

ETHNO-NATIONALISM AND THE FIJIAN GRASSROOTS

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ABSTRACT

Fiji has been noted for its problems with racial tensions. Previous analyses have focused on the role of the Fijian elite in propagating racial tensions against the Indo-Fijian community. Therefore, this thesis endeavoured to find out, how do ordinary Fijians feel about ethno-nationalism? Are they active players in spreading such sentiments? The study placed increased focus on eastern Fijians, given that their elite had their power entrenched at Cession. This examination found that while stereotypes and biases that are ethno-nationalistic in nature do exist, eastern Fijians want other challenges to be addressed. More specifically, poverty and gender issues are two concerns requiring attention. Modernization has increased poverty, as many Fijians lack the skills to access better paying jobs. The Fijian culture plays a big role here, as it encourages ordinary Fijians to view education suspiciously. Furthermore, cultural emphasis on rank and patriarchy makes Fijians, including women, subservient to those with higher status. This means that problems such as violence against women are prevalent. NGOs are involved in trying to address these concerns, although with limited success. NGOs and ordinary Fijians conflict in how best to deal with poverty. NGOs argue that changes at the political level will help decrease poverty. On the other hand, the Fijian grassroots want direct measures to help them overcome their plight. With gender issues, women's NGOs are more successful, as their work also gives direct attention to Fijian women. This is highlighted by the fact that more Fijian women are speaking out against their plight. This study is significant because it shows that ordinary Fijians are not active players in the promotion of ethno-nationalism. Instead, other actors, such as the Fijian elite and NGOs, are involved in ethno-nationalistic disputes.

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Table of Contents

<i>PERMISSION TO USE</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>ABSTRACT</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Introductory Chapter</i>	<i>1</i>
Introduction and Objectives	1
Central Variables	7
Overview	9
Methodology	10
<i>Chapter One- Historical Preconditions for Analysis</i>	<i>11</i>
Introduction	11
British Colonial Authorities	13
Christian Missionaries	17
Establishment of the Fijian Elite	20
Indo-Fijians and Protests	24
Conclusion	29
<i>Chapter Two- Fijian Elite Interaction with the Fijian People</i>	<i>30</i>
Introduction	30
Protection of Fijian Interests and Paramountcy	31
Fears of Indo-Fijian Domination	42
<i>Indo-Fijian Political Power and Aspirations</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>The threat of Indo-Fijian Economic Power</i>	<i>45</i>
Land	47
<i>Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB)</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Leasing Land: ALTA and Continuing Uncertainty</i>	<i>52</i>
Conclusion	54
<i>Chapter Three- The Grassroots Respond</i>	<i>56</i>
Introduction	56
The Ideal Traditional Village Life	57
The Importance of Money and the Onset of Poverty	63
<i>NGOs and Poverty Alleviation</i>	<i>67</i>
Gender	71
<i>Gender Issues and NGOs</i>	<i>73</i>
Is Ethnonationalism even a Factor? Discussion	79

Conclusion	83
<i>Concluding Chapter</i>	85
Overview of Thesis Objectives	85
Conclusions and Synthesis of Major Findings	86
<i>Main Conclusion</i>	86
<i>Synthesis and Conclusions by Focus Areas</i>	87
Recommendations for Further Research	90
<i>Map of Fiji</i>	92
<i>Appendices</i>	93
Appendix I: Comparison of Seat Allocation in the House of Representatives between the 1996 CRC and the 1997 Constitution	93
Appendix II: Population by Religion and by Race - 1996 Census of Population	94
Appendix III: Location of Labour Force	95
Appendix IV: Average Weekly Household Income by Province	96
Appendix V: Poverty Lines by Area and Ethnicity (\$F/week), 2002/2003	97
Appendix VI: Consumer Price Index- (Base: 1993=100)	98
Appendix VII: Population in Relative Poverty by Area, 1990-1991*	99
Appendix VIII: Population in Relative Poverty by Ethnicity, 1990-1991*	100
Appendix IX: General Perceptions of Social and Economic Conditions of Migrant Heads of Households Before and After Migration, 1992-1993	101
Appendix X: Estimated Urban Population and Households by Ethnicity	102
Appendix XI: Households and Population by Ethnicity and Sector, 1986, 1996	103
Appendix XII: Gross Annual Income of Migrant Heads of Households by Sex, Before and After Migration, 1992-1993	104
Appendix XIII: Housing Characteristics, 1996 (By Percent)	105
Appendix XIV: Gross Enrolment Ratio – Class 1-8: Ethnic Groups	106
Appendix XV: Progress of the 1988 Cohort for 13 Years by Ethnicity & Gender	107
Appendix XVI: Level of Formal Education by Gender, Ethnicity and Residence for People 15 years and over, 1989-90, (Figures as a percentage)	108
Appendix XVII: Informal Sector in Fiji	109
Appendix XVIII: Level of Education in the Informal Sector	110
Appendix XIX: Informal Dwellings in Fiji’s Urban Areas, 1996	111
Appendix XX: Reasons for Living in Squatter Settlements	112
Appendix XXI: Conditions faced by Fijian Commoners, By Settlement Type	113
Appendix XXII: Household Income and Size, by Decile Grouping	114
Appendix XXIII: Average Number of Persons, Per Household, By Location Type (1996 Census):	115

Appendix XXIV: Average Number of Persons, Per Household, by Economic Grouping (2002-2003 HIES).....	116
Appendix XXV: Urban Household Expenditures	117
Appendix XXVI: Consumption Patterns, by Decile Grouping	118
Appendix XXVII: Expenditure by Income Grouping.....	119
Appendix XXVIII: Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre Client Statistics- Suva Branch	120
Appendix XXIX: Access to TVs, Radios and the Internet in Fiji.....	121
Appendix XXX: Average weekly household income by ethnic group (\$F)	122
Appendix XXXI: The basic Needs Poverty Line by Area, 1990-1991.....	123
<i>Thesis Bibliography</i>	<i>124</i>

Introductory Chapter

Introduction and Objectives

The colonization of Fiji by Great Britain in 1874, which was formalized with the signing of the Deed of Cession, ushered in a new era for indigenous Fijians. One aim of colonization was to protect the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous Fijians so they would not experience the plight experienced by indigenous peoples in other colonies.¹ At the same time, colonization also endeavoured to enlighten indigenous Fijians by converting them to Christianity.² However, several colonial initiatives were introduced that had, and continue to have, a negative impact on the Fijian grassroots. The Fijian elite is comprised of political leaders, high ranking military officers, senior public servants, and crucially, the chiefs anchored in Fijian traditions. Grassroots refers to ordinary Fijians who lack high socio-economic status, and who are not recognized as having chiefly rank.

The first significant development that took place during colonialism was that the eastern chiefs were allowed to consolidate their power over all of Fiji, including over the western people. This meant that the patriarchal system of the east, which placed a great deal of power in the hands of the chiefs, was entrenched. Western Fijians became subservient to the power of colonially supported eastern chiefs. The westerners, who were far more egalitarian than their eastern counterparts, lacked a matching confederacy

¹ Stephanie Lawson, *The Failure of Democratic Politics in Fiji*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 58.

² R. A. Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, Vol. I. (Suva: Government Press, 1968), Appendix- Deed of Cession, I.

of their own, allowing the eastern confederacies to gain favour with the colonial authorities. Confederacies reflect the hierarchical and expansive nature of pre-colonial Polynesian influence,³ while also illustrating territorial divisions based on past warfare.⁴ Confederation status is advantageous because it allows the elite of this extended unit to voice the concerns of the social and cultural group in a stronger fashion. It should be noted that western tribes, influenced by the Melanesian culture, did not establish a confederacy of their own because they were not as expansive and hierarchical. Wars conducted by pre-colonial western tribes were carried out either for retribution for past wrongs to a tribe, or to gain respect for the *Big-man* of the tribe.⁵

Another key colonial initiative was the introduction of Indians into Fiji. They were brought from the Indian sub-continent in the late 1870s as indentured labourers to work on the sugar plantations. This led to the colonial authorities strongly enforcing the policy of *Divide and Rule*,⁶ where indigenous Fijians (henceforth referred to as Fijians) were effectively isolated from the Indians (from now on referred to as Indo-Fijians) to maintain order in the colony and preserve the traditional way of life of the Fijians. Thus, Fijians lived a sheltered and communal lifestyle in isolated, traditional rural villages. After the end of their indenture period, Indo-Fijians established themselves either as small-scale sugarcane farmers on leased Fijian land or entered the trade and commerce

³ Expansion refers to the quest by various eastern confederacies to gain control over more territory, power, and wealth.

⁴ The confederacies (all from the east) that have been officially recognized since the colonial period are the Tovata, the Burebasaga, and the Kubuna.

⁵ Michael C. Howard, Nii-K. Plange, Simione Durutalo, and Ron Witton, The Political Economy of the South Pacific, (Australia: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1983), 39.

It should be noted that the *Big-man* can be somewhat compared to the Chief of the Polynesian Tribe, although the *Big-man* did not possess the power of an Eastern Chief because Melanesian society was more egalitarian.

⁶As will be discussed more in-depth later, the colonial authorities gave the chiefs responsibility to maintain law and order amongst Fijians through the policy of *Indirect Rule*. This policy solidified and entrenched the power and control of the chiefs in Fiji.

industries.⁷ Consequentially, Fiji became deeply divided between two contrasting peoples and cultures.

Since independence in 1970, three coups have taken place, two in 1987 and one in 2000. All three coups saw the political, official and military Fijian elites mobilizing Fijian commoners to support the overthrow of Indo-Fijian dominated governments. These coups were justified by the Fijian elite as necessary in order to stop the perceived threat posed by the Indo-Fijians to the Fijian culture. Consequentially, ethnic relations between the two communities deteriorated markedly.

Leading academics in the field have intensively analyzed ethnic tensions in Fiji from diverse viewpoints and with differing interpretations. However, many of these explanations present incomplete interpretations of the phenomenon, as they do not examine what role the Fijian grassroots play in the promotion of ethno-nationalism. They all discuss ethnic tensions in terms of elite responses to the subject.

Some leading academics argue that Fijian commoners are submissive to the wishes of the Fijian elite because of elite claims to traditional authority. For example, Brij V. Lal (1986) has suggested that Fijian commoners equally share the views articulated by the elite. He implies that these beliefs have led to ethnic polarisation, highlighted in the political struggles between Fijians and Indo-Fijians. R.S. Milne (1981) has also looked at the influence of the traditional structure on the Fijian grassroots. His view of Fiji as a bipolar society also assumes that the views of ordinary Fijians are the same as those of the Fijian elite. Isireli Lasaqa's (1984) analysis is also

⁷ The indenture system was terminated in 1916-1917 after much pressure from Indo-Fijian leaders, which exacerbated the level of ethnic tension in Fiji. Furthermore, the Indo-Fijians eventually came to form more than half of the country's population, which also contributed to heightened ethnic tensions in the colony.

within this stream because his work portrays the Fijian grassroots as being completely submissive to the wishes of the Fijian elite. While he gives the reader an important insight into Fijian life and values, his reasoning follows the traditional viewpoint that Fijians completely favour a traditional, rural-based lifestyle, in contrast to Indo-Fijians who favour an individualistic and urban-based lifestyle.

A second interpretation posits that ethno-nationalism is class-based. Michael Howard (1991) suggests Fiji is embroiled in class conflict whereby the Fijian elite form a core component of the dominant class, and act in ways that allow them to maintain their power. This analysis portrays the Fijian grassroots as being prevented from rising up in their socio-economic status by the Fijian elite. The basic premise is that the Fijian elite have resisted any threats to their power. For example, he argues that Prime Minister Bavadra, himself an ordinary Fijian from the west (though claiming to be of chiefly status), was overthrown because the Fijian elite, including the eastern chiefs, saw him as a threat to their authority. The analysis is indeed innovative. However, his argument is problematic because his analysis does not fully explain inter-ethnic relations, including the response of the Fijian grassroots to the ethnic divide. Robertson and Sutherland's (2003) analysis of the 2000 coup follows the same line of reasoning as Howard, arguing that ethnic tensions are the result of the Fijian elite's desire to maintain their position and privilege. Like Howard, their analysis is incomplete because it does not describe the response of the Fijian grassroots to the ethnic divide. The basic problem in both of these studies is that the views of the Fijian grassroots have been neglected because their voices and opinions are not heard. On the other hand, the Fijian elite voice their opinions on the issues continuously. This means that the opinions of the Fijian elite are more readily documented and analyzed.

Third, some leading academics make the assumption that ethno-nationalistic sentiments held by the Fijian elite are inter-changeable with those of ordinary Fijians. For example Premdas (1991, 1993, 1995), as well as Premdas and Steeves (1991, 1993, 1995), have focused on ethnic tensions in relation to the constitutional and political changes made by the Fijian elite. Robertson and Tamanisau's (1988) analysis is also problematic because they too discuss ethno-nationalism in terms of the constitutional and political changes made by the Fijian elite. The main problem posed by these studies is that the Fijian grassroots may not agree with elite responses to ethnic tension.

The above critiques are not meant to denigrate the work of leading academics on the issue, because they have made strong contributions in trying to explain what is occurring in Fiji. However, their interpretations imply that the Fijian grassroots do not really have any other concerns beyond that of culture. This thesis suggests that while ordinary Fijians may harbour certain stereotypes that are ethno-nationalistic in nature, there are other challenges that they feel need more attention. This is why focusing on the grassroots is essential given that prevailing academic interpretations of ethnic interaction focus on the elite.

Therefore, this study has endeavoured to fill this gap because it is necessary to see how the Fijian grassroots feel about ethno-nationalism, and whether or not this phenomenon is their primary preoccupation. This study has focused on three main areas. One area concerns the influence of the colonial legacy on the attitudes and values of the Fijian grassroots, and if that legacy continues to have an effect today. A second area revolves around the attitudes of Fijian commoners, and whether or not they are active players in the promotion of ethno-nationalism. A third area of analysis is the role of some of the relevant non-governmental organizations (now to be referred to as

NGO's) operating in Fiji, and whether or not their activities have had any influence on the attitudes of the Fijian grassroots.

It should be noted that this study has placed more attention on eastern Fijian commoners. The rationale for this is simple. Many scholars have acknowledged the central role of Fijian chiefs in using ethnic appeals and sentiments to sustain their political authority. Although Fijians have, on occasion, supported their chiefs when appeals to ethnic solidarity have been utilized by chiefs, how do Fijians view ethno-nationalism? Is it the driving force of their lives?

In the course of conducting this study, the central contention is that while stereotypes and biases exist at the grassroots level, there are other challenges that the Fijian grassroots (especially those from the east) face, and ones they want addressed. More specifically, eastern Fijians are concerned about the deteriorating quality of life, especially their struggles with poverty. While there are some Fijians that idealize many aspects of traditional life, more are complaining that their poor quality of life prevents them from progressing. There are several reasons for why the Fijian grassroots endure such a poor quality of life. One reason for this is that the traditional way of life has held most Fijians back, as they have been forced to accept decisions made for them by the Fijian elite. Traditional Fijian society, especially eastern Fijian society, has enforced the view that those of rank are to make the important decisions since they possess more knowledge than the Fijian grassroots. As a result, ordinary Fijians have not been able to attain the necessary skills and capacities to fully participate in society. This means that when frustrations arise, Fijians have been taught by the Fijian elite that their problems can be traced to the Indo-Fijians. Thus, many misperceptions of Indo-Fijians continue to prevail. For example, it is believed that Indo-Fijians are wealthier than Fijians.

Additionally, Fijians have been taught that the Indo-Fijian threat to the Fijian culture remains pervasive. As will be highlighted in the study, a number of constraints, especially the lack of skills, make it difficult for Fijians to progress. Moreover, there are strong sentiments by eastern Fijians that their quality of life must improve.

Central Variables

One challenge from the outset is to gain an understanding of the traditional structure of authority that binds ordinary Fijians. Therefore, our analysis requires a basic knowledge of traditional Fijian society and the social hierarchy that has been established. The basic social hierarchy of Fijian society includes (in ascending order): the *i tokatoka* (extended family), the *mataqali* (the family group), the *yavusa* (the clan), and the *vanua* (a group of *yavusa*).⁸ Within this framework, the chiefs are the highest levels of authority to whom commoners give their unconditional allegiance and loyalty. The chiefs are an autocratic elite responsible for the survival (in the vaguest sense of the term) of their people.⁹ This structure of authority, which places importance on status and rank, has made ordinary Fijians subservient to the will of the chiefs. For example, chiefs can alienate the most valuable property within the communal holdings for their own purposes. Additionally, they determine what land can be taken from the collective holding and how much can be allocated to individuals. They can also determine what shall be produced on the communal land and how it is to be consumed and marketed.¹⁰ This is why Fijian society has been labelled as a *Culture of Silence* because, in addition

⁸ Isireli Lasaqa, *The Fijian People: Before and After Independence, 1959-1977*, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1984), 18.

⁹ O.H.K. Spate, *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, (Suva: Government Press, 1959), 5-7.

¹⁰ W.P. Morrell, *Britain in the Pacific Islands*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 8.

to unconditionally obeying their superiors (including their chiefs), Fijians are expected not to challenge the wisdom of their allocative decisions.

The traditional structure also considers land to be an important part of the lives of Fijians. Fijians were, and continue to be, encouraged to live off the land and engage in subsistence agriculture for their survival. The Spate Report of 1959 highlighted that the Fijian elite argued that land was crucial for Fijians because it unified the people.¹¹ This is why Fijians are encouraged to live in rural villages, because it is believed that it helps reinforce their values and way of life. The Fijian elite also continues to preach the importance of maintaining the paramountcy of the Fijian culture because it helps protect Fijian land. This has led to tensions with regards to land tenure between Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Land is a source of division because Indo-Fijians argue that they need access to more land for leasing purposes, and more security of leasing provisions. On the other hand, the Fijian elite argue that the Indo-Fijians want to deprive the Fijian people of their land. More specifically, the Fijian elite say that Indo-Fijians want to deprive Fijians of the protections of Fijian paramountcy, entrenched under the Deed of Cession.¹²

The colonial period also saw the codification of Fijian land based on the *mataqali* system. While it was argued that the *mataqali* system standardized the way land was divided, what it did was impose the eastern system on Fiji. The system of landholding is communal, meaning that the community prevails over the individual in importance, and individuals have obligations and responsibilities to the community.¹³

¹¹ O.H.K. Spate, The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects, 5.

¹² It should be noted that the three Constitutions passed after independence continue to protect the paramountcy of the Fijian culture as well.

¹³ O.H.K. Spate, The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects, 11.

However, the *mataqali* system also has other distinctive features. For example, each *mataqali* is in charge of its own land, which means that each respective *mataqali* independently divides land amongst its members for things such as gardens.¹⁴ It is inconceivable for *mataqali* land to ever fall into the hands of non-Fijians if restrictive conditions are imposed. Therefore, if members of another race are to have access to Fijian land, it can only be on the basis of a temporary arrangement. Additionally, these ‘strangers’ must compensate the Fijian landowners for its use. Fijians have an extremely strong identification with *mataqali* land because it forms the soul of the Fijian race.

Overview

The first chapter analyzes the historical background with the focus being placed on the evolution of attitudes towards ethnic accommodation and the Fijian culture. Overall, this chapter identifies the problems created by colonialism, including the creation of various institutions that have given rise to ethnic tensions between Fijians and Indo-Fijians. This chapter also puts into context why the policy of *Divide and Rule* was established, and how the Fijian elite fit into this policy.

The second chapter deals with elite participation in ethnic conflict. This chapter asks the following questions: First, what accommodative framework has been developed by the elite in the period after independence? More specifically, what kind of racial categories have been created by the Fijian elite? This chapter discusses the various issues raised by the Fijian elite as being important for the survival of the Fijian people. Furthermore, there will be an analysis of how the elite have used the various institutions inherited from the colonial period to serve their own self-interests. There

¹⁴ Ibid. 8.

will also be a discussion of the role that the 1987 and 2000 coups played in the development of this framework.

The third chapter deals with the response of eastern Fijians to ethnic conflict and other crucial issues that affect them. The following questions are addressed in this chapter: First, what phenomenon is going on at the grassroots level? And second, is ethno-nationalism felt as strongly at the grassroots level as at the elite level? This chapter will also deal with the role that NGOs play in this phenomenon.

Methodology

In examining the dynamics of ethnic accommodation in Fiji, the study utilizes empirical and historical methodologies. This study is based on qualitative analysis, as opposed to quantitative analysis, and thus employs the typical methods used in qualitative research. The study included a textual analysis of written materials such as journal articles, books and government documents. Other relevant documents such as United Nations documents, documents from NGOs, and newspaper articles were also consulted.

The study draws on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include reports from NGO's, the United Nations, relevant civil society organizations, and Government sources. Secondary sources, including books and journal articles, were relied upon as well in the analysis of ethnic accommodation and conflict.

Chapter One- Historical Preconditions for Analysis

Introduction

The problems that Fiji faces today are not just due to the results of events and crises that have occurred recently. The predicament that the country currently finds itself in has its roots in past events including the institutional structure put into place after Fiji became a British colony.

Well before colonization, Fiji was mainly populated by Melanesian peoples. Invasions by the Tongans introduced the Polynesian culture to the area.¹⁵ What this meant was that there were two main cultural influences in the area. The western Melanesian culture, more prevalent in the western and central parts of the island of Viti Levu, emphasized a more egalitarian culture. Amongst other things, this meant that limited chiefly power was emphasized.¹⁶ The Polynesian influence, more prevalent in the eastern part of Viti Levu and the island of Vanua Levu, as well as the other surrounding islands, emphasized a more rigid, paternalistic and hierarchical culture. Amongst other things, this meant that chiefs held power and authority over commoners.¹⁷

¹⁵ R. A. Derrick, A History of Fiji, Vol. I. (Suva: Government Press, 1968), 2.

¹⁶ Ibid. 2-4.

¹⁷ Ibid. 2-4.

European involvement in Fiji began in the early 19th century, when shipwrecked traders observed that the area was full of valuable sandalwood.¹⁸ After sandalwood stocks were depleted, other goods such as bêche-de-mer were heavily sought by European traders.¹⁹ European penetration into the area had two major consequences. Europeans introduced western goods such as guns and other hardware into the area. Warfare between various tribes became much more dangerous than before. Whoever possessed these new weapons could expand much more easily. European traders dealt more with the eastern Fijians, meaning that their chiefs were able to use such weapons to expand their power, wealth, and territory.²⁰ Contact with Europeans also signalled the introduction of the influence of European values on Fijians.²¹ Mission societies spread the Christian faith widely among Fijians and the basic elements of a new capitalist economy began to take root. The churches reinforced the basis of chiefly authority. Chiefs now had access to a money income as they were incorporated into the colonial administration. Both Christianity and the money economy furthered chiefly status and privilege in the territory.

The Cession of Fiji to the British by the high chiefs of eastern Fiji in 1874 institutionalized their position over all Fijians allowing them to secure their power within the colony.²² However, colonization also had some other lasting impacts including the introduction of Indians as indentured labour and the entrenchment of the idea of the 'paramountcy' of the Fijian people and culture. It was believed that only by

¹⁸ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 7.

¹⁹ Michael C. Howard et al *The Political Economy of the South Pacific*, 71.

²⁰ Ibid. 90.

²¹ Thomas Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians: The Islands and their Inhabitants*, Vol. I. Ed. George Stringer Rowe, (London: Alexander Heylin, 1858 (reprinted 1977)), 2.

²² R.S. Milne, *Politics in Ethnically Bipolar States: Guyana, Malaysia, Fiji*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1981), 60-61.

actively segregating Fijians, Indo-Fijians and Europeans would law, order, and peace be maintained in the colony. However, this initiative only created false images of one another, especially between Fijians and Indo-Fijians. This produced a high level of tension between the groups, and laid the foundation for problems seen today.

British Colonial Authorities

The actions and ideas of the first Governor of Fiji, Sir Arthur Gordon, laid the groundwork for the principles that continue to be observed today. One of Gordon's primary objectives was to safeguard Fijian interests from the evils of western penetration, including the European planters looking for cheap labourers to work on their sugar plantations. Gordon was greatly motivated by the actions of settlers in New Zealand, who effectively displaced the Maori by taking over their land.²³ As a result, one of his key initiatives was to re-structure the social modes of control to keep order and stability in Fiji.²⁴ This meant that preserving the doctrine of the paramountcy of Fijian interests, implied in the Deed of Cession, was of the utmost importance.

Therefore, one measure taken was to make the land the inalienable property of the Fijian people.²⁵ However, Europeans had alienated some land prior to Cession. Therefore, the Native Lands Commission (NLC) was established in 1880 to look into, and decide on, the validity of such claims. After the Commission finished its work approximately fifty years later, roughly 83% of land (since then increased with the transfer of some Crown land to the Fijians) was deemed to belong to the Fijian people, and was thus

²³ Nicholas Thomas, "Sanitation and Seeing: The Creation of State Power in Early Colonial Fiji," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32:1 (Jan., 1990), 149.

By placing importance on the Fijian culture, Governor Gordon wanted to get the chiefs onside. By doing this, he wanted to create an environment where European planters and capitalists would be free to make profits in their respective industries, including in sugarcane farming.

²⁴ Robert T. Robertson and Akosita Tamanisau, Foreword by Don Dunstan, Afterword by Bruce Knapman, *Fiji: Shattered Coups*, (Marrickville, Australia: Pluto Press Australian Ltd, 1988), 7.

²⁵ Nicholas Thomas, "Sanitation and Seeing," 149.

inalienable.²⁶ The other parcels of land were deemed to be either freehold or Crown land. Indo-Fijians could not own land in Fiji.

Gordon also introduced the policy of *Divide and Rule*, of which *indirect rule* was a major portion of this policy. *Divide and Rule* maintained segregation between the various groups living in Fiji. A major consequence of this was that it would help to create and foster many misperceptions between the various groups. *Divide and Rule* conformed to the following hierarchical structure. God was above all else; the Queen (portrayed as giving the land to the Fijians) was next in the hierarchy; the Governor was the next in the chain of command.²⁷ With respect to the Fijian people, the eastern chiefs, whose power was seen as being derived from those higher up in the hierarchy, were next in command.²⁸ *Indirect Rule*, based on experiments conducted in Africa and Asia, gave the eastern chiefs the primary responsibility of ensuring that law and order was maintained in Fijian areas.²⁹ It was argued that this framework would preserve the traditional life of the Fijian people. This policy included the creation of institutions such as the Great Council of Chiefs (the GCC) and the Native Regulations Board (NRB) to help govern the Fijian people (though all subject to the authority of the colonial government). The role of these institutions, as well as the specific role of the chiefs will be discussed later in the chapter. The British colonial authorities, in collaboration with the eastern chiefs, also codified traditional Fijian values to be used by the chiefs to

²⁶ Isireli Lasaqa, *The Fijian People*, 41.

²⁷ Martha Kaplan and John D. Kelly, "Rethinking Resistance: Dialogics of "Disaffection in Colonial Fiji," *American Ethnologist* 21:1 (Feb., 1994), 131.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 131.

²⁹ Norman Etherington, "The Gendering of Indirect Rule: Criminal Law and Colonial Fiji, 1875-1900," *The Journal of Pacific History* 31:1 (1996), 42-43.

enforce indirect rule.³⁰ These values included eastern Fijian ideas, as these were regarded as superior by the British because their system mirrored the ideal, hierarchical system.³¹ Western, Melanesian-influenced ideas were anything but ideal according to the British, as they felt that Melanesian beliefs did not have the hierarchical structure to unite the Fijian people.³² However, it should be noted that the values codified as traditional were those that correlated with British principles, including those of a natural hierarchy and of the Christian religion.³³

Another initiative taken by Governor Gordon was the introduction of Indian indentured labourers in Fiji. This scheme was the result of the economic policy that the colonial authorities envisioned to make Fiji self-sufficient. After Cession, the British encouraged The Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) of Australia to monopolize sugar production because other European plantations operating in Fiji were either failing or were seen as too small to have any impact.³⁴ The company eventually agreed to start operations in Fiji, but demanded a stable source of cheap labour to begin operations. The colonial government, as well as the eastern chiefs, did not want Fijians to work on the plantations and disrupt their “traditional” way of life.³⁵ Additionally, it was more difficult and expensive to bring in indentures from the other Pacific Islands.³⁶ The solution reached was to bring in Indians from India as indentured labourers who signed five-year contracts to work on the plantations. Various experiments had been held in the British Empire to find the best indentured workers, and Indians were deemed better

³⁰ Martha Kaplan, “Luve Ni Wai as the British Saw It: Constructions of Custom and Disorder in Colonial Fiji,” *Ethnohistory* 36:4 (Autumn, 1989), 351.

³¹ R. A. Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, 5.

³² Michael C. Howard et al *The Political Economy of the South Pacific*, 36.

³³ O.H.K. Spate, *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, 6.

³⁴ Robert T. Robertson and Akosita Tamanisau, *Fiji: Shattered Coups*, 8.

³⁵ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, 11.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 11.

labourers because they were regarded as being healthier, as having relatively better physique, as being easy to recruit, and more importantly, as being more obedient.³⁷ The colonial authorities and the eastern chiefs initially did not regard the Indians as a threat to their power and privilege because it was assumed that if the Indians stayed after the end of their indenture contracts, they would amount to nothing more than agricultural labourers.³⁸ At the on-set of the indenture period, the colonial authorities (in collaboration with the eastern chiefs) extended the policy of *Divide and Rule* to include segregation between Fijians and Indo-Fijians, as a way to keep order in the colony. The Fijians were governed through indirect rule, which gave the chiefs the primary responsibility over the Fijian people though subject to colonial authority. Additionally, Fijians were given the right to their own system of customary law, including their own courts, judges and administrators.³⁹

On the other hand, the Indo-Fijians were placed under the sole control of the colonial government.⁴⁰ The British (encouraged by the eastern chiefs) also forbade the Indo-Fijians from living in Fijian villages in order to ensure that the two groups were separated.⁴¹ And in the few cases during the indenture period where Fijians worked as plantation labourers, Fijians and Indo-Fijians were housed separately and each had different contractual arrangements.⁴² Additionally, the Indo-Fijians were not extended the same privileges as the Fijian people, including the right to their own customary law

³⁷ John D. Kelly, "The Other Leviathans: Corporate Investment and the Construction of a Sugar Colony," in *White and Deadly: Sugar and Colonialism*, Ed. Pal Ahluwalia, Bill Ashcroft and Roger Knight, (Commac, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 1999), 105, and C.J. Robertson, "Fiji Sugar Industry," *Economic Geography*, 7:4 (Oct., 1931), 402-403.

³⁸ Robertson, "Fiji Sugar Industry," 121, and Michael C. Howard et al, *The Political Economy of the South Pacific*, 31.

³⁹ R.S. Milne, *Politics in Ethnically Bipolar States*, 61.

⁴⁰ Ibid 61.

⁴¹ John D. Kelly, "Threats to Difference in Colonial Fiji," *Cultural Anthropology* 10:1 (Feb., 1995), 65.

⁴² Ibid. 65.

and systems.⁴³ This separate and unequal treatment increased resentment amongst the Indo-Fijians, as they felt excluded and discriminated against by the colonial authorities. As will be discussed later, protests would be made by the growing Indo-Fijian population and would be seen as a threat by the colonial authorities and eastern chiefs with regards to their power and privileges.

Christian Missionaries

The influence of Christian missionaries, and the message of Christianity, would also have a strong impact on Fijian values and attitudes. Prior to conversion, Fijians were regarded as lacking the ability to contemplate anything natural.⁴⁴ However, they were regarded as admiring some aspects of human life, such as those of cleverness, and reacting to abnormal activities.⁴⁵ What was regarded as Fijian religion prior to the adoption of Christianity was complex. Many ceremonies had supernatural backgrounds, as Fijians believed in the presence of many gods and spirits, who were held to influence any unexplained phenomena.⁴⁶ These gods and spirits would be called upon to help with the undertaking of various tasks, including success in war and deliverance from sickness.⁴⁷ Therefore, magic was considered to be very important, meaning that only persons of intelligence and rank were given the responsibility of carrying out the rituals to invoke these gods and spirits.⁴⁸

There were three types of uses of magic prior to contact: 1-black magic, which produced death, disease and bad luck (utilized in times of war); 2- specialized/beneficent

⁴³ Ibid. 65.

⁴⁴ Rev. W. Deane, Fijian Society or the Sociology and Psychology of the Fijians, (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd, 1921), 24.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 24.

⁴⁶ R. A. Derrick, A History of Fiji, 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 10

⁴⁸ W.P. Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 9.

magic of departmental experts, which was very important for economic purposes such as warding off crises like drought; and 3- private magic used by ordinary people in everyday life.⁴⁹ The first two instances were carried out in times of crisis, usually in the village temple (called *bure kalou*).⁵⁰ Every village had at least one such temple, though they were used only in times of crisis.⁵¹ The overall impression missionaries had of the Fijian “religion” was that Fijians were more superstitious than religious.⁵² While missionaries inferred that there was no “national” god, because no single Fijian nation existed, they also recognized that Fijians engaged in some forms of worship. While all Fijians believed in local gods,⁵³ as spirits of renowned ancestors, eastern Fijians had stronger beliefs in the supernatural qualities of their chiefs.⁵⁴ Thus, Fijians gave their chiefs deeper allegiance, fearing that angering them would result in negative consequences, including those of a supernatural quality.⁵⁵ Therefore, hierarchy was more important in the eastern parts (where there was greater Polynesian influence) than in the western parts, (where there was a greater Melanesian influence).

While both groups were labelled as barbaric, missionaries classified the groups in terms of who could be converted more easily based on the following rationale.⁵⁶ They believed that people could be converted to Christianity only if their culture’s hierarchical structure was strong.⁵⁷ Missionaries determined that converting the western Fijians, who were influenced by Melanesian ideals, would be difficult because their

⁴⁹ Ibid. 9.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 11-12.

⁵¹ Ibid. 11-12.

⁵² Rev. W. Deane, *Fijian Society*, 63

⁵³ Ibid. 93.

⁵⁴ R. A. Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, 11.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 11.

⁵⁶ John D. Kelly, “Threats to Difference in Colonial Fiji,” 68.

⁵⁷ Nicholas Thomas, “Colonial Conversions,” 372-373.

social structure was not hierarchical.⁵⁸ Additionally, missionaries reasoned that the beliefs of the westerners were too diversified because they primarily engaged in ancestor worship (in relation to local gods).⁵⁹ On the other hand, eastern Fijians were more ideal for conversion because they adhered to a hierarchical social structure, as opposed to the more egalitarian western Fijians.⁶⁰ Adding to the preference for easterners was the fact that eastern Fijian society stressed that those of rank, especially the chiefs, were the direct descendants of various gods.⁶¹

After this classification, missionaries then endeavoured to abolish any unthinkable acts going on.⁶² The aim was to instil the belief in one omnipresent and omni-powerful deity as to curb some of the deplorable acts the missionaries felt were going on.⁶³ Another aim was to make Fijians good Christians, because only then could they be trained to participate and progress in a civilized, capitalist society.⁶⁴ Michael C. Howard et al have further interpreted the aims of missionaries as being three-fold: 1- to instil a desire in Fijians for European-produced consumer goods; 2- to encourage Fijians to plant cash crops so they could afford to live in the manner promoted by the missionaries; and 3- to promote the interests of the local indigenous ruling class.⁶⁵ The basic theme here is that missionaries were forceful in trying to instil a sense of European values amongst the Fijians. For example, Thomas Williams preached against what he

⁵⁸ Rev. W. Deane, Fijian Society, 36-37.

⁵⁹ Thomas Williams, Fiji and The Fijians: The Islands and their Inhabitants, Vol. I, Ed. George Stringer Rowe (London: Alexander Heylin, 1858 (reprinted in the United States 1977), 4.

⁶⁰ Michael C. Howard et al The Political Economy of the South Pacific, 48

⁶¹ Ibid. 48.

⁶² Nicholas Thomas, "Colonial Conversions," 372-373.

⁶³ John Barker, "Introduction: Ethnographic Perspectives on Christianity in Oceanic Societies," in Christianity in Oceania: Ethnographic Perspectives, Ed. John Barker (Lanham, Md: University Press of America Inc, 1990), 19.

⁶⁴ Martha Kaplan and John D. Kelly, "Rethinking Resistance," 130.

⁶⁵ Michael C. Howard et al The Political Economy of the South Pacific, 89-90.

believed was the degradation of women (termed the slavery of women) because of their participation in outdoor labour.⁶⁶ Williams also preached against polygamy in Fiji, which was seen as “unnatural, unreasonable, and evil.”⁶⁷

The views and aims of Christian missionaries were reflected in the codification of “traditional” customary laws. Martha Kaplan observed that any unacceptable practices deemed heathen and superstitious were challenged, and in some cases suppressed, by Christian missionaries.⁶⁸ The consequence of this was that those traditional practices deemed unsuitable by missionaries and the colonial authorities were made criminal offences.⁶⁹

Establishment of the Fijian Elite

British colonial preferences for a strong traditional leadership to maintain order and stability fit together neatly with the hierarchical nature of eastern Fijian society.⁷⁰ As John D. Kelly alludes to, the British favoured eastern systems because it would be more effective to maintain law and order, which was necessary in order to protect various interests, including those of European planters.⁷¹ And with the eastern chiefs giving the British their un-fettered loyalty, eastern systems were further accepted.⁷² Hence, the colonial authorities gave the eastern chiefs the responsibility of maintaining order in Fijian areas through *Indirect Rule*. And the consequence of this policy was that it allowed the eastern chiefs to extend their status, power and privilege over the territory.

⁶⁶ Jane Samson, “Rescuing Fijian Women? The British Anti-slavery Proclamation of 1852,” The Journal of Pacific History, 30:1, (1995), 25.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 25.

⁶⁸ Martha Kaplan, “Luvu Ni Wai as the British Saw It,” 353.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 351.

⁷⁰ John D. Kelly and Martha Kaplan, Represented Communities: Fiji and World Decolonization, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 126.

⁷¹ Ibid. 127.

⁷² Ibid. 127.

The power and status of the eastern chiefs was entrenched with the creation of institutions such as the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) and the Native Regulations Board (NRB).⁷³

The GCC was one of the first institutions created by the colonial authorities that legitimated eastern chiefly power, and whose creation would have many consequences. One outcome was that it gave the chiefs the power over things such as the administration of customary law and influence in the Colonial Legislative Council.⁷⁴ Additionally, Fijians were placed in a more subservient position vis-à-vis the eastern chiefs as such institutions legitimated the chiefs' power. These institutions and power arrangements were justified by the eastern chiefs and the colonial authorities as being necessary in order to protect the Fijian culture. O.H.K. Spate stated in his 1959 report that “[there] was a firm belief [amongst the chiefs] in hereditary authority and corresponding distrust in the capacity of ordinary men to run their own affairs.”⁷⁵ For example, when there were proposals to introduce elections for Fijian Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs), the chiefs resisted such efforts by claiming that they spoke for all Fijians because only they knew what was best for the Fijian community.⁷⁶ While the chiefs enjoyed the privileges of power, the Fijian grassroots were confined to the traditional way of life which was based on subsistence agriculture.

The colonial period created a land tenure system to help protect the traditional way of life for the Fijian people. This system, which divided Fijian land according to the *mataqali* (clan) system, was meant to standardize land tenure and prevent the

⁷³ Stephanie Lawson, “The Myth of Cultural Homogeneity and Its Implications for Chiefly Power and Politics in Fiji,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 32:1 (January 1990), 799.

⁷⁴ Martha Kaplan and John D. Kelly, “Rethinking Resistance,” 130.

⁷⁵ O.H.K. Spate, *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, 7.

⁷⁶ Ahmed Ali, “Fiji: Political change, 1874-1960,” in *Politics in Fiji: Studies in Contemporary History* Ed. Brij V. Lal (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986) 15.

alienability of land to foreigners.⁷⁷ The chiefs especially argued that keeping land in Fijian hands was the only way of protecting the traditional village life of Fijians. Additionally, it would also insulate the Fijian grassroots from the capitalist system until they were ready to compete in it. This meant that the Fijian people were encouraged (and for the most part forced) to work in rural villages because the village was identified as being essential to protect Fijian values and way of life.⁷⁸ In the village, there was no real specialization of labour. Labour was mobilized when those with authority, such as the senior members of the household, local kin-group and those of special rank decided that such labour was necessary.⁷⁹ Furthermore, employment of labour in the Fijian community was greatly dependent on obligations. The key element of Fijian society was that loyalty came above all else, whether it be loyalty to the group, or identifying with (and giving allegiance to) chiefs and elders as sources of authority.⁸⁰ One complaint brought up in the Spate report was that the system of land tenure was based only on Bauan (eastern) tradition.⁸¹ Spate complained about other elements of the system as well. One problem he saw was that a status quo system had been implemented, and nothing was being done to encourage Fijians to modernize, including entering the capitalist economy.⁸² Additionally, Spate felt that land was not being divided up properly, as there was no connection between the number of cultivators, the amount of land available, and the amount of land being distributed to the *mataqali*.⁸³

⁷⁷ Henry J. Rutz, "Capitalizing on Culture; Moral Ironies in Urban Fiji," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 29:3 (Jul., 1987), 537.

⁷⁸ Michael C. Howard, Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991), 72.

⁷⁹ R.R. Nayacakalou, Tradition and Change in the Fijian Village, (Suva: South Pacific Social Sciences Association, 1978), 108.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 109.

⁸¹ O.H.K. Spate, The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects, 10-11

⁸² *Ibid.* 10-11.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 10-11.

The problem he identified (and one that continues to be highlighted today) was that some *mataqali* with few members received large allotments of land, while some *mataqali* with many members did not receive enough land.⁸⁴

Fijian leaders also played a large role in helping to create and maintain segregation between ethnic groups, argued as being necessary in order to maintain the paramountcy of the Fijian people. Ratu Epeli Ganilau highlighted this sentiment in 1922 when he said "...We strongly object to being ruled by Indians, as we always have regarded British rule to be the sole foundation of honour, justice and fairness."⁸⁵ This sentiment described the rationale in establishing two sources of authority for Fijians. In addition to the colonial government (which was greatly influenced by the eastern chiefs), parallel Fijian institutions were also implemented to maintain law and order in the Fijian community. These institutions were, and continue to be, used by the Fijian elite to help protect traditional Fijian society, as well as to enforce ethnic segregation. Some of these institutions (some of which were highlighted earlier) included the Great Council of Chiefs (the GCC), the Native Regulations Board (the NRB), the Fijian Administration (the successor to NRB), and the Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB, which will be discussed in a later chapter). The Spate Report raised a concern that these institutions affected the level of cooperation between the groups because no concessions were made to the Indo-Fijians unless it coincided with the self-interest of the Fijian elite.⁸⁶ The Burns Commission, which followed the Spate Commission, expanded on Spate's concerns, stating that these institutions were creating divisions that were retarding

⁸⁴ Ibid. 10-11.

⁸⁵ Martha Kaplan and John D. Kelly, "Rethinking Resistance," 123.

⁸⁶ O.H.K. Spate, The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects, 6-7.

progress and growth in Fiji.⁸⁷ Moreover, the eastern chiefs further solidified their power when they were given positions within the colonial government and administration.⁸⁸ Therefore, any threats to their power had to be averted. For example, the Fijian elite rejected the suggestion made by Indo-Fijians that a common roll be implemented in voting for Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs). The Fijian elite claimed (and were supported by the European members) that democracy was unsafe and unwise because it would lead to the domination of one group over another.⁸⁹ The Fijian elite felt deeply threatened by the Indo-Fijians, especially when the latter's population began to challenge that of the Fijian people, and when Indo-Fijians began rising in economic clout.⁹⁰

Indo-Fijians and Protests

Arrangements were made in 1878 to bring indentured labourers from India, and they began arriving in Fiji in 1879.⁹¹ The colonial authorities (in conjunction with the eastern chiefs) decided that Fijians should not be allowed to work on the sugar plantations because it would destabilize Fijian society. Initially, Indo-Fijians were not viewed as a threat because the belief was they would either leave for India after their contracts ended, or if they stayed, they would not amount to more than agricultural labourers.⁹² While some Indo-Fijians returned to India, most stayed after the end of their indenture contracts. Those Indo-Fijians that remained in Fiji became involved in a

⁸⁷ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, 91.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 51-52.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 51-52.

⁹⁰ As will be discussed, the British favoured the Fijian leadership because the latter gave their un-fettered loyalty to the colonial government. On the other hand, Indo-Fijian leaders openly questioned the power structures and systems in place, which was perceived by the British as the Indo-Fijians questioning their authority. Therefore, they supported actions to thwart any threats posed by Indo-Fijians to the structures in place.

⁹¹ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, 11.

⁹² Robert T. Robertson and Akosita Tamanisau, *Fiji: Shattered Coups*, 8-9.

variety of occupations, including: cane farming, operating small shops, and engaging in entrepreneurial initiatives. The arrival of wealthy Gujaratis from India dramatically increased the threat felt by the European and Fijian communities, in terms of both economic and political power.⁹³ The Indo-Fijians became an even greater threat when the size of their population grew to challenge that of the Fijian people. In response, the colonial authorities and Fijian chiefs tried to minimize the role of the Indo-Fijians in the colony. This led Indo-Fijian leaders to protest their lack of equal status with their counterparts.

One area that the Indo-Fijian leaders protested was the lack of equality in the political arena, including the Legislative Council. The Arya Samaj was one group that campaigned for Indo-Fijian political equality in the colonial period. The *Samaji*, as they were known, included the more educated members of the Indo-Fijian community, and were amongst those who sought equality in Fiji.⁹⁴ It cannot be denied that there were also rivalries within the Indo-Fijian community, including between orthodox and reformist Hindus; Muslims and Hindus; India-born and Fiji-born Indo-Fijians.⁹⁵ For example, the *Samaji*, who were a reformist Hindu sect, were in dispute with other Indo-Fijian groups, including with conservative Hindus, and with Muslims because they did not like the open sale of beef.⁹⁶ However, one common grievance that all Indo-Fijian groups agreed on was that they did not feel the colonial government was treating them equally in comparison with other British subjects.

⁹³ Ibid. 12. The reason why the Gujaratis came to Fiji was because they wanted to get involved in trade and the textile industry.

⁹⁴ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, 46.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 53.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 46-47.

They called for elections to the Legislative Council by a common roll arguing that political rights should not be based on status.⁹⁷ Moreover, they demanded the installation of democratic mechanisms to replace the nomination system that existed. However, Indo-Fijian leaders believed that it was acceptable to impose certain restrictions on the franchise, such as language qualifications.⁹⁸ While it is true that the Legislative Council came to be partially elected after 1929, most MLCs continued to be appointed during the majority of the colonial period, as all motions made by Indo-Fijian MLCs for a common roll were defeated.⁹⁹ A communal roll was implemented, in conjunction with the continuation of appointments for Fijians until the 1960s, with the argument being that this was needed to protect certain interests, especially those of the Fijians. Additionally, the British and the chiefly elite intensified efforts to keep the ethnic groups separate, including maintaining the ban on Indo-Fijians from living in Fijian villages. They feared that if the groups came together, and started to find common grievances, it would lead to trouble in controlling the Fijians, as they would begin to question the authority structure in place.¹⁰⁰ Actions taken by Indo-Fijian soldiers, who withdrew their services from the British war effort during World War II to protest the fact that they were paid less than their British counterparts, did not help things either.¹⁰¹ Such protests led the colonial authorities and the eastern chiefs to vilify the Indo-Fijians as selfish, and portrayed them as a threat that could not be ignored.

A second area where Indo-Fijians protested their lack of equality was in the economic sphere, most notably in agriculture. One key area was the distribution of land.

⁹⁷ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, 51.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 52. The language restrictions included Indo-Fijians having to pass a test to show that they had a basic competence of the English language.

⁹⁹ Ahmed Ali, "Fiji: Political change, 1874-1960," 14.

¹⁰⁰ John D. Kelly, "Threats to Difference in Colonial Fiji," 73.

¹⁰¹ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, 71.

As discussed earlier, Fijians were given ownership of approximately 83% of the land in order to preserve Fijian paramountcy. The Indo-Fijians protested because this did not conform to the plurality that had come to exist.¹⁰² Furthermore, there was a concern that individual earning capacities were being negatively affected by the system of land tenure.¹⁰³ During the colonial period, Indo-Fijians had to lease land either from the CSR, or from the Fijians. The problem with leasing from the Fijians was that there were an increasing number of farmers whose leases were not being renewed because the Fijians wanted to benefit from the profits of sugarcane farming.¹⁰⁴ This is a phenomenon that continues today, which will be further discussed in chapter two.

Two growers' associations formed during the colonial period illustrate the historical background behind Indo-Fijian grievances towards land tenure and the reaction of the Fijian elite to these concerns. One association formed was the *Kisan Sangh* (created in 1937), which was a moderate organization, whose membership included the more prosperous cane growers.¹⁰⁵ The *Akhil Fiji Krishak Maha Sangh* (better known as the *Maha Sangh*) was created in June 1941, and was considered to be more militant. The differences between these organizations were first illustrated in the cane strike of 1943. This strike protested the fact that the prices paid by the CSR to cane farmers did not keep up with the rising cost of living.¹⁰⁶ The *Maha Sangh* called for cane farmers not to harvest their crop if prices were not increased; the *Kisan Sangh*

¹⁰² The plurality highlighted refers to the argument that the Fijians were not the only group living in Fiji. Indo-Fijian leaders argued that because more than one group lived in Fiji, no one group should be excluded at the expense of others.

¹⁰³ V. Nithi Nithyanandam, & Rukamni Gounder, "Equals in Markets: Land Property Rights and Ethnicity in Fiji and Sri Lanka," <http://www.eh.net/XIIICongress/Papers/Nithyanandam.pdf> (16 September 2004), 18.

¹⁰⁴ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, 61.

¹⁰⁵ Michael C. Howard, *Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State*, 49.

¹⁰⁶ Adrian C. Mayer, *Indians in Fiji*, 71.

waited for a commission to hear the Indo-Fijians. This eventually led to the latter organization splitting into two, as the more militant members wanted to boycott the harvest.¹⁰⁷ Despite the difference in positions, this strike showed that the Indo-Fijians were no longer satisfied with the lack of equality. This was evident in a quote by a CSR historian, who stated that “... the Company was perhaps, slow in changing its dominating attitude towards the Indians as they developed from indentured labourers to relatively prosperous farmers and mill workers. ...”¹⁰⁸ The differences seen in 1943 strike were also evident in the 1960 cane strike. When the cane contract ended in 1960, there were calls for an increase in prices paid to cane farmers. And when an impasse ensued, some resolved not to harvest the cane, with the Maha Sangh leading the charge.¹⁰⁹ The key in this was that the more moderate leaders condemned the strike, claiming that such measures were harming relations with other groups.¹¹⁰ It cannot be denied that these unions exhibited signs of intra-group rivalry within the Indo-Fijians, especially between the leaders. The more militant Indo-Fijians wanted things to change quickly, while the more moderate organizations wanted to work within the system as far as possible. However, the common grievance articulated was that Indo-Fijians involved in agriculture lacked a sense of security with regards to land tenure including getting and/or maintaining leases. It is also important to note that these strikes gave the Fijian elite an opportunity to justify their rule. Grievances over land tenure were, and continue to be, used by the Fijian elite to vilify Indo-Fijians as a threat to the Fijian culture. They

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 71-72.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 109.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 111.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 111-112.

further argued that the Fijian culture would suffer the plight of the Aborigines and Maori without the elite being in charge.¹¹¹

Conclusion

The actions and events of the colonial period have left a lasting imprint on the Fijian landscape. The British introduced the concept of *Divide and Rule* as a way of controlling the inhabitants of Fiji while maintaining their power base. One of the biggest aspects of British rule was the introduction of Indo-Fijians through the indenture system, while at the same time maintaining the paramount position of the Fijians. The Christian missionaries made an impact by promoting eastern systems, as they were considered superior compared to their western counterparts. The consequence here is that it helped lead to the adoption of eastern governing structures during the colonial period. The position of the eastern Fijian elite was entrenched. They legitimated their authority by pointing to the Deed of Cession establishing the principle of Fijian paramountcy. The impact of this was that it helped the chiefs design a system that anchored their power and prestige in the colony. The Indo-Fijians were able to rise up from their initial position as indentured labourers. The subsequent increase in their population and growing economic power made them a threat. The Indo-Fijians recognized that they were being held back by the institutional structures of the colonial administration calling for equality between the groups. The impact of interaction between these groups is that it laid the foundation for the events that have taken place today.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 111-112.

Chapter Two- Fijian Elite Interaction with the Fijian People

Introduction

Interaction by the Fijian elites with the Fijian grassroots and the framework that they have built up to serve Fijians has tried to reinforce ethnic differences in the country. But what type of framework has been developed by the Fijian elites to deal with ethnic accommodation in the post-independence period? And how has this framework been used by the Fijian elites to maintain their status and privilege?

At first glance, attention could be directed to the various constitutions that have been instituted in the post-independence era. Fiji has had three constitutions since independence: the first one was passed in 1970 after achieving independence from Great Britain; a second constitution that was passed in 1990 by Rabuka's civilian government after the second coup of 1987; and the third and current constitution was passed in 1997, although it was briefly abrogated after the coup of 2000.

Some of the inherited colonial institutions were incorporated into all three constitutions, and continue to affect the workings of the country. The Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB) continues to have a great impact on land policy. The Agricultural Landlords and Tenants Act (ALTA) and the Native Land and Trust Act (NLTA) are examples of legislation that also derive their history from the colonial era. Other institutions such as the GCC have also helped to maintain a *de facto* Divide-and-Rule policy by creating separation between the various groups in Fiji. The Fijian elite claims that these institutions are required to safeguard and maintain the traditions and customs

of the Fijian people.¹¹² Additionally, the chiefs have argued that they must play the leading role in the affairs of the country because only they can protect the interests of the Fijian people.¹¹³ The resulting consequence is Fijian leaders interact in such a way with Fijians to create an image of “us-vs-them” with regards to the Indo-Fijians. More specifically, the fears being spread are that, if the Fijian elite is weak, the Fijian people will be left in a classless state like that of the Maori in New Zealand and the Aborigines in Australia.¹¹⁴ This type of rhetoric has had several consequences. One is that land continues to be a source of great tension. Additionally, the Fijian elite have made numerous appeals that Indo-Fijians pose a great threat to the principle of Fijian paramountcy, in part because they want access to more Fijian land.

Protection of Fijian Interests and Paramountcy

The Fijian Affairs Board articulated in the *Wakaya* letter, written to the British in 1963, that the chiefs required the necessary power to ensure the survival of the Fijian people and their culture.¹¹⁵ The independence period has not led to any de-emphasis by the Fijian elite of the importance of this principle. The Fijian elite continue to point out that this principle was entrenched in the Deed of Cession of 1874, arguing that Fijian high chiefs ceded Fiji to Great Britain to protect the Fijian culture.¹¹⁶ The effect of this is that the Fijian elite, including the eastern chiefs, has been able to maintain their power by controlling the key institutions of the State.

¹¹² While the composition of the Fijian elite has now come to include leading Fijian bureaucrats and politicians, the eastern Chiefs still play a key role in the day-to-day affairs of the country.

¹¹³ R.S. Milne, *Politics in Ethnically Bipolar States: Guyana, Malaysia, Fiji*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1981), 60-61.

¹¹⁴ Ralph Premdas, “General Rabuka and the Fiji Elections of 1992,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31 No. 6 (June 1991), 997-998.

¹¹⁵ Michael C. Howard, *Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State*, 60-61.

¹¹⁶ Ralph R. Premdas, and Jeffrey S. Steeves, “Ethnonationalist Politics in Fiji: The 1992 Elections,” *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, Vol. XXII, No. 1-2 (1995), 24.

The Alliance Party,¹¹⁷ a party dominated by the eastern chiefs, used the political arena to enforce this principle when they governed from 1970-1987. By creating the Alliance Party, Fijian leaders wished to follow the example of the Malay *bumiputras* in Malaysia, a political leadership comprised of social superiors in that country.¹¹⁸ The bumiputra-led Government that came to power in Malaysia in the late 1960s instituted policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP), arguing that it had to help indigenous Malaysians establish their paramountcy in Malaysia.¹¹⁹ The rhetoric of paramountcy that was used in Malaysia in the late 1960s is similar to that used by the Fijian elite to the present day. In essence, the Alliance Party was another institutional tool to maintain control over the Fijian people. Stephanie Lawson has argued that the Alliance Party (and after its demise, its off-shoots) was used by the eastern chiefs to create a sense of cultural homogeneity among Fijians.¹²⁰ More specifically, unity was forged by joining all Fijians under the leadership of the Fijian elite, which was argued "... as necessary for maintaining the 'natural' order of the world..."¹²¹

During its tenure, leaders of the Alliance Party respected democratic principles, such as the rule of law, only if it served their self-interest.¹²² For example, colonial systems and institutions such as the GCC and the NLTB were incorporated into all three constitutions, thus allowing the Fijian elite to maintain control over the Fijian people in

¹¹⁷ The Alliance Party was a political party that included the following factions: the Fijian Association, the Fijian section that was dominated by the eastern chiefs; the Indian Alliance, a small group of wealthy Indo-Fijians; and European capitalists, who were economically powerful. In the overall scheme of things, the members of the Fijian faction, especially the chiefs, dominated this party.

¹¹⁸ Dr. Stephen Sherlock, "Constitutional and Political Change in Fiji," Australian Parliamentary Library, Research Paper 7 1997-1998, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1997-98/98rp97.htm> (14 March 2005).

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Stephanie Lawson, "The Myth of Cultural Homogeneity and Its Implications for Chiefly Power and Politics in Fiji," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 32 No. 4 (Oct. 1990), 795-796.

¹²¹ Ibid. 798.

¹²² Ian Fraser, "Fiji's May Events: The Law that Failed," USP School of Law, Vanuatu, 9 June 2000, [http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/journal_splaw/Special Interest/Fiji Fraser1.html](http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/journal_splaw/Special%20Interest/Fiji_Fraser1.html) (1 November 2004).

the name of protecting the paramountcy of the Fijian culture.¹²³ The constitutional entrenchment of the principle of Fijian paramountcy would mean that other groups could be discriminated against in order to maintain this principle. Ralph Premdas has argued that the claims of the Fijian elite are wrapped up in cultural symbols to legitimize their positions of power.¹²⁴

This explanation rationalizes the set-up of the 1970 constitution. For example, the constitution incorporated a Bill of Rights, as well as incorporating multi-ethnic representation in Parliament.¹²⁵ However, the constitution also included a stipulation that a two-thirds majority in each house was required in order to pass any amendments to this document.¹²⁶ This may seem standard when compared to the process required to make constitutional amendments in western countries, but the Senate included eight GCC appointed Senators, meaning that their votes were crucial in passing any constitutional amendments.¹²⁷ And while the 1970 Constitution did not constitutionally recognize the GCC, it did give them the power to make Senate appointments. The GCC is given such powers because they are seen as reflecting the chiefs' moral, spiritual and political authority amongst the Fijian people, making them the legitimate voice of the Fijian grassroots.¹²⁸ Moreover, such institutions allowed the Fijian elite to protect and

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ralph R. Premdas, "Public Policy and Ethnic Conflict," United Nations, UNESCO, Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Discussion Paper Series No. 12, <http://www.unesco.org/most/premdas.htm> (1 November 2004).

¹²⁵ Ralph R. Premdas, *Ethnic Conflict and Development: The Case of Fiji*, (Aldershot, England: Avebury Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1995), 33.

¹²⁶ Ralph R. Premdas, "Fiji under a New Political Order: Ethnicity and Indigenous Rights," *Asian Survey* Vol. 33 No. 10 (October 1993), 547.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 547.

¹²⁸ Australian Broadcasting Corporation, The World Today Archives, Edmond Roy, "Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs," <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/stories/s129651.htm> (7 July 2005). The GCC does this because the belief is that the chiefs (who make up this institution) are closer to Fijians, and know what is best for them. Therefore, they legitimately represent Fijian concerns, and are the ones to voice the opinions of the Fijian people

advance their own interests. For example, moves made by Alliance governments, such as the nationalization of the sugar industry in 1973, were done to benefit those who were members of, or had connections with, the Fijian elite.¹²⁹ However, the Fijian elite justified such actions as being necessary to protect the paramountcy of the Fijian people. Extremists within the Alliance Party allowed the Fijian elite to further use the principle of Fijian paramountcy to solidify their power in the country. These members argued that stability in Fiji can be maintained only if Fijians maintained their paramountcy.¹³⁰ Therefore, when questions of the power of the Fijian elite were brought up, the Alliance Party, as well as later pro-Fijian governments, posited that they were the only ones who could protect Fijian paramountcy.

The Fiji Labour Party (the FLP), created out of the Trade Union Movement, posed a strong challenge to the power of the Fijian elite because it questioned who really benefited from Fijian paramountcy.¹³¹ At the launching of the FLP, the party's first leader, Dr. Timoci Bavadra explicitly stated that "...what has become increasingly apparent is that a tremendous gap exists between the ruling party's rhetorical claims to serving the interests of the people, and its policies."¹³² In another speech, Bavadra suggested, "... [surviving the] Alliance's unholy rule for sixteen long years is an achievement itself. But the peace of the people has limits, just as the powers of the rulers must have limits."¹³³ Therefore, the creation of the FLP worried the Alliance

¹²⁹ Robert T. Robertson and Akosita Tamanisau, *Fiji: Shattered Coups*, 18-19.

¹³⁰ Philip Szmedra, "Trouble in Paradise: Racial Politics, Military Coups, and Global Market Integration in Fiji," <http://itc.gsw.edu/faculty/pszmedra/ATWS%20draft.htm> (19 September 2004).

¹³¹ The FLP was composed of intellectuals and union leaders of both groups. This party was relatively integrated and multicultural in composition, which explains the acceptance of multicultural ideas by its members.

¹³² 'Atu Bain, and Tupeni Baba, "Bavadra: Prime Minister, Statesman, Man of the People, Selection of Speeches and Writings: 1985-1989," (Nadi, Fiji: Sunrise Press, 1990), 2

¹³³ *Ibid.* 74.

Party, especially the chiefs, because the FLP platform shifted focus away from race, and concentrated more on socio-economic issues, including the corruption of the Alliance government. The FLP-led Coalition victory in the 1987 elections troubled the Fijian elite. Their biggest fear was that the victory would lead to the inception of properly western democratic ideals, which would lead to the questioning of, amongst other things, chiefly power and privileges. The FLP was further vilified because its caucus was dominated by Indo-Fijians.¹³⁴ These two factors led the chiefly-led Alliance members to stress that since Fijians were not in power, the Fijian culture would be trumped by FLP's wish to introduce multiculturalism in Fiji.¹³⁵ These fears led to the creation of the Taukei Movement (led by many eastern chiefs), which orchestrated a campaign of destabilization aimed at bringing down the government in the name of maintaining Fijian paramountcy.¹³⁶ This movement culminated in the subsequent coups of 1987. Lt. Col. Sitiveni Rabuka, the leader of the 1987 coups, believed that

“...in that Deed, the chiefs of Fiji, who represented the Fijian people, ceded Fiji to Great Britain...when the power, the sovereign authority was returned [at independence], it came back to everybody who was living in Fiji...the Fijians felt that [it] should have been handed back to their chiefs...and not to strangers.”¹³⁷

He added that “...I believe that the justice in this case is justice for the Fijians to determine their own destiny in their own land.”¹³⁸ Rabuka justified his actions as necessary in order to remove the threats posed by the FLP-Coalition, as well as to

¹³⁴ Bavadra's Government included 19 Indo-Fijians, 7 Fijians (including Bavadra), and 2 from other groups.

¹³⁵ John Davies, “On the Source of Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Fiji,” Te Karere Ipurangi: Maori News Online, <http://maorinews.com/karere/fiji/davies.htm> (5 November 2004).

¹³⁶ Robert T. Robertson and Akosita Tamanisau, *Fiji: Shattered Coups*, 66.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* 37.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 17.

remove a constitution that was negatively affecting the Fijian people.¹³⁹ The subsequent 1990 Constitution included entrenching the paramountcy of the Fijian people, but mainly through increased representation in the **political** arena. Fijians were given thirty-seven out of seventy seats in the House of Representatives, while twenty-four out of thirty-four seats in the Senate of Chiefs were reserved for Fijians.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, positions such as the Presidency and the Prime Minister-ship were also reserved for Fijians.¹⁴¹ This constitution also entrenched the role of the GCC in the country, including giving it the power to select the President.¹⁴² The allocation of such powers was designed to ensure that Fijians, and with it the Fijian elite, would remain in power.

The above discussion poses a question: who really gained power from the 1987 coups? This is asked because the coups led to the suspension of democracy, and mainly members of the Alliance governments prior to the 1987 coups led the “civilian administration” that governed from 1987-1992.¹⁴³ Additionally, Rabuka gained power within the civilian administration, and secured immunity for his actions in the coup.¹⁴⁴ Brian Martin has drawn attention to the fact that Prime Minister Mara and Governor-General Ganilau (both high chiefs from the east) played rather ambiguous and

¹³⁹ Eddie Dean and Stan Ritova, *Rabuka: No Other Way* (Suva, Fiji: The Marketing Team International Ltd, 1988), 132-133.

¹⁴⁰ Ralph R. Premdas, and Jeffrey S. Steeves, “Fiji: Problems of Ethnic Discrimination and Inequality in the New Constitutional Order.” *Round Table*, Issue 318 (April 1991) - Full-text article retrieved from www.proquest.org (20 November 2004). Rural Fijians were given more seats under the 1990 Constitution as to prevent a repeat of the 1987 elections, where urban Fijians helped the FLP get into power.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Ralph Premdas, “General Rabuka and the Fiji Elections of 1992,” 997.

suspicious roles during and after the 1987 coups. For example, both were restored to their former positions in the civilian administrations after the coups.¹⁴⁵

However, some have argued that Rabuka, who became Prime Minister after Mara became the President, was not totally insensitive to non-Fijians in the Parliament. After all, he twice solicited the support of Indo-Fijian parties to gain and maintain power: he required the help of the FLP to gain power in 1992, and he required the help of the National Federation Party (NFP) to keep power in 1994.¹⁴⁶ One can also concede that Rabuka played a leading role in the setting up the 1996 Constitutional Review Commission (CRC, which led to the Reeves Report, the document that outlined the findings of the 1996 CRC), and ultimately, the 1997 Constitutional Amendment.¹⁴⁷ However, section 161 of the 1990 Constitution forced Rabuka to set-up the CRC, as the section stated that the constitution had to be reviewed within seven years of first being implemented.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, contrary to popular belief, the Fijian elite were not as accommodating in the passage of the 1997 constitution. In reality, it was the NFP leader, Jai Ram Reddy, who offered to compromise when the Fijian factions wanted to throw out the Reeves report because they felt that it did not give Fijians enough power.¹⁴⁹

This leads to a further question: who do the Fijian elite really represent? The Reeves report clearly highlighted this concern when it stated that

¹⁴⁵Brian Martin, *Social Defence, Social Change*, (London, UK: Freedom Press, 1993). <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/93sdsc/sdsc05.pdf> (29 September 2004). 54.

¹⁴⁶ Roderic Alley, "The Coup Crisis in Fiji," *Australian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 35 No. 4 (November 2000), 516.

¹⁴⁷ 517.

¹⁴⁸ Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji, 25th July 1990 (Suva: Government Printer, 1990), 148.

¹⁴⁹ Dr. Stephen Sherlock, "Constitutional and Political Change in Fiji," Government of Australia, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1997-98/98rp97.htm> (14 March 2005).

“...Throughout this century the colonial government enunciated the principle that the interests of Fijians must always remain paramount. In part, the assertion of this principle reflected genuine concern...in part it served the interests of the colonisers...the principle [came to be] widely accepted and *became part of the political culture* (emphasis added).”¹⁵⁰

The report later stated that

“...the constitution should be based on the principle that the interests of all communities must be recognised and protected. It should explicitly recognise the protective function of the principle that the interests of the indigenous Fijians are paramount, on the understanding that it does not involve the relegation of the interests of other communities.”¹⁵¹

The preamble of the 1997 Constitution specifically makes reference to the unique situation of the Fijian people, including the principle of paramountcy outlined in the Deed of Cession.¹⁵² Furthermore, section 6(d) makes reference to Fijian paramountcy in that “the rights of the Fijian and Rotuman people include their right to governance through their separate administrative systems.”¹⁵³ Section 116(1) also affirms and recognizes the Great Council Chiefs, further securing Fijian paramountcy.¹⁵⁴

Additionally, in contradiction to the Reeves report, which recommended more national seats in relation to communal seats, more seats were reserved on the basis of ethnicity, as shown in Appendix I.

Those involved in the 2000 coup also justified their actions as being necessary because Fijian paramountcy had not been maintained. ‘Paramountcy’ was threatened by the multi-cultural orientation of the FLP Government elected in 1999. There will be more discussion on Chaudhry’s FLP Government later in the section on the Indo-Fijian

¹⁵⁰ Fiji Constitution Review Commission, The Fiji Islands: Towards a United Future. Report of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission 1996 (Suva: Parliament of Fiji, 1996), 6

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 23

¹⁵² The Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, <http://confinder.richmond.edu/FijiIslands.htm#6> (25 October 2004).

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

threat. However, it has been argued that the 2000 coup was a way for the Fijian elite to acquire more power for themselves. The following discussion will highlight some of the key players in the coup, all of whom had ambitions of gaining more power and wealth. For example, Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, the man who took over from Rabuka as head of the SVT Party after they lost power in the 1999 election, was allegedly planning a coup to oust Prime Minister Chaudhry with disenchanted members of rival parties.¹⁵⁵ These parties are said to include PANU (a group of western chiefs), and the VLV (a group who wanted Fiji to be declared a Christian state), who felt Rabuka had abandoned the goals of the 1987 Coups).¹⁵⁶ The 2000 coup was carried out by the Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit (CRWU), a team that included retired Captain Ligairi. It is argued that the CRWUs involvement was supported by Fijian military and political leaders, as well as other Fijians with ties to the Fijian elite interested in gaining more power.¹⁵⁷ The infamous George Speight, a key figure in the 2000 coup and its aftermath, is also included in many discussions. He is well known for justifying the coup as being necessary because "...it is [about protecting] the supreme rights of our indigenous people in Fiji."¹⁵⁸ Speight also dismissed the 1997 Constitution after the coup, and tried to dismiss President Mara (who was eventually forced out by the military civilian administration several days after the coup) and the authority of the GCC. However, Speight's motives are questioned because he benefited from contracts given out by the

¹⁵⁵ Robbie Robertson and William Sutherland, Government by the Gun: The Unfinished Business of Fiji's 2000 Coup, (Australia: Photo Press, 2003), 6.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 6-7.

¹⁵⁷ Sam Howe Verhovek, "Burst of Ethnic Tension in Fiji Threatens South Seas Eden," in The New York Times, 7 June 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/960100fiji-crisis.html> (11 November 2004).

¹⁵⁸ Andrew Robertson, "Island of Intolerance? The Fijian Debacle," in Harvard International Review, <http://hir.harvard.edu/articles?id=991> (3 October 2004).

Rabuka government prior to the election of the Chaudhry government in 1999.¹⁵⁹

Additionally, while arguing that he was trying to maintain Fijian paramountcy, Speight is more known for trying to secure power for himself in the civilian administration. For example, he bitterly opposed the appointment of Laisenia Qarase as interim Prime Minister in July 2000.¹⁶⁰ Rabuka, who had become the GCC chair by the time of the 2000 coup, cannot be left out of consideration either. Rabuka's role as an international statesman had consistently been growing, which was indicative in him mediating the ethnic clashes in the Solomon Islands.¹⁶¹ It is alleged that Rabuka wanted a top position within the country, such as the Presidency. It is argued that he offered to mediate the aftermath of the coup to show his worth as a political head of state. In his brief stint as mediator, Rabuka unsuccessfully asked Mara to resign as President, which eventually led the latter to terminate Rabuka's tenure as mediator.¹⁶² Another claim is that Rabuka wanted to become the military commander after the 2000 Coup.¹⁶³ Additionally, Rabuka has showed that he still has political aspirations. For example, Rabuka has been trying to form a "multiracial party" since 2004 to run in the next election.¹⁶⁴ What this shows is that Rabuka will use any avenue possible to gain power, including using multi-ethnic appeals to gain support.

Current Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase's role in securing power cannot be understated either. Shortly after Qarase was named Prime Minister of the interim

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Robbie Robertson and William Sutherland, Government by the Gun, 36.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 16-18

¹⁶² Ibid. 17-18.

¹⁶³ "Fiji Trial: Rabuka Sought Top Military Post," Pacific Islands Report, <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2004/july/07%2D08%2D04.htm> (11 July 2005).

¹⁶⁴ Davila Waqusa, "Fiji Moves toward Multiracial Party," Pacific Islands Report (Editorial appearing in the Fiji Sun, 6 April 2004), <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2004/april/04%wD10.htm> (7 March 2005).

government after the 2000 Coup, he threatened Chaudhry's deposed government to support his administration or face the consequences of the law.¹⁶⁵ Additionally, after Qarase won the 2001 election, he would not include Chaudhry in the constitutionally mandated multiparty Cabinet.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, Qarase asked for the 1997 constitution to be amended in 2002 to re-establish the primacy of the Fijian people.¹⁶⁷ In 2002, Qarase's government rejected calls by opposition parties and NGOs to establish a proper Truth and Reconciliation Commission like that established in South Africa after the end of apartheid, claiming that such a commission would not be beneficial in healing tensions in Fiji.¹⁶⁸ And the Unity Commission set up in 2002 basically excluded Indo-Fijians further strengthening the argument that Qarase's Government wanted to create unity within the entire Fijian community as to create legitimacy and support for their power. While Qarase has recently introduced a Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill, argued as being necessary to help reduce ethnic tensions in the aftermath of the 2000 coup, this bill is flawed. This bill, if passed in its current form, would make it easier for former Government Ministers and others associated with the 2000 coup to be granted amnesty.¹⁶⁹ This is only a further illustration of how the Fijian elite, which includes the eastern Chiefs, have used their positions of power in order to serve their own interests. The danger is that when threats are felt, the Fijian elite tends to resort to

¹⁶⁵ "Baba Says New Fiji Interim Government Unconstitutional," University of the South Pacific School of Journalism, Pacific Nius. http://journalism.uts.edu.au/archive/fiji_coup/0729baba.html (23 September 2004).

¹⁶⁶ Dr. S. Chandrasekhran. South Asia Analysis Group, Paper No. 522, 28 September 2002: "Fiji- Qarase should accept Court verdict." <http://www.saag.org/papers/paper522.html> (24 October 2004).

¹⁶⁷ Dr. S. Chandrasekhran. South Asia Analysis Group, Paper No. 440, 9 April 2002: "Fiji- The Constitutional Crisis Continues." <http://www.saag.org/papers/paper440.html> (24 October 2004).

¹⁶⁸ Samisoni Paretti, "Let's Start from '87 Coups', Vakatora Says: The Truth Must be Known," *Island Business Magazine* (November 2004), <http://www.islandsbusiness.com/3.html> (29 November 2004).

¹⁶⁹ Sanjay Ramesh, "Reconciliation Bill an Insult to Victims of Fiji Coup," *Pacific Islands Report*, <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2005/June/06-08-com1.htm> (27 June 2005).

any measure possible to keep their hold on power, using Fijian paramountcy as a major justification for their actions.

The purpose of this discussion is to show that Fijian leaders have done everything possible to try and secure power for themselves, justifying these moves as being necessary to protect the Fijian culture. More importantly, it is the Fijian elite that use ethno-nationalistic rhetoric to gain control over the country, and use these resources for their own personal benefit. And as will be discussed later on, the Fijian grassroots do not really benefit from these actions, and are not active participants in the promotion of ethno-nationalism. The relevance of this is that caution must be used when analyzing ethnic relations in Fiji, because sentiments expressed by the Fijian elite do not mean that the Fijian grassroots also consistently hold these sentiments, or even feel that this is the main challenge to be overcome in the country.

Fears of Indo-Fijian Domination

The Fijian elite have also raised fears of Indo-Fijian domination to justify the various positions and actions taken in the post-independence era. These fears will be discussed in this section.

Indo-Fijian Political Power and Aspirations

The cordial cooperation between Prime Minister Mara and Opposition leader Koya in the brief period after independence was short-lived, and the negative aftermath continues to be felt today. One of the key areas of conflict has been over the issue of the common roll, which has its roots from the colonial era. But it is important to re-visit the topic, because the issue continues to affect how the Fijian elite have portrayed the Indo-Fijians, which is seen to have increased the level of ethnic tensions in the country. Indo-

Fijian leaders have argued that the communal roll system negatively affects integration and advancement, although many have come to approve of the principle of Fijian paramountcy.¹⁷⁰ The 1975 Royal Commission on Fiji's Electoral System mentioned that "...if Fiji is to take its place in the international world of today it cannot afford to maintain an electoral system which can be represented as racialism."¹⁷¹ However, the chiefly-dominated Alliance Party resisted this demand (despite their assertion that the common roll was a "long-term objective") claiming that "...the undermining of the constitutional protection afford[ed] to Fijian interests- is too much for any Fijian leader to entertain."¹⁷² The 1987 coup occurred in part because the compromises made in 1970 were greatly eroded by the mid 1980's.¹⁷³ Norman Feller adds that the 1987 coups were orchestrated partly because the Fijian elite could not see the Indian majority taking power.¹⁷⁴ The other justification for the 1987 coups was to retain Fijian paramountcy. Moments before the May 1987 Coup, MP Taniela Veitata stated that "...a life of peace and harmony has been the governing principle upon which the Fijian people have been living their lives ever since the arrival of Christianity..."¹⁷⁵ Rabuka partially rationalized the May 1987 coup by claiming that the Indo-Fijians (referring to them as the "immigrant race" and "heathens") threatened the culture, heritage, and Christian principles of the Fijian people.¹⁷⁶ Sanjay Ramesh argues that because the Bavadra government posed a threat to the chiefs with their non-racial political platform, the

¹⁷⁰ Victor Lal, Fiji Coups in Paradise, 39.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* 35.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* 47.

¹⁷³ Ralph R. Premdas, Ethnic Conflict and Development, 55.

¹⁷⁴ Norman Meller. "Ethnic and Racial Cleavages in Pacific Island Constitutions." The Journal of Pacific History, (September 1997) http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2375/is_n2_v32/ai_20554490 (15 September 2004).

¹⁷⁵ Eddie Dean and Stan Ritova, Rabuka: No Other Way, 9.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 126.

Alliance Party, led by Ratu Mara (who was a high chief from the east), argued that the FLP was trying to break the racial balance that the Alliance had constructed and maintained since independence.¹⁷⁷ The FLP was also portrayed as being an Indo-Fijian-dominated organization trying to take power away from Fijians, thus raising fears that Fijians would become subject to outsiders.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, the Alliance Party was seen as mobilizing the Taukei Movement prior to the May 1987 coup to gain support for the feudal-style hierarchy that helped them gain and retain their privilege.¹⁷⁹

With the 2000 coup, many of the same arguments seen in 1987 were used to mobilize support against the Chaudhry-led FLP-Coalition government. The Fijian elite played a key role in the organization of the 2000 coup, because as seen with the Bavadra government, Chaudhry's FLP government tried to govern based on socio-economic issues (much like Bavadra's government). It is true that Chaudhry made some mistakes that alienated some of his supporters. For instance, he attacked some of the constitutional compromises that Reddy had made with Rabuka (such as communal seats being given pre-dominance) to get the 1997 Constitution passed.¹⁸⁰ He also did not consult with the chiefs on some government initiatives, such as the awarding of certain contracts.¹⁸¹ The latter move threatened the Fijian elite, leading to the accusation that the Indo-Fijians were taking over the country. This led then President Ratu Mara to remove Chaudhry as Prime Minister in the aftermath of the 2000 coup, installing Tevita

¹⁷⁷Sanjay Ramesh, Pacific Islands Report, "After 125 Years, Fiji's Indo-Fijians in Retreat," Pacific Islands Report, 5 May 2004, <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2004/may/05%2D05%2Dana.htm> (15 January 2005).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Brian Martin, Social Defence, Social Change, <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/93sdsc/sdsc05.pdf>, 51.

¹⁸⁰ Robbie Robertson and William Sutherland, Government by the Gun, 8.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 8-9.

Momoedonu as the acting Prime Minister.¹⁸² The GCC was also actively involved in the discussions of a new constitution to guarantee that Fijian interests would not be subservient to those of the Indo-Fijians.¹⁸³ The consequence of this was that Indo-Fijians became the targets of violence of “mobilized” Fijians with the installed military government quietly supporting such actions.¹⁸⁴ Basically, the elite gave the coup life and tried to legitimize subsequent actions arguing that Fijians did not trust the Indo-Fijian-led government.

The threat of Indo-Fijian Economic Power

Although emphasized less when compared to the political power of the Indo-Fijians, the Fijian elite has also targeted the perceived economic power of the Indo-Fijians. The two coups (and their aftermaths) showed that the Fijian elite did not want anyone to question the privileges and status that they had acquired (or were in process of acquiring). Rabuka believed that “Fiji was for the Fijians,” and the Indo-Fijians had to be challenged because they had attained more than their fair share of business and the economy.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, it was argued that Indo-Fijians occupied more professional positions and were preventing Fijians from progressing.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, the Fijian elite argued that Indo-Fijians were “flaunting” their material prosperity because many own businesses, and worse, refuse to hire Fijian workers.¹⁸⁷ These facts, according to the elite, supported the need for remedies that would benefit Fijians. Such grievances were

¹⁸² Ibid. 21-22.

¹⁸³ Ibid. 35-38.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ralph R. Premdas, “Fiji under a New Political Order,” 542.

¹⁸⁶ Stephanie Lawson, “The Myth of Cultural Homogeneity and Its Implications for Chiefly Power and Politics in Fiji,” 813-814.

¹⁸⁷ John Davies, “On the Source of Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Fiji,” Te Karere Ipurangi: Maori News Online <http://maorinews.com/karere/fiji/davies.htm>

reflected in the 1990 and 1997 Constitutions with the introduction of constitutionally mandated affirmative action programs. The 1990 Constitution is regarded to have instituted a form of pseudo-apartheid by means of Chapter III, Fijian and Rotuman Interests, which privilege these groups over all others.¹⁸⁸ The 1997 Constitution, though regarded as a Compact, maintained special treatment for Fijians through initiatives such as affirmative action programs (constitutionally entrenched in section 6 (k), and Chapter V- Social Justice).¹⁸⁹ These programs set aside jobs, projects, and scholarships for “disadvantaged groups” (i.e. Fijians) to help them overcome their poorer conditions.¹⁹⁰ Prime Minister Qarase stated earlier this year that affirmative action for Form Seven Fijian students is justified because it will help them to deal with the disadvantages they face.¹⁹¹ However, there are deep flaws in these affirmative action programs. Since affirmative action programs began, the Fijian elite, including the chiefs and bureaucrats, have taken advantage of its benefits, leaving little room for ordinary Fijians.¹⁹² For example, Fijian Holdings Limited (FHL), a creation of the GCC in 1984, has been used by members of the Fijian elite to expand their wealth.¹⁹³ The NLTB and the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB) hold approximately 27% of the shares of FHL.¹⁹⁴ Additionally, when the Fijian Affairs Board further invested in FHL in 1989 to expand the activities of the FHL, it did so with proceeds from a F\$20 million loan by the Fijian government.

¹⁸⁸ Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji, 25th July 1990, 31.

¹⁸⁹ Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, 1997, <http://confinder.richmond.edu/FijiIslands.htm#6> (25 October 2004).

¹⁹⁰ Ralph R. Premdas and Jeffrey Steeves, Ethnic Politics and Inequality in Fiji: Understanding the new Constitution,” *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*, vol.96, no.1, (1993), 70.

¹⁹¹ “Qarase Defends Funding for Fijian Students,” *Pacific Islands Report* (Article appearing in the Fiji Sun, 26 January 2005), <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2005/january/01%2D27%2D15.htm> (27 January 2005).

¹⁹² Robbie Robertson and William Sutherland, *Government by the Gun*, 43.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* 95.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 97.

Moreover, the directors and shareholders of FHL included Qarase and other members of his current government, who benefited from increased activities of FHL, including higher dividends.¹⁹⁵ Additionally, those that own the other 73% of shares are owned by bureaucrats and other members of the Fijian elite, as a \$10,000 minimum has been required to invest in FHL since it became a private-holding company in 1992.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, Brij Lal has argued that such programmes are not accountable, transparent and fair for they have given the Fijian elite even more privileges over the Fijian grassroots.¹⁹⁷ In other words, the Fijian elite have consistently used the rhetoric that affirmative action is necessary to tackle the Indo-Fijians economic threat to legitimately gain access to state resources to advance their own positions.

Land

The issue of land in Fiji has been, and continues to be, a major source of tension between Fijians and Indo-Fijians. The traditional communal land tenure system that has been in place since colonialism prohibits the private and individual alienation of Fijian land.¹⁹⁸ Today, approximately 88% of the land is owned by the Fijians, leaving the Indo-Fijians and other groups to rely on leases of non-reserved Fijian land.¹⁹⁹

Three types of land tenure exist in Fiji today. First there is *Native land*, where the *mataqali* [indigenous clan] is the basic proprietary unit, and the Native Lands Trust

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 97

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. 98

¹⁹⁷ Brij V. Lal, "Debating Fiji's Democratic Future," *Fijian Studies*, (2003) Vol. 1. No.1, Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, http://www.fijianstudies.org/dload/vol1/no1/dialogue_debating_fijis_democratic_future.pdf (3 October 2004), 160.

¹⁹⁸ Ralph R. Premdas, *Ethnic Conflict and Development*, 26.

¹⁹⁹ Mahendra Reddy and Padma Lal Pacific "State land transfer in Fiji: Issues and Implications," *Pacific Economic Bulletin* (May 2002) http://apseg.anu.edu.au/pdf/plal/PEB17_1lal_reddy.pdf (20 January 2005), 147.

Board (the NLTB) administers the usage (including leases through legislation like Agricultural Landlords and Tenants Act (the ALTA) of the land.²⁰⁰ Both the NLTB and ALTA will be discussed shortly. There is also *Crown (State) Land*, governed by the Crowns Land Act, of which there are three types: *Schedule A* land, where former Fijian land reverts to the Crown in the cases where a *mataqali* has become extinct; *Schedule B* land, where land was either not occupied, nor was it claimed by Fijians when the Native Lands Commission (NLC) was established in 1880; and *State Freehold* (which comprises one-third of state land), where land was bought from those issued Crown grants after the NLC was established, as well as land bought from Fijians between 1905 and 1908.²⁰¹ Lastly, there is *Freehold Land*, which only constitutes approximately 8% of land in Fiji, which can be bought or sold by private individuals.²⁰² Ralph Premdas states that land is a powerful (if not the most powerful) bargaining tool that the Fijian elite possess, which could explain why the various governments (dominated by the Fijian elite) have maintained a rigid attitude towards land.²⁰³ The Fijian elite have consistently argued that since the time of Cession, there has been an understanding that Fijian land is unalienable, and it is their responsibility to do everything possible to protect Fijian land.²⁰⁴ However, this poses problems for Indo-Fijian farmers, who currently rent approximately 62% of the land leased out by the Fijians.²⁰⁵ These farmers want more land and longer leases so they can have more security. They fear that their

²⁰⁰ Spike Boydell and Wejendra Reddy, "Contemporary Land Tenure Issues in the Republic of Fiji," A Paper for the Pacific Rim Real Estate Society (PRRES) Conference 2000, Sydney, 23-27 January, 2000, <http://business2.unisa.edu.au/prres/Proceedings/Proceedings2000/P7C1.doc> (31 October 2004), 5.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* 5.

²⁰² *Ibid.* 5.

²⁰³ Ralph R. Premdas, *Ethnic Conflict and Development*, 26.

²⁰⁴ Ross Nepia Himona, "A Colonial Legacy- The Third Fijian Coup," Te Karere Ipurangi: Maori News Online <http://maorinews.com/karere/fiji/tumai.htm> (7 February 2005).

²⁰⁵ Ralph R. Premdas, "Fiji under a New Political Order: Ethnicity and Indigenous Rights," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 6 (June 1991), 548.

livelihood will disappear once their leases expire.²⁰⁶ This has led the Fijian elite to contend that the Indo-Fijians want to deprive the Fijians of their land.²⁰⁷ For example, the Taukei Movements (taukei means `our land`) prior to both the May 1987 and May 2000 coups argued that the Indo-Fijians were infringing on the land rights of the Fijians.²⁰⁸ This argument shows how the elite continue to manipulate the facts, because every constitution has protected the land rights of the Fijians. This creates mistrust and increases the level of tension between Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB)

The NLTB was created in 1940 by the Native Land Trust Ordinance (also known as the NLTO). This was the result of Ratu Sukuna's efforts to standardize and centralize the administration of the leasing of Fijian land.²⁰⁹ Thus, many of its powers and responsibilities include protecting Fijian land, and ensuring the survival of the natural and cultural heritage of the Fijian people.²¹⁰ Prior to the passage of the NLTO, leases were negotiated independently, and the terms varied from lease to lease (though subject to some restrictions).²¹¹ By placing the administration of the leasing of Fijian land on a sound basis, it was argued that the NLTO (and the NLTB) would give Indo-Fijians more security of land tenure on the land that they leased.²¹²

However, the creation of the NLTB did not, and still has not, eased the insecurity

²⁰⁶ Ibid. 548.

²⁰⁷ Henry J. Rutz, "Capitalizing on Culture; Moral Ironies in Urban Fiji," in Comparative Studies in Society and History Vol. 29 No. 1 (January 1987) 542.

²⁰⁸ B. Raman, "A Deeper Look at Fiji," South Asia Analysis Group, 3 June 2000, <http://www.saag.org/notes/note98.html> (31 December 2004).

²⁰⁹ Ralph R. Premdas, "Fiji under a New Political Order," 548.

²¹⁰ Native Land Trust Board, <http://www.nltb.com.fj/> (7 February 2005)

²¹¹ Native Land Trust Board, "Ratu Sukuna," http://www.nltb.com.fj/ratu_sukuna.html (7 February 2005).

²¹² National Congress of Fiji. "Document: Control of Land, 1964/65." Fijian Studies 1:2 (November 2003). http://www.fijianstudies.org/dload/vol1no2/national_congress_of_fiji.pdf (19 September 2004), 395.

of Indo-Fijians with regards to land tenure. One problem is the lease arrangements under ALTA, which will be discussed shortly. Another problem is that the NLTB has been used by the Fijian elite to serve their own interests. A Ford Foundation article has argued that "...at the ideological level, entrenched vested interests use the notion of the *vanua* as a powerful instrument in securing conformity and forging solidarity."²¹³ In other words, the Fijian elite have used the NLTB to try and legitimize their power, arguing that if Fijian land is not protected, they will lose their way of life and fall prey to foreign influence.²¹⁴ Isireli Lasaqa (1984:49) has stressed that Fijian land must be protected because the land is a source of identity for the Fijian people. However, Robert Norton counters Lasaqa's argument by stressing that the NLTB has been used to force unity within Fijian groups, which legitimizes the chiefs' role as head of the Fijian people, and allows them to control and use the various institutions to serve their interests.²¹⁵ The Spate Report stated, "...The... [basic] problem facing the Fijian today [includes amongst other things is] the work of the Native Land Trust Board...Unfortunately, discussion of these immediate problems is often side-tracked by an appeal to the Deed of Cession of 1874..."²¹⁶ Having control over the NLTB has enabled the Fijian elite to increase the gap between themselves and Fijian commoners in terms of both power and wealth. For example, revenues from land rented out by the NLTB are divided up as follows: 25% for the NLTB, 3.75% for the head of the *vanua*, 7.5% for the head of the *yavusa*, 11.25% for the head of the *mataqali*, and 52.5% for

²¹³ Professor Vijay Naidu and Dr. Mahendra Reddy, "ALTA and expiring land leases: Fijian farmers' perceptions of their future," Ford Foundation, http://apmrn.anu.edu.au/projects/fiji_alta.pdf (31 January 2005), 3.

²¹⁴ Robert Norton, "Culture and Identity in the South Pacific: A Comparative Analysis," *Man: New Series*, Vol. 28 No. 4 (Dec. 1993), 747.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* 749.

²¹⁶ O.H.K. Spate, *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, 16.

members of the *mataqali*.²¹⁷ In 1998, this enabled the chiefs to pocket F\$5.6 million of the F\$18,726,453 (30%) in rent charged.²¹⁸ At the beginning of 2005, the NLTB increased the annual lease administration fee to F\$56.25 from F\$22.50 to help pay for the costs of the NLTB, despite the fact the NLTB also receives grants from the government.²¹⁹ In 1974, the Native Land Development Corporation (NLDC) was created as a subsidiary, thus allowing the NLTB, and with it the Fijian elite, to enter the development sector.²²⁰ For example in 1978, the NLTB leased sixteen acres of land to a development group for a project in Navesi without landowner approval, claiming that it did not need the consent of all the owners to carry on with such a project.²²¹ The effect of this was that some of the land being cultivated by some *mataqali* was being leased out for development.²²² The General Manager of the NLTB has even said that the NLTB wants to be the “one stop for investors,” meaning that the NLTB feels it has the authority to lease out land without landowner approval.²²³ The irony here is that the coups of 1987 and 2000 were undertaken to prevent the alienation of Fijians’ land without their approval. A further irony is that the 1990 and 1997 Constitutions were argued as being necessary to protect Fijian land, although they did not give land any

²¹⁷ Naziah Ali, “NLTB criticized over ‘failure’ to address tenants, landlords,” University of the South Pacific School of Journalism: Wansolwara Online: News, 17 April 2002, <http://www.usp.ac.fj.journ/docs/news/wansolnews/2002/2002april/wansol11704025.html> (6 February 2005).

²¹⁸ Rukmani Gounder, “Ethnicity, Land Property Rights, conflict and Development Assistance: A Case Study of Fiji,” <http://devnet.massey.ac.nz/papers/Gounder%20C%20Rukmani.pdf#search='NLTB%20AND%20Fiji'> (29 January 2005).

²¹⁹ Fiji Times, “Board Increases Lease Service Fee,” 23 January 2005, <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=15191> (23 January 2005)

²²⁰ Henry J. Rutz, “Capitalizing on Culture; Moral Ironies in Urban Fiji,” 541-542.

²²¹ Ibid. 552-553.

²²² Ibid. 552-553.

²²³ Native Land Trust Board, “Interview with Mr. Kalivati Bakani, General Manger of the NLTB, 21/11/2002, http://www.nltb.com.fj/commentary/03_05_05.html (9 February 2005).

more protection than the 1970 Constitution.²²⁴ These actions show that the NLTB is one institution being used as a tool by the elite to add to the feelings of mistrust between ethnic groups. Additionally, the Fijian elite have also used the NLTB to further their own interests.

Leasing Land: ALTA and Continuing Uncertainty

The passage of the Agricultural Landlords and Tenants Ordinance (ALTO) in 1966 was designed to give tenants more security by establishing thirty year leases consisting of three ten-year terms.²²⁵ Furthermore, the landlord has to justify the hardships caused by leasing out the land in order to regain his land.²²⁶ However, there was still dissatisfaction amongst Indo-Fijians with ALTO because of the leasing period. This led to the passage of the Agricultural Landlords and Tenants Act (ALTA, which is still in existence today) in 1976. The Act maintains the thirty-year lease period, but with an uninterrupted twenty-year period plus ten years (on approval).²²⁷ However, the thirty-year period is regarded as a *de facto* maximum, as the NLTB usually does not extend leases beyond this period.²²⁸ This fact causes much uneasiness amongst Indo-Fijians. Added to problems with the lease period, Indo-Fijians are also concerned because many leases are set to run out in the period between 1997 and 2005, and it has

²²⁴ Ralph R. Premdas and Jeffrey Steeves, *Ethnic Politics and Inequality in Fiji: Understanding the new Constitution*, 71.

²²⁵ Victor Lal, *Fiji Coups in Paradise: Race, Politics and Military Intervention*, (London, UK: Zed Books Ltd., 1990), 30.

²²⁶ Brij V. Lal, "Politics Since Independence Continuity and Change, 1970-1982," in *Politics in Fiji* Ed. Brij V. Lal, (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 83.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* 30.

²²⁸ Spike Boydell and Wejendra Reddy, "Contemporary Land Tenure Issues in the Republic of Fiji," <http://business2.unisa.edu.au/prres/Proceedings/Proceedings2000/P7C1.doc> (31 October 2004), 4.

been articulated that many will not be renewed.²²⁹ This is reflected by the fact that since 1999, approximately 6000 cane leases have not been renewed.²³⁰

However, the NLTB has countered with their own contentions, arguing that they have the support of all Fijian landowners. Some of the justifications for non-renewal include poor land use practices, and a desire by landowners to enter commercial farming.²³¹ Additionally, the NLTB has argued that rent charged under ALTA, which is 6% of unimproved capital value (UCV), is too low, as well as impossible to quantify.²³² These claims are made while the NLTB (and landowners) consistently demand that tenants pay periodic goodwill payments in cash and in kind, both during the lease and when considering renewal of leases.²³³ The NLTB has led the charge in complaining that the Native Land Trust Act (NLTA, which was used on all land transactions prior to the passage of ALTO and later ALTA) should be used in leasing out Fijian land because it allows for the market value to be charged.²³⁴ The NLTA currently applies to all agricultural land less than 2.5 acres, except for land in reserves.²³⁵ It also establishes lease tenure on a rolling five-to-ten year basis, with market value for land being charged, and with leases renewable with NLTB consent.²³⁶ The GCC, the NLTB, and the ruling

²²⁹ Mahendra Reddy and Padma Lal, "State land transfer in Fiji: Issues and Implications," http://apseg.anu.edu.au/pdf/plal/PEB17_1lal_reddy.pdf, 146.

²³⁰ "Mataqali Renews leases, Calls on Others," *Pacific Islands Report* (Article appearing in the Fiji Times on 4 August 2005) <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2005/august/08%2D04%2D14.htm> (12 September 2005).

²³¹ Vijay Naidu and Dr. Mahendra Reddy, Ford Foundation, Profession "ALTA and expiring land leases," http://apmrn.anu.edu.au/projects/fiji_alta.pdf (31 January 2005), 4.

²³² *Ibid.* The reason given as to why UCV is hard to quantify is that it is hard to determine exactly what unimproved capital value really is.

²³³ *Ibid.* 8.

²³⁴ Naziah Ali, "NLTB criticized over 'failure' to address tenants," University of the South Pacific School of Journalism: Wansolwara Online: News, <http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/wansolnews/2002/2002april/wansol1704025.html> (6 February 2005).

²³⁵ Naidu and Reddy, "ALTA and expiring land leases," 7.

²³⁶ *Ibid.* 7.

SDL Party led by Qarase support the case for NLTA replacing ALTA.²³⁷ This support was shown in 2002 when the Crown transferred control of some of its land to the Fijians. What it illustrated was that the Fijian elite are using land for their own benefit. This land, previously administered under ALTA, now fell under the NLTA, meaning that the NLTB now has control over this land.²³⁸

Given the above discussion, it is ironic that, while the NLTB makes complaints about the practices of Indo-Fijian tenants, the Fiji Development Bank's (FDB) Special Loans Division finances many unsuccessful rural initiatives. While it true that the number of loans being approved has decreased, the value of these loans have also increased.²³⁹ However, the central level of the FDB has used its discretion to approve the loans of those applicants with connections to the Fijian elite.²⁴⁰ One could argue that these are two different institutions, which is true. But, these points help to make the case that the Fijian elite have used land as one tool to further their own ambitions. This all happens while the Indo-Fijians are portrayed as a threat to the ownership of Fijian land.

Conclusion

The Fijian elite maintain the argument that they need to hold positions of power in order to protect the interests of Fijians. This has meant that the principle of *Divide and Rule* is being forcefully applied in the post-independence era. What this implies is that a label of inferiority is being applied to other ethnic groups in the country, namely

²³⁷ Maika Bolatiki, "Fiji Election Pivotal for Parties," Pacific Islands Report (Article appearing in the Fiji Sun 12 January 2004), <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2004/january/01%3D12%2D16.htm> (1 March 2005).

²³⁸ Mahendra Reddy and Padma Lal, "State land transfer in Fiji," 148.

²³⁹ Mazural Alam, Stewart Lawrence, and Ruvendra Nandan, "Accounting for Economic Development in the context of post-colonial Stress Syndrome: The Fijian Experience," Adelaide University, www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/apira/papers/Alam52.pdf (13 January 2005).

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

the Indo-Fijians. The Fijian elite also maintain that the Indo-Fijians are an enemy that must be held in check, and it is only the Fijian elite that will be able to do this. If they do not maintain power, there will be many irreversible consequences that will negatively affect the Fijian way of life. Other groups are portrayed as targeting Fijian land, a key component of Fijian traditional life. Furthermore, the paramount status of Fijians will be lost if other groups are able to gain dominance over the territory. And last but certainly not least, Fijians will be subject to the dominance of the Indo-Fijians. Therefore, it is argued that anything to prevent such a takeover must be utilized.

Chapter Three- The Grassroots Respond

Introduction

The Fijian grassroots have been described as harbouring the same level of ethno-nationalism as the Fijian elite because their leaders claim that all Fijians feel strongly about the threat posed by Indo-Fijians to the Fijian culture and people. But is ethno-nationalism really felt as strongly at the grassroots level as it is felt at the elite level? Is ethno-nationalism the biggest priority of ordinary Fijians? Or are there more pressing matters that they want addressed?

The assessment made is that while eastern Fijians do harbour some stereotypes and biases that are ethno-nationalistic in nature, they are not active participants in the promotion of ethno-nationalism. However, there are other challenges that they face and want addressed. In other words, the priorities of the grassroots differ from those of the Fijian elite. Ordinary Fijians have indicated that other priorities need to be addressed in order for them to progress. Poverty is seen as a key challenge that has to be alleviated. Women's rights, including gender roles and stereotypes, also have been highlighted as requiring attention. These issues will be discussed in this chapter to gain a sense of what is occurring at the grassroots level.

In assessing these issues, the role of NGOs will be discussed in order to see if they have had any effect in helping to alleviate the problems that the grassroots face. In today's globalizing world, NGOs are perceived to be important players in dealing with the grassroots because they have the freedom and flexibility to engage in more

activities.²⁴¹ Therefore, this chapter will also discuss the role of NGOs within the context of some of the initiatives that need to be undertaken to improve the situation in Fiji.

The Ideal Traditional Village Life

The first two chapters have discussed how the elite have stressed the importance of village life as being crucial to the survival of the Fijian people and their culture. This implies that the location of Fijian commoners affects the level of identification with the values and attitudes of one's culture. Therefore, it is important to discuss the specifics of village life in eastern Fiji to gain an insight of how it influences their day-to-day lives, including their quality of life.

Life in Fijian villages is very conservative because the view is propagated that without strong adherence and enforcement of traditional beliefs, the Fijian culture will be irreparably damaged. Therefore, the principles of communalism, hierarchy and paternalism are strictly enforced and followed.

Communalism places the expectation on Fijian villagers that they will work together for the benefit of the group.²⁴² The belief is that proper social relations are the basis for the other spheres of life, including the psychological and economic aspects. This means that Fijian villagers must adhere to the principle of balance, where individual and group rights and obligations must both be attended to.²⁴³ Nayacakalou

²⁴¹ United Nations, UNRISD Report for the World Summit for Social Development, "States Disarray: The Social Effects of Globalization," [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/d2a23ad2d50cb2a280256eb300385855/8bae05fc33a200d480256b670065e3a3/\\$FILE/StatesofDis_ES.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/d2a23ad2d50cb2a280256eb300385855/8bae05fc33a200d480256b670065e3a3/$FILE/StatesofDis_ES.pdf) (10 December 2004).

²⁴² Spike Boydell, "Philosophical Perceptions of Pacific Property- Land as a Communal Asset in Fiji," Pacific Rim Real Estate Society Annual Conference 21-24 January 2001, <http://www.usp.ac.fj/landmgmt/pdf/ppofpacificproperty.pdf>, (11 May 2005), 2.

²⁴³ Jennifer Corrin-Care, "Conflict Between customary Law and Human Rights in the South Pacific" Malaysian Law Journal, <http://www.mlj.com.my/free/articles/JenniferCorrin-Care.htm> (12 May 2005).

(1975:15) highlighted that Fijians can live a proper communal life if they properly follow a social structure that is beyond the nuclear family. These divisions are (in ascending order): *i tokatoka*, *mataqali*, and *yavusa*, with the *mataqali* (the clan) being given predominance. These divisions dictate the level of economic cooperation, socialization, and intimate family life in the village.²⁴⁴ These divisions are also important for defining roles and responsibilities for things such as ceremonies, social occasions, and the employment of labour. This means that the various divisions make different contributions in the various village activities.²⁴⁵ For example, in village fundraising initiatives (known as *solu*), where money is raised for specific village projects, some divisions are expected to help in preparation of the feast accompanying the activity, while others may have more ceremonial roles.²⁴⁶ Additionally, all members are expected to make monetary contributions to the cause at hand which can impose hardship.²⁴⁷

Fijian villagers also continue to engage in *kerekere* (borrowing), where members of the unit ask each other for items with the expectations that no request will be turned down.²⁴⁸ With *kerekere*, there is no requirement to pay back what was borrowed. *Kerekere* is seen by villagers as a source of pride because it shows the generosity of their culture.²⁴⁹ Fijian villagers also engage in other important rituals such as *sevusevu* (ritual

²⁴⁴ Andrew Arno, *The World of Talk on a Fijian Island: An Ethnography of Law and Communicative Causation*, (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1993), 9.

²⁴⁵ R.R. Nayacakalou, *Tradition and Change in the Fijian Village*, 109.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. 11. It should be noted that *kerekere* is first usually asked for from closer kin units.

²⁴⁷ Karen Brison, "Field Letters from 1999 Fiji Term Abroad: Letter # 3 from 1999 Fiji Term Abroad, Friday September 24," Union College, Department of Anthropology, <http://www.union.edu/PUBLIC/ANTDEPT/fiji99/kbletter3.htm#women> (26 March 2005).

²⁴⁸ It should be noted that individuals first ask for *kerekere* from (and prefer to receive) from closer kin units.

²⁴⁹ John Davies, "On the Source of Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Fiji," Te Karere Ipurangi: Maori News Online, <http://maorinews.com/karere/fiji/davies.htm> (5 November 2004).

presentations) and *kava* (a traditional Fijian drink made of piper methysticum served during a variety of events) on a daily basis in the village. *Sevusevu* is a basic offering which can be presented for a variety of reasons, for example, as a sign of appreciation by guests for the hospitality of their hosts. *Kava* sessions are male-dominated events, where various issues and troubles are discussed. These sessions (which are also referred to as *yaqona* or *grog* sessions) are lengthy events. As Arno (1993: 81-84) has suggested these sessions can be used to catch up on gossip, or help to mediate conflicts or troubles facing particular villages, or to set the facts straight on certain cases. *Kava* has become such a force that it is even present in diplomatic offices.

While cooperation is a big part of village life in general, adherence to the hierarchical and patriarchal elements of the social structure is also a major portion of life in the Fijian villages. This leads to heavy emphasis on age, rank, and sex, thus creating fundamental inequities between people in the village. Additionally, eastern villages place great emphasis on seniority. The distinction in authority between chiefs and the grassroots is the most obvious distinction. Each chief at each level makes cumulative decisions for that particular division. Chiefs of lower divisions make more but usually less important decisions for their particular group. The consequence of this is that chiefs of the higher divisions are given the responsibility of making key decisions because they are seen as being of a higher class.²⁵⁰ The implication of this is that the village chief, who is usually the most senior male member from the highest *mataqali* and/or *yavusa* within the village, has the authority to make important resolutions for the village as a whole, though the number of decisions he makes are few in number.²⁵¹ The status of the

²⁵⁰ R.R. Naycakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 33.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.* 33.

village chief is reflected in things such as seating arrangements at important events, respect given to him, and being given better living quarters within the village.²⁵² Many Fijians continue to believe that respecting chiefs and elders is necessary for Fijians to retain their cohesiveness, as these members possess knowledge and experience that commoners do not.²⁵³ Eastern Fijians, who generally live in more isolated surroundings than their western counterparts, believe that their chiefs possess *mana* (a sense of godliness). Therefore, many try and refrain from angering them fearing possible punishment for their transgressions.²⁵⁴

Communication within the village also illustrates the hierarchical and patriarchal system of Fijian culture. For example, there are strict rules for communication between parents and children (known as *veitamani*), and between siblings (known as *veitacini*).²⁵⁵ Communication in these relationships is asymmetrical, meaning that parents or older siblings are free to address their junior counterparts freely; junior members in the relationship are restricted in when and how they address their superiors.²⁵⁶ The same relationship extends to that between chiefs and ordinary Fijians, especially in eastern villages. This is why chiefs have had a great deal of success in imposing their views on the Fijian grassroots, because of the expectation that orders of superiors will not be questioned.²⁵⁷ Another type of relationship is that of restraint and avoidance, seen between the parent-in-law and the child-in-law (*veivugoni*). This relationship sees mutual avoidance and restraint, where the pair avoids speaking if possible, but resorting

²⁵² R.R. Nayacakalou, Tradition and Change in the Fijian Village, 15.

²⁵³ *Ibid.* 109.

²⁵⁴ Martha Kaplan, "Christianity, People of the Land, and Chiefs in Fiji," in Christianity in Oceania: Ethnographic Perspectives, Ed. John Barker (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America Inc, 1990), 131.

²⁵⁵ Andrew Arno, The World of Talk on a Fijian Island, 68.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 68.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 68.

to the use of third parties when communication is necessary.²⁵⁸ However, cross-cousin communication (*veitavale*) is generally more relaxed. This means that the two in this association freely express their views to one another, and can even joke with one another.²⁵⁹

Men are given pre-eminence in the village because emphasis is placed on patrilineal descent. This occurs because of the belief that men will carry the Fijian culture with them.²⁶⁰ Consequently, gender roles and relations are generally fixed. Although women play key roles within the household, they are also regarded as being powerless, burdened, and subject to men.²⁶¹ Women are expected to serve men; men are to guide women; men are to speak on behalf of women at important functions.²⁶² Any changes or challenges (perceived or actual) to this authority have serious consequences such as violence against women.

Religion, a pinnacle of Fijian life, is very important, especially to rural Fijians. As shown in Appendix II, most Fijians are Christians, with the majority belonging to the Methodist Church. The church is seen as a unifying factor, because it brings Fijians together, and helps to sustain the principles of Fijian culture.²⁶³ The importance of religion is illustrated by the fact that the church (usually a Methodist Church) stands in the centre of the village. Fijian Christianity has several principles. One principle is that of *loloma* (kindly love), which teaches Fijians to submit to the principles of generosity

²⁵⁸ Ibid. 69.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. 69.

²⁶⁰ Diane Michalski Turner, "Women's Ritual Roles in Matailovau, Fiji Islands: The Construction of Gender and Social Life," Ph.D Diss., Michigan State University, 1986, 11-12.

²⁶¹ Bronwen Douglas, "Conflict, gender peacemaking, and alternative nationalisms in the Western Pacific," The Australian National University Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies. State Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper, <http://devnet.anu.edu.au/online%20versions%20pdfs/53/2Douglas53.pdf> (29 March 2005).

²⁶² Diane Michalski Turner, "Women's Ritual Roles in Matailovau, Fiji Islands," 1.

²⁶³ Martha Kaplan, "Christianity, People of the Land, and Chiefs in Fiji," 140.

and reciprocity.²⁶⁴ Fijian commoners are taught that Jesus Christ's Crucifixion illustrated the importance of espousing the principles of giving and sharing.²⁶⁵ Therefore, *loloma* is seen as a key principle because it articulates the very essence of what it means to be Fijian.²⁶⁶ However, Fijian Christians are not individualistic, as they do not believe in things such as the natural state of sin, individual achievement of grace, and sense of universalism of belief.²⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Fijian Christians are taught to give to their church profusely because such offerings will be rewarded by god.²⁶⁸ Additionally, the principles of unity and love are also taught to Fijian Christians, with sources such as the Ten Commandments being used to support such teachings.²⁶⁹ Crucially, religion has also been used to re-enforce the traditional structures and attitudes. For example, the traditional hierarchy of the village is re-enforced during church services, illustrated by seating arrangements of the congregation during the services.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, the churches suggest to Fijians that they are the chosen people of the land, and therefore everything must be done to prevent Fijians from experiencing what the Israelites endured during Biblical times.²⁷¹ Father Kevin Barr articulates some of teachings previously used by some of these churches. For example, Romans 13 was used to justify the chiefly system; ordinary Fijians were told that strict observance of the Sunday Sabbath placed them above idol worshippers; and Indo-Fijians were depicted as

²⁶⁴ Ibid. 137.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. 138.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. 137.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. 134.

²⁶⁸ Srenbrnik, "Ethnicity, Religion and the Issue of Aboriginality," 192.

²⁶⁹ Fr. Kevin Barr, "The Church and Fijian Ethnocentrism: An Adventure in Religious History and Sociology," ECREA, http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/publications_files/Papers/35.doc (29 June 2005), 8.

²⁷⁰ Seating during Church services follows the hierarchical and patriarchal structure, and is as follows: chiefs and commoners, men and women.

²⁷¹ Henry Srenbrnik, "Ethnicity, Religion, and the Issue of Aboriginality in a small island state: Why does Fiji Flounder?" *The Round Table* (2002), 192.

heathens.²⁷² Villagers are taught to espouse the principles of hierarchy, loyalty, and obedience. Furthermore, Christianity has also been used to promote ethnic separation.

The Importance of Money and the Onset of Poverty

It has been asserted by the Fijian elite that the village is crucial for the survival of the Fijian people, and therefore they must work hard to save their culture in order to maintain this security. They have further stressed that contact with urban areas will lead to the destruction of the traditional Fijian structure. However, the increased importance of money has forced eastern Fijians out of isolated rural communities to look for work in more populated areas. Money is required to pay for things such as food, water, electricity, and community fundraisers. Money is also something that is not easily accessible to eastern Fijians. While Appendix III shows that the labour force is greater on the western edge of Vanua Levu, it should be noted that 70-78% of the labour force is engaged in subsistence agriculture.²⁷³ Although this may sound positive, it is not. The prevalent industries in Fiji are the sugar industry (which is predominant on the western island of Viti Levu), tourism and the garment industry, located in urban centres.²⁷⁴ Appendix IV shows that the lowest three of the lowest four Provinces in terms of weekly income are from the east. Appendix V illustrates that the average rural villager requires approximately \$115 to survive. The result is that many Fijians live on \$2-4 a day, with the income shortfall for basics needs at \$83 in rural parts and \$100 in urban areas.²⁷⁵

And as illustrated in Appendix VI, prices of basic goods continue to increase. Adding to

²⁷² Fr. Kevin Barr, "The Church and Fijian Ethnocentrism," 16-17..

²⁷³ Association of National Census and Statistics Directors of America, Asia and the Pacific, "Utilization of Census Data: GIS Modelling, 1996 Census," <http://www.ancsdaap.org/cencon2002/papers/Fiji/Fiji.PDF>. (17 July 2005), 10.

²⁷⁴ N.H. Delailomalama, "Case Studies on Technical and Vocational Education in Asia and the Pacific," United Nations, UNESCO, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001049/104955e.pdf> (17 July 2005)..

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

such pressures is the fact that approximately 30-60% of the disposable income of rural Fijians is taken up by Church and village obligations.²⁷⁶ The consequence of this is that 35% of Fijian villagers fall below the poverty line, as defined by the United Nations (see Appendices VII and VIII).

In one survey, eastern rural Fijians suggested that the quality of their houses, lack of income, and high levels of indebtedness took priority.²⁷⁷ Moreover, an Asian Development Bank Survey (ADB) found that rural Fijians wanted the lack of facilities to be addressed. For example, four of ten rural communities surveyed had immediate access to health care, while the rest had to walk an average of 1-3 hours or more to access such facilities.²⁷⁸ Another survey found that 54% of respondents wanted more steps to be taken to help alleviate social problems, including those of poverty.²⁷⁹ As highlighted in Appendix IX, many eastern Fijians move to town because they believe that urban areas provide more opportunities. Approximately 47% (according to 1996 figures) of the population go to urban areas to look for work, 52% percent of whom look for opportunities in the Suva area.²⁸⁰ Moreover, 1996 figures indicate that approximately 158,160 Fijians have permanently relocated to urban areas, while 230,979

²⁷⁶ Citizens Constitutional Forum, Mick Beddoes, "What are good land policies for Fiji in the 21st century? Speech on 20 July 2002, http://www.ccf.org.fj/artman/publish/article_10.shtml (3 April 2005).

²⁷⁷ Asian Development Bank Pacific Regional Department, and the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, "Fiji: Poverty Status Discussion Paper," The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, <http://www.spc.org.nc/Poverty%20Programme/Fiji%20poverty%20assessment.pdf>, 16.

²⁷⁸ Asian Development Bank, "Priorities of the People: Hardship in the Fiji Islands," September 2003, 12.

²⁷⁹ "Christianity, Poverty & Wealth in the 21st Century," The FCC-Research Group, August, 2000, <http://www.aprodev.net/files/CPW/Fiji.pdf> (29 June 2005), 24.

²⁸⁰ Dharma Chandra, "Socio-demographic and Economic characteristics of Migrant Heads of Households and the Consequences of their Migration in Fiji, 1992-1993, *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* Vol. 17 No. 1 (March 2002), <http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/journal/2002/v17n1dn.pdf> (20 March 2005), 56.

live in rural areas.²⁸¹ Appendices X and XI give a further breakdown of the population in Fiji.

However, life in the city has not lived up to expectations given the high unemployment and over-crowded conditions of cities.²⁸² One consequence is that many who cannot find jobs as wage labourers have looked to the informal economic sector for jobs. As Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty found approximately 51% of respondents living in Suva became involved in this sector because the belief is that they will make more money.²⁸³ Survey results indicate that incomes for many have actually dropped and conditions have become worse (see Appendices XII and XIII). Lack of education comes into play here. While an increasing number of Fijian students are being educated, many do not attend school past the primary level (which is Grade 8) (highlighted in Appendices XIV- XVI). Fijians have been taught that education will lead to permanent re-location to the city, meaning that one will forget about their rural roots and heritage.²⁸⁴ Therefore, many rural Fijians have come to believe that education will lead to the corrupting of their culture and values.²⁸⁵ This is illustrated by a 1996 figure that highlighted that approximately 6400 secondary level students were dropping out of

²⁸¹ Neelesh Gounder, "Rural Urban Migration in Fiji: Causes and Consequences," University of the South Pacific, Department of Economics, Working Paper 2005/12, http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/schools/ssed/economics/working_papers/2005/wp2005_12.pdf (8 July 2005)

²⁸² C. Gounis and H.J. Rutz, "Urban Fijians and the Problem of Unemployment," in *Fijians in Town*, Ed. Chris Griffin and Mike Monsell-Davis (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific: 1986), 57.

²⁸³ Mahendra Reddy, Vijay Naidu and Manoranjan Moahnty, "The Urban Informal Sector in Fiji: Results from a Survey," *Fijian Studies*, 1:1 (2003) http://www.fijianstudies.org/dload/vol1no1/urban_informal_sector.pdf, 135.

²⁸⁴ Isireli Lasaga, *The Fijian People*, 82.

²⁸⁵ Carmen M. White, "Language, Authenticity and Identity," *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. Vol. 15 No.1 (2002). <http://www.channelviewpublications.net/lcc/015/0016/lcc0150016.pdf>, 25.25.

school, a number expected to rise.²⁸⁶ The result of this is that many Fijians who relocate to urban centers do not have the skills to enter modern sectors of the economy. As survey results indicate, their level of education is low, and many end up entering some form of agricultural activity within the economy (as highlighted in Appendices XVII and XVIII).

Lacking modern skills many Fijians live in squatter settlements with Suva seeing the greatest increase in such communities (see Appendix XIX). Those that end up living in squatter settlements do so because of a lack of steady employment and the high costs of urban life (highlighted in Appendix XX). The government estimates that the number of squatter settlements is expected to rise by the end of 2005, suggesting that urban areas will see approximately 13,725 families living in squatter settlements, of which approximately 6309 will be Fijian.²⁸⁷ Appendix XXI shows that squatter settlements, which fall under the designation of inferior housing, suffer from having no electricity, unsafe water, and poor sanitation. Many people cannot afford life in town. They are unemployed and extended families cannot support the numbers of relations living in their homes. It has been stressed that the notion of the extended family unit has not decreased with the onset of people moving to urban areas.²⁸⁸ The notion of the survival of the extended family leads many poor Fijian households to continue to support older members (see Appendix XXII). However, there is now evidence to suggest that the prevalence of poverty is changing this network of support. Poorer families are living in more nuclear units (illustrated in Appendices XXIII and XIV).

²⁸⁶ Pacific Islands Report, "More Fiji Children dropping out of school," 2 July 1999, <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/1999/july/07%2D05%2D08.html> (25 April 2005).

²⁸⁷ Hansard of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, February 14, 2005, <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/hansard/viewhansard.aspx?hansardID-323&viewtype=full> (25 April 2005).

²⁸⁸ C. Gounis and H.J. Rutz, "Urban Fijians and the Problem of Unemployment," in *Fijians in Town*, 57.

These statistics are further supported by the responses to the 2002-2003 Urban Household Income and Expenditure Survey which showed that a vast majority of respondents could not afford many of the basics of life, including medical care and health services (see Appendices XXV-XXVII). Additionally, a survey conducted in 2000 found that 80% of respondents wanted poverty alleviation to become **the number one political priority** because it was so negatively affecting their lives.²⁸⁹

NGOs and Poverty Alleviation

It was suggested earlier in the chapter that the NGOs are considered to be major players in the developing world because they have a better capacity to deliver services that others do not. So do NGOs play any role in poverty alleviation? The answer is not really. This was reflected in an Asian Development Bank (ADB) survey which found that over 40% of communities were not aware of any efforts to battle poverty.²⁹⁰ The government's role in poverty alleviation has been minimal.²⁹¹ The government has engaged in some initiatives such as "village beautification projects" for rural areas to help provide things such as clean water.²⁹² However, the impact of such programs is not great because, as claimed by Prime Minister Qarase in a May 12, 2005 speech, the governments of the developing world do not have the resources to alleviate poverty.²⁹³ This concession is surprising given the fact that the elite have justified affirmative action programs as necessary to alleviate poverty. What it does is add more suspicion on the

²⁸⁹ Christianity, Poverty & Wealth in the 21st Century," The FCC-Research Group, August, 2000, <http://www.aprodev.net/files/CPW/Fiji.pdf> (29 June 2005), 25.

²⁹⁰ Asian Development Bank, "Priorities of the People: Hardship in the Fiji Islands," September 2003," 14.

²⁹¹ Government of Fiji, "Government aims to reduce Poverty by 5%- Minister," 8 July 2005, http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/page_4941.shtml (14 July 2005).

²⁹² Government of Fiji, "Government's Village Improvement Scheme to Continue," http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/page_1946.shtml (31 May 2005).

²⁹³ Government of Fiji, "Hon. Qarase- Inaugural address at the 28th ADFIAP Annualy Conference," http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/printer_4594.shtml (18 July 2005)

government as to who really benefits from these programs. However, claims such as the one made by Qarase encourage NGOs to participate in the developing world.²⁹⁴ NGOs have focused their attention on advocacy and institution-building in partnership with the state.²⁹⁵ The belief is that institutional changes are necessary because current structures exclude the majority of the population from development.²⁹⁶ Therefore, institutional structures must be changed in order for progress to be made.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, such initiatives will increase participation at the grassroots level, thus giving ordinary Fijians a voice. By improving government strategies and capacities, NGOs argue that more people will be able to fully participate in modern society, meaning that Fijian leaders can be held more accountable for their actions as well.²⁹⁸ Thus, a great deal of activities carried out by NGOs with regard to poverty alleviation deals with democracy promotion.²⁹⁹ The United Nations, especially the UNDP and UNESCAP, have stressed the importance of de-centralization of power away from the Federal Government while incorporating rural villages into the existing municipalities. The term used to describe such programs is *sustainable human development*, where the belief is that local governance and participation will enhance the quality of life by establishing good

²⁹⁴ United Nations, UNRISD Report for the World Summit for Social Development, "States Disarray," [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/d2a23ad2d50cb2a280256eb300385855/8bae05fc33a200d480256b670065e3a3/\\$FILE/StatesofDis_ES.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/d2a23ad2d50cb2a280256eb300385855/8bae05fc33a200d480256b670065e3a3/$FILE/StatesofDis_ES.pdf) (10 December 2004).

²⁹⁵ United Nations, UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security, Interview with Andrea Ferrante, http://www.rdfs.net/news/interviews/0206in/0206in_ferra_en.htm (10 December 2004).

²⁹⁶ Kisha Chantelle Krishna and Habibul Haque Khondker, "Nation-Building Through International Volunteerism: A Case Study of Singapore," in *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Patrington: 2004, Vol. 24, Issue 1-2, pp. 21-55, Full-Text Article retrieved from www.proquest.org (25 November 2004).

²⁹⁷ Ibid. 2, Saubhagya Shah, "Development Critique: From evil state to civil society," HIMAL South Asian http://www.sangam.org/ANALYSIS/Developmentcritique_12_18_02.htm (14 November 2004).

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Asian Development Bank, "A Fact Sheet: Fiji Islands and the ADB," http://www.adb.org/Documents/Fact_Sheets/FIJ.asp?p=ctryfij (9 July 2005).

governance and economic development.³⁰⁰ It is further argued that de-centralization will give citizens the initiative to advance and become more productive because they will have a stake in the system.³⁰¹ NGOs believe they must set the example for states and individuals in terms of what strategies and initiatives must be taken for people to progress.³⁰² ECREA is another NGO involved in the field of democracy-promotion. Their mission is “motivated by Jesus Christ’s vision, to nurture and build a compassionate, just and inclusive society.”³⁰³ However, much of their mandate is trying to empower ordinary Fijians so they feel more confident to participate in society and overcome the problems associated with poverty.³⁰⁴ For example, Koila Costello-Olsson of ECREA has mentioned that Fijians must speak out against their elite because instability holds the people back.³⁰⁵ In a separate ECREA presentation, Aisake Casimira suggested that by empowering the Fijian grassroots, they will be able to discover that appeals to traditional culture by the Fijian elite helps the elite to maintain their power and privilege.³⁰⁶ What is seen is that there is a contradiction in priorities. Ordinary Fijians want direct measures to be taken to alleviate poverty, while NGOs place focus on

³⁰⁰ Timothy D. Sisk, “Global Networks for Democracy Promotion: Enhancing Local Governance,” Case Study for UN Vision Project on Global Public Policy Network Systems,”

http://www.globalpublicpolicy.net/fileadmin/gppi/Sisk_Local_Governance.pdf (18 July 2005), 17.

³⁰¹ United Nations, “Local Government in Asia and the Pacific: A Comparative Study, Country Profile: Fiji” <http://www.unescap.org/huset/gg/governance.htm> (20 May 2005)

³⁰² NGO Focus: The Role of NGOs, Sue Wheat, “What are NGOs doing here?” 55-56 http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/publications/courier/courier181/en/en_055_ni.pdf (10 December 2004).

³⁰³ ECREA, “Constitution and By-Laws,” <http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/constit.htm> (24 May 2005).

³⁰⁴ ECREA, Aisake Casimira, “The stranger in our midst,” Presentation to a Dialogue on Forgiveness on 22nd September 2004 in Labasa, http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/publications_files/Papers/45.doc (1 November 2004).

³⁰⁵ Koila Costello-Olsson, “Truth, Justice and the Pacific Way: Keeping the Peace,” Paper for the National Council of Churches- Australia, Christian World Serve, July 5th-9th, 2004, ECREA, http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/publications_files/Papers/40.doc. (1 November 2004).

³⁰⁶ Aisake Casimira, “Interventionism: Development or Enslavement?” Paper presented at the ACFOA Conference in Canberra, 18th September 2003, ECREA http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/publications_files/Papers/28.doc (1 November 2004).

democratic reform, arguing that such changes will give the Fijian grassroots a better chance of overcoming their poverty. As Claire Mercer highlights, NGOs struggle in their operations because of the conflict between the scale of their activities and what the people of the developing world want.³⁰⁷ The feeling at the grassroots level is that NGOs are oversimplifying problems by claiming that democracy and a vibrant civil society will help to alleviate poverty.³⁰⁸ What is illustrated here is that while Fijians, especially eastern Fijians, need services, the government either suggests that the problem is not that bad or that little can be done given financial constraints whereas the NGOs concentrate on building up strategies.³⁰⁹

Such NGO activities are encouraged by donors as well. The reason is that donors fund NGOs on a selective basis as to promote their vision of how a country should be run.³¹⁰ The consequence of this is that NGOs operate in specified sectors, most notably democracy promotion.³¹¹ For example, AUSAID targets almost 40% of its funding on initiatives of governance and state capacity building.³¹² Additionally, the ADB has approved three technical assistance grants for 2005 “totalling US\$895,000 for strengthening public sector banking and cash management, reviewing the fisheries sector, and road improvements.”³¹³ But, funds for initiatives to directly battle poverty alleviation are not included. The net effect of this is that ordinary Fijians continue to

³⁰⁷Claire Mercer, “NGOs, Civil Society and Democratization: A Critical Review of the Literature,” in *Progress in Development Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2002), 11.

³⁰⁸Ibid. 11

³⁰⁹United Nations, UNFPA, “Fiji Islands: Country Brief,” <http://pacific.unfpa.org/Countries/fj.htm> (2 June 2005).

³¹⁰Ibid.

³¹¹UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service, “Evaluations, Strategic Planning and log-frames- donor-imposed straitjackets on local NGOs?” Article contributed by Lisa Bornstein (no author specified), 13 February 2004, , *Civil Society Observer*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, April-May 2004, <http://www.un-ngls.org/cso/cso2/evaluations.html> (4 December 2004).

³¹²AUSAID, “AUSAID Annual Report 2003-2004,” http://www.usaid.gov/anrep04/pdf/anrep03_04.pdf (7 July 2005).

³¹³Asian Development Bank, “A Fact Sheet: Fiji Islands and the ADB.”

struggle with poverty. What this does is it increases frustration amongst the Fijian grassroots, which leads to the continuation of certain stereotypes which will be discussed later.

Gender

Gender has increasingly become a significant issue. The patriarchal culture of Fijian society constrains women severely. One basic premise of Fijian culture is that the essence of women is more child-like.³¹⁴ Therefore, they must be constrained because the “immature” nature of their souls leads to their inability to contain themselves within societal boundaries.³¹⁵ This is used as justification for male dominance over women. For example, one aspect of Fijian marriage is that in the first five years of marriage, couples fight a great deal so that husbands establish their authority and dominance over their wives.³¹⁶ As one woman stated in an interview, “...I can't do anything, so I have to listen to him because he's my husband.”³¹⁷ Another example is the continuation of the custom of *bulubulu*, which is done after the rape of a woman. This is where the transgressor could (and usually does) go to the victim's father with *yaqona* and apologize for his actions, with the expectation (and usually the reality being) that the father will forgive him for his actions.³¹⁸ The woman has no say in the matter. Moreover, the aftermath of the 2000 coup has made women more prone to male

³¹⁴ Diane Michalski Turner, “Women's Ritual Roles in Matailovau, Fiji Islands: The Construction of Gender and Social Life,” Ph.D Diss., Michigan State University, 1986, 3

³¹⁵ Ibid. 3.

³¹⁶ Apryle Pickering, “An Observation of Fijian Society: The Conflict between Individuality and Communalism,” Chapter 5- Life Histories, Union College, Department of Anthropology, <http://www.union.edu/PUBLIC/ANTDEPT/fiji99/pickering/apeth5.htm> (23 April 2005).

³¹⁷ Amber Johnston, *Sex, Love and Marriage*, “Chapter 5: Sex,” Union College, Department of Anthropology, <http://www.union.edu/PUBLIC/ANTDEPT/fiji/fjajid4.htm> (21 May 2005).

³¹⁸ Cristina Veran, “Pacific Women and the Law: The Status of Fiji,” A Globe of Witnesses, <http://thewitness.org/agw/veran091703.html> (26 May 2005).

authority and violence.³¹⁹ Winston Halapua states that this is a result of a ‘militaristic’ state of mind whereby those with authority can legitimately discipline anyone being ‘disobedient.’³²⁰ Moving to cities has not really alleviated the struggles women face in their day-to-day activities. In one survey, a woman iterated how women are often forced and encouraged into prostitution by the male heads of the family to increase family income.³²¹ Another survey found that poor women continue to suffer from the rigidities of the patriarchal structure the most since poor families give males the first chance to get an education, which limits the amount of skills that women possess.³²² As one woman interviewed by the NGO fem’LINK Pacific states, “...we aren’t given access to make big decisions...and our [capacities are]...ignored.”³²³ The overall concern is the tendency for men to establish their authority and dominance as the head of the unit.³²⁴ The resulting domestic abuse is reflected in statistics such as those shown in Appendix XXVIII. Women also continue to be disempowered by government legislation and institutional practices that have not been brought up to date in order to adequately protect women.³²⁵ For example, in the rare cases where women report abuses to the

³¹⁹ ISIS, Women in Action. Mavic Cabrera-Balleza “Fiji: Trouble in Paradise: One on One with Raijeli Nicole of the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement,” as appearing in Women in Action, (1-2: 2000). <http://www.isiswomen.org/wia/wia100/soc00013.html> (3 November 2004).

³²⁰ Winston Halapua, “Militarism and the Moral Decay in Fiji,” *Fijian Studies*, Vol. 1. No.1 (2003), http://fijianstudies.org/dload/vol1no1/militarism_and_moral_decay.pdf (1 October 2004), 112.

³²¹ Asian Development Bank, “Priorities of the People,” 11.

³²² International Labour Organization, “Unit 2: Gender Issues in the World of Work,” <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit2/fijipovt.htm> (10 July 2005).

³²³ Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, “Fem’Talk: Young Women’s Perspectives from the Fiji Islands,” *Pacific Development Bulletin* (October 2001),

<http://devnet.anu.edu.au/online%20versions%20pdfs/56/14%20Rolls56.pdf> (2 April 2005), 46.

³²⁴ Raymond Young, “Gender Mobility and Urban Place in Fiji: from Colonial to post-Colonial Wanderings,” *Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol. 15 No.3 (September 2000)

<http://www.unescap.org/ESID/psis/population/journal/2000/v15n3dn.pdf> (13 July 2005).

³²⁵ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Statistical Profiles: No. 11, “Women in Fiji: A Country Profile,” 1997.

authorities, women are blamed by the courts for causing the abuses they face.³²⁶ This leads to the continuing prevalence of violence against women. Statistics show a continuous increase in domestic violence. The Fiji Times reported that between 1997 and 2001, there had been a twenty-four percent increase in the number of reported cases of violence against women (2261 reported cases in 2001 compared to 1722 in 1997).³²⁷ Many cases go unreported because Fijian women feel constrained to speak out against their victimization. This is the consequence of the prevailing attitude amongst many Fijian women coming to believe that they are confined by their gender.³²⁸ This has led to the development of women's NGOs which endeavour to empower women. As highlighted in the last section on poverty, many NGOs focus on institutional change as the way to bring about change. What has been found with regards to women issues is that while attention is placed on advocacy, the grassroots are more involved in initiatives taken by women's NGOs.

Gender Issues and NGOs

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) is a multi-ethnic women's NGO that was established around the time of the 1987 Coup. The FWRM shifted its focus from service delivery to democracy promotion for two reasons: 1- the belief that democracy is the necessary pre-condition for women's rights to evolve; 2- Fijian women

³²⁶ PeaceWomen, "Strengthening Pacific Partnership for Eliminating Violence against Women: A Pacific Regional Workshop Report," Suva, Fiji Islands 17-19 February 2003, <http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/Fiji/Pacificreport.pdf> (8 May 2005).

³²⁷ "Gender Violence Costs Fiji Police \$1.2 Million a Year," *Pacific Islands Report* (article appearing in the Fiji Times/PINA Nius Online 27 November 2002), <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2002/november/11%2D27%2D09.htm> (April 25, 2005).

³²⁸ P. Imrana Jalal, "Gender Issues in post coup d'etat Fiji: Snapshots from the Fiji Islands (a short story of life in the feminist trenches)," Speech at Townsville International Women's Conference, Australia 3-7 July 2002, <http://www.nz-lawsoc.org.nz/wcg/news/gen-issues-fiji.htm> (3 April 2005).

(from all ethnic backgrounds) can create problems on racially divisive issues.³²⁹

FWRM's mandate is to help to empower women through institutional changes. The belief is that the restoration of democracy is the only way institutional changes can be made.³³⁰ This mandate may seem problematic, because as highlighted in the section on poverty, many Fijians require direct aid to help them to overcome their struggle. In conducting its activities, the FWRM has worked more with those at the elite level, including the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, and with the Law Reform Commission. For example, the FWRM has lobbied government officials to review the patriarchal nature of the criminal justice system so that women feel confident to report cases of violence.³³¹ The FWRM has also lobbied the Fiji Law Reform Commission (FLRC) to recommend changes in the criminal justice system as to address the problems discussed above. Such initiatives have had some success. For example, the FLRC recommended changes to many laws in their 1999 Sexual Offences Report to the Attorney General.³³² The FWRM campaigned to reform legislation to give women more protection under the law.³³³ A decade long struggle finally led to the passing of the Family Law Bill in 2003 (a bill that is to come into effect in December 2005).³³⁴ Some of the particulars of this bill include: putting more emphasis on the nuclear family unit; giving more protection to women and children under the law; and giving women more

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ P. Imrana Jalal, "Gender Issues in post coup d'etat Fiji."

³³¹ Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, "Reform of Laws relation to Sexual Offences in Fiji- 25 November 2004," http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=612&first_item=0 (4 April 2005).

³³² Nicole George, Working Paper 2004/4, "Advocacy or Activism: Gender politics in Fiji," October 2004, <http://www.rspas.anu.edu.au/ir/working%20papers/04-4.pdf> (10 April 2005), 11-15.

³³³ Ibid. 11-15.

³³⁴ Fiji Law Reform Commission, "Family Law Reform," <http://www.lawreform.gov.fj/common/default.aspx?page=familyLaw> (6 June 2005).

rights with regard to matrimonial property.³³⁵ While these changes are few in number, they are significant because higher authorities have begun to recognize the need to protect women's rights.

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) is another multi-ethnic women's NGO. The FWCC has been hailed as one of the more effective women's NGOs in Fiji because it has struck a balance between efforts directed at the grassroots level and those directed at the institutional level. First established in 1984 as a rape crisis centre, the FWCC's mandate has evolved to include working with officials at the elite level to help develop initiatives to empower women.³³⁶ The FWCC continues to offer counselling services to female victims of violence which now has come to include mobile counselling clinics, telephone counselling (which can be accessed 24-hours a day), and on-line counselling.³³⁷ Mobile counselling is one of the bigger moves because Fijian women living in rural parts have greater access to these services. Most Fijian women located in rural areas will not attend workshops located in urban areas because of the expense.³³⁸ Although offices are based in the urban areas, they are making efforts to reach out to the grassroots.³³⁹ The FWCC has also placed its focus on creating public awareness on women's rights. One program of the FWCC is the "Male Advocacy Training Workshop," a program whose intent is to educate men to be more sensitive to women's

³³⁵ ECREA, Media Release, "Remarks on the Family Law Bill, 13 May 2002," http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/publications_files/media/21.doc (6 June 2005).

³³⁶ Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Suva Office, <http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=563> (11 May 2005).

³³⁷ Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, "Mobile Counselling," <http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=696>, "Phone Counselling," <http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=695>, "Online Counselling," <http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=694> (14 May 2005).

³³⁸ PeaceWomen.org, "Strengthening Pacific Partnership for Eliminating Violence against Women," 87-88.

³³⁹ It should be noted that counselling through at the offices located in urban areas has also continued. FWCC offices are currently located in Suva, Nadi, Labasa, and Ba.

issues.³⁴⁰ Additionally, the “16 Days of Activism,” a program that has been operating since the early 1990s, is designed to gather support for Fijian women’s human rights.³⁴¹ These campaigns have drawn some criticism from the government because the FWCC has used the media to convey its message, while the government prefers a quieter diplomatic approach.³⁴² In spite of such criticisms, the FWCC has endeavoured to work with the government to help improve conditions for Fijian women. These efforts have included monitoring implementation of laws and sentencing, participating in government working groups on policy programmes and legislative reform, and using action research for its services and programs.³⁴³ These efforts have been praised by the current Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation, who congratulated the FWCC for its efforts in providing support services for victims of assault and violence, and helping to facilitate debates.³⁴⁴

Fem’LINK Pacific is another women’s NGO operating in Fiji that is multi-ethnic in composition. Established after the 2000 coup, the Suva-based fem’LINK aims to empower women by encouraging them to use the media to give a uniquely female perspective on issues.³⁴⁵ The belief is that women’s issues are not heard in the media, and such initiatives will make their voices heard, thus leading to change.³⁴⁶ It was noted by the director of fem’LINK that only 18% of total daily media coverage deals with

³⁴⁰ Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre, “Domestic Violence: A Rights Issue,” <http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=921>, “16 Days of Activism,” <http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=706> (11 May 2005).

³⁴¹ Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre, “Domestic Violence: A Rights Issue,” <http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=921>, “16 Days of Activism,” <http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=706> (11 May 2005).

³⁴² Nicole George, “Advocacy or Activism,” 18.

³⁴³ PeaceWomen, “Strengthening Pacific Partnership for Eliminating Violence against Women,” 85-86.

³⁴⁴ PeaceWomen, “Strengthening Pacific Partnership for Eliminating Violence against Women,” 81.

³⁴⁵ Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, “Gender and the role of the media in conflict and peacemaking: The Fiji experience.” *Pacific Development Bulletin*. (November 2000) <http://devnet.anu.edu.au/online%20versions%20pdfs/56/14%20Rolls56.pdf> (6 April 2005), 64.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 64.

women, and much of that coverage depicts women in a negative or sexual manner.³⁴⁷

While the focus is on women, fem'LINK has also articulated that it hopes to create awareness amongst all groups that they face the same problems in terms of social, political and economic development issues, and its activities illustrate such visions.³⁴⁸

The concern that has been brought up is that most Fijians cannot afford to access many forms of media, so how will they be exposed to the issues raised in such initiatives. One answer to this question is that fem'LINK travels to all parts of the country to help with the set-up and facilitation of women's discussion groups. Their discussions are then video-taped and sent to various discussion groups held by other women's NGOs.³⁴⁹ The hope is that these participants will discover the values, concerns and visions they have in common.³⁵⁰ Groups like the FWCC have used these videos in community outreach programs, showing that fem'LINK is targeting women from all walks of life.³⁵¹

Fem'LINK has also taken advantage of the prevalence of radio amongst Fijians (highlighted in Appendix XXIX) in starting a radio broadcast using "suit-case radio technology, thus allowing for mobility in terms of location of broadcast."³⁵² The initiative is known as Fem'TALK 89.2 FM, and was started in mid-2004.³⁵³ This radio program broadcasts approximately once a month, and endeavours to generate public

³⁴⁷ Pacific Media Watch, "Media Critic Condemns Lack of Women's Views," 16 August 2003, <http://www.pmw.c20.org/2003/fiji4149.html> (25 May 2005).

³⁴⁸ Sangeeta Singh, "New Women's Initiative Stirs Controversy," USP Journalism: Wansolwara Online, Vol. 6 No.1, (April 2001). <http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/wansol/61women.html> (2 July 2005).

³⁴⁹ Eci Nabalarua, "Pathways to political participation in Fiji: Gender, race and religion in sustainable community development and nation building," *Pacific Development Bulletin* (October 2002,) <http://devnet.anu.edu.au/online%20versions%20pdfs/59/1159Nabalarua.pdf> (21 January 2005).

³⁵⁰ Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, "Fem'Talk."

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² PeaceWomen, "Fiji's First Mobile Community Women's Radio Project," <http://www.peacewomen.org/news/Fiji/Aug04/radio.html> (13 May 2005)

³⁵³ Ibid.

awareness of issues concerning women, youth, and even men.³⁵⁴ The hope is that with diverse viewpoints being presented, it will help Fijians to discover they have common values and concerns with the other groups.³⁵⁵ Another hope is that by including a wide variety of perspectives, public awareness about the different cultures and initiatives will also increase.³⁵⁶ Furthermore, the program is designed to bring to light that women of all ethnic backgrounds have common issues that need to be addressed.³⁵⁷ Just to put this into context, the August 2004 broadcast included ECREA, youth groups, as well as members of other faiths. Fem'LINK also publishes monthly e-news bulletin "fem'TALK," which highlights the activities of fem'LINK and other women's organizations. However, with access to the internet plaguing many Fijians (highlighted in Appendix XVIII), its reach within Fiji is constrained.

ECREA is a Christian organization that also endeavours to empower Fijian women. ECREA's activities are guided by four principles: social justice, integral human development, servant leadership and participation.³⁵⁸ ECREA runs a *Gender and Peace Program*, which targets women, men and youth in effort to create a culture of peace, justice and reconciliation in religious and social institutions.³⁵⁹ One particular workshop held under this theme area was *Towards a Culture of Peace*, held in 2001. Its purpose was to bring people from a variety of backgrounds together to discuss ways to empower women.³⁶⁰ What this program found was that the reach of NGOs was limited.³⁶¹ Many

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Sangeeta Singh, "New Women's Initiative Stirs Controversy."

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ ECREA, <http://www.ecrea.org.fj> (13 May 2005).

³⁵⁹ ECREA, "Gender and Peace Program," <http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/genderpeace.htm> (13 May 2005).

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

participants congratulated ECREA for setting up this initiative leading to a second workshop. The second workshop broadened its target audience with the hope that it would further facilitate dialogue amongst women of all groups and lead to the realization that they share common concerns.³⁶² ECREA also runs other programs to deal with women's issues. A *Woman and Communication Program* was set up in 2000, which ran from July 2000 to November 2002. The aim of this program was to train and develop the abilities of men and women to identify barriers to communication, and bring people from all ethnic backgrounds together.³⁶³ ECREA also set up a *Peace Research Program* (which ran between June 2001 and November 2002) whose objective was to bring to light the role of cultural and religious symbolism in the lives of individual Fijians (in the broad sense of the term).³⁶⁴ With the help of a fem'LINK video, this session found that women of all groups were very willing to discuss the impact of the Coup on them and their families.³⁶⁵

These are highlights of some of the programs that women's NGOs are engaged in to help women overcome their struggles. While there are women's NGOs that concentrate on advocacy, such as the FWRM, women's issues are being brought to the forefront. The consequence of this is that women are speaking up about their plight for the first time.

Is Ethnonationalism even a Factor? Discussion

In light of the discussion thus far, the question that arises is, are the eastern Fijian grassroots active participants in the promotion of ethno-nationalism? The assessment

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ ECREA, "Women and Communication," <http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/womandcomm.htm> (13 May 2005).

³⁶⁴ ECREA, "Peace Research- Towards a Culture of Dialogue for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation," <http://www.ecrea.org.fj/webpages/peaceresr.htm> (13 May 2005).

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

made is that generally, ordinary Fijians, including those from the east, do not participate in discussions on ethno-nationalism.

This is not to say that Fijians do not harbour negative attitudes towards Indo-Fijians. There has been some documentation that Fijians blame Indo-Fijians for their poverty. For example, a 2000 survey found that 51% of respondents felt that the wealthy, highlighted as being selfish, were to blame for the poverty of the Fijian people.³⁶⁶ The same survey found that 35% of respondents stressed that the rich were not following teachings in the Bible about sharing with the poor.³⁶⁷ These results are surprising given that Indo-Fijians are generally worse off than Fijians. While it cannot be denied that some Indo-Fijians are better off than others, approximately 31% of Indo-Fijians were below the poverty line in the 1990s, compared to 27.7% of ethnic Fijians.³⁶⁸ Appendix XIII shows the conditions that Indo-Fijians (who live in rural settlements) endure worse conditions than their Fijian counterparts. As Appendix XXX shows, Fijians at the bottom of the scale generally make more than Indo-Fijians. Appendix XXXI shows that Fijians in the poorest areas are generally better off than the poorest of Indo-Fijians.

Additionally, some polls suggest that support for Fijian leaders remains, but they want the country to move forward as well. Pollsters such as the *Tebbutt Times* and the internet-based *Fijilive* regularly conduct surveys to find out the reaction of Fijians to various issues including that of ethno-nationalism. For example, the *Tebbutt Times* most recently conducted three separate surveys of urban Fijians to gather their reaction

³⁶⁶ “Christianity, Poverty & Wealth in the 21st Century,” The FCC-Research Group, August, 2000, 24.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 24.

³⁶⁸ Setsuo Otsuka, “Cultural Influences on Academic Achievement in Fiji,” The Australian Association for Research in Education <http://www.aare.edu.au/04pap/ots04633.pdf> (5 June 2005), 24.

on the recent Unity Bill, which would re-classify certain crimes committed by coup leaders as politically-motivated, thus making them eligible for amnesty.³⁶⁹ One poll found that 55% of urban Fijians polled supported the Bill, believing that it would help the country move forward.³⁷⁰ However, most Fijians do not have access to the internet (as illustrated in Appendix XXIX). Additionally, urban polls must be treated with caution because there is no indication of who is polled, and how they are polled.

In spite of these sentiments, ordinary Fijians do not participate in the ethno-nationalistic debates. The voices of ordinary Fijians are relatively silenced, as discussed earlier in the section on traditional village life. This means that even during elections, ordinary Fijians, including those from the east, are manipulated into voting a particular way.³⁷¹ For example, Fijians have traditionally been told how to vote, and who to vote for under the AV voting system.³⁷² Additionally, there have been reports that some have even been threatened if they did not vote a certain way.³⁷³

However, the debate on ethno-nationalism involves a few other participants. Indo-Fijian leaders, as well as FLP members may also be considered to be participants in the debate on ethno-nationalism. For example, their protests, discussed in chapters 1 and 2, have been directed at how other groups, most notably the Indo-Fijians, are hurt by things such as land legislation. Additionally, they have argued that the Fijian elite have used national institutions to expand their wealth at the expense of ordinary Fijians.

³⁶⁹ Laisenia Qarase, "A plea for Restorative Justice," Speech from 2 June 2005, <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2005/June/06-17-com.htm> (28 June 2005).

³⁷⁰ "Fiji Poll Shows Most Oppose Reconciliation Bill," 21 June 2005, <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2005/june/06%2D22%2D04.htm> (27 June 2005).

³⁷¹ Robert Keith Reid, "Fiji Heads to the Polls," [Pacific Magazine](http://www.pacificislands.cc/pm52001/pmdefault.php?urlarticleid=0033) (May 2001), <http://www.pacificislands.cc/pm52001/pmdefault.php?urlarticleid=0033> (27 August 2005).

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ "Day one of Fiji's elections passes without violence, but Pamphlets Threaten Bloodshed," [Pacific Islands Report](http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2001/august/08%2D27%2D02.htm), 26 August 2001 <http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2001/august/08%2D27%2D02.htm> (27 August 2005).

The Fijian elite and NGOs are involved in these deliberations. Chapters 1 & 2 highlighted the views of the Fijian elite. What is generally seen is that the Fijian elite have resorted to ethno-nationalism in order to cover up other issues facing the Fijian grassroots. NGOs have generally responded to these issues. Many initiatives have followed the logic that empowering Fijians can only occur through institutional change. By building the capacities of the Fijian grassroots, including those from the east, NGOs argue that Fijian commoners will be able to look at all issues more objectively. The implication of such efforts is that governance issues will lead to reforms in other areas. Moreover, without proper governance structures in place, the voices of the Fijian grassroots will continue to be suppressed. Therefore, NGOs endeavour to get the views of ordinary Fijians heard. The Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF) is one NGO involved in the debate on ethno-nationalism. The CCF has promoted a people-based process to establish a constitutional agenda (amongst other things) based on national issues and consensus.³⁷⁴ One of its initiatives has been to criticize the Qarase government's reconciliation program.³⁷⁵ With the current proposed Reconciliation bill, the CCF has argued that it does not follow the principles of consensual decision-making, justice, wrongdoer contrition, and victim empowerment.³⁷⁶ Additionally, they argue that only the Fijian elite would be involved in the reconciliation process if the bill is passed in its present form, thus excluding other participants including the Fijian grassroots.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Conciliation Resources. Satendra Prasad, "Limits and Possibilities for Civil Society Led re-democratization: The Fijian Constitutional Debates and Dilemma," http://www.c-r.org/pubs/occ_papers/occ_fiji.shtml (17 October 2004).

³⁷⁵ It should be noted that the CCF was de-registered by the Fijian Government in 2001 for its criticism of the Government in its handling of post-Coup affairs.

³⁷⁶ Citizens' Constitutional Forum, "CCF Submission to the Sector Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Order," http://www.ccf.org.fj/artman/publish/article_312.shtml (7 July 2005).

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

Conclusion

Poverty and Gender issues are two of the biggest challenges that the Fijian grassroots face, with poverty being the biggest issue. Eastern rural Fijians are more prone to these phenomena, which are caused by a variety of factors. Economic factors, including increased dependency on money to pay for things such as communal obligations, as well as a lack of job opportunities, have increased the seriousness of poverty. Additionally, the village life and its structures have had a negative impact. While education is discouraged because of the threat it poses to the Fijian culture, participation in subsistence agriculture and maintaining one's obligations to the village are generally encouraged. Urban areas are attractive because Fijian commoners perceive them to be economic havens. However, this has not been the case, as wages do not keep up with rising expenses. The consequence is the rise in squatter settlements in urban centers and a decreasing quality of life.

Women's rights have emerged to become a key issue as well. Fijian culture teaches that men are the dominant sex, which has led to increased violence against women. The consequence is that women are further disempowered, and are more prone to violence. However, the grassroots and NGOs disagree over how poverty can best be alleviated. The grassroots believe that poverty can only be alleviated through direct measures. On the other hand, NGOs generally believe that institutional reform will be more effective in alleviating poverty, because it will give the grassroots the capacities to rise up from the conditions they currently suffer. While women's NGOs also place some focus on advocacy, they are generally more involved with the grassroots.

However, the Fijian grassroots are generally quiet on issues of ethnic accommodation. While stereotypes exist, ethno-nationalism is not the only issue facing

Fijians. Responses to ethno-nationalism are generally made by NGOs. This is because addressing poverty and gender issues are the biggest priorities of the grassroots.

Concluding Chapter

Overview of Thesis Objectives

The handover of Fiji by eastern chiefs to the British effectively placed them in a position of great power over all Fijians. Although the composition of the Fijian elite has been broadened to include top bureaucrats, military personnel and other politicians (including those from the west), eastern chiefs continue to maintain substantial control over the Fijian grassroots. Their role has been further solidified by the constitutional entrenchment of the eastern-dominated Great Council of Chiefs whose powers include the authority to select the President. It has been argued that the chiefs must maintain their authority over Fijians, because only they have the ability to fend off threats to the Fijian culture. This rhetoric implies that the Fijian grassroots whole-heartedly follow their chiefs say in part because of chiefly claims to traditional authority. Therefore, the thesis endeavoured to find out exactly what is occurring amongst the Fijian grassroots . The study focused on the eastern Fijian grassroots to determine if they were as strong in their beliefs about ethno-nationalism as their elite, whose power was entrenched at Cession. Additionally, the thesis was also designed to see whether or not this issue is their primary pre-occupation. This study focused on three main areas. One area investigated was the influence of the colonial legacy on the Fijian way of life and if that legacy continues to have an effect today. A second area revolved around the attitudes of Fijian commoners and whether or not they are active players in the promotion of ethno-nationalism. A third area of investigation has looked into the role of some of the

relevant non-governmental organizations (now to be referred to as NGO's) operating in Fiji, and whether or not they have any effect on ordinary Fijians.

Conclusions and Synthesis of Major Findings

Main Conclusion

The main conclusion reached is that while stereotypes and biases that are ethno-nationalistic in nature exist amongst eastern Fijians, there are other challenges that they face, and ones they want addressed. Poverty is one of the bigger issues that Fijians highlight as requiring attention. The other issue is that of gender, including violence against women. Modern times have made money more important, as it is needed to buy items such as food and electricity. Additionally, money is required to keep up with communal obligations, which adds further pressure on the limited resources that rural Fijians possess. The result is that their quality of life, including the quality of their homes and sanitary conditions, are affected. The eastern parts of Fiji also provide fewer economic opportunities with subsistence agriculture being a staple of the eastern Fijian economy. This leads many to move to urban areas as the perception is that urban areas provide better opportunities and a chance of a better life. However, conditions that most eastern Fijians endure in urban areas are not much better than a life of subsistence in isolated villages. Jobs are difficult to find, and expenses are higher in urban areas. The result is that many are forced to live in squatter settlements. Conditions in these settlements are poor; commoners endure, amongst other things, unsanitary conditions and houses of poor quality. Gender issues, especially violence against women, have become more prevalent. Reported cases of domestic violence continue to increase which affects the quality of life that women can enjoy. In addition to enduring poverty, they must also accept the authority of male members of Fijian society. The dominance

of men is so great, women feel that they are confined and defined by their gender. As a result, they feel disempowered.

Synthesis and Conclusions by Focus Areas

The entrenchment of traditional institutions and attitudes affects the progress of Fijians. Since colonial times, the Fijian grassroots have been taught that civilized Christians obey authority figures because those with authority possess more knowledge than commoners. Additionally, authority figures know what is best for their people, thus increasing the necessity of obeying them. One effect is that Fijians do not want to engage in activities that will affect the workings of their culture. This effect is most notably seen in how much they value education. Although there are an increasing number of Fijians that place more emphasis on education, many still view education suspiciously, because it is seen as a corrosive influence. Rather, dependence on things such as subsistence agriculture is encouraged especially in eastern Fiji. The effect is that they have limited skills, affecting their access to jobs. With more Fijians, especially those from the east, moving to town in hopes of finding a better quality of life, this affects what jobs they can apply for because they have limited transferable skills. The net effect is that many cannot afford to live in town, illustrated by the increase in squatter settlements. A second inference made is that the principles of hierarchy and paternalism also continue to affect Fijians. Rank, age and sex are very important in Fijian society. One area that this is reflected in is women's issues, as women continue to face male domination. This is illustrated in the rising level of violence against women. This is also highlighted by the fact that women are generally reluctant to speak out against their victimization. A further example is that poor Fijian families give males first chance at an education. Fijian society teaches that paternalism and hierarchy must be

adhered to in order for the Fijian culture to survive. And because rural villages are considered to be the social security of the Fijian people, many accept such principles. However, they also want poverty to be addressed because it is seen as affecting their capability to survive. The indication here is there is a strain in one's acceptance of the traditional way of life, but generally the traditional structures are still strong.

Ethno-nationalism has been used by the Fijian elite who claim that everything has to be done to thwart the threat posed by Indo-Fijians to the Fijian culture. This implies that Fijians are active participants in the promotion of ethno-nationalism. However, research has found otherwise. Eastern Fijians, while harbouring certain stereotypes that are ethno-nationalistic in nature, do not say much about the issue, focusing their attentions more on their poverty. This is not to say that their poverty is not blamed on Indo-Fijians. Many eastern Fijians still harbour the stereotype that Indo-Fijians are wealthier than them. Additionally, some believe that Indo-Fijians are hoarding their wealth thus adding to the pressures faced by poor Fijians. In spite of this, more attention is placed on their quality of life. The basic problem here is that many Fijians have not realized that poverty, and even gender issues, are cross-cutting. The general trend is that the debate over ethno-nationalism involves the Fijian elite, Indo-Fijian leaders, members of parties such as the FLP, and NGOs. As highlighted in chapter three, NGOs place a great deal of emphasis on institutional reform. The view is that the Fijian elite use ethno-nationalism to manipulate ordinary Fijians. This is illustrated during times such as elections, when Fijians are told how to vote, and who to vote for. Thus, initiatives must be taken to first change the culture of state institutions. Indo-Fijian leaders and members of the FLP have called for things such as land legislation to be reformed, as to give Indo-Fijians more security in the country. The net

result is that the outward ethno-nationalist sentiments are a mask for the poverty that they face.

The priorities of NGOs and eastern Fijians conflict in areas like poverty. Many NGOs believe that poverty alleviation can occur only through changes in the institutional framework of the country. Therefore, democracy promotion has become a major focus of NGOs. De-centralization of government authority is one particular initiative taken by NGOs which assumes that increased participation in the system will empower Fijian commoners to pull themselves out of poverty. Fijians, especially those in the east, want direct services to be provided to help improve their quality of life. In defence of NGOs, their activities are constrained by donors, whose vision is that governance issues are a priority. However, this is where communication is important, because the grassroots and NGOs must be on the same page. The reach of NGOs affects the level of influence they have on Fijian commoners. Poverty alleviation initiatives have not helped the Fijian grassroots as poverty continues to increase. However, as illustrated in the section on Gender issues in chapter three, the influence of NGOs becomes greater if they reach out to the more remote areas. This is reflected by the fact that an increasing number of women at the rural level are speaking out about their plight. Previously, most women's NGOs held workshops in urban areas, thus making them inaccessible for many Fijian women. To go to these workshops, women require money for transport. And as discussed, money is hard to come by for most Fijians. Therefore, most women were reluctant to even consider attending such workshops. But with more women's NGOs reaching out to the remote areas, more women are speaking out about their plight. While violence still affects women, the general trend is that they are more willing to speak up. NGOs operating in Fiji have had some success in empowering

Fijian commoners through the introduction of new ideas. And while they face many challenges, they have made some progress. This is encouraging because it means that Fijian commoners want to become active players in the conditions that plague them.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has revealed that issues other than ethno-nationalism require attention in Fiji. And while ethno-nationalism is not the primary pre-occupation of Fijian commoners, some stereotypes still exist, such as all Indo-Fijians being wealthy. However, many of the problems plaguing Fijian commoners are cross-cutting in nature. Therefore, the following are suggestions for future research.

One area that can be further explored is the role of women's NGOs in reducing stereotypes between Fijians and Indo-Fijians. This thesis highlighted that many NGOs are multi-ethnic in nature. Additionally, women's NGOs are beginning to hold some multi-ethnic workshops. While some of the successes were highlighted, further research is required. For example, attention could focus on how direct contact between the various members affects social relations and perceptions of each group.

Another area that can be further explored is whether or not there are changes being made in the education system to change attitudes amongst Fijian commoners. This could involve exploring things like teacher's attitudes, and the role that teacher training may have in the education system. Additionally, the culture of the education system could be considered: To what extent does the education of Fijians foster ethnic division?

These are just a couple of suggestions. They are meant to highlight that many issues that plague Fijian commoners are cross-cutting in nature. Bringing this revelation to light may not have an immediate effect, but such revelations could be passed on to

future generations. This can help reduce the general ethnic segregation and divide seen in Fiji.

Map of Fiji



Source: Fiji Islands Visitor's Bureau, "Map of Fiji," <http://www.fijifvb.gov.fj/about/geograph/map.shtml> (9 July 2005).

Appendices

Appendix I: Comparison of Seat Allocation in the House of Representatives between the 1996 CRC and the 1997 Constitution

CRC (1996) Recommended Allocation of Seats in the House of Representatives

Reserved Seats	
Fijians (including Pacific Islanders)	12
Indo-Fijians	10
General Voters	2
Rotumans	1
Open Seats	45
TOTAL	70

Allocation of Seats in the House of Representatives under the 1997 Constitution

Reserved Seats	
Fijians (including Pacific Islanders)	23
Indo-Fijians	19
General Voters	3
Rotumans	1
Open Seats	25
TOTAL	71

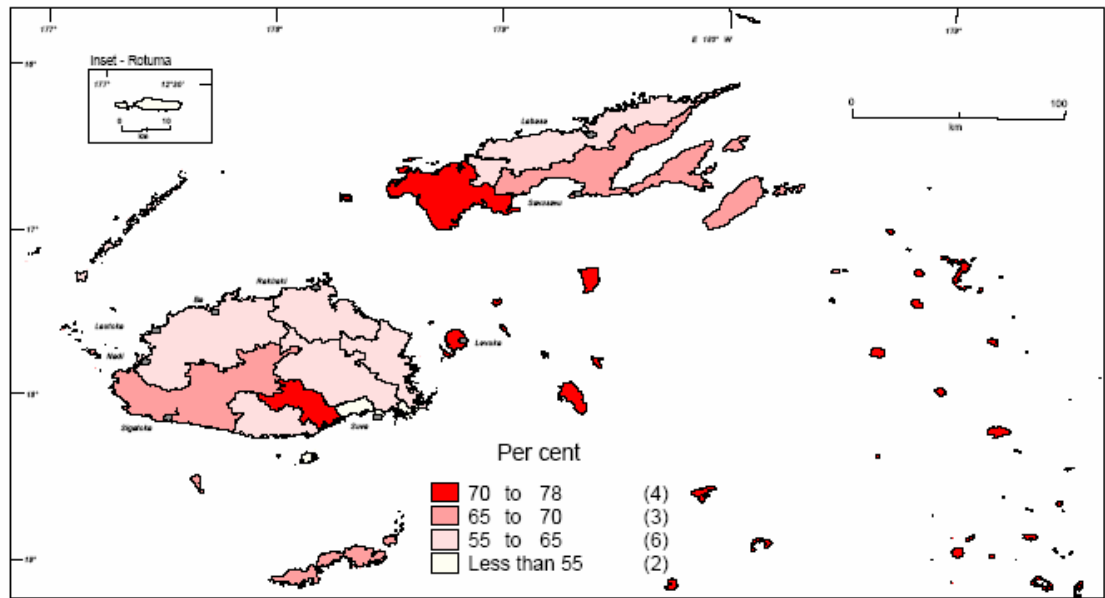
Source: Government of Australia, Dr. Stephen Sherlock, "Constitutional and Political Change in Fiji," <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1997-98/98rp97.htm> (14 March 2005).

Appendix II: Population by Religion and by Race - 1996 Census of Population

Ethnicity	Total	Fijian	Indian	Other
Total	775,077	393,575	338,818	42,684
Anglican	6,325	2,508	1,208	2,609
Apostolic	2,593	2,237	250	106
Assembly of God	31,072	24,717	4,620	1,735
Baptist	1,296	695	382	219
Catholic	69,320	52,163	3,520	13,637
CMF (Every home)	5,673	5,149	269	255
Gospel	1,354	618	514	222
Jehovah's Witness	6,102	4,815	486	801
Later Day Saints	3,475	2,253	633	589
Methodist	280,628	261,972	5,432	13,224
Presbyterian	383	105	90	188
Salvation Army	989	628	251	110
Seventh Day Adv	22,187	19,896	572	1,719
Other Christian	18,085	12,624	2,492	2,969
Arya Samaj	9,564	44	9,493	27
Kabir Panthi	118	43	73	2
Sanatan	193,927	551	193,061	315
Satya Sai Baba	60	7	52	1
Other Hindu	57,428	219	57,096	113
Sikh	3,076	0	3,076	0
Ahmadiya	1,976	18	1,944	14
Sunni	32,351	175	32,082	94
Other Moslem	19,996	131	19,727	138
Bahai	563	389	25	149
Confucian	365	8	21	336
Other	1,039	61	314	664
No religion, etc	5,132	1,549	1,135	2,448

Source: Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, (Government Printer, Suva), <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/Social/religion.htm>. (8 June 2005).

Appendix III: Location of Labour Force



Source: Association of National Census and Statistics Directors of America, Asia and the Pacific, "Utilization of Census Data: GIS Modelling, 1996 Census," <http://www.ancsdaap.org/cencon2002/papers/Fiji/Fiji.PDF>. (6 July 2005)

Appendix IV: Average Weekly Household Income by Province

Province	Average Household Income (F\$)	
Rewa	291	
Ra	220	
Ba	212	
Serua	191	
Macuata	186	*
Naitasiri	182	
Lomaiviti	172	
Kadavu	170	
Tailevu	157	
Namosi	156	
Cakaudrove	152	*
Bau	152	*
Nadroga/Navosa	150	
Lau	130	*

Source: Crosbie Walsh, "Poverty, Politics and the Politics of Race in Fiji," <http://www.devnet.org.nz/conf/Papers/walsh.pdf>, (5 July 2005).

*indicates the Provinces located in eastern Fiji

Appendix V: Poverty Lines by Area and Ethnicity (\$F/week), 2002/2003

	Food Poverty Line	Basic Needs Poverty Line	Food Costs as % of Basic Needs
Urban	76.17	138.63	54.9
Rural Settlement	73.99	115.42	64.1
Rural Village	79.43	104.85	75.8
Ethnic Fijian	80.12	128.99	62.1
Ethnic Indian	70.04	132.38	52.9
Others	80.12	128.99	62.1
National	75.08	114.12	65.8

Source: Ganesh Chand, "Overview of Current Economic Conditions in Fiji," Global Policy Network, <http://www.gpn.org/data/fiji/fiji-analysis.doc>, (5 July 2005), 15.

*Note- Rural Settlements are occupied by Indo-Fijians only, Rural Villages are occupied by Fijian commoners only.

Appendix VI: Consumer Price Index- (Base: 1993=100)

	Annual Average Inflation Rate	All Items
1994	0.6	100.8
1995	2.2	103.0
1996	3.1	106.1
1997	3.4	109.7
1998	5.7	116.0
1999	2.0	118.3
2000	1.1	119.6
2001	4.3	124.7
2002	0.8	125.6
2003	4.2	130.9
2004	2.8	134.6

Source: Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Index, (Government Printer, Suva)
<http://www.spc.org.nc/prism/country/fj/stats/Economic/cpi.htm>. (9 June 2005).

Appendix VII: Population in Relative Poverty by Area, 1990-1991*

	Total	Urban	Rural Village	Rural Settlement
Based on household income	32.7	29.0	35.2	34.9
Based on per capita household income	37.6	31.2	43.6	39.7

Source: United Nations Development Fund, "The Fiji Poverty Study," http://www.undp.org.fj/poverty/poverty_study.htm (18 July 2005).

*denotes poverty defined as getting less than 50% of average household income

Appendix VIII: Population in Relative Poverty by Ethnicity, 1990-1991*

	Total	Fijian	Indo-Fijian	Other
Based on household Income	32.66	31.28	34.46	26.92
Based on per capita household income	37.61	36.59	36.61	36.05

Source: United Nations Development Fund, "The Fiji Poverty Study," http://www.undp.org.fj/poverty/poverty_study.htm (18 July 2005).

* denotes poverty defined as getting less than 50% of average household income.

Appendix IX: General Perceptions of Social and Economic Conditions of Migrant Heads of Households Before and After Migration, 1992-1993

Social and economic conditions	Percentage
Employment and working conditions better after migration	85.3
Social and cultural life better after migration	85.0
Income better after migration	81.4
n	2,416

Source: Dharma Chandra, "Socio-demographic and Economic characteristics of Migrant Heads of Households and the Consequences of their Migration in Fiji, 1992-1993, Asia-Pacific Population Journal, Vol. 17 No. 1 (March 2002), <http://www.unescape.org/esid/psis/population/journal/2002/v17n1dn.pdf>, (20 March 2005), 75.

Appendix X: Estimated Urban Population and Households by Ethnicity

Division	Total Households	Population		
		Fijians	Indians	Others
Central/Eastern	47,105	114,856	91,425	21,660
Northern	8,768	84,60	28,598	1,827
Western	27,770	47,602	73,001	6,436

Source: Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, Urban Household and Income Survey, 2002-2003, (Government Printer, Suva) http://www.spc.int/prism/fjtest/HIES/household_income_and_expenditure.htm, (9 June 2005).

Appendix XI: Households and Population by Ethnicity and Sector, 1986, 1996

	1986		1996		PERCENTAGE CHANGE	
	Households	Population	Households	Population	Household	Population
Total	124098	708973	144239	767802	16.2	8.3
Fijian	53000	325317	66782	389139	26.0	19.6
Indo-Fijian	64001	347376	68978	337623	7.8	-2.8
Other	7097	36280	8479	41040	19.5	13.1
Urban	49579	272734	67684	354040	36.5	29.8
Rural	74519	436239	76555	413762	2.7	-5.2
Fijian Rural	36505	219794	41215	230979	12.9	5.1
Indo-Fijian Rural	35721	204000	33088	170664	-7.4	-16.3
Other Rural	2293	12455	2252	12119	-1.8	-2.6
Fijian Urban	16495	105523	25567	158160	55.0	49.9
Indo-Fijian Urban	28280	143376	35890	166959	26.9	16.4
Other Urban	4804	23835	6227	28921	29.6	21.3

Source: Neelesh Gounder, "Rural Urban Migration in Fiji: Causes and Consequences," University of the South Pacific, Department of Economics, Working Paper 2005/12.
http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/schools/ssed/economics/working_papers/2005/wp2005_12.pdf (8 July 2005), 2.

Appendix XII: Gross Annual Income of Migrant Heads of Households by Sex, Before and After Migration, 1992-1993

Income level(F\$)	(percentage)						Percentage point change for total
	Before migration			After migration			
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	
0-2999	28	49	29	21	44	22.1	-6.7
3,000-4,999	25	15	24	24	16	23.5	-0.9
5,000-6,999	19	11	18	21	11	20.3	2.1
7,000-9,999	15	14	15	18	18	17.6	2.4
10,000-14,999	8	8	8	11	8	10.5	2.2
15,000-19,999	3	2	3	4	3	3.8	0.6
20,000+	2	1	2	2	0	2.2	0.3
Total	100	100	99	101	100	100	
n	2,188	136	2,324	2208	154	2,362	

Source: Dhārma Chandra, "Socio-demographic and Economic characteristics of Migrant Heads of Households and the Consequences of their Migration in Fiji, 1992-1993, *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* Vol. 17 No. 1 (March 2002), <http://www.unescape.org/esid/psis/population/journal/2002/v17n1dn.pdf>, (20 March 2005), 71.

Appendix XIII: Housing Characteristics, 1996 (By Percent)

	No Safe Water Source	Use Pit Toilet	No Electricity	Use Kerosene for Lighting	Use Wood for Cooking Fuel
National	16.9	43.7	44.7	33.4	56.2
Fijian	11.5	34.9	62.1	52.5	65.1
Indo-Fijian	21.8	54.5	29.2	16.0	49.7
Other	6.4	12.7	34.1	27.1	32.7
Urban	2.5	23.3	18.2	12.8	18.4
Rural Village	18.0	41.2	77.9	67.6	85.6
Rural Settlement	35.4	74.3	64.2	23.5	75.1

Source: Asian Development Bank Pacific Regional Department, and the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, "Fiji: Poverty Status Discussion Paper," The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, <http://www.spc.org.nc/Poverty%20Programme/Fiji%20poverty%20assessment.pdf>, (13 July 2005), 14.

Appendix XIV: Gross Enrolment Ratio – Class 1-8: Ethnic Groups

	Fijians			Indians			Others		
Year	No in School	Population	Gross	No in School	Population	Gross	No in School	Population	Gross
	Class 1-8	Aged 1-13	enrol ratio	Class 1-8	Aged 1-13	enrol ratio	Class 1-8	Aged 1-13	enrol ratio
1996	82,120	75,566	108.67%	63,749	59,914	106.40%	6,933	7,344	94.40%
1997	83,777	76,920	101.59%	58,177	59,380	97.97%	6,461	7,400	87.31%
1998	86,227	78,301	110.12%	60,425	58,869	102.64%	6,698	7,449	89.92%

Source: United Nations, "The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports, Fiji, Education for All," Statistics from the Ministry of Education. Department of Statistics Annual Report, http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/fiji/rapport_2.html, (13 July 2005).

Appendix XV: Progress of the 1988 Cohort for 13 Years by Ethnicity & Gender

Year	Class	Ethnic Fijians			Indo-Fijians		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1988	Class 1	5,846	5,271	11,117	5,053	4,685	9,738
1989	Class 2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1990	Class 3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1991	Class 4			9,325			9,311
1992	Class 5	4,829	4,790	9,619	4,889	4,677	9,566
1993	Class 6	4,566	4,518	9,084	4,603	4,476	9,079
1994	Class 7/Form 1	4,486	4,508	8,994	4,479	4,487	8,966
1995	Class 8/Form 2	4,213	4,010	8,223	4,602	4,587	9,189
1996	Form 3	3,614	3,785	7,399	3,919	4,343	8,262
1997	Form 4	3,283	3,623	6,906	3,601	3,938	7,539
1998	Form 5	2,858	2,953	5,811	2,763	3,159	5,922
1999	Form 6	2,632	3,101	5,733	2,830	3,182	6,012
2000	Form 7			1,247			2,604

Source: Setsuo Otsuka, "Cultural Influences on Academic Achievement in Fiji", The Australian Association for Research in Education, <http://www.aare.edu.au/04pap/ots04633.pdf> (5 June 2005), p. 26.

Appendix XVI: Level of Formal Education by Gender, Ethnicity and Residence for People 15 years and over, 1989-90, (Figures as a percentage)

	Fijian	Indo-Fijian	Others	Total
RURAL MALES				
No formal educ	20.6	21.8	18.6	21.5
Below Fiji Junior	62.3	55.1	59.3	58.5
Fiji Junior	9.8	11.2	5.3	10.1
NZSC/Equiv	4.5	6.6	8.1	5.7
NZUE/Form 7	2.1	4.1	4.9	3.3
Tertiary	0.7	1.1	3.5	1.0
RURAL FEMALES				
No formal educ	17.4	24.6	22.5	24.6
Below Fiji Junior	67.8	45.0	56.6	57.4
Fiji Junior	7.2	8.8	5.8	9.3
NZSC/Equiv	3.9	5.2	7.4	5.4
NZUE/Form 7	1.6	2.7	5.3	2.6
Tertiary	0.4	0.5	2.4	0.6
URBAN MALES				
No formal educ	17.5	19.2	15.5	17.8
Below Fiji Junior	42.6	38.3	30.7	40.8
Fiji Junior	14.6	15.1	11.3	14.3
NZSC/Equiv	13.7	13.3	15.2	13.3
NZUE/Form 7	8.9	10.3	16.8	10.0
Tertiary	2.8	3.8	10.5	3.8
URBAN FEMALES				
No formal educ	16.5	17.3	16.8	18.8
Below Fiji Junior	45.9	34.6	33.3	46.2
Fiji Junior	16.1	13.7	12.2	13.7
NZSC/Equiv	13.3	12.0	16.5	12.0
NZUE/Form 7	6.5	9.3	18.3	7.1
Tertiary	1.8	3.4	11.4	2.2

Source: United Nations Development Fund, 1999-2000

Source: United Nations Development Fund, "The Fiji Poverty Study," http://www.undp.org.fj/poverty/poverty_study.htm (18 July 2005).

Appendix XVII: Informal Sector in Fiji

	No of people in Informal Sector*			% change over previous decade	
	1996	1986	1976	1996	1986
Total Informal Employment	109233	101585	71376	7.5%	42.3%
of which: Agriculture	69505	59081	45414	17.6%	30.1%
Non-Agriculture	39728	42504	25962	-6.5%	63.7%
Informal Incidence	36.7%	42.1%	40.5%	-12.9%	4.1%
<u>Non Agr. Informal Incidence</u>	<u>13.3%</u>	<u>17.6%</u>	<u>14.7%</u>	<u>-24.3%</u>	<u>19.7%</u>

* Figures are the difference between the census year figures on total employment in each sector and annual employment survey figures for formal employment in the respective sectors. There are discrepancies in the figures given by the Bureau of Statistics for the two sources of data which it compiled but in the absence of any other official estimate on informal sector, this method provides a reasonable estimate of the size of the sector.

Source: Mahendra Reddy, Vijay Naidu and Manoranjan Mohanty, "The Urban Informal Sector in Fiji: Results from a Survey," *Fijian Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (2003), http://www.fijianstudies.org/dload/vol1no1/urban_informal_sector.pdf, 136.

Appendix XVIII: Level of Education in the Informal Sector

Worker No.*	Years of formal education
Worker 1	8.8
Worker 2	8.5
Worker 3	7.5
Worker 4	7.4

* Worker 1 is the owner or the enterprise; others are ranked in order of their importance to the enterprise.

Source: Mahendra Reddy, Vijay Naidu and Manoranjan Mohanty, "The Urban Informal Sector in Fiji: Results from a Survey," *Fijian Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (2003), http://www.fijianstudies.org/dload/vol1no1/urban_informal_sector.pdf, 144.

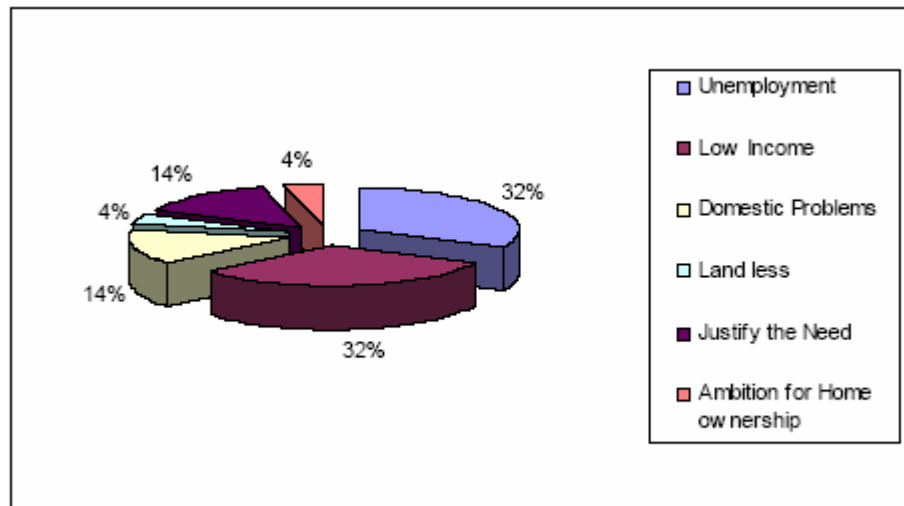
Appendix XIX: Informal Dwellings in Fiji's Urban Areas, 1996

Urban Area	Urban Village	Squatter	Settlement	Peripheral*	Total Dwellings
Suva	1,641	5,163	-	210	7,034
Lautoka	137	1,203	515	36	1,691
Ba	69	159	166	64	516
Labasa	66	471	-	131	696
Levuka	118	100	-	-	218
Nadi	561	293	496	148	1,501
Nausori	151	259	-	117	527
Navua	-	-	52	-	52
Rakiraki	25	138	151	-	314
Savusavu	32	139	-	56	227
Sigatoka	438	50	116	11	613
Tavua	80	47	-	-	127
Vatukoula	30	226	-	83	336
Korovou	-	25	-	-	25
Nabouwalu	24	6	-	-	30
Pacific Harbour	-	-	42	-	42
Seqaqa	-	14	-	-	14
Total	3,410	6,313	1,560	867	14,171

Source: United Nations Development Fund, "The Fiji Poverty Study," http://www.undp.org.fj/poverty/poverty_study.htm (18 July 2005).

*Peripheral indicates houses that could not be classified as urban or rural

Appendix XX: Reasons for Living in Squatter Settlements



Source: Abdul Hassan, "A Preliminary Study on the Supply of Low-Cost Housing in Fiji," <http://www.usp.ac.fj/landmgmt/pdf/4%20O%20lock%20Forum%202005%20Abdul%20Hassan.pdf> (15 July 2005), (15 July 2005), 14.

Appendix XXI: Conditions faced by Fijian Commoners, By Settlement Type

	Superior (5.6% dwellings)	Inferior (25.5% of dwellings)	Above Ave	Aver- age	Below Ave	Inferior
Unsafe construction	0.2	26.4	0.07	2	10.8	26.4
Tin	1.7	58.3	5.6	21.9	49.3	58.3
No Electricity	1.5	62.5	6.5	18.2	41.1	62.5
Unsafe Water	2.2	25.8	5.5	11.7	20	25.8
Kerosene lighting	1.7	55.6	6.4	16.5	34.5	55.6
Cooking open fire	4.2	62.8	15.1	34.2	54.4	62.8
One room only	3.7	38.8	3.2	8.9	19.7	38.8
Pit or no toilet	1.5	53.5	5.6	19.7	40.7	53.5

Source: Crosbie Walsh, "Poverty, Politics and the Politics of Race in Fiji," <http://www.devnet.org.nz/conf/Papers/walsh.pdf>, (5 July 2005).

Appendix XXII: Household Income and Size, by Decile Grouping

Ten Percent Group	Average per capita weekly income	Average number of working adults	Average number of children	Average dependency	Average household size
1	\$11.10	1.4	1.5	0.94	4.1
2	\$17.20	*Number obstructed in source	1.7	0.92	4.5
3	\$21.60	1.8	1.8	0.94	1.8
4	\$25.60	1.7	1.9	0.92	4.9
5	\$30.30	1.9	2.0	0.90	5.2
6	*Number obstructed in source	2.0	2.0	0.87	5.2
7	\$40.00	2.2	2.0	0.83	5.6
8	\$48.90	2.3	1.9	0.79	5.9
9	\$68.60	2.6	1.8	0.71	5.9
10	\$164.70	2.7		0.66	6.0

Source: United Nations Development Fund, "The Fiji Poverty Study," http://www.undp.org.fj/poverty/poverty_study.htm (18 July 2005).

Appendix XXIII: Average Number of Persons, Per Household, By Location Type (1996 Census):

Average Household Size	5.2
Urban Area	5.3
Rural Area	5.0

Source: The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, "Fiji: Assessment of Hardship and Poverty," <http://www.spc.org.nc/Poverty%20Programme/Fiji%20poverty%20profile.pdf> (17 July 2005).

Appendix XXIV: Average Number of Persons, Per Household, by Economic Grouping (2002-2003 HIES)

Average Household Size	5.0
Poor	4.1
Non-Poor	6.0

Source: The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, "Fiji: Assessment of Hardship and Poverty," <http://www.spc.org.nc/Poverty%20Programme/Fiji%20poverty%20profile.pdf> (17 July 2005).

Appendix XXV: Urban Household Expenditures

<i>EXPENDITURE</i>	<u>EXPENDITURE ITEM GROUP</u>	Number of Households	%	Average Annual (\$)
<i>i) Household Consumption Expenditure</i>				
	1. Food, Beverages and Tobacco	3010	99.8	3,141
	2. Housing Tenure Rents and Other Maintenance Costs	2976	98.7	1,883
	3. Clothing and Footwear	2,290	76.0	517
	4. Household Equipment and Operations	2,779	92.2	428
	5. Medical Care & Health Services	1,436	47.6	604
	6. Transport and Communications	2,949	97.8	1,842
	7. Recreation and Entertainment	1,780	59.0	483
	8. Education	2,055	68.1	666
	9. Miscellaneous Goods and Services	2,894	96.0	1,511
	10. Total Consumption Expenditure	3,015	100.0	10,062
<i>ii) Household non-consumption expenditure</i>				
	1. Insurance Premiums, Social Security Contribution, Direct Taxes etc.	1,323	43.9	1,399
	2. Investments (purchase of land, houses, shares, etc.	414	13.7	7,677
	Total Non Consumption Expenditure	1,479	49.1	3,400
<i>iii) Total</i>		3,015	100.0	11,730

Source: T.I. Bainimarama, "Urban Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2002-03: Provisional Results," Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 18 December 2003, (Government Printer, Suva) <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/HIES/HIESProvisionRelease.doc>, (2 June 2005), 6.

Appendix XXVI: Consumption Patterns, by Decile Grouping

CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE	D E C I L E G R O U P										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Food, Beverage & Tobacco	48.0	43.4	42.5	40.2	38.2	38.3	33.9	30.6	27.6	19.4	31.2
Tenure, Rents and Other Maintenance Costs	20.5	19.5	18.6	18.9	19.0	18.0	19.0	18.5	16.9	18.8	18.5
Clothing and Footwear	3.0	3.6	3.6	4.0	3.9	3.5	4.4	3.8	4.5	3.6	3.9
Household Equipment and Operations	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.8	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.7	3.4	3.9
Medical Care and Health Services	2.2	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.5	2.3	2.6	2.5	2.2	4.5	2.9
Transport and Communications	13.1	16.2	16.2	16.4	17.7	18.0	18.0	19.1	18.3	18.6	17.9
Recreation and Entertainment	0.6	1.2	1.6	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.5	3.4	3.6	3.6	2.8
Education	2.9	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.8	3.5	3.8	4.4	5.8	5.5	4.5
Miscellaneous Goods and Services	6.0	7.3	8.5	9.4	8.8	10.0	12.0	13.7	16.3	22.5	14.4

Source: T.I. Bainimarama, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, "Urban Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2002-03: Provisional Results," 18 December 2003, (Government Printer, Suva), <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/HIES/HIESProvisionRelease.doc>, (2 June 2005), 6.

Appendix XXVII: Expenditure by Income Grouping

Expenditure Class	I N C O M E CLASS								Total
	Less 2,000	2001-5000	5001-7500	7501-10000	10001-15000	15001-20000	20001-30000	30001+	
Less 2,000	44	56	6						106
2001-5000		297	187	89	45				618
5001-7500			271	171	141	33	8		624
7501-10000				188	200	65	23	10	486
10001-15000					263	153	78	26	520
15001-20000						126	111	31	268
20001-30000							123	99	222
30001+								171	171
Total	44	353	464	448	649	377	343	337	3015

Source: T.I. Bainimarama, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, "Urban Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2002-03: Provisional Results," 18 December 2003, (Government Printer, Suva), <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/HIES/HIESProvisionRelease.doc>, (2 June 2005), 6.

Appendix XXVIII: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Client Statistics- Suva Branch

New and Repeat Domestic Violence Cases

Seen from 1993 - May 2005

YEAR	NEW	REPEAT	TOTAL
1993	241	273	514
1994	257	488	745
1995	331	670	1001
1996	469	728	1197
1997	405	637	1042
1998	484	980	1464
1999	544	724	1268
2000	338	348	686
2001	449	391	840
2002	429	377	806
2003	394	448	842
2004	572	472	1044
May-05	224	179	403
TOTAL	5137	6715	11852

Source: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, "Suva Branch Client Statistics,"
<http://www.fijiwomen.com/index.php?id=1317> (2 July 2005).

Appendix XXIX: Access to TVs, Radios and the Internet in Fiji

<i>Rank ordering for:</i>		
TV sets per head	Radio sets per head	Internet subscribers per head
1 NZ/Aotearoa 1:2	1 Guam 1:0.75	1 NZ/Aotearoa 1:1.2
2 New Cal/Kanaky 1:4	2 NZ/Aotearoa 1:1	2 Guam 1:3.3
3 Palau/Belau 1:1.8	3 American Samoa 1.1	3 New Cal/Kanaky: 1:7
4 American Samoa 1:1.4	4 Samoa 1:1.01	4 Cook Islands 1:7.5
5 Guam 1:1.5	5 Tokelau: 1:1.4	5 French Polynesia 1:7.6
6 Cook Islands 1:5.3	6 Cook Islands 1:1.5	6 Tuvalu 1:8
7 French Polynesia 1:6	7 Fiji 1:1.6	7 Fiji 1:17.6
8 Fiji 1:9.9	8 Palau/Belau 1:1.6	8 Wallis & Futuna 1:17.6
9 Tuvalu 1:14	9 Kiribati 1:1.6	9 FSM 1:18
10 Samoa 1:20	10 French Polynesia 1:2	10 Vanuatu 1:28.9
11 FSM 1:38	11 New Cal/Kanaky 1:2	11 Tonga 1:38
12 Tonga 1:55	12 Niue 1.2	12 Samoa 1:44.4
13 Vanuatu 1:88	14 Tuvalu 1:2.8	13 Marshall Islands 1:44.4
14 PNG 1:90	14 Vanuatu 1:3	14 Nauru 1:49
15 Kiribati 1:100	15 Solomon Islands 1:9	15 Kiribati 1:50.3
16 Solomon Islands 1:174	16 PNG 1:13	16 PNG 1:72
17 Niue No data	17 FSM 1:11.5	17 Solomon Islands 1:238
18 Nthn Marianas No data	18 Nthn Marianas No data	18 Nthn Marianas No data
- Marshall Is. No data	- Marshall Islands No data	- Niue No data
- Nauru No data	- Nauru No data	- American Samoa No data
- Tokelau No data	- Tonga No data	- Palau/Belau No data
- Wallis & Futuna No data	- Wallis and Futuna No data	- Tokelau No data

Source: Philip Cass, "Media Ownership in the Pacific: Inherited colonial commercial model but remarkably diverse," *Pacific Journalism Review* Vol. 10 No. 2 (2004), http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2004/November/pjr10_2.pdf, (30 March 2005), 88.

Appendix XXX: Average weekly household income by ethnic group (\$F)

Decile	Ethnic Indian	Ethnic Fijian
1	32.40	38.10
2	60.80	67.60
3	81.60	89.50
4	101.50	107.90
5	124.20	126.70
6	152.50	147.80
7	186.70	175.30
8	240.60	217.60
9	327.90	288.50
10 (richest)	914.40	537.10

Source: Ganesh Chand, "Overview of Current Economic Conditions in Fiji," Global Policy Network, <http://www.gpn.org/data/fiji/fiji-analysis.doc>, (5 July 2005), 15.

Appendix XXXI: The basic Needs Poverty Line by Area, 1990-1991

	Minimum Gross Household Income Required to meet basic needs each week (F\$)	Per cent of the population earning less than the poverty line
National	83.00	25.5
Urban	100.08	27.6
Rural Village	75.44	22.4
Rural Settlement	84.10	26.2
Fijian	92.63	27.7
Indo-Fijian	97.34	31.0
Others	92.63	27.6

Source: United Nations Development Fund, "The Fiji Poverty Study," http://www.undp.org.fj/poverty/poverty_study.htm (18 July 2005).

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