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# Stakeholder Participation and Advocacy Coalitions for Making Sustainable Fiji Mineral Royalty Policy

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**Abstract:** The Fiji government perceived mining as a means to accelerate economic growth because of its potential to generate great wealth for the Fijian economy. However, the environmental and social impacts associated with mining is of great concern. Mining activities have caused immense environmental degradations that affect livelihoods. One way to recompense these mining impacts is to provide a source of income to the landowners that can substitute the providence of natural resources that were damaged or completely taken away by mining activities. From the current revenue earned from mining, only land leases have been paid out to landowners and no royalty payments as yet, because there are no specific guidelines to determine the distributions. These have brought about the great need to determine the fair share of mineral royalties between the Fiji Government and the landowners in Fiji. This paper will therefore explicate the formation of coalitions based on similarities in policy beliefs, the various strategies undertaken to interact and network with each coalition in efforts to advocate core policy beliefs to obtain government's attention for the formulation of Fiji's Mineral Royalty Policy, based on the analytical lenses of Advocacy Coalition Framework and Issue Network Theory, at both the problem definition and agenda setting stages. Moreover, this paper also investigates the impacts of political instability in formulating Fiji's first ever Mineral Royalty Policy.

**Keywords:** stakeholder participation; advocacy coalitions; issue networks; policy beliefs; political instability; Fiji Mineral Royalty Policy

## 1. Introduction

The structure and the rates of mineral royalties vary in different countries; however, the reason to collect mineral royalties is to repay the mineral resources owners for the extraction of minerals from the land and the royalty entitlement has become more complex over the years because of mineral rights and ownerships [1]. Due to the complexity of mineral rights ownership and the issue of appropriate mineral royalty entitlements, determining the fair share of mineral royalties between the Fiji government and the resource owners is most imperative. This is to be achieved through the formulation of Fiji's Mineral Royalty Policy (FMRP).

In Fiji, there are three main coalitions competing for government's attention for the formulation of FMRP. The respective coalitions are the Indigenous Coalition, the Environmentalist Coalition, and the Business Coalition. These three coalitions have defined and interpreted elements of FMRP more differently, mainly based on respective sets of core policy beliefs. As explained by Portz [2], defining a problem is very important in the initial stage of the policy process, because the definition of a problem will determine the type of policy tool that should be used to effectively address the problem.

In this case, the Indigenous Coalition have defined FMRP elements from a livelihood perspective, the Environmentalist Coalition from an environmental conservation and sustainability perspective, and lastly, the Business Coalition from an economic perspective. The different definitions reflect the different core policy beliefs of the coalitions. Consequently, devising effective strategies to advocate core policy beliefs requires adequate interactions and networking from coalitions [3]. Through these interactions, coalitions can obtain the best expositions to solve the dilemma of the various components and elements that are required to be captured in the FMRP. In achieving these, the agenda setting for formulating FMRP is definitely attainable. However, the political instability currently experienced in Fiji provides challenges to the coalitions in advocacy efforts and issues pertaining to FMRP have become politicized.

Despite the significance of mineral rights and ownership conflicts among the relevant stakeholder coalitions, including indigenous communities around the world [4–7], there is surprisingly little literature on the decision-making process for making sustainable mineral royalty policies. Therefore, the research question for this paper is “How are multiple competing advocacy coalitions interact based on different policy beliefs and what effects do divergent definitions of the policy problems have on the agenda setting stage to formulate Fiji’s Mineral Royalty Policy?” To answer this research question, this study utilized: i) the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to describe the formation of the three coalitions and the strategies undertaken to advocate on core beliefs and; ii) the Issue Network Theory (INT) to describe the interactions of the three coalitions in selected venues in attempts to reach a common ground before the actual agenda setting for the formulation of FMRP. The developed research questions with the chosen, constructed conceptual framework will reduce the existing gaps in academic and policy literature.

## 2. Theoretical Approach to Public Policy Process

In this paper, the ACF and INT are utilized to describe the policy process to formulate the FMRP; the following describes the two theoretical approaches in more detail.

### 2.1. Advocacy Coalition Framework

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is a framework of the policy process formulated by Sabatier [8] to address “wicked” problems particularly those that involves with conflicting goals, disputable critical technical issues, and numerous actors from different government levels [9]. Cairney [10] further explained that ACF is appropriate to describe a complex policymaking environment where numerous actors from the various levels of government, makes decisions regardless of high levels of vagueness and uncertainty, the period to make decisions are usually long, for instance, a decade or sometimes even more, and addresses policy by using very different means. Some policy issues contain severely politicized disagreements comprising numerous actors. Others are considered as technical and processed regularly, mainly by policy experts, outside of public attention [10].

As emphasized by Sabatier and Weible [11], the main characteristics of ACF include the following: (a) producing policies in modernized societies is very complicated, practically and legitimately and actors must be experts and also influential. To be influential in the policy subsystem requires actors to continuously pursue policy issues, such as the Fiji Mineral Royalty Policy components; (b) policy actors possess very strong beliefs and are inspired to interpret beliefs into legitimate policy; (c) takes as long as a decade and sometime even more for a policy change to occur and actors are normally resistant; and lastly, (d) advocacy coalitions are formed by actors who possess same core policy beliefs and synchronizes in a nontrivial manner [12].

Furthermore, Sabatier [8] explains ACF as the framework that is comprised of three fundamental principles. Firstly, the process to change policies and to acquire learning from these policies requires longer periods of time for instance a decade or even more. Secondly, effective collaboration of actors from various institutes is the utmost convenient manner to contemplate a change in policy considering the long periods it requires. Thirdly, public programs and policies can develop into belief systems

where the sets of value significances and determines the various presumptions on the manner to understand them [8].

In describing core beliefs of coalitions that keep the actors together, Sabatier [12] further described the core beliefs of advocacy coalitions into three main types. The deep core beliefs which are essential and cannot be changed, similar to switch in religion, but are very extensive to convey comprehensive policy, similar to one's perception regarding human nature. Policy core beliefs are further precise, for instance ensuring appropriate balance amid the government and market, but bulk of the policy core beliefs still cannot be changed. And lastly, secondary aspects are relative to policy execution. They are allegedly to change, for example, existing rules versus economic motivations [12].

One of the weaknesses of ACF is that it does not capture the interactions and networking of policy participants. To complement this, the Issue Network Theory was utilized, and as explained by Elliot and Schlaepfer [13], Issue Network Theory describes the interactions among policy participants in subsystems as well as the structure of the subsystems.

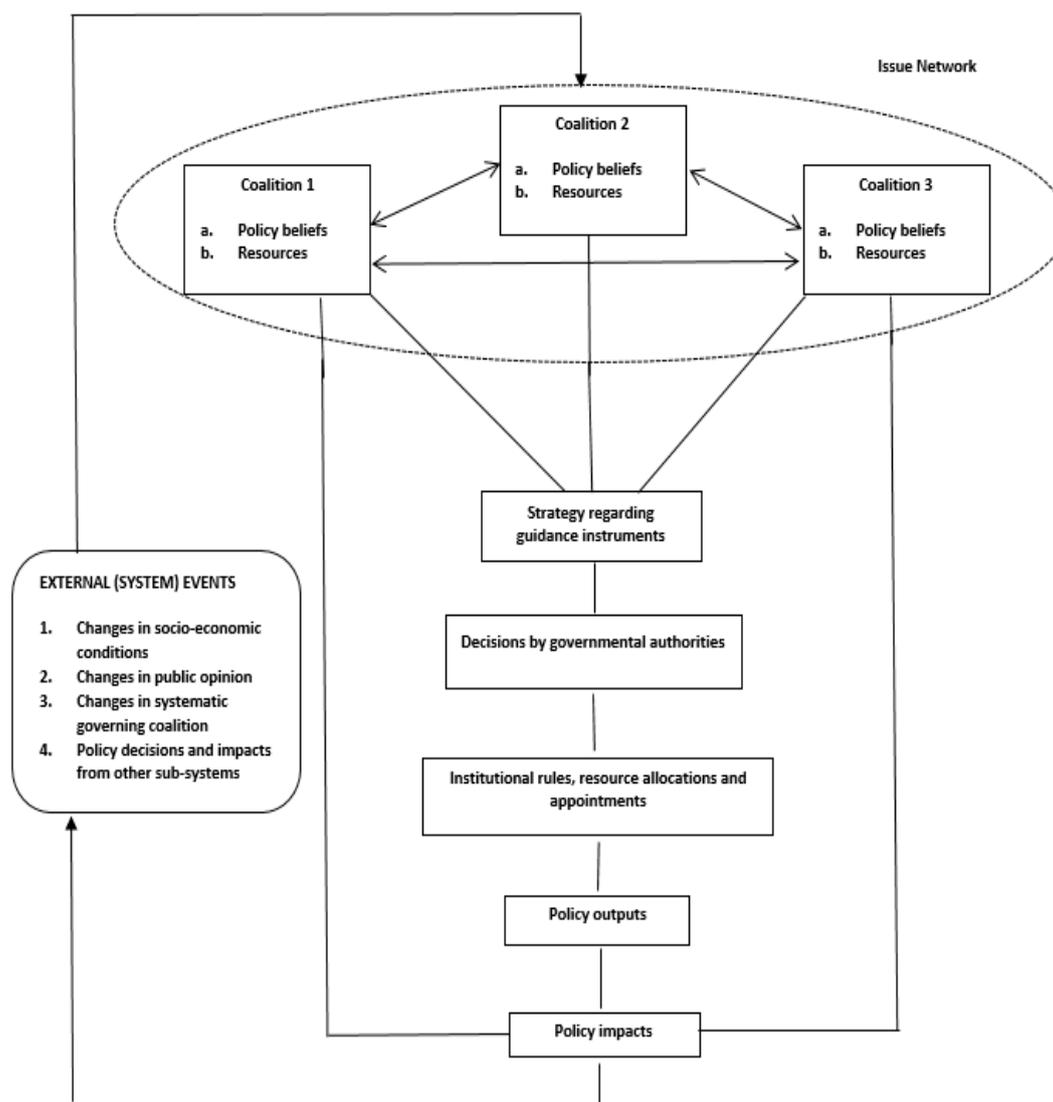
## 2.2. Issue Network Theory

The Issue Network Theory was utilized to describe the manner in which interest groups and various individuals effectively collaborate in the policy subsystems and also the manner in which subsystems are designed [14]. Specifically, issue network explains the manner in which various interest groups and individuals bond in efforts to advance shared intentions or motives appropriate to influence government policies [15]. This term was promoted since it defines a further open policymaking system that comprises additional actors and relations compared to the previous iron triangle notion [16]. As further explained by Waarden [17], networks are avenue where information are exchanged, bargaining eventuates and, access to decision-makers are made possible through a more synchronized approach. Issue Network Theory also explains the hierarchy perspective where power or influence is given actors in a social system is utilized considering the various positions that they acquire in one or several networks [18].

Furthermore, Elliot and Schlaepfer [13] explained that ACF is consistent with the two coalitions of actors' policy network approach that can be perceived as the only precise network structure. Nevertheless, there is one imperative variance. A structural approach emphasizes on coalitions by reflecting the relationships amid existing actors, whereas the ACF emphasizes on the powerful perception of belief systems. This permits not only the examination of disagreements and disputes, but also the scrutiny of contents. Additionally, the structural approach provide support in envisioning the various actions of actors, reliant on the structure of the network, which the ACF does not provide [13].

## 2.3. Synthesis of ACF and Issue Network

Figure 1 describes the policy subsystems that prevail within a wider ACF system, which sets boundaries for action and offers each coalition with diverse limits and opportunities. On the left of the Figure is the external (system) events that comprises changes in socioeconomic, a change in government and the impacts of decisions made in other subsystems. This component of ACF reflects the political instability in Fiji that has influenced the formulation of FMRP. The center portion of the figure describes the policy process from the adoption of beliefs and the formulation of coalitions, the strategies utilized to obtain policy change, the approvals of the policy by relevant government authorities, the implementation of the policy and its outputs and impacts. The features of ACF adopted in this paper focus only on the external factors and the policy process. The circle with broken lines at the top of the diagram describes the INT and the arrows indicates the various interactions and networks of the three coalitions to advance policy beliefs and interests, in this case the formulation of FMRP.



**Figure 1.** Flow Diagram of Advocacy Coalition Framework and Issue Network (Source: Adopted from [14,19]).

### 3. Research Design

#### 3.1. Case Selection: Mineral Royalty Policy in Fiji

For the purpose of this research, the Bua bauxite mining site and the Namosi copper exploration site were chosen to explain environmental and social impacts emanated from mining and how the formulation of FMRP can be used as a remedy tool to address or moderate the consequences of mining in Fiji.

Namosi is a province situated in Viti Levu, the largest island of Fiji and Bua is a province situated in Vanua Levu, the second largest island of Fiji. Both the provinces are rich in natural resources and minerals deposits. The bauxite mining in Bua was the first one to be undertaken by Fiji and as stated in the Standing Committee on Natural Resources Report [20], the bauxite mining was conducted in the Nawailevu mine in the district of Lekutu, in the land belonging to four different clans, namely, Naicobo of Nawailevu village, Nalutu of Navakasiga village, Noro of Naiviqiri village and Naita of Votua village. The bauxite mining began in 2011 and ended in 2014 and was carried out by China's Shangdong Xinfu Aluminum and Electricity Group, also known as Xinfu [21]. The Namosi copper exploration site is home to the largest exploration activity in Fiji. The copper explorations began in

2012 at the Waisoi mine [22]. The mining company conducting explorations in Namosi is the Namosi Joint Venture (NJV). Specifically, NJV is a merger of three companies namely, Newcrest Mining Limited owning seventy point seven five percent (70.75%) of shares and is also a prominent gold producer company in Australia, the Pacific and Asia, Mitsubishi Materials Corporation with a share of twenty seven point two five percent (27.25%), an international Japanese company that supplies materials, and lastly the Nittetsu Mining Co. Ltd. with two percent (2%), also an international Japanese company that supplies materials. Newcrest manages and operates the NJV [23]. Namosi province is the smallest province in Fiji and the impact of copper explorations are so immense, that it threatens the very livelihood of the people. Generating issues and concerns from the mining experiences in Bua and Namosi can be utilized as a learning curve for future mining exercises in other parts of Fiji and a platform to formulate FMRP.

### 3.2. Method

This research was carried out using a qualitative approach and document analysis in order to i) determine diverse and competing values, interests, and norms held by multiple stakeholders in the case and ii) categorize these participants into several identifiable advocacy coalitions based on the distinct belief systems and solidarities observed in the dynamics of multiple types of interactions or relationships within each group and among the groups [12,24,25], as described in Sections 5 and 6. In terms of four criteria, the validity and reliability of this case study could be evaluated [26,27]. First, for ensuring internal validity, literature on the theories of the policy process (i.e., ACF and the Issue Network Theory) enabled us to develop the research framework on the relationship between the distinct sets of policy beliefs and the formations of advocacy coalitions and its effects on the formulation of FMRP, as depicted in Figure 1. Second, for strengthening construct validity, we triangulated the sources and types of data. Information used in this research are generated from the following: academic papers, journals, articles and text books, relevant Fiji government reports from the Ministry of Lands, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, 2013 Fiji Constitution, Fiji Parliament Reports, Bua and Namosi provincial councils, presentations and opinions expressed in websites and social media, official non-government organization websites and daily newspaper articles. Third, for guaranteeing external validity, comparative case analysis approach was applied to the multiple advocacy groups—i.e., the Indigenous Coalition, the Environmentalist Coalition, and the Business Coalition—within a case. That is, within a group analyses were conducted one by one to understand within a group dynamics and comparative group analysis was followed to detect between groups dynamics. Fourth, for improving reliability, the key research question of this study around interactions among the advocacy coalitions was identified.

## 4. Background

### 4.1. The Need for Fiji Mineral Royalty Policy

Even though mining is not a major contributor to the Fiji's national Gross Domestic Product, contributing only 1% in 2013 [28], its potential to generate great wealth for the Fijian economy is promising. As explained by the Ministry of Lands [29], the discovery of minerals deposits in Fiji are believed to be in abundance and could bring huge financial prospects for both the landowners and the investors. This possibility has resulted in increased mining and exploration licenses being issued to mining companies by the Ministry of Lands [29].

To accelerate economic growth, Fiji cannot continue to rely on tourism and the recovering sugar industry. The focus now shifts to mining because of its potential to create employment opportunities, earn tax revenue and provide remunerations such as land leases and mineral royalties. However, the environment and social impacts of mining should be addressed more cautiously. As pointed out by McLeod [30], the negative environmental impacts of mining in Fiji include the loss of vegetation,

the change of landscape, deforestation, rivers and sea pollution, depletion of marine species, loss of herbs for medicines, destruction of plantations and difficulties in the rehabilitation process.

One way to alleviate these environmental and social impacts is to provide financial security in the form of mineral royalty payments. As reported by Naidu [31], the royalty monies are kept in a future generation fund by the Ministry of Lands because there are no specific guidelines on how to pay out the monies. Furthermore, the Fiji government is yet to determine the regulation on fair share of royalties for the extraction of minerals [32]. Determining the fair share of mineral royalty between Fiji government and landowners is very complex, and also an enormous task because it evolves with sensitive issues, which, if not appropriately handled, can cause more instability in the country.

#### 4.2. The Coup Culture in Fiji

Since the arrival of Indian descents to Fiji under the indentured labor scheme in 1879 to 1919 [33], the Indo-Fijian population has comprised of thirty-eight percent of Fiji's total population [34]. After gaining its independence in 1970, Fiji has experienced three coups. As explained by Woods [35], the first coup occurred in 1987, the second in 2000 and the most current in 2006. The primary reason for the illegal takeover of governments is the political struggles between the '*iTaukeis*' (native Fijians) and the Indo-Fijian groups. Since the Indo-Fijian populations have increasingly been well-educated and growing in economic power, the *iTaukeis* feared the dominance of Indo-Fijians in government and businesses, and whenever an Indo-Fijian political party was elected to parliament, to restore powers to the '*iTaukeis*', coups are carried out [35].

As explained by Alley [36], since Fiji's independence, the Ratu Mara Alliance Party dominated Fiji's politics. This party was mainly supported by the indigenous Fijians. In 1987, the Alliance Party was defeated by the Labour and National Federation party coalition dominated by Indo-Fijians. The coup was led by Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka, to restore political powers to the indigenous groups, and became Prime Minister of Fiji under the '*Soqosoqo Vakavulewa ni Taukei*' (SVT; a Fijian phrase meaning the united alliance of the indigenous people) political party. In the 2000 coup, the scenario in 1987 was repeated. The Rabuka's SVT government was defeated by an Indo-Fijian dominated Labour Party and Mahendra Chaudary was then elected as Prime Minister of Fiji in 2000. This provoked the indigenous populations and prompted another coup. The coup was executed by George Speight, with the backing of the Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit (CRW) of the military forces and the civilians [36].

As Wood [35] further explained, the coup carried out in 2006 was different from the coups conducted in 1987 and 2000. In 2006, the military takeover was led by an indigenous person, Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama against an indigenous government, the '*Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua*' (SDL; a Fijian phrase meaning the united alliance of the people of Fiji) political party led by Laisenia Qarase. This coup was carried out in the name of modernizing Fiji, combating corruption and promoting multiracialism. Bainimarama executed the coup in 2006 and is the current Prime Minister of Fiji assisted by Aiyaz Khaiyum under the Fiji First political party [35].

To ensure multiracialism, first, the Fiji government promotes equal rights to all citizens where no special treatment is given to any particular person or group based on ethnicity, religion, gender, qualifications etc. [37]. This law restricted the indigenous populations to freely raise issues and concerns affecting their lives. The claim to acquire a larger share of mineral royalties by landowners due to the great loss incurred from mining is often perceived by government as racist. When indigenous concerns are supported by public officials holding key positions in government, they face consequences such as interrogation and even redundancy. There was very little publicity about these events. Furthermore, to promote multiracialism in Fiji, as reported by Toga [38], the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) was dissolved by government in 2012. This grieved the indigenous populations tremendously because the GCC is the pinnacle of the indigenous institutions and is an avenue where indigenous welfare and wellbeing are discussed and recommendations made to parliament reflecting the interests and concerns of the indigenous population [39]. Secondly, the government appoints provincial council representatives and no longer the people from the province as it used to be [40]. It is through these

government appointments that provincial council agendas are influenced. Thirdly, as highlighted by Buadromo [41], thirteen decree amendments were made since the takeover of government in 2006 until today, specifically to weaken indigenous land and resource ownership.

Reflecting the degree of consensus needed for major policy changes that require consensus in decision making [11], Fiji adopts the Westminster system and the Prime Minister is the head of state [42]. Consequently, national issues are discussed and passed in parliament. The Fiji First political party is the government of the day and comprises sixty-four percent of parliament representatives [43]. Considering the dominance of Fiji First political party in parliament, indigenous matters tabled for voting always receive less votes, thus indigenous interests are not prioritized. Even though the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) an indigenous supported party, leads the opposition segment of parliament, indigenous concerns raised are often perceived by government as of less importance. Thus, parliament decisions always gravitate Fiji First priorities and are perceived by the indigenous populations as unfavorable and discriminative.

Reflecting the concept by Sabatier and Weible [11] emphasizing the number of decision-making venues for any major policy change and how accessible these venues are to those intending for a policy change, the dissolution of GCC deprived the indigenous populations of the privilege to make decisions related to national issues. The only decision-making body in Fiji concerning national issues is the Fiji Parliament, leaving the indigenous population at a great disadvantage, hence, increased the use of social media and blogs to raise issues and concerns. Therefore, the openness of the political systems in Fiji does not exist and this is a major challenge for coalitions as it affects advocacy efforts.

## 5. Competing Policy Beliefs and Values among the Advocacy Coalitions

### 5.1. The Advocacy Coalitions' Beliefs, Strategies and Powers

Beliefs and values are the principal understandings that individuals or societies are obsessed with [44]. Reiterating the three types of beliefs by Sabatier [12], the first type is deep core beliefs which are essential and cannot be changed, similar to changing of religion, but are very intensive to guide comprehensive policy such as one's perception on human nature, the second is policy core beliefs which are further precise but still cannot be changed and, the third is the secondary aspects related to the actual execution of the policy. They allegedly are to change, for example, learning the effects of rules contrasted with economic motivations [12]. In this study, the beliefs and value systems of the three coalitions reflect is also their deep, core and secondary policy beliefs for FMRP (See Table 1).

### 5.2. Advocacy Coalitions Composition

The advocacy coalitions are composed of different actors from government and private organizations, with common interest or agenda and engage in a non-trivial degree of coordinated activities over time [12]. The Indigenous Coalition, the Environmentalist Coalition, and the Business Coalition are competing for government attention for the formulation of FMRP.

#### 5.2.1. Indigenous Coalition

The Indigenous Coalition is comprised of actors with indigenous interests and concerns at heart. The passion to uphold and promote indigenous interests propelled the formation of this coalition. The landowners are the most important actors of this coalition. Landowners includes owners of the land in which the mining activities are conducted, as well as other landowners from other parts of Fiji. As explained by the Ministry of 'iTaukei' Affairs, all indigenous Fijians are entitled to enrol in the Native Lands Registry, a record of surveyed indigenous land boundaries stipulating owners by province [45].

Another critical member of the coalition is the 'iTaukei' Land Trust Board (TLTB). TLTB is mandated to administer and protect indigenous rights to land ownership and facilitate commercial transactions

that revolve around indigenous land use and negotiates all leases and license agreements on behalf of the landowners [46].

Another influential member of the indigenous coalition is the SODELPA, a political party heavily dominated by indigenous Fijians that promotes indigenous interests. It was formed in 2013, after the dissolution of its former name '*Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua*' (SDL; a Fijian phrase meaning the united alliance of the people of Fiji). The dissolution of SDL was due to the requirement by the electoral office that all political parties contesting the 2014 general elections be registered in English only [47]. Currently, SODELPA is supported by the majority of the indigenous population in Fiji and also leads the opposition segment in parliament. Having SODELPA as the opposition in parliament is an important platform for the Indigenous Coalition as this is an avenue where indigenous interests can be expressed after the dissolution of GCC.

The '*Yaubula*' (natural resources) Management Support Team (YMST) established in the various provinces in Fiji is another crucial member of the Indigenous Coalition. The YMST initiatives were established in 2010 with the sole purpose to support existing natural resource initiatives carried out in the provinces and to raise concerns to relevant authorities [48]. Different provinces have different YMST establishments. Some are organised at provincial level, some at district level and some at the village level. This is a very powerful platform, as it recognises and encourages the participation of the communities in natural resource management initiatives.

The most vigorous members of the Indigenous Coalition are the Youth Groups. Since the beginning of mining exercises in Bua and Namosi, the youth groups of the two provinces are very active in participating in conservation programs organized by government and non-government agencies and assisting in educating and informing villagers about the importance of managing natural resource prudently. As reported by Silaitoga [49], the youth network works very closely with the chiefs of the provinces concerning development issues, especially the need to obtain consensus from the landowners for the use of their natural resources for development purposes without any undue influence [49]. There are other actors in the Indigenous Coalition but the landowners, TLTB, SODELPA, YMST and the Youth Groups are the most stable ones.

The deep, core beliefs of the indigenous coalition include: (a) the review of the existing Fiji Mining Act to restore the land and natural resources ownership to the landowners. Currently, the landowners only have the right to use the land and natural resources but the state owns them all [50] and; (b) landowners should have the larger share of the mineral royalty policy to compensate the vast environmental degradation caused by mining.

The policy core beliefs of the Indigenous Coalition include: (a) only those registered in the Native Lands Register are entitled to receive any royalty payments and; (b) the increase in land rentals and lease rates in line with the current market price. The secondary aspect of the Indigenous Coalition includes: (a) government and investors follow the '*free prior informed consent*' concept to obtain consent from landowners. This requires landowners to be thoroughly informed and consulted at all stages of the development phases. As experienced in many cases in Fiji, consents are obtained from only a particular member of the clan and not all members as required; (b) adequate time should be given to landowners to decide on the agreement of the development initiatives in their land. Apparently, to obtain consent for Bua bauxite mining, the Standing Committee on Natural Resources Report [20] stated that landowners were given only thirty (30) minutes to decide on the agreement. In fact, to expedite obtaining consent from the Bua landowners, government executed the compulsory acquisition in the name of development and public purpose [51]. This is such an unfair practice because landowners were not appropriately informed and very limited time were allocated to consolidate agreements.

The strategies utilized by the Indigenous Coalition to advocate beliefs include the following: (a) raise indigenous interests in parliament through analytical debates; (b) forum shopping through participation in government and non-government meetings, workshops, conferences etc.; (c) provide natural resource management training and awareness to indigenous communities; (d) request the

formulation of FMRP to determine the fair share of royalty payments between government and landowners; (e) express indigenous interests and concerns through social media and blogs.

### 5.2.2. Environmentalist Coalition

The second coalition is the Environmentalist Coalition comprising mainly non-governmental conservation and environmental organizations. The first member is the Fiji Environmental Law Association (FELA). Promoting sustainable management of natural resources by the use of law is the primary mandatory of FELA and the association was established with the backing of International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [52]. Furthermore, Fiji have existing environmental laws, however, these laws are not effective or well enforced, hence, FELA tries to appropriate this drawback [52].

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is another crucial member of the Environmental Coalition. The IUCN members are from the public sector and also from the various existing civil society organizations that provides proficiencies and mechanisms to promote human progress, economic development and most importantly the conservation of nature to the public, private and non-governmental organizations [53]. The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) is also the member of the Environmentalist Coalition. Its objectives are to promote conservation and the prudent management of natural resources particularly the marine environment [54]. The Conservation International-Fiji (CI) is another important member of the Environmental Coalition and is responsible for securing the environment that provides food, and fresh water essential for livelihoods [55]. NatureFiji-MareqetiViti (NFMV) is also another important member of the Environmentalist Coalition and is mandated to improve biodiversity and the conservation of habitats, protecting endangered species and lastly encourages the sustainable use of natural resources in Fiji by effective collaborative conservation initiatives, raising awareness, providing education, conducting research and exchanging information regarding biodiversity [56]. Another crucial member of the Environmentalist Coalition is BirdLife International (BI), who responsible for the conservation of birds and their habitats from a global biodiversity perspective and engaging people with regards to the sustainable use of natural resources [57].

The Fiji-Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) is another important member of the coalition. Fiji-LMMA is a non-government organization that works very closely with government agencies, academic institutions and about four hundred communities in efforts to promote and encourage the preserving, protecting and the using of marine resources in Fiji in a sustainable manner [58]. The last member of the Environmentalist Coalition is the University of the South Pacific (USP), solely responsible for conducting environmental research, reporting findings for public information and enlightenment, and offering environmental studies qualifications. The members of this coalition all have the passion to conserve and protect the natural environment. This coalition is the most resourceful coalition as it has the technical, finance and human resource capacity to implement conservation initiatives. It is their effective collaborations with the indigenous communities and the government that has enabled the successful implementation of various environment projects and programs.

The deep core belief of the Environmentalist Coalition are as follows: (a) promote prudent natural resources management to ensure providence accommodate the needs of the current and future generations; (b) empower communities by providing financial, technical and human resource resources to implement environmental projects and programs. These also assist Fiji to passively contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Millennium Development Goals. The policy core beliefs of the coalition include: (a) promote sustainable development; (b) establish reliable monitoring mechanisms to monitor development initiatives and they impacts on the environment and livelihood. The secondary aspect of the coalition is strengthening the enforcement of environmental laws in Fiji.

The strategies undertaken by the Environmental Coalitions to advance beliefs are as follows: (a) provide training, educational and awareness programs to the communities; (b) provide funds

for the implementation of conservation initiatives at community base; (c) conduct research in areas which are considered an environmental concern, and provide vital information about the research to the general public for enlightenment; (d) provide environmental studies to the general public; and (e) participate in cross-coalition interactions by providing valuable advice to the government of the day and encouraging community participation concerning environment and conservation initiatives.

### 5.2.3. Business Coalition

The third coalition is the Business Coalition. This coalition is comprised of the Ministry of Lands, particularly the Department of Mineral and Resources, the two mining companies Shangdong Xinha Aluminum and Electricity Group and the Namosi Joint Venture, Investment Fiji, and other investors and developers.

As explained by the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources [59], the ministry is responsible for administering a total of eighteen thousand State Land leases that comprises of four percent of the current total land mass in Fiji and the Department of Mineral and Resources is to oversee the development of groundwater resources in Fiji (groundwater assessment & borehole drilling), conduct chemical and microbiological analysis of groundwater, provide geological hazard information and technical services to the public, and geo-hazard assessment through geotechnical test-hole drilling.

Another member of the Business Coalition is Investment Fiji, solely responsible to promote investment opportunities to investors both internationally and locally in order to develop existing industries and enterprises to boost the exports of Fiji's goods and services [60]. The mining companies that conduct mining in Bua and Namosi are also important members of the Business Coalition. China's Shangdong Xinha Aluminum and Electricity Group, also known as Xinha conducted bauxite mining in Bua [21] and the Namosi Joint Venture is currently conducting copper explorations in Namosi [61]. There are other investors and developers in the coalition, but for the purpose of this case, this two mining companies are considered because of their role in the mining activities in Bua and Namosi.

The deep core policy beliefs of the Business Coalition are: (a) stimulate economic growth; (b) all minerals belong to the Government as articulate in the Fiji Mining Act Cap 146 and Section 30(1) of the 2013 Fiji Constitution [51]. The coalition's core policy beliefs include: (a) provide attractive incentives to investors; (b) government should get the larger share of mineral royalty payments because the money will be utilized for the development of the whole country and not to a one particular ethnic group. The secondary aspects of the Business Coalition include: (a) the execution of compulsory acquisition in the name of development and public purpose to eliminate hindrances to development [50]; (b) achieve sustainable development at all times.

The various strategies undertaken by the coalition to advance core beliefs include, the formulation and amendments of new and existing policies, decrees, regulations, legislations, and acts, and active participation in government and non-governmental meetings, workshops, conferences etc., and in radio and television talkback shows.

**Table 1.** Advocacy coalitions competing for Fiji Mineral Royalty Policy.

Features	Indigenous Coalition	Environmental Coalition	Business Coalition
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Landowners</li> <li>➤ iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB)</li> <li>➤ Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA)</li> <li>➤ Bua and Namosi Youth Groups</li> <li>➤ YMST</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fiji Environmental Law Association (FELA)</li> <li>➤ NatureFiji-MareqetiViti (NFMV)</li> <li>➤ Conservation International Fiji (CI)</li> <li>➤ World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF)</li> <li>➤ BirdLife International (BI)</li> <li>➤ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</li> <li>➤ Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA)</li> <li>➤ University of the South Pacific (USP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ministry of Lands—Department of Minerals and Resources.</li> <li>➤ Investment Fiji</li> <li>➤ Mining companies— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Namosi Joint Venture</li> <li>○ Shangdong Xinfu Aluminum &amp; Electricity Group, also known as Xinfu</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Other foreign investors/developers</li> </ul>
Deep Core Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review the existing Fiji Mining Act, and Section 27 of the 2013 Fiji Constitution to restore land and natural resources ownership to the indigenous.</li> <li>➤ Landowners should have the larger share of the mineral royalty payments as compensation for the loss of resources and damages to the environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Promote prudent natural resources management</li> <li>➤ Empowering communities by financial, technical and human resource to implement environmental projects and programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stimulate economic growth</li> <li>➤ All minerals belong to the Government as stipulated under the Fiji Mining Act Cap 146 and Section 30(1) of the Fiji Constitution under the Bill of Rights.</li> </ul>
Policy Core Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Only those who are registered in the ‘<i>Vola ni Kava Bula</i>’ (Native Land Register) are entitled to receive Royalty payments.</li> <li>➤ Increase land rentals and lease monies to be in par with current market value.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintain sustainable development</li> <li>➤ Establish reliable monitoring mechanisms to monitor development initiatives and its impacts on the environment and livelihood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide attractive incentives for investors to stimulate economic activities.</li> <li>➤ Government should get a larger share of mineral royalty payments from investors.</li> </ul>
Secondary Aspects Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Free Prior Informed Consent considered in efforts to obtain consent from landowners to carry out mining activities.</li> <li>➤ Allow adequate time for decision making regarding development initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strengthening the enforcement of environmental laws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Compulsory public purpose to eliminate hindrances to development</li> <li>➤ Sustainable development should be maintained.</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Analytical debate in Parliament</li> <li>➤ Forum shopping by participating in government and non-government meetings, workshops and conferences</li> <li>➤ Request FMRP formulation</li> <li>➤ The use of social media and blogs to voice concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide financial, technical and human resources</li> <li>➤ Provide training, educational and awareness programmes</li> <li>➤ Conduct research</li> <li>➤ Cross-coalition interaction</li> <li>➤ Provide advice to government and landowners on environmental issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formulate and amend policies, regulations, legislations, acts and decrees.</li> <li>➤ Participate in radio and television talk back shows.</li> <li>➤ Participate in government and non-government meetings, workshops, conferences, etc.</li> </ul>

(Source: Authors' own data collection and design).

### 5.3. Resource Dependencies among Advocacy Coalitions in Agenda Setting

Agenda setting is the politics of choosing issues for agile consideration [62]. Furthermore, agenda setting is the outcome of an effective collaborations of a society by the political and social institutions to expound the validity of the difficulties and the variety of adequate expositions [63]. This raises the importance of problem definition in policy process. As Rochefort and Cobb [64] explained problem definition is pertinent to identifying public issues and the manner in which these public issues are presumed and discussed. Weiss [65] further elaborated that problem definition is equivalent to, but diverse from, agenda setting. Problem definition is perturbed with the formation of a set of details, beliefs, and conceptions in how people perceive circumstances. Agenda setting denotes the course in which problems become public considerations at specific periods and venues [65]. Reich [66] also mentioned that the most crucial factor of political debate is not the evaluation of other expositions to the problems, but the manner in which problems are defined.

In this case, in order to advance policy beliefs and to attain agenda setting, coalitions should gain sufficient support, and the definitions of FMRP elements by each coalition will generate the much-needed support. It is quite evident that the three coalitions—the Indigenous, the Environmentalists and the Business Coalitions—have very diverse problem definitions regarding FMRP. Each coalition has defined the problems by exhibiting deep core beliefs, policy core beliefs, secondary aspects and strategies. While the Indigenous Coalition defined the FMRP problems emphasizing the repercussions of mining to the environment and the livelihoods of the people, the Environmentalist Coalition defined FMRP problems by emphasizing the importance of attaining sustainable development and prudent natural resource management. Disparately, the Business Coalition is more economic growth driven and focusses more on precedent measures to maximize utilization of current resources to generate wealth.

Each coalition has important components that other coalitions necessitate in order to operate effectively. The Indigenous Coalitions are landowners and are rich in natural resources. The Environmentalist Coalition is very well resourced and has the financial, technical and human resource capacity to implement environmental policies, programs and projects. On the other hand, the Business Coalition has the upper hand of being the government of the day and is responsible for the formulation of rules and regulations, and investors have the capacity to invest in the Fiji economy. By realizing the strengths of each coalition, there is a great need for coalitions to interact in order to share resources, information and expertise to attain determined objectives.

The Indigenous Coalition depends on the Business Coalition primarily for the provision of adequate public goods and services, business arrangements with potential investors to receive lease monies, mineral royalty payments and other entitlements for the use of their natural resources. The Indigenous Coalition also requires the Environmentalist Coalition's resources to effectively participate and indulge in conservation initiatives and acquire the much-needed knowledge to practise prudent natural resources management.

The Environmentalist Coalition relies on the Business Coalition to regulate and enforce environmental laws, and to spearhead conservation initiatives through effective collaborations with other government agencies and line ministries. The Environmentalist Coalition also depends on the Indigenous Coalition to involve indigenous communities to participate in various conservation initiatives, which defines the core existence of their respective organization.

The Business Coalition is dependent on the Indigenous Coalition for the use of their natural resources to generate income for the economy. The Business Coalition also relies on the Environmentalist Coalition for valuable advice on sustainable development and most importantly the sharing of resources to effectively implement government environmental policies and programs.

Understanding the great level of dependency amongst the three coalitions illustrates the importance of and the great need for each coalition to interact and effectively collaborate for the advancement of core beliefs. Interactions can be in many forms. These can include collaborations in the implementation of programs, sharing of resources, engagement in dialogues and participation in

debates and forum chats, workshops, meetings, seminars, conferences and many other more. Effective interactions pave the way for coalitions to reach common ground regarding various elements that should be captured in the FMRP. This requires the three coalitions to compromise at some level to achieve the best exposition related to FMRP by incorporating critical core beliefs of each coalition. However, in this case, the political turmoil currently experienced by Fiji has greatly affected the acceptance of critical elements of FMRP. The impact of this political instability can infuriate coalitions, which can cause another civil unrest, if core beliefs are continually suppressed.

## 6. Dynamics in Interactions within Each Coalition and among Coalitions in FMRP

The features of the ACF and INT that are emphasized in this case study include the formation of coalitions according to certain sets of policy belief and value systems, the level of interactions and networking amongst coalitions to advocate core policy beliefs, and lastly the external events that affect the manner in which each coalition advocates core policy beliefs to attain policy change. Reiterating, the Indigenous Coalition, the Environmentalist Coalition, and the Business Coalition are competing for Fiji government's attention to formulate FMRP. Effective interactions and networking amongst other coalitions and even within coalitions is very influential in gaining support for the advancement of core policy beliefs. Discussed below are the various ways in which the three coalitions interact and network with each other to advocate and advance core policy beliefs and most importantly to attain common solutions.

### 6.1. Indigenous Coalition's Interactions and Networks

The most vibrant members of the Indigenous Coalition are the youth groups. They are very active in participating in activities such as demonstration marches, assisting and collaborating with NGOs in the implementation of conservation initiatives, and participating in local and international meetings, seminars and conferences raising critical environment concerns faced in their respective provinces. As reported by Simmons [67], Setareki Ledua a 25-year-old traditional navigator, sails from island to island by the traditional Fijian ship 'Uto ni Yalo' (a Fijian phrase meaning the heart of the spirit) to hold environmental awareness, something that is close to his heart. To capture advocacy efforts at the international level as reported by Satakala [68], the Bua Urban Youth representative Alisi Nacewa represented Fiji at the Ocean Conference at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA, in 2017. This was a great opportunity for community, youths, women, and indigenous voices to be presented and heard at an international arena [68].

The YMST established in the 14 provinces in Fiji also engage in heavy networking and interactions with governmental and non-governmental organizations. This is because one of their main roles is to support natural resource management at the community level [48]. NGOs, such as FLMMA, funded community members to be YMST reps and they work very closely with the appointed Conservation Officers (CO) based in provincial council offices around the Fiji [69]. The environmental activities carried out by the YMST and COs are funded by WWF, WCS who are also FLMMA members, and some direct funding are from donors such as Packard, MacArthur and Asian Development Bank [58]. Other effective networking and interaction efforts by the Indigenous Coalition include participation in television and radio talk back shows, the use of social media, and attending governmental and non-governmental meetings, seminars, conferences etc.

However, due to the political situation currently experienced in Fiji, the Indigenous Coalitions are not fully liberated to express indigenous issues and concerns [70], which prompted the use of social media and blogs to advocate and gain support.

### 6.2. Environmentalists Coalition's Interactions and Networks

The most effective strategy to advocate environmental issues is to involve communities in natural resource management and conservation initiatives. As explained by International Union for Conservation of Nature [69], fourteen conservation officers were appointed to support respective

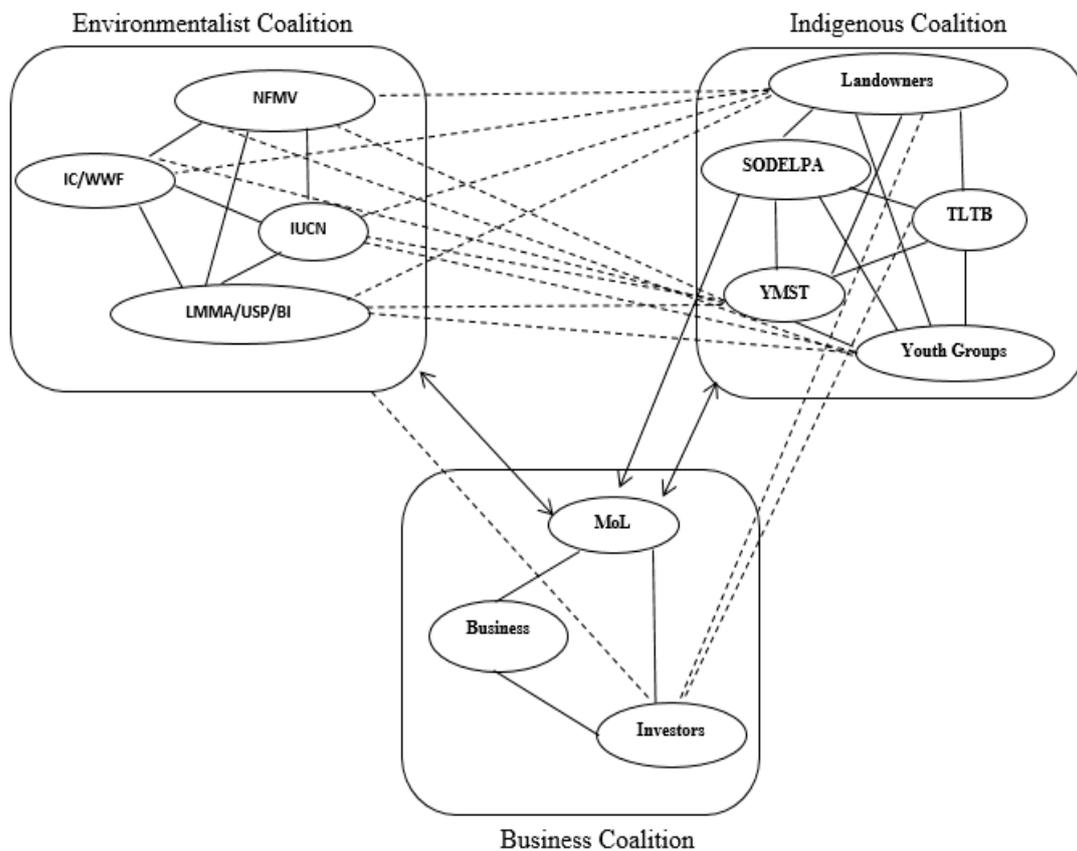
provincial councils, districts and villages regarding the conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources. These conservation officers play vital roles by linking government institutions, NGOs, and local communities for capacity building, exchange of information, and providing educational initiative related to environmental issues, sustainable development and the prudent utilization of resources. Conservation Officers also represents the indigenous communities to the various national decision and policy making avenues by raising land and marine resource management issues faced in respective provinces [69].

### 6.3. Business Coalition's Interactions and Networks

The Shangdong Xinha Aluminum & Electricity Group, also known as Xinha [21], carried out bauxite mining in Bua. In order for the company to gain the support of the Bua landowners, in addition to lease money, royalty payments, land rentals, the company also gave privileges to landowners. As was reported in the Standing Committee on Natural Resources Report [20], the company had created employment opportunities, where out of hundred registered staff, ninety-five were from Bua and casual laborers were accommodated as the need arises. Furthermore, other benefits include providing \$30,000 to the Bua Scholarship Fund and also rendering financial assistance to youth and education projects [20]. These initiatives indicated the company's efforts to accommodate the welfare of the Bua people. However, these benefits are one off benefits, but the damages caused by mining will take a longer period of time to recover and some are even irreversible.

As stated by Namosi Joint Venture [61], NJV discusses comprehensively with local communities and respective key stakeholder groups in to inform the various initiatives undertaken by NJV. Discussions are conducted in several ways including village meetings, organized information sessions for both the stakeholders and the communities, official Waisoi Project environmental impact assessment consultation and information sessions, and attending to public enquiries by phone calls, mails and face to face encounter. Furthermore, NJV has provided funding and assistance for education, health, infrastructure and, community support. The estimated total education assistance to the Namosi landowners was \$978,829.43. These are some of the ways NJV interact with the Namosi people to gain support and also advance policy beliefs [61].

Figure 2 shows the relationships among the various coalition groups that exist in Fiji to obtain policy attention regarding FMRP. The nodes are the various actors, and lineal connections are the various links amongst actors. NatureFiji-Mareqeti Viti, Conservation International, Birdlife International, Fiji Environmental Law Association, Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas, University of the South Pacific and World Wildlife Fund for Nature are the pro-environmentalists in Fiji. They provide advice to government and indigenous communities on prudent natural resources management. They also conduct researches, carry out community based environmental activities, and provide training to various communities including the indigenous on environment issues. The Youth Groups and YMSTs work very closely with the pro-environmentalists in implementing environmental initiatives. The SODELPA is indigenous Fijians dominated political party, since it promotes indigenous interests, it works very close with the indigenous population. TLTB administrates the native lands of Fiji and is responsible for providing business opportunities between investors and landowners regarding land lease arrangements. The Fiji Government is the regulator of the country and it influences all actors. The investors work very closely with government for investment opportunities to stimulate economic growth. Investors also work very closely with TLTB to obtain land lease arrangements to operate business and Investment Fiji for investment requirements.



Keys:	
	Collaborative Relation
	Same Agenda/Interest Relation
	Regulatory Relation
	Political Relation
	Coalition (Interest Groups)
	Main Actors in the Coalitions

**Figure 2.** Relational Structure of Advocacy Coalitions in Fiji. (Source: Authors’ own data collection and design).

### 7. Conclusions and Implications

Problem definitions are crucial, as they determine the policy tools to solve the policy problems. Any policy process begins with the identifying the problem and most importantly defining the problem. Throughout the case, the coalitions have different perspectives of FMRP reflecting the differences in respective policy beliefs. The Indigenous Coalition defined FMRP problems from an indigenous perspective emphasizing the need to appropriately remunerate landowners for the use of their natural resources. The Environmentalist Coalition defined the FMRP problems from a conservation and sustainable development perspective, and the Business Coalition defined the FMRP problem from an economic perspective and emphasized more on economic growth of the Fijian economy.

The different ways in which the coalitions have defined FMRP problems have prompted the formation of the three coalitions. The coalitions are comprised of actors with similar value systems and

who coordinates to advocate core policy beliefs. In every coalition, there are core members who will remain faithful in the fight of the coalition's core policy beliefs and others will join whenever necessary. In efforts to advance core policy beliefs, each coalition develop strategies to effectively gain support and obtain government's attention for policy change related to FMRP. This include the engagement of communities, participation in televisions and radio talk back shows, participation in government and non-government meetings, workshops, conferences etc., the use of social media and blog sites to express issues and concerns, organize demonstration marches, and analytical debates and speeches in parliament.

However, the political situation in Fiji, has restricted coalitions in order to advocate policy beliefs. The two coalitions, the Indigenous Coalition and the Business Coalition, are in fierce battle because their core policy beliefs are totally opposite to each other, whereas the environmental coalition provides some sort of balance to those two coalitions in the sense of providing financial, technical resources and know-how expertise. The challenges for advocating core beliefs include media sanctions where media outlets are not allowed to publish or broadcast anything that contradicts government agendas, even if it is of peoples' concern. Anyone found to counter government agendas, especially matters related to indigenous rights, will be interrogated and eventually redundant if are public officials. The indigenous population claims that the government is not paying enough attention to their interests and are often perceived as anti-indigenous. This is because the government promotes equal rights to all citizens and any entitlement should be earned by merit and not because one belongs to a certain group. There are existing speculations that the current government intends to weaken indigenous rights through the amendments of 13 decrees from 2006 to date [41] (For more detail, please refer to Appendix A). This is very sensitive to the indigenous community and if the government continues to suppress indigenous rights, civil unrest can erupt.

Reaching a common ground is a need for all the three coalitions. That is where each coalition has to compromise at some level to achieve the best exposition where all coalitions' core policy beliefs can be considered. In this case, reaching a common ground between the indigenous coalition and the business will be very difficult because of the sensitivity of each core policy beliefs. At the moment, Fiji is preparing for its 2018 general elections, and one way to advance coalitions' core policy beliefs, particularly the Indigenous Coalition, is by voting in parliament a new government. As long as the current government is in place, the Indigenous Coalition's core policy beliefs will not be materialized. If the current government is re-elected, then there is a possibility of civil unrest, because the indigenous are frustrated by the manner the current government is handling issues and concerns related to appropriate compensation for the use of their land and natural resources. Once the government consider the environmental and social impacts of mining of great importance and the need to compensate landowners appropriately in addition to adhering to the valuable environmental advices, and recognizes sustainable development precaution measures, a solution to FMRP problems can be achieved resulting in the attaining agenda setting for the formulation of FMRP.

Therefore, to conclude, problem definition plays a vital role in the formation of coalitions, which glue actors together to advocate similar core policy beliefs. Each coalition has deep core beliefs which are not changeable, core policy beliefs which are more precise but still not changeable, and secondary aspects which are related to the execution of the policy. To advocate core policy beliefs more effectively, coalitions should have strategies to gain efficient support. In this case, coalitions advocate core policy beliefs through networking and interactions with each other. It is through the various networking and interactions amongst and within coalitions that a common ground can be realized as the best exposition to the policy problem. Once a common ground is achieved, the agenda setting for policy change can be attained.

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## Appendix A

The thirteen (13) decrees amendments by the Fiji Government from 2006 to date pertaining to the iTaukei institution structure and landownership:

No.	Decree Amendments	Descriptions
1	Fijian Affairs Great Council of Chiefs Regulation of 2007	Suspended the role of the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC).
2	Fijian Affairs Great Council of Chiefs Regulation of 2008	Eliminates nomination of GCC members from the 'iTaukeis.'
3	Fijian Affairs Provincial Council Amendment Regulation 2008	Government appoints Fiji Affairs Board and Provincial Councils members.
4	Native Land Trust Amendment Decree No. 39 of 2009	Government chooses iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB) members.
5	Native Land Trust Regulation Amendment of 2010	Equal distribution of lease money.
6	Mahogany Industry Development Decree No. 16 of 2010	TLTB are not responsible for administering mahogany leases. A separate entity has been established.
7	Regulation of Surfing Area Decree No. 35 of 2010	'iTaukeis' are deprived of 'qoliqoli' (fishing) rights and government can endorse tourism initiatives (hotel/surfing) without consulting 'qoliqoli' owners.
8	Fijian Affairs Amendment Decree No.31 of 2010	Change of Fijians to iTaukei for native Fijians. All citizens are called Fijians.
9	Native Land Trust Amendment Decree No. 32 of 2010	The Prime Minister of the Government is the president and chairs the TLTB and also appoints Board members. Normally is was the President who appointed the president, the chairperson and the 'iTaukeis' who appointed Board members.
10	Native Land Trust Amendment Decree No. 20 of 2010	All extinct land belongs to the government.
11	Native Land Trust Amendment Decree of 2012	All extinct land belongs to the government. Previously, the GCC controls extinct lands.
12	iTaukei Affairs Amendment Decree No. 22 of 2012	Dissolvement of GCC.
13	Constitution of the Republic of Fiji 2013	Government weakens the landownership for 'iTaukeis.'

(Source: [41]).

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