Meals were precious time for observing, since people were socializing and freely discussing different matters concerning their life. We also had the opportunity to join two festive occasions, one family get-together and one party with invited guests. The family get-together was on a Sunday. We went to church and afterwards we participated in a Sunday-lunch with the traditional *lovo* on the menu. During these two occasions, we could study the tradition of preparing, cooking and eating a festive meal, as well as the *kava* ceremony.

## Interviews

We separated the interviews into two categories, *interviews outside Namau* and *interviews in Namau*. The result chapter contains exclusively the data from *interviews in Namau*, except for the part concerning, “the situation of cocoa in Namau”.

### □ Interviews outside Namau

The first interview was conducted with the board of the organization Cocoa Bello to receive background information about the study project. The interview was unstructured and conducted at their office in Malmö. In addition to the interview, we had further contact with the organization to arrange practical matters concerning the field study and our stay in Fiji.

While in Fiji, we conducted two interviews outside the targeted group in Namau. The first interview was conducted with a person functioning as the exporter of the Fijian cocoa, and also the trader of the cocoa beans deriving from the farmers in Namau. Through this interview, we received background information on the market situation of cocoa and a reflection of the idea of a future development of the Fijian cocoa industry. The interview was conducted at the interviewee’s office in Suva, Fiji. The structure of the interview guide was open, containing topics.

Further we conducted an interview with the chairman of the Tailevu Province Cocoa Growers and Producers Co-operative Association Ltd. We received information about the situation of the cocoa farmers in Namau as well as a picture of the plans to develop the cocoa industry. The interview was conducted at the main office of the co-operative in Nausori, Fiji. The structure of the interview guide was open, containing topics.

### □ Interviews in Namau

We used in-depth interviewing to be able to reach the participants' point of view. The interviews were structured in accordance with the interview guide approach. To do so we developed categories and topics that were investigated while we remained open to pursue new angles of approach to find new information (Kvale 1997, p. 94; Rossman & Rallis 1998, p. 124).

One pilot interview was carried out, for us to test the interview guide. Previous to the pilot interview, we spent three days among the families in Namau settlement to get to know about them as well as finding further questions and openings to the research. We conducted interviews with six families in Namau. During the interviews, one of us asked the questions while the other took notes. We were permitted to use a tape recorder in some of the interviews.

The interviews were conducted in the houses of the participants. Kvale (1997, p. 264) claims that to obtain complete answers, it is favourable to conduct the interviews in the natural environment of the participants. The families consisted of an average of eight persons. The participants were primarily cocoa farmers, but some families also produced milk and other crops. We engaged both men and women, husband and wife, in the interviews while their children were addressed during participant observations, i.e. informal conversations.

### ***Procedure and result processing***

1. Studied the literature concerning the research questions.
2. Gathered background information about the field study, through interviews.
3. Organized and analyzed the gathered data from 1 and 2.
4. The field study began with participant observations and informal interviews.
5. Organized and analyzed the gathered data from 4.
6. Designed interview format based on 1,2 and 4.
7. Carried out in-depth interviews and participant observations.
8. During number 7, organized, familiarized and analyzed gathered data.
9. Re-evaluated the interpretations in accordance with the literature.
10. Wrote the report.

While gathering the data, we systematically organized field notes and interview transcripts. This helped us to discover questions, patterns and themes for an ongoing analysis as the project unfolded. In the identification of patterns and themes we searched for alternative understandings to evaluate our interpretations of the gathered data (Rossman & Rallis 1998, p. 176-182). The analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted in accordance with a narrative data analysis. We made a narrative structuring of the transcript, organized the text according to social and time themes and developed the structures of the stories we were told during the interviews and the participant observations (Kvale 1997, p. 174). According to Kvale (1997, p. 168), the narrative might enable the researcher to manage a more interesting and understandable presentation of the result than a mere transcript of the interviews. The narrative also contributes to a uniform depiction of the interview situation, the analysis as well as the final report.

The report, including references and the presentation of the chosen literature, is designed according to the Harvard system. We applied the Harvard guide on the home page of University of Borås (Högskolan i Borås 2007).

### ***Validity and Reliability***

Satisfactory validity concerns that the researcher studied what was intended to be studied to a great extent. Reliability is the degree of accuracy of the chosen method, which means that the

result is not random. Good reliability is accomplished if the researcher applied the scientific method in a cautious way and if the result is accurate and trustworthy (Kullberg 1996, p. 54). The validity and reliability of this study were considered through carefully choosing method, critical reviewing, literature, interviews and observations. We also re-evaluated our interpretations of the collected field data, which the use of participant observations made possible through observing similar events and actions several times.

## ***Ethical considerations***

### **Ethics – research**

The study was overt, which means that the participants knew the purpose of our research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.142). We strived to ensure the rights, confidentiality and well-being of the participants that formed the focus of our studies. The ethical rights consisted of giving all the relevant information to the participants in the study, for example the purpose of the interviews and the observations. We also explained that the study was voluntary, that it was possible to leave the study if the participant so wished, and that parts of the interview could be deleted. In this way it was possible for the participants to give their approval to the participation in the study. We handled the data as confidential; the tapes are kept in a secure place, and we did not reveal names, not approved by the participants, in the report (Holme & Solvang 1997, p. 32; Vetenskapsrådet 2004).

### **Ethics – behaviour**

During our stay in Fiji, we were aware of the customs and manners considering religion, culture and politics. To behave in a proper manner, we constantly reconsidered the social situations in the daily life. With this in mind we were able to show respect by adapting our choice of clothes and behaviour.

## ***Relevance***

### **Goal of the essay**

A large number of projects in developing countries are run by organizations from industrialized countries. The Swedish-Fijian exchange project, *Cocoa – from farming to retailing* is no exception. The ideas are western but the country where the ideas are implemented is far from western. When reading the project description, the idea of how and why they should encourage and propose a Fijian cocoa industry seems like a matter of course. In view of the fact that they have had the cocoa plantations for many decades, we started asking questions such as: Why has the government not tried to revive the production of cocoa earlier? Why did the cocoa not become a part of the Fijian food culture before? Suddenly the outcome and success of the project do not seem obvious and there are a large number of questions to be asked. This is when it starts getting interesting from our point of view. Ideas that are seen through the eyes of one culture do not have to be seen in the same way or have the same meaning and importance in another culture. We believe that an idea that seems obvious in one culture must be re-evaluated and presented in terms of the culture that it is to be implemented in. Through the process we hope to get a deeper understanding of how to discern the needs and the characteristics of a society and culture to be able to present ideas for products and launch them to success.

## **Use of survey result**

The study contributes information for a deeper understanding concerning the Fijian food culture and an application field for the processed cocoa. The result can be utilised in the Swedish-Fijian exchange project, *Cocoa - from farming to retailing*, as guidelines in the process of developing a locally sustainable and profitable chocolate.

## **Result**

### ***Food in Namau***

Namau is a settlement of 28 houses on the east coast of Viti Levu, the main island of Fiji. In Namau the main sources of income are cocoa farming, dairy farming and mixed crops. Here we spent one week to carry out interviews and observations, by joining their daily life and participating in activities involving food. We experienced great hospitality among the people in Namau. The participants described the hospitality as a cultural tradition, based on the concept that time and property are communal. The families we visited also had a spirit of togetherness, as the family members spent a lot of time together no matter what age.

During the stay in Namau, we noticed that they spent an appreciable amount of time on activities involving food. The participants in Namau were farmers and self-sufficient in their way of life, meaning that they planted, harvested and made all the preparations of their crops to be able to consume any food. They cultivated coconut, banana, papaya, passion fruit, guava, orange, lime, pineapple, avocado and breadfruit as well as starchy root crops like dalo and cassava. In their cooking they used different kinds of green leaves, some of which were collected from the forest that others cultivated. The families also had livestock with pigs, cows and chickens, and they also hunted wild boars and caught fish in the nearby river.

During our stay, we participated in food preparations as well as cooking in one family. While making food preparations, we sat on the floor in the kitchen, outside in the garden or in the living room. When it was time to cook, we moved into the kitchen where they had a fireplace and a paraffin stove. The actual cooking was mainly done by women and children though sometimes men helped with certain preparations.

To describe the food in Namau, we explain below what kinds of ingredients they used in cooking as well as how they used them. We have divided the ingredients into what type of food the items belong to according to the participants, i.e. starches, vegetables, meat, fruits, spices, everyday food, beverages and the cocoa crop.

### **Starchy food**

Dalo, cassava, yam, breadfruit, and cooking banana were cultivated on the farm and represented a predominant percentage of the food intake among the participants. The starches are considered the best source of energy and usually served boiled accompanying dishes with green leaves cooked in coconut milk. When they described ingredients used in cooking they always mentioned the starchy plants first, and if meat was included in a meal it was mentioned last.

Other starches were rice, instant noodles and flour; none of these sources originated from the farm. Rice and noodles were not served together with traditional Fijian dishes, instead with a curry, regarded as an Indian dish and rice was also mixed with coconut milk. The flour included food items such as pancakes, crackers and different kinds of bread such as roti, coconut buns and babakau. Roti was regarded as an Indian bread, made without yeast. The shape was thin and round and it was baked in a pan on the stove. The roti was eaten with butter or accompanying a curry. Babakau was considered a Fijian style bread made of a yeast dough and cooked in oil. Another bread that was regarded as Fijian was coconut buns. These buns were made of a yeast dough and cooked in coconut milk.

## **Vegetables and coconut milk**

The vegetables eaten depended on the time of the year, since the participants relied on their farm and therefore ate the vegetables in season. Green leaves such as rourou (dalo leaves), bele (hibiscus manihot) and ota (a local variety of fern) were common as well as the duruka (a vegetable similar to asparagus). The vegetables served in a meal were always cooked. They never had raw vegetables like a salad accompanying the meal.

The leafy vegetables as well as the duruka were commonly served cooked in coconut milk (lolo) with some onion and salt. The coconut milk was made of scraped coconuts. They mixed the coconut scrapings with water to be able to extract the coconut milk. The participants emphasized that the food contained a good source of liquid, which was necessary to restore the loss of fluid caused by the hot climate and the work at the farm. Therefore the appearance of the dishes with vegetables in coconut milk was similar to soup.

## **Meat**

Meat was not included in a meal on a daily basis, with the exception of the packed school lunch. Certain “rules” from school were to be followed for how to prepare this meal, which needed to include a source of protein such as meat, egg or milk. According to the participants the protein was needed for the children’s brains to function while studying, while it was not considered necessary for the work at the farm.

Because fresh and frozen meat, such as pork, chicken and fish, was considered expensive as well as not possible to store without a refrigerator, it was usually only served for festive occasions. However, preserved meat such as canned tuna or corned beef was sometimes used as an ingredient in a curry or as a condiment to the traditional dishes with green leaves and coconut milk. The meaning of a curry was similar to a stew. No spice in particular was used, instead they used the ingredients that were available, for example, onion, garlic, ginger, green papaya and, depending on the occasion, meat was added.

## **Fruit**

Fruit was eaten between the meals. The range of fruits used in cooking a lunch or dinner meal usually comprised coconut, breadfruit as well as the unripe green papaya. However, fruits used in cooking lunch and dinner did not seem to have a distinct sweet taste. The sweet fruits were used instead in cakes and to make lemonade. Sometimes they used banana and avocado as a spread on toast, instead of butter. Avocado was also called Fijian butter.

## **Spice**

The idea of a spice seemed to be everything adding flavour to a dish and not only the dried spices or herbs we usually think of when talking about spices. When we asked if there were any particular spices used in cooking, they listed everything from salt, ginger, curry powder (spice mix of grounded, dried spices introduced by the Indian population), “Chinese salt” (Mono Sodium Glutamate – flavour enhancer) to tomato, cabbage, carrot, garlic and onion. Meat was also regarded as flavouring. The participants said about the use of meat in their dishes, “sometimes we add some meat or tuna, just for the taste”.

## **Everyday food**

Sugar, salt, oil and flour were groceries referred to as everyday food, meaning ingredients used in almost every meal and bought in the supermarket. The participants also bought rice, noodles, biscuits, onions, tea, tinned fish and meat in the supermarket. All families underlined

that they did not buy food (vegetables) from the local market because that was the same food (vegetables) as they had on the farm. Though certain food items were bought in the local market, for example the nut evi, which was a seasonal food that was time consuming to prepare, why it was considered worthy to buy. The food purchase at the supermarket was made on a weekly and sometimes on a monthly basis.

## ***Beverages in Namau***

### **Hot Drinks**

The most common beverage was tea. The type of tea varied from tea, the “English” type of tea, (black tea), bought in the supermarket to lemon leaf tea, made of lemon leaves picked on the farm. The participants emphasized that lemon leaves were something they could rely on if they did not have money to buy the tea from the supermarket. Tea was always drunk with sugar. The participants also liked coffee although it was too expensive to consume on a regular basis. The use of milk in coffee depended on whether they had the opportunity of getting fresh milk in the morning.

### **Fruit juice**

They prepared lemonade of the fruits in season, for example lemon, papaya and pineapple. The fruit juice was combined with sugar and water. The homemade juice was sent with the children to school. While working on the farm, they drank the juice from coconuts or water from the river.

### **Kava**

A festive meal such as a family get-together generally began with guests gathering to have kava. People were seated in a ring, on the floor, around the kava bowl and one person handed out the small drinking bowl with kava to those around. When drinking kava one ritual involved clapping hands both before receiving the kava bowl and after drinking. Clapping hands was a way of showing gratitude. We were told that one should at least drink two bowls of kava when it was offered. Before the first bowl of kava, one was not allowed to tell stories or talk.

Most women stated that they only drank kava at weddings, while the men stated that they drank kava on several occasions, such as meetings, to welcome guests and parties. From the participant observations, we noticed mostly men drinking kava while only some women were drinking and no children. If one did not join the kava ceremony, one sat behind talking to others who did not have kava. It was common on these occasions for the women and children to eat before the men, who drank kava for quite a long time before they ate.

The participants regarded the kava ceremony as a Fijian custom and an important tradition possessing a very strong meaning in the Fijian culture. The participants said that drinking kava provided an opportunity of discussing important matters as well as solving family issues. Furthermore it was the traditional ritual of welcoming guests. Kava was considered to have the same meaning for Fijians as wine has for Europeans. In the village it was not accepted to drink any alcohol, and therefore a party with alcohol must be held in town. The participant claimed that the elders did not accept the alcoholic drinks.

## **Cocoa**

The cocoa crop was not consumed by the families, according to the participants, because of the lack of knowledge of how to prepare the cocoa beans. Furthermore, cocoa was not in the first place regarded as food, but instead as a source of income, “cocoa is money for my family, it is only money”. However, when discussing cocoa, some of the participants from time to time pounded their cocoa to make a beverage, describing that they preferred the cocoa beverage with a thick texture and a strong taste. “Cocoa is just like coffee, a lot strong, sometimes you put more, it is the taste of chocolate and whenever sugar is there, it is like something else”, meaning that by adding sugar the real taste of chocolate appeared.

In general, instead of using their own cocoa the participants used the cocoa powder bought in the supermarket. The local supermarket offered several brands of cocoa powder as well as pre-mixed drinking chocolate, with cocoa, sugar and milk powder. The cocoa was said to be used to make a “cocoa tea” (a hot beverage with cocoa powder, milk/water and sugar) as well as for baking cakes. Since the cocoa powder was considered expensive, it was mainly used in cakes for special occasions.

We asked the participants how they pictured the use of their cocoa. They believed the cocoa could be useful as a beverage, if mixed with hot milk/water and sugar. However, one of the participants believed that their cocoa would not be successful because it would be different from the existing cocoa powder.

## **Meal situations**

From the interviews we found out that the most important meals were either breakfast or lunch, because these meals provided the energy for being able to work all day on the farm.

Most meals were prepared and eaten in the home, but occasionally a family member ate outside the home, for example when selling crops in town, usually the men. However, it was not common for a whole family to eat out. The exception was children who had school lunch outside the farm, although the food was prepared at home.

For their meals, the families were seated on homemade mats on the floor. Even if they had a table it was not utilised. The “table” was set by arranging a tablecloth on the floor in the living room. Still, when having tea, we always moved down to the floor while drinking. Things that were done were usually done seated on the floor, as during the food preparations. At a party or a meeting, people were gathered around the kava bowl.

At mealtime, food was arranged in serving bowls, with two persons sharing one bowl. From the serving bowl they used utensils to put the food on their own plates from which they ate with their hands. Before eating, usually the father prayed and blessed the food. However, the meal seemed relaxed. For example, when it was time to eat, the participants were allowed to come later if they had things to do, and everybody was freely laughing and chatting with one another. When finished eating everybody said a couple of appreciating words about the food to show gratitude towards the person or persons responsible for the cooking.

## **Breakfast**

When the participants were talking about what food they had in the morning they said, “we eat flour for breakfast”, including pancakes, crackers and different kinds of bread such as roti, buns and babakau. Alternatively noodles and rice with a curry or rice with coconut milk were

also eaten in the morning. However, most of the participants underlined that rice was only for children to bring to school because it was easy to cook in the early morning. The morning was the only time when they considered the time aspect while cooking, i.e. lack of time. The mothers woke up about five in the morning to be able to prepare the breakfast and school lunch before the children had to leave for school. They also underlined the need for the children to eat a proper breakfast because of their long walk to school.

The most popular drink at breakfast was tea, both lemon leaf tea and the tea bought in the supermarket. Some participants liked to have coffee if they had to wake up really early, but coffee was not drunk on a daily basis. Usually the participants did not drink while eating but drank the tea afterwards, although at breakfast they had the beverage and the food at the same time.

After breakfast it was common to go out and get the starchy plants and vegetables to be prepared for lunch.

## **Lunch**

The meal at lunch was considered important to gain energy and also an opportunity for relaxation from work. The women usually made lunch and dinner while the men were out working on the farm. There were exceptions, when the woman also worked on the farm and they cooked lunch together.

The food eaten at lunch varied from, as the participants expressed, “a heavy lunch with starchy crops such as dalo or cassava, accompanied with rourou or bele in coconut milk, to a light lunch with rice and curry”.

The participants emphasized the importance of relaxing with a cup of tea after lunch. One participant even claimed that he did not feel satisfied if not drinking tea after eating. Some families also had home-made juice to drink at lunch.

## **Dinner**

When talking about the importance of dinner, the participants also mentioned the opportunity to talk and have a good time with the family, in contrast to breakfast and lunch when they only mentioned the energy to be able to work on the farm. The food eaten for dinner was also different from that of other meals. None of the participants served rice and curry for dinner. Instead they had the traditional Fijian food, for example dalo or cassava with rourou, ota or bele in coconut milk.

Also at dinner, tea was the most popular beverage and it was drunk after eating. The participants said that they sometimes skipped dinner depending of what they had had for lunch. If they had had a heavy lunch, they occasionally served tea with bread or biscuits in the evening.

## **A festive meal**

The participants did not include meat in their diet on a daily basis, though on special occasions they always mentioned meat as a part of the meal. For a family party they preferred to buy frozen meat from the supermarket, for example pork, chicken, shrimps and fish. The participants said that they could serve anything at a party, but usually they cooked the food in the lovo, for example the dish palusami, baked chicken, pork, dalo and cassava. Duruka and fish in coconut milk were also popular dishes. Some of the participants regarded Chinese and Indian dishes made from recipes as fancy and possible to be cooked for their parties.

The participants explained that if they arranged a party, guests usually brought food as a gift to be cooked at the party. One participant said, “if you have pork or chicken, the rest will come from others and you do not have to worry”. The participants underlined that it was important to have an abundance of food so that there would be plenty enough for everybody. The food brought as a gift varied because of where people lived. If they lived on a farm, it was the crops from their farm, but if they lived in the city, it was usually frozen food or other groceries bought in the supermarket.

### **Food choice**

How the participants made their food choices was influenced by several aspects such as heritage, beliefs, financial and practical matters. From interviews we found out that it was mostly women who decided what to cook as well as what groceries to buy, while both men and women went to the supermarket to make the purchase of groceries. Before making the food purchase, they always made a shopping list, which they stuck to no matter what. The participants stated that the list was the most important when purchasing groceries. The list helped them to buy only the groceries they had come for. They did not check for new products, but they bought products with the price matching their needs. Some families also wrote the price of the groceries on the shopping list and checked for products with the matching price. However, they stated that a new product might be bought if it was tried somewhere before or if someone recommended it.

### **Practical matters**

Namau village was situated in a remote area and for some participants it took weeks between visits to town. Most families did not have a television set or a newspaper, which made them hard to influence by commercial ads in supermarkets, TV, and newspapers as well as by testing different foodstuffs outside the home. There was no electricity in the village, which led to poor storing possibilities for refrigerated groceries.

### **Financial**

A further aspect was the financial situation. The families bought as little as possible from supermarkets and local markets, since they wanted to live off the farm and off what they were growing. They claimed that they did not have enough money to go to restaurants, travel or try out a new product without knowing that it would be useful.

### **Heritage and beliefs**

The heritage influenced the food choice, and most women stated that they mainly cooked dishes their mothers had taught them. There were also beliefs affecting their choice of food, for example the food to be suitable for the hard work on the farm. Also when talking about food in Namau, the expression “fresh from the farm”, was commonly in use. It was about their crops such as dalo, fruits and other farm products such as milk. It was a positive statement to underline that the crops were locally and carefully grown within the farm/village. This kind of food was considered to be healthy and to be the real kind of food.

There were exceptions concerning both heritage and beliefs, because cooking has evolved despite the people being hard to influence and their cuisine having been affected by the outside world. For example, in some families they cooked dishes from foreign cuisines by using imagination as well as recipes. The use of noodles, rice and flour was another example. These were products that the participants did not believe to provide the best source of energy for the

hard work or even be as healthy as the vegetables and starchy crops from the farm, but they were chosen anyway because these items were convenient to cook and offered a change of diet.

European, Indian and Chinese dishes were often referred to as “fancy food”, cooked from recipes. One participant talked about making dessert pies and she stated that she did not make as fancy pies as in Europe, while other participants claimed that they could cook “fancy dishes” for their parties, for example Chinese and Indian dishes. There were also participants who believed white sugar to be of better quality than brown sugar, because the white sugar was exported while the brown sugar was left.

### **The idea of healthy food**

The participants described healthy food as starchy, providing energy to be able to work all day on the farm. Commercial ads were common on food packages marketing products as being a good source of energy. As they saw it, they also ate very healthy food when eating vegetables and fish fresh from the farm. Sugar was considered a good source of energy for the hard work on the farm, “sugar is good for hard-working farmers”. Food regarded as unhealthy was food not providing a sufficient amount of energy. For example serving biscuits and tea instead of dinner was considered unhealthy.

A “balanced diet” was also a concept of healthy food, which was food providing for body-building, energy and strength. Their understanding of a balanced diet originated from a paper, distributed by the health care authorities and intended to teach them how to prepare meals and school lunches for children. They also mentioned training as important to stay fit and they explained walking to school and eating starchy crops as a way to do so.

### **The idea of taste**

“The food is tasty and delicious”, was the spontaneous answer to the question asking the participants to describe the taste of their food. They also described the taste as that of green vegetables and starchy root vegetables. However, in other situations they talked about the importance of the taste to be balanced and a participant said, “after tasting the food you will get all the information needed to decide if it is good, and if it is not, you have to change”.

Most of the food was slightly salted, and the only time when they used a spice mix (dried grounded spices) was when they were cooking Indian or Chinese dishes. When they cooked traditional Fijian food as rourou, bele and ota with coconut milk, they used salt, and it was the natural flavours of the ingredients that added to the taste. The participants said, “the natural taste has been given by God”. Hence the natural taste of food was considered the right taste and that was a property of the food originating from the farm.

The food we cooked and ate tasted natural of green leaves and coconut milk with a slightly salty flavour. If someone liked the food spicy, they could add fresh chilli and lime on top of the food while eating, but they did not use chilli when cooking for the simple reason that everybody did not like spicy food.

Sweetness was regarded as an important property of several food items. For example the fruits, fruit juices and tea consumed were very sweet. When the participants talked about what kind of food was tasty, they often referred to something as “sweet”, which included everything from fruit to the eyes of a fish. Considering the taste for sweetness, several participants stated that they had to put at least three teaspoonfuls of sugar in the tea, because otherwise it

would not be tasty enough, and all the participants stated that they used sugar in tea to make it tasty.

### **Rules of food and ingredients**

Concerning known traditions or rules, some participants claimed that there were no such rules, for example for how to combine dishes and ingredients. But from what we could see in other situations, there did exist rules for what to combine. For example the participants emphasized that pork goes with salt and fish with coconut milk and always in a contrast of the two foodstuffs. Further, we asked if they could imagine using cocoa in cooking, and because they use coconut in most of their cooking the response was, “if you mix cocoa and coconut you have to add flour, to do baking”. There were also participants who thought that food eaten for breakfast is not to be eaten for lunch and dinner, for example pancakes at lunch. Salt and sugar were the foremost flavour enhancers but not to be used together in a dish. They did not put any sugar in the food when cooking lunch or dinner because then they used salt. The participants said, “sugar we use for pancakes and tea, while salt goes with coconut milk and rice”.

In an interview we found out the existence of ancient beliefs. For example if they invited someone from a different tribe there were rules about what type of food they could eat in front of each other. A certain tribe could not eat fish in front of another tribe, while that tribe could not eat pork in front of another tribe. If someone ignored the “rules”, they believed this person would suffer and be “punished”. We were told a story about a man who ignored the rules and got a fishbone stuck in his throat, and the only way to get it out was to have a reconciliation with a kava ceremony to ask for forgiveness.

### ***The situation of cocoa in Namau***

In this chapter we have compiled results from two interviews conducted in Fiji but *outside Namau*. One with the chairman of the Tailevu Province Cocoa Growers and Producers Co-operative Association Ltd. and another with the exporter of the Fijian cocoa beans.

### **Background to Namau cocoa**

Cocoa was introduced to the farmers in Namau, Tailevu province, by the Fijian government in the 1960s, as a substitute for the declining banana industry. At first, the sale of cocoa was increasing, but then problems occurred with a fungus disease, called the black pod disease. The effects of the fungus disease were devastating and after a couple of years the government gave up the idea of cocoa as a profitable crop. In the 1980s, there was an attempt to revive the cocoa industry and the Department of Agriculture began advising the farmers how to treat the plants and avoid the black pod disease. However, this attempt failed and the government once again pulled out their contribution of advice and resources. In the 1990s the world market price of cocoa dropped substantially and most farmers gave up, which led to a collapse of the Fijian cocoa industry. Today there are only 18 out of about 100 cocoa farmers left in the Tailevu Province, although it is still the most active cocoa growing area in Fiji, covering about 200 acres of cocoa plantations.

At present the cocoa farmers in Namau are members of a cocoa co-operative, the Tailevu Province Cocoa Growers and Producers Co-operative Association Ltd, whose assignment is to function as their spokesman, caring and looking after their interests. The co-operative was founded in 1984.

## **The development of the cocoa industry**

Today the export of cocoa is handled through a single exporter, trading the total amount of cocoa beans produced in Fiji. Furthermore the quantities of cocoa are not adequate to be shipped alone, which makes the cocoa dependent on other crops to be shipped together when exported.

No attempts have been made at refining the Fijian cocoa for the local market. In the 1980s the chairman of the cocoa co-operative went to a cocoa farm in Sri Lanka, where he studied the small-scale production of chocolate, which he thought was possible to develop in Fiji as well. Back in Fiji, he had plans for starting up some kind of local processing of cocoa, but there was not enough interest in developing this idea. The reason why the cocoa farmers are interested in developing today is they have been carefully informed about the better profit of processed products.

The chairman believed that the development could be realized through the private sector. The issue of where to implement the processing has not yet been solved. The options are processing done by the farmers in Namau or processing done in a certain facility. However, he believed that it is important to start with the farmers to enable them to survive and to develop their cocoa farming. He said that chocolate is now found all over Fiji, even in small and remote villages, but it is imported chocolate and not Fijian. In the Tailevu area the resources are scarce and a locally produced chocolate could be something for the farmers to count as their own and provide them with a good profit.

At present, only the farmers of Namau are ready for development, but to be able to proceed they need resources, expert advice as well as continuous research by the Department of Agriculture, concerning agricultural development and the black pod disease.

## **Discussion**

### ***Research and methodology***

#### **The field study**

During the field study, we found out that some farmers regarded us with our assignment as an “expertise team”. Therefore they declined to participate in the study, because they were afraid to say things the “wrong” way. It is possible that this might concern the families that participated in the study as well, through not expressing themselves completely during the interviews.

While staying in Namau, we sought to experience their daily life with respect to the activities involving food. However, we have to consider that our experience may have been coloured by the fact that we were their guests, and that their daily life might be spent differently from what was shown to us during the study.

Further we considered that the farmers will be the producers as well as the consumers of the cocoa, i.e. they had a double interest in the cocoa. To accomplish the purpose of this study, we have been careful to explain that the participants had to consider themselves as consumers not as producers.

As Holme and Solvang (1997, p. 190-191) point out, there is a risk of misinterpretations, which we have considered possible, because during the field study English was used as a language of communication, which is a second language for the participants and the researchers. Sometimes information was translated from Fijian to English through a third person, which might have caused a distortion of the information.

#### **Literature**

During the research of literature in Fiji, we discovered that the literature about cocoa and the studies about the Fijian food culture were very old. The most up-to-date study about cocoa and food was published in 1986. In spite of this we decided to use this literature because we believed it offered a background as well as a retrospective view of the situation concerning food habits and cocoa farming in Fiji (Holme & Solvang 1997, p. 130-138). It is also an indication that research within the area is absent. It would be desirable to begin local research at the university, to arouse interest in Fijian resources.

#### **Processing of data**

We chose to present the field data according to a narrative data analysis, to obtain an accurate and graphic description of the food culture in Namau (Kvale 1997, p. 168). Sometimes it is of interest to refer separately to each participant in the result. We chose to present the participants as a unit, partly for ethical considerations, the confidentiality, and partly because our intention was to create a cultural picture through concentrating the patterns and seeking attributes connecting the participants as an entity (Kvale 1997, p. 158).

#### ***The food culture in Namau***

The mission of developing an industry and the products deriving from it are complex, which was proved in many ways during the time we were working on this project. We saw a number of parameters that might affect the identity of a product, in this case the future chocolate. Fur-

ther we realized the importance of listening to the voice of the customer, which Cooper (2001, p. 23) emphasizes, since their voice can tell one so much about the specific properties that the product should communicate to the target group. This led us to consider a broad variety of aspects, such as the social and cultural matters which Mäkelä (2000, p. 7, 15) and Caplan (1997, p. 1-25) discuss, and not only the aspects of a core product.

As Bringéus (1988, p. 11-23) claims, an overall picture is important to be able to see *why* a food culture appears in a particular way, and not only to look at *what* is eaten within a culture. Regarding a development project such as the *Cocoa - from farming to retailing*, we believe it is of great importance to get to know the target group to be able to present the ideas according to their culture. Svederberg (2002, p. 19-21) conducted her study by participating when the interviewees were cooking, which enabled her to get to know the true beliefs of her target group and not only the stories told in a face-to-face interview. We believe this concerns our study as well, because through participating in their daily life, we were able to learn about the participants' everyday life through experiencing it ourselves. This might enable us to uncover and understand the true needs of the target group. When the needs of a target group are identified, it is possible to form the goals of the development project, as well as to establish of a plan of how to go through with the project to reach these goals (Cooper 2001, p. 287; Jarlbro 2004, p. 45-50).

### **Choosing the food from the farm**

In the survey by Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 15), the *taste* was the foremost feature of how food items were chosen, while among the participants the food choice primarily depended on the *cost* and *cultural beliefs*. The food cultivated on the farm was a way of eating for “free”, which the participants underlined in the interviews. An aspect regarding the food bought in the supermarket or outside the village was that this food was seen as convenient food. The participants boiled the rice in the morning for the children to eat and bring for packed lunch because it was “fast and easy”. This was also the same food seen as “light”, “nothing for hard workers”, compared to the root crops cultivated on the farm. Svederberg (2002) found that the participants in her study preferred their own food because of beliefs about their own food culture being the most suitable. This is similar to the beliefs of the participants, concerning the food from the farm being most suitable for their daily life. The participants claimed that the food from the farm is the real food, given by God, in contrast to the food from the supermarket or the local market considered to be the convenient food. The conception “fresh from the farm” was so strong that it was considered wrong to buy crops like bananas or products like milk, when they had the best quality in their own village, the “true food” as defined by Turner (1984, p. 134) and Pollock (1985, p. 198).

Bringéus (1988 p. 11-23) thinks that our food choices are affected by the access of food in a certain area, such as the food in season as well as what food is considered beneficial to consume. By studying the food culture in Namau, we could see that the food eaten depended on the location of the village. It was not possible for the participants to use for example the ocean as a source to get food. Compared to the dishes described in the literature by Bailey (1992), Fiji Bure (2007), Mellor and Hoskins (1986) and Pollock (1985), the food in Namau differed at some points because the food eaten by the participants was limited to the access of food within the farm, since they strove to be self-sufficient. However, if a food item was considered beneficial to consume, they did purchase that food, for example the food bought in the supermarket, like starches such as rice and flour. The benefit was that these items facilitated the cooking by being easily accessible, compared to the plant and root starches from the land, demanding a lot of work before being consumed.

## Foreign food influences

As Mennell (1992, p. 75-80) wrote about colonization, we perceived the food culture in Naimau to be influenced by the time of colonization, affecting both their eating and their drinking habits. For example the concept of “gunu ti”, defined by Pollock (1985, p. 200) as a beverage accompanied with bread, is said to be an English influence. Other influences in the participants’ diet derived from Indian immigrants such as rice, certain bread as the roti and lentils (Landguiden Oceanien-Fiji 2007; Fiji Bure 2007).

According to Turner (1984, p. 135), cassava is a relatively new crop in Fiji. Regardless of this, the participants talked about cassava as a Fijian food, and cassava was also used in the same way as the traditional starchy roots, dalo and yam. However, when the participants were talking about starches, we discerned a difference between cassava and the traditional starchy roots. They always emphasized that dalo was apart from the other food, and they also mentioned dalo first when talking about their crops. This might be related to the symbolic meaning of a food that Turner (1984, p. 135) ascribes to dalo and yam. Although the symbolic meaning of cassava was not the same as that of dalo and yam, cassava was accepted as a part of their food culture and even combined and eaten with traditional Fijian dishes such as rourou in coconut milk (CIA 2006, p. 2). On the other hand, rice, also depicted as a starch, was not combined with the Fijian “i coi” in a meal, nor did the participants place rice on a level with the starches from the farm. The reason why cassava was accepted might be the availability of the crop. As Rozin (2000, p. 153) states, the characteristics of a food culture for a specific area depend on what kind of food is suitable within that area, for example conditions of cultivating. The conditions within the farm suited cassava, which enabled the farmers to grow cassava to the same extent as dalo, turning cassava into a crop that was *fresh from the farm* and regarded as *the real food*. Rice, on the other hand, was something bought in the supermarket and for this reason it had neither the same value nor the same importance as the crops from the farm.

It was common for the participants to point out, “this is the Fijian food”, comparing this food with the food they considered to be *not* Fijian, which might be the same as Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 13) describe, a way for them of telling what was normal and not normal to eat. According to Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 13), these are the rules for fitting into one’s group. Belasco (2002, p. 2) claims it is a way of showing one’s identity. The rules concerning what kind of food that was permitted to eat in front of another tribe, might also be a way to distinguish between groups and to prove of their belonging. When the participants emphasized what was considered their own culture, there was a natural opposite, *not* their own culture. It seemed as if the participants needed to show off their cultural identity, which is also similar to what Rozin (2000, p. 137) describes, that comparing food is an act of showing strong needs to hold on to one’s own identity, which is proved through the food eaten within one’s own culture.

Burstedt (2002, p. 12-13) points out that a certain combination of ingredients is specific to a certain group. The mixture of ingredients that made the food specific to our target group seemed to be the way of adding coconut milk or coconut cream in the dishes, boiling green leaves in coconut milk and eating the starchy root crops by dipping them in the liquid from the coconut milk.

The *Fijian food* mentioned by the participants might also be called the *typical* food, as discussed by Burstedt (2002, p. 12-13), because it was the food the participants ate every day, which transformed this food into being the *typical Fijian food*, also consisting of the influ-

ences that were discussed by Meigs (1997, p. 104), Mäkelä (2000, p. 15) and Beardsworth and Keil (1997, p. 51) deriving from the environmental, social and economic circumstances unique to Namau.

### ***The meaning of food and meals***

The meaning of a concept such as food might be diverse within different cultures, and according to Pollock (1985, p. 200), problems might occur when translating words and expressions into another language. We believe this issue to concern this project, and hence we find it important to identify the meaning of cocoa within the target group, as well as the meaning of the pictured meal situations suitable for cocoa.

Pollock (1985, p. 200) claims that a common error was made by those involved in nutrition education when advising the Fijians to include the fruit papaya in their breakfast. She says it is wrong for two reasons. First the concept of breakfast is European, second raw fruit and vegetables are not considered part of the Fijian meal. The participants did not serve any raw fruits or vegetables with their meals either. When describing the different meal situations in the result chapter, we used the concepts of breakfast, lunch and dinner, because these were the expressions the participants used when they described what they ate during a day. The expressions did not include the same components of food as in Europe, but as Pliner and Rosin (2000, p. 24) point out, a certain meal can also have the meaning of a certain time, and hence the participants used these expressions to describe the time of the day. But these expressions also showed the importance of a meal, as Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1, p. 5) claim, as a sign for the family to be gathered, involving the social element of the meal. The food/meal concepts described by Pollock (1985, p. 198-200) involve neither the social meaning nor the time aspect of the meal, only the components of the foodstuff.

The idea of food and meals defined by Pollock (1985, p. 198-200) shows what kind of food is possible to combine and what food is accepted in a certain meal, while the idea of breakfast, lunch and dinner shows what time of the day is related to the meal, as well as the social aspects of it. When combining these two ways of expressing food and meals, as Pliner and Rosin (2000, p. 36), point out concerning the standards of food and meals, we might get the overall picture to uncover the meaning of food and meals including rules and standards affecting the food choices.

### **Components of a meal**

According to Pollock (1985, p. 199) and Turner (1985, p. 134), a Fijian meal consists of two parts, the “*kakana dina*”, *the real food* and the “*i coi*”, *the condiments*. When the participants talked about a meal, they mentioned the starchy plants together with another dish such as rourou in coconut milk. Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1, p. 10) also emphasize that certain components form the meal, and what components form the meal depends on the food culture. In Namau it seemed to be the ingredients from the farm, such as the starchy plants and the boiled leaves in coconut milk, regarded as the two elements of a meal. Pollock (1985, p. 199) and Turner (1985, p. 134) explain that the Fijian expression for food, the “*kakana dina*”, symbolizes root and tree starches. They also claim that nowadays rice and flour might be included in the expression “*kakana dina*”. However, Pollock underlines that the basic concept of “*kakana dina*” only refers to the food from the land. This might be a further reason why the participants regarded rice and flour as light food not suitable for the hard work on the farm, while the starches from the farm were considered appropriate for hard work. We did not see them mixing rice with a traditional Fijian dish such as the green leaves in coconut milk either, as rice might not be regarded as the “*kakana dina*” and therefore not combined with the “*i coi*”

when composing a meal. Still rice was adapted to suit the Fijian diet in another way, as they served the rice together with the typical coconut milk spiced with salt. This is similar to what Long (2004, p. 26) and Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 6) discuss about the hamburgers in South America, as the participants in the same way adapted the rice to fit their own food values. Still, this kind of dish, as rice and coconut milk, was not considered a meal, because it was eaten on its own for example at breakfast, when the participants had food belonging to the “gunu ti”.

Pliner and Rosin (2000, p. 19) claim that beverages are often seen as a given to a meal, for the purpose of getting the liquid needed for the body, and hence the meal is often associated with a beverage. A phenomenon that really puzzled us was that the participants, did not drink during the meal, as Europeans do, but only at breakfast, and instead drank afterwards. However, according to Pollock (1985, p. 197), the concept of drink is widely used, covering items with a soft texture such as boiled green vegetables. However, we believe that the conceptions of food and meals described in Pollock’s study provided another answer to that puzzle. The explanations may be the following: at lunch and dinner the participants usually had food belonging to the “kakana dina” involving two components, neither of which was a beverage. But at breakfast time they usually had food belonging to the “gunu ti”, where one of the components actually was a beverage.

### **Food as a timetable**

In Namau food was incorporated in almost everything that was done during a day. Meigs (1997) calls the food the strongest of all matters, and life in Namau was about food from the morning to the evening. Pliner and Rosin (2000, p. 24) point out that food preparations and cooking give structure to the day and, as mentioned earlier, a certain meal can also have the meaning of a certain time. For the participants food was the start of the day by cooking for the children and preparing lunch. Then it was working *time* on the farm to produce food. After eating lunch it was relaxing *time* by drinking tea, and after tea it was working *time* again to produce food. In the afternoon the children came back from school, which meant cooking *time* and dinner *time*, by eating together. When food is involved in so many things, then it starts to mean a lot of things, as discussed by Meigs (1997, p. 104), Mäkelä (2000, p. 15) and Beardsworth and Keil (1997, p. 51), such as aspects of feelings, fears, economy and solidarity.

### **Food - masculine and feminine**

In most families in Namau they told us that it was the women who made the cooking, which was different from the information we found in the literature, where both men and women made a contribution when cooking (Momoivalu 1985a, p. 18). However, if the cooking process started out in the field, we would like to say that both men and women cooked together. Cooking in Namau was not just about boiling. Instead it covered the whole food chain from fieldwork, sowing and planting crops, pruning, and then harvesting, before they were able to cook and consume any food. It seemed as if most of the fieldwork was done by the men, while the women took care of the ripe crop and transformed it into edible food as well as taking care of the dishes and other things belonging to the domestic work.

James (1997, p. 74) and Beardsworth and Keil (1997, p. 53) consider the conception of strong and weak food, i.e. masculine and feminine food. Turner (1984, p. 135) claims that during the harvest of dalo and yam, the dalo is associated with femaleness and yam is associated with maleness. Though this did not seem to affect however the crop to be consumed by a man or a woman. They did express certain food to be more suited the hard work at the farm, but they

never distinguished the work carried out by a man from the work carried out by a women. The food that was distinguished to suit a certain person was the food for children. The participants believed that children required meat, protein, to think all day in school and the parents needed energy, carbohydrates, to work on the farm. The energy the parents needed came from the starchy food on the farm, from the sugar they put in the tea and the fat from the coconut milk. According to the participants, the meaning of food in general was to provide energy to be able to work all day on the farm. Therefore, a new product of cocoa should be devised as suitable to the hard work on the farm, otherwise it might be considered unnecessary and not profitable enough for buying

### **Food and socialization**

Sobal (2000, p. 119, 128) emphasizes that a meal is only a meal if it is eaten with someone else. As regards the participants, the meal in the evening seemed to be the most prototypical meal in terms of this aspect. However, even if the participants did not express the social importance for every meal, the socialisation was still there, for example when preparing food and cooking. No matter if they were cooking or not cooking, all of them, family and friends, were socializing. There is also a known tradition of spending time together, relaxing and drinking beverages like tea and kava. For this purpose a drinking chocolate might be useful. It will never be as important in a cultural sense as the kava, but drinking chocolate might be a new way of relaxing in the social way they are used to, as described in KavaRoot (1999b, p. 1, 4-5) and Granqvist & Jörneryd (1993, p. 115).

Another social activity seemed to be the shopping because most shopping was made in Saturdays. This was the only day of the week the participants pointed out that they spent time together to just have fun. The shopping was an opportunity to walk around, talk to people or drink kava in the local market place.

### **Food for giving**

As Beardsworth and Kiel (1997, p. 52) describe, it is possible to communicate a number of aspects by means of food. For example the food brought as a gift to a feast, to a villager having visitors or to old people, communicates generosity and indicates belonging to a group taking care of one another. When those from the urban areas visited the village, there was an exchange of products needed for both parties. Pollock (1985, p. 200) also discusses the importance of the amount of food served at a feast. The amount of food seemed to depend on the contribution from the guests and for the participants, it seemed important to be able to eat as much as they wanted, and no one would leave a feast still being hungry.

### **Food and cocoa**

The participants described the meaning of food and a condiment in the same manner as Barrau (1958, p. 35) depicted Fijian food 50 years ago. However, when the participants talked about the crops grown on the farm in contrast to the products bought at the local market or supermarket, the expression *real food* was used covering all their crops with no consideration taken of starchy plants or supplementary plants. They did not refer to the cocoa crop as food, however, but instead as a source of income, *money*. The reason for this was probably that cocoa was their primary source of income as well as the fact that most farmers did not know how to process the cocoa into an “edible”. In the future we believe it will be of importance for the cocoa to be considered an “edible”. Because the farmers do not have resources for professional development of their products, they will have to handle it themselves. Consuming the cocoa would make it possible to come up with ideas of how to improve the products. The

consumption of the Fijian cocoa might also be more likely to establish it as a “real” Fijian product.

The concept of “gunu ti”, defined by Pollock (1985, p. 199-200) refers to tea together with a starch such as buns, scones or biscuits. At present, the commercial cocoa powder is accepted and used by the participants as a beverage and also in baking. Hence the cocoa can be applied in the “gunu ti” both as the beverage and also as a part of the starchy component in a cake or cookie. The “gunu ti” was eaten during the day, especially in the morning. The participants also consumed the “gunu ti” as fast food, regarded as not healthy because it did not provide enough energy. However, we believe in emphasizing that the Fijian cocoa as a beverage will serve as a better source of energy than tea. The participants also had a tradition when spending time together and relaxing while drinking tea. Hence, as discussed earlier, there is a strong value in socializing while drinking, for which reason a drinking chocolate might be promoted as a social drink.

According to Pollock (1958, p. 199), there are several items considered to be non-meal eatables, including items that are not considered real food. This includes prepared food such as for example sweets, also called “refreshments”, in our terms referred to as desserts. She states that such items are eaten alone, nor did the participants have sweets in connection with a meal. Today imported chocolate is consumed by the participants and is regarded as a sweet. The cocoa as a variety of a “chocolate bar” could be considered a sweet belonging to this group of non-meal eatables. The sweet eatables were, according to the literature, popular as gifts. Since the participants stated that the keeping qualities were the most important property of the food used as gifts, the cocoa product might be used in the same manner as sweet eatables, though it is important to keep in mind that in Namau sweets were never mentioned as a gift.

We examined if there might exist a demand for cocoa as an ingredient when cooking dishes for lunch or dinner. However, the acceptance of cocoa as a flavour is rather small for several reasons. For example the Fijian dishes are cooked and combined in traditional ways, but introducing cocoa as a flavour in cooking might work if introducing a new recipe from a foreign cuisine. Among the participants the use of foreign food is however limited and also believed to be both “fancy” and “light” food, not suitable for daily use or for the hard work on the farm. They also considered cocoa to go with sugar and there was a belief that sugar should not be combined with salt, which was already used in all the dishes for lunch and dinner. This belief might belong to the rules of the food culture determining, as Rozin (2000, p. 142) claims, what taste suits a certain dish or meal.

### ***The sensory attributes of the food culture***

Rozin (2000, p. 153) and Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 8) discuss the parameters affecting the *flavours of a food culture*. In Namau they used firewood to cook food giving the surrounding area a smoky smell. A smoky flavour was also found in the festive meal, the traditional Fijian way of cooking, the lovo described in Fiji Bure (2007) and Lonely Planet (2006). The smoky flavour contributes to the specific flavour of the food culture in Namau. In the same way, flavouring the chocolate and using their own flavours originating from the farm might strengthen the identity of the product (Burstedt 2002, p. 12-13). For example vanilla, coconut, orange and chilli were all grown on the farm making them the flavours of their food culture. In the processing of the chocolate we recommend using the specific attributes that are natural for the cocoa beans in Namau. Instead of focusing on eliminating defects, like acid taste and smoky flavour, which are not accepted for the export cocoa, the cocoa produc-

ers should turn these *defects* into positive attributes, specific to their cocoa product (the Agricultural Commodity Committee 1985, p. 2). To make a cocoa product with a smoky taste reminiscent of the lovo and an acid taste reminiscent of the lemon juice that is squeezed over the food is a way of giving the cocoa product an identity, because it is the same taste as the flavours of the food culture in Namau.

When asked about typical flavours, the participants never mentioned any of their food having a bitter flavour. According to the Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2006), the traditional drink kava has a bitter taste, though we did not find the taste of kava bitter. Because of the absence of bitter flavours there might be a low tolerance of bitterness in food. Therefore we suggest reducing the natural bitterness in cocoa by adding sugar and in this way producing the taste also referred to as the taste of chocolate in Douglas and Vosten (1995, p. 20).

### **The conception of taste**

The sensory properties of food were described as *taste* by the participants. They never described food as chewy, cold or smooth, which is similar to what Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 14) point out. The term *taste* is commonly used instead of other sensory properties. However, when the participants referred to a certain food as having a good taste, they used the term *sweet* to describe that it was tasty. It seemed as if the taste of sweetness symbolized the good taste. The participants also described their food as resembling the taste of the green leaves and starchy root vegetables, the actual ingredients of their food.

In the stories of the Fijian food culture in Namau, we heard a lot about the concept of taste. The participants talked about “good taste” and “just for the taste” and there was a belief that the women knew how food and dishes should taste, “the women know the taste, because their mothers taught them”. The food culture of the participants did not seem to be about their personal taste, but instead, as Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 3) discuss, the taste seemed to be shaped by role models. The taste of the participants seemed to be learned from their family. Their own food culture gave them just what they needed, the same phenomenon that Svederberg (2002) found in her study. Often when the participants described the taste, it involved the whole village and sometimes it seemed to involve the whole Fijian community, “our taste” or “it is the right taste for us”. This showed the strong connection between their food and culture in a social way (Mäkelä 2000, p. 15).

In the description of how the food got this “good taste”, the participants stated, “just add some onion, salt and tuna”. Together with the natural taste of the food, this produced the good taste. Maybe this taste is the same as the taste of “necessity” that Mäkelä (2000, p. 13) writes about.

### **Food purchase**

#### **The shopping list**

The participants living far away from the urban areas with no access to TV and newspapers in their daily lives affect the extent of influences from the outside world. Furthermore the villagers almost never went to restaurants, eating instead their food in a protected atmosphere, as described in Kittler and Sucher (2004, chapter 1 p. 6). The only meals eaten outside the home were when visiting friends and distant family members and when the men went to sell crops in town. Another place for influences by new products would be in the supermarket, the same situation that Bringéus (1988, p. 11-23) underlines. But when the participants made their food purchase, they always used a shopping list and totally stuck to the products written on that list. The list transferred the food shopping to the protected atmosphere, as discussed earlier,

which is one reason why the cocoa needs to get on that shopping list. To get on the list, it must be regarded as an everyday product, which might be done if cocoa is to be considered profitable for their daily life.

## ***Building a trademark***

### **Fresh from the farm**

From the interviews we found out that the women decided what to cook as well as what groceries to buy, while both men and women went to the supermarket to purchase groceries. In view of the fact that the women decided what to buy, it might be beneficial to target them in the marketing campaign.

Mossberg and Nissen Johansen (2006) as well as Holger and Holmberg (2002, p. 9) consider telling stories about a product to be the best way of building a trademark. The Fijian community was full of stories from the past. Around the kava bowl stories are told and telling stories is part of the Fijian tradition and culture according to Lonely Planet (2006), Granqvist and Jörneryd (1993, p. 115) and Medicallink (2000). Because of the strong relations in the family and to relatives in the village, the way of telling stories about the cocoa product would be recommendable, because it might be a natural way of marketing among the target group. We found that the participants only bought products they knew. A way of learning about a product could be to hear stories about it. The stories should mediate the picture of the farmers in Namau, their cocoa plantations and chocolate making. The stories should also tell about *home made* or *farm-made* chocolate, *fresh from the farm*, because these attributes cause food to be regarded as the “real food”, and this would also strengthen the connection to the producers, the Fijian cocoa farmers. According to Mossberg and Nissen Johansen (2006) and Holger and Holmberg (2002, p. 9), this is how the customers will recognize the product. Holmberg (2002, p. 83) also emphasizes the connection between the product’s identity and an icon, a person connected to the product. The “icon” in this case would be the cocoa farmers in Namau.

The sensory properties of the locally processed cocoa will be different from commercial cocoa powder and chocolate, due to the technology available. Considering Bowallius and Toivio’s (2002, p. 13-14) and Björkman’s (2002, p. 699) views on how consumer expectations are built up through meetings with a product, the Fijian cocoa should be stressed as being different from the commercial varieties of cocoa and chocolate, bringing forward the positive properties unique to the local chocolate. Otherwise the consumers’ expectations might not correspond with the actual product properties, resulting in disappointed costumers and product failure.

### **The healthy cocoa product**

Moreover, it is important to know the meaning of conceptions when deciding the product properties to be used in the marketing and conveyed to the target group. In the description of the project, *Cocoa – from farming to retailing*, Mr. Rimfors (2006) writes that they aim to develop a healthy cocoa product. Since it is a Swedish organization with Swedish values helping the Fijian cocoa farmers to develop *their* cocoa industry, we wanted to compare the meaning of the conception of healthy food in the target group to the meaning of healthy food in Sweden. In the literature the meaning of the Swedish conception of healthy food is a low carbohydrate and low fat diet (Google Scholar 2007; Schäfer Elinder & von Haartman 2007), while the participants sought after energy especially from starches to be able to work on the farm. What was the same in both cultures was the importance of exercise. In Namau they told us about the children’s exercise when walking the seven kilometres to the school or to the bus

stop as well as when working on the farm. For them exercise seemed to be a healthy way of living, but exercise was a natural element in their daily life. Consequently the participants did not regard a high-energy diet as an unhealthy lifestyle. Instead a good source of energy was preferable to be able to work/exercise all day.

## Conclusion

### ***The importance of a Fijian identity***

The project, *Cocoa - from farming to retailing*, aims to develop a whole culture surrounding the chocolate and not only the products deriving from it. To manage this aim, it is important that the cocoa will be considered a “real” Fijian product. The cocoa farmers do not regard cocoa as a food item, however, but as a source of income. For this reason there might be a resistance to consuming the cocoa, though consuming the cocoa would make it possible to come up with ideas of how to improve the products. The consumption of the Fijian cocoa might also be more likely to establish it as a “real” Fijian product.

The participants regarded the starches from outside the farm as “light food” not suitable for the hard work on the farm and foreign dishes as “fancy food” for special occasions. This point of view should be considered for the chocolate to be mediated as Fijian and produced on the farm. For example cassava is a relatively new crop in Fiji, however considered as a Fijian food because it is grown within the farm, which might be similar to cocoa.

Strengthening the Fijian identity of the products might be done through telling stories about the cocoa in Namau. For example the cocoa being, *fresh from the farm*, emphasizing the cocoa to be locally and carefully grown within the farm/village. Since this food is considered to be healthy and to have a natural taste given by God, the real kind of food.

There are also divided opinions of who is going to do the processing. However, the purpose of the project, *Cocoa - from farming to retailing* is to provide the farmers with the support and the opportunity to add value to their products. Processing the cocoa close to the farm would be preferable and would also contribute to strengthening the Fijian identity. Keeping the processing within the farm also opens for future business opportunities, for example offering tourists to visit the farm and the cocoa plantations. At the farm the tourists can be offered to buy the chocolate and to try out how to make chocolate.

### ***Developing a taste***

To introduce a Fijian product, we would recommend a natural flavouring such as sugar/vanilla, because the Fijian dishes were usually very natural, with a taste of the natural ingredients. To keep the Fijian identity and manage the financial aspects, the future flavourings should be possible to grow within the farm, such as ginger, coconut, orange, chilli and passion fruit. It is also important to check how different flavour/ingredients affect the products in terms of keeping qualities.

Certain foods and beverages were very sweet because sugar is considered to make this kind of food tasty. There seemed to be an absence of food items with a bitter flavour, and in cocoa there is a natural taste of bitterness, for which reason we suggest using sugar to produce the taste regarded as chocolate.

The use of milk in the cocoa product cannot be taken as a given, because the consumers have limited storage facilities for refrigerated groceries. Milk powder is also considered expensive and is therefore not used on a daily basis. If milk is needed in the product, a solution would be to add milk powder to the cocoa product, for example as a premixed chocolate beverage, so that the consumer only needs to add hot water.

During the development of sensory properties, we believe that the Swedish organization should keep in mind that they have the authority of being an expertise team vis-à-vis the local people. This might affect the way in which they express like or dislike, in the belief that the opinion of the Swedish team is to be considered precise. Instead the Swedish team should be considered a guidance tool for developing the taste of Fiji.

From the interviews we could see that most of the cooking is done by women and they are also considered to know the right taste of the food, which shows the importance of involving women in the process of developing flavours as well as recipes.

### ***How to use the cocoa?***

During the study, we found that the participants associate the use of cocoa with beverages and with baking cakes. We also investigated the possibility of other areas of application, for example in cooking, as an ingredient in savoury sauces or as a spice. In view of how the participants flavour their dishes and what ingredients they use, the cocoa is not likely to be used in cooking.

Furthermore, energy was shown in the interviews to be the most important quality of food and meals, especially at breakfast, when the food also needed to be convenient and quick. At breakfast the participants usually had food belonging to the concept of “gunu ti”, usually tea with bread or biscuits. This kind of food is regarded as unhealthy because it does not provide enough energy, but it is consumed because it is easy and convenient to prepare. But if cocoa could replace tea, the cocoa would serve as a better source of energy. Cocoa being suitable as a beverage is also underlined by the fact that it is considered important to drink a lot, to keep the fluid balance in the body. The “gunu ti” also consists of an item made of flour, where it would be possible to use cocoa. Tea is drunk during the day, after every meal and “gunu ti” can also be eaten during the day, so the use of cocoa could be frequent, if accepted in this context.

### ***How to present the cocoa product?***

When purchasing food, the participants claimed that the shopping list was very important, and they only bought the groceries that were on that list. They did not try new products but chose what was familiar, which they knew would be useful. The women decided what to cook and buy, for which reason we suggest targeting the women in the marketing process. Considering that the participants did not try new products, it is of importance to find a way to reach the consumers, where they get an opportunity to try the product, for example through workshops and publicity stunts as well as through the story telling.

Since the participants claimed that the price was the decisive factor when purchasing the food, a low price of the product is of importance. The cocoa has to be considered worth buying, which might be achieved through emphasizing certain advantages in the marketing, such as being convenient, nutritious and providing energy in the morning.

The consumers should not get the impression of the cocoa product being like conventional cocoa powder, because then they might be disappointed due to faulty expectations. A suggestion is to emphasize the product’s different texture and taste in the marketing, pointing out that it still contains all the healthy nutrients of natural cocoa beans.

The introduction of Fijian cocoa has to be considered educational; the consumers need to be trained in using the cocoa, because it will be different from existing cocoa powder. A further

step would be to develop recipes of the Fijian cocoa product, of how to use it in baking as well as serving suggestions, to be displayed on the package.

One way of presenting the cocoa product as a beverage would be to mould the chocolate into “coins” that are equal to one portion, making the use of the product convenient and fast. From the interviews we noted that the participants do not do their shopping on a daily basis; instead it is done weekly or every second week. A suggestion is to adapt the amount of cocoa in the package in relation to how the cocoa is supposed to be consumed. The package should communicate the properties of the product to the costumers as well as the identity of Namau. It would be preferable that the package is a local product as well as the manufacturing process of the package to be made according to environmentally sustainable methods and of materials suitable for food. The package should protect the product from moist, considering the humid environment.

From the interviews we noted that the participants did most of their shopping at the supermarket and not at the local market. We believe, however, that it is harder to control the supply/sales in the supermarket, so it would be better for the farmers to conduct the sales by themselves, for example setting up a small cocoa “shop” at the local market, at least until they can provide stable quantities. Concerning the participants stated they did not buy food at the local market, exceptions were made, for example if they had limited access to a food within the farm and this food was considered “beneficial” to purchase, as the evi. Because cocoa is also limited, the consumers might consider to buy the cocoa from the local market as well. To sell the cocoa products by themselves also offers an opportunity to provide the consumers with information and advices regarding the products.

### ***Concluding words***

In the beginning of the study, we asked ourselves questions as, why has not anyone tried to revive the cocoa production earlier? Why do not Fijians consume the local cocoa? Well, today we understand that several attempts have been done to revive the cocoa industry, but they were all unsuccessful. We have been told a number of causes to blame, as environmental conditions, black pod disease, poor advising, lack of interest in developing, declining cocoa prices and a political unrest. However, in present, the farmers are very enthusiastic and have many ideas for the cocoa, which we believe is essential to the outcome of the development process. Furthermore, the previous attempts to revive the interest of cocoa were mainly meant for exporting, hence we do emphasize the importance to keep the development in a small scale and to begin within the local market. It is also important that the farmers will be able to develop the business according to their own ambitions.

There are still problems with fungus disease on the cocoa pods and the resources are scarce, hence there is a need of support regarding resources and agricultural advisement. Therefore, ideas of future studies would be to involve the agricultural research of the University of the South Pacific in the development of the cocoa industry in order to promote the development of small-scale farming. It would also be of great importance to make a study of other possible market segments in Fiji, such as the Indo-Fijians, the urban population and tourists, in order to find the market opportunities that can be utilised by the cocoa farmers.

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## Appendix

1. Search in database
2. Interview questions - Namau

## ***Search in database***

CIA The world fact book

- Fiji

FSTA, Food Science and Technology Abstracts (1990-), database of Kristianstad University

- Fiji and food
- Fiji and taste
- cocoa and taste
- cocoa and characteristic
- Theobroma Cacao and bean
- cocoa and Fiji
- cocoa + flavour
- cocoa + aroma
- acid + cocoa
- cocoa + bean
- cocoa + project + Fiji
- cocoa + development + Fiji
- food + Fiji
- foodway + Fiji
- food culture + Fiji
- taste + Fiji
- ingredients + Fiji
- Fiji+ cooking
- Fiji + eat
- Fiji + drink
- Fiji + beverage

Google Scholar

- Fiji + cocoa
- Fiji + food
- Fiji + food culture
- Fiji + cooking
- Fiji + development + cocoa
- Fiji + development + food culture
- hälsosam
- hälsa + Sverige + 2007
- god + hälsa + 2007

Landguiden, Utrikespolitiska institutet, database of Kristianstad University

- Fiji
- Fiji
- Fiji + cacao
- Fiji + mat

Nationalencyklopedin, database of Kristianstad University

- kultur
- värdering

- tro
- matkultur

South Pacific Library, South Pacific collection, University of the South Pacific, Suva

- ethnology + Fiji
- ethnology + food + Fiji
- ethnology + foodway
- ethnology + food choice
- cocoa + Fiji
- cocoa + develop + Fiji
- Fiji + food
- Fiji + foodway
- cocoa + project
- Fiji + cocoa + project
- Fiji + eating
- Fiji + eat
- agriculture + Fiji
- Fiji + food patterns
- anthropology + Fiji
- anthropology + food + Fiji
- food culture + Fiji
- taste + Fiji
- ingredients + Fiji
- Fiji + cooking
- Fiji + drink
- Fiji + beverage
- Fiji + kava

## **Interview for the families in Namau Settlement**

### ***Daily food and food choices***

1. How would you like to describe the food you eat?

For example: properties such as texture, taste, appearance, smell, colours.

2. Who is doing the planning and making the decisions of what to cook?
3. Do you ever consider the time aspect when cooking?
4. Who goes to town to buy groceries?
5. Would you like to describe how you do the food shopping?

For example: how do you choose your groceries, producer, quality, price, nutrition, family needs.

6. What do you buy at the market?
- 6b. Why do you buy these things?
7. What is the meaning of food for you?
8. What is healthy food for you?
9. What kinds of ingredients are used in your cooking?
10. Are there any ingredients that cannot be mixed?

### ***Meal patterns***

11. What kinds of meals do you have during the day?
12. Would you like to describe a daily...
  - 12a. breakfast?
  - 12b. lunch?
  - 12c. dinner?
  - 12d. snack?
13. What do your children have for packed lunch to school?
14. Which of your daily meals are the most important for you?
- 14b. What is the meaning of that meal?
15. Are there any food items that can be eaten for example for breakfast but not for lunch?
16. What do you drink with your meals during the day?
17. What do you drink on the field while working?

- 18. Which would you prefer between...
- 18b. coffee?
- 18c. tea?
- 18d. chocolate drink?
- 19. How would you have it? Why?
- 20. When do you drink Kava?
- 20b. Why?
- 20c. What is the meaning of the Kava ceremony?

### **Feast**

- 21. Would you like to tell us about what kind of food you serve when you have a party?
- 21b. How would you make the preparations?
- 21c. How many dishes?
- 21d. Who does the cooking?
- 21e. What would you drink at the party?
- 21f. Is this a Fijian custom?
- 22. Is there any food/drink you would not serve at the party, any taboo?
- 23. If visiting someone else, would you give any kind of food as a gift?
- 23b. What?
- 23c. Why?

### **Cocoa**

- 24. What is the meaning of cocoa for you?
- 25. Do you use any cocoa today?
- 26. How do you think you could use the cocoa (in the future)?
- 27. What do you think is the status of cocoa?
- 28. Do you think that cocoa in the market is cheap/expensive? Why?