Customs of respect: the traditional basis of Fijian communal politics

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Summary

The unity of the Fijian community is the central fact of political life in Fiji. This study analyses the cultural, social and political forces which sustain Fijian unity. It draws upon an examination of the activities of the Fijian administration, particularly the Provincial Councils as reformed and democratized in 1967. Communalism at the national level, not surprisingly, is built upon parochialism at the local level. But Fijian parochialism has a number of distinctive features, which shed light on Fijian political unity within the national polity. At the levels of province, district and village, relations between parochial units are governed by a concern for unity, within which there has been increasing resort to traditional organization. Chiefs are being invited back into Fijian politics because their office has a vital role to play within the 'customs of respect' which are the basis of Fijian political activity.
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Acknowledgments

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I am particularly grateful to Ratu Qoro Latianara, Roko Tui Naitasiri. The many references to Naitasiri Provincial Office records indicate the depth and scope of the records maintained during his eight years as Roko Tui Naitasiri. I am also especially indebted to my father-in-law, Ratu Livai Volavola, whose long involvement in public life afforded me invaluable assistance in many different ways. Others whose assistance I should not fail to acknowledge individually are: Ratu Manasa Kubuabola, Mr Meli Ramacake, Ratu Jope R. Kikau, Ratu Jone Tabaiwalu, Ratu Inoke Seru, Ratu Alipate Veikoso, Mr Varea Driti, Mr Viliame Takalaiyale, Ratu Kitione Kubuabola.

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Finally I would like to thank my wife, Litia, for the years of support and for answering endless questions.
A note on the translation and pronunciation of the Fijian language

Translations from Fijian to English are often very difficult to make, frequently necessitating extensive paraphrasing. Generally speaking, I have attempted to produce translations which, as far as possible, appear natural in English. In a number of cases I have quoted from notes made in English from Fijian speech. A Fijian anthropologist once expressed puzzlement at translations provided by an American anthropologist; he could not imagine how they would have been said in Fijian, a result perhaps of the fact that he learned Fijian before English. To cater for the reader in this position I have often felt a need to include the original Fijian alongside the translation.

With the exception of a few quotations from other writers, Fijian words in this book are rendered in the official Fijian system of orthography. This system employs twenty-three out of the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet and, with the exception of five letters, the sound of Fijian consonants approximates the English. An approximation of the Fijian sounds for the five exceptional consonants can be found in the following rules:

- b is pronounced mb as in number;
- c is pronounced th as in that;
- d is pronounced nd as in candy;
- g is pronounced ng as in singer;
- q is pronounced ng as in finger.

The pronunciation of the five vowels approximates the sounds of Spanish or Church Latin.

Almost all Provincial Council Records are in Fijian, and I have drawn heavily on these and other Fijian sources for this book. Excerpts from these sources have been translated into English.
Glossary of Fijian words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bose vakavanua</td>
<td>Literally 'traditional council', that is the chiefs of a traditional polity such as a vanua or a matanitu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buli</td>
<td>A Fijian administration official in charge of a Tikina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burua</td>
<td>A feast held after a funeral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gone turaga</td>
<td>A person of chiefly rank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kai</td>
<td>Literally 'member of'; placed before place names so that a Kai Viti is a Fijian, Kai Idia is an Indian or a Kai Toga is a Tongan. The word Taukei (owner or native) is also used to mean Fijian. Kai seems to have political overtones and applies to men rather than women or children. Gone ni (child of) or Lewe ni (member of) are used more frequently in general conversation to describe Provincial or district membership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakase</td>
<td>Gossip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka vakavanua</td>
<td>Literally 'thing in the way of the land'; that is a traditional event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudrükudru</td>
<td>Grumbling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liuliu</td>
<td>(sometimes spelt i liuliu) The general word for leader, usually used to mean chairman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mata</td>
<td>The general word for representative. A matanivavanua is the traditional spokesman for a chief. Without qualification in the context of this book it refers to members of Provincial Councils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matanitu</td>
<td>A large traditional polity formed by a federation of vanua. Matanitu is now used to mean government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mataqali</td>
<td>A patrilineal group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mata turaga

Chiefly representative. Within a Provincial Council this refers to members appointed by the Secretary for Fijian Affairs. Within a Tikina Council it refers to members chosen because of chiefly status.

Qaranivalu

Title of the paramount chief of Naitasiri.

Roko Tui

The head of a Province. Also the title of the chiefs of some areas (see Tui below). Roko Tuis and Assistant Roko Tuis are often referred to simply as Rokos.

Tabua

A polished whale's tooth used in ceremonial presentations.

Talai

An abbreviated form of Talai ni Kouvau (literally Commissioner of the Governor), the term applied to the Minister for Fijian Affairs and his colonial predecessors. Talai veivuke or Assistant Talai is one of the powers held by District Commissioners.

Tikina

Literally it means 'part' or 'element'. With a capital 'T' it is the name of the unit of administration that is a subdivision of a Province. It is sometimes regarded as meaning, in general terms, 'district'. The Old Tikina (Tikina Makawa) refers to the administrative unit abolished in 1944.

Tokatoka

(sometimes spelt i tokatoka) A patrilineal group, smaller than mataqali and yavusas and known by a variety of names throughout Fiji.

Tui

A title of chiefly office, the ruler of a vunua or matanitu. Now used in Fijian as an equivalent of 'King'. Precise titles vary from place to place. For example the paramount chief of Rewa is the Roko Tui Dreketi, not Tui Rewa.

Turaga

Usually translated as chief, though it has a wide range of uses and the full scope of its meaning cannot be contained
in the normal English usage of the word 'chief'. 'Gentleman' is as approximately accurate as 'chief'. A turaga ni lewa, a gentleman of the law, refers to a judge.

**Turaga bale**
A 'high chief'.

**Turaga ni Koro**
The 'headman' of a village under the Fijian administration; not necessarily a man of chiefly birth.

**Vanua**
Literally 'land' or 'place'. The name of a traditional polity. It can be used in constructions such as vanua qali, vanua kaisi and vanua bati.

**Veivakatorocaketaki**
Literally 'the process of being lifted up', this is the term used to translate the concept of 'development'.

**Veimatatamata**
Literally 'races' or 'ethnic groups', this is the term used to translate the notion of 'multi-racialism'.

**Viavia levu**
Literally 'greatly wanting to be', it implies arrogance or unseemly ambition; a very serious charge.

**Vulagi**
Variously translated 'guest' and 'stranger' it is probably most accurately defined as 'non-native'.

**Vunivalu**
Literally 'root of war', a chiefly title in many places within Viti Levu. In some places a Vunivalu is the paramount chief (e.g. Bau); in other places the Vunivalu is a lesser chief (e.g. Rewa).

**Yaqona**
The Fijian word for the drink more widely known by the Polynesian name Kava. It is drunk for refreshment, as an informal group activity and as part of an important ceremony.

**Yavusa**
A patrilineal group. Usually it is applied to a large group where the patrilineality is fictional but its usage is flexible and varies from place to place.
Introduction

Community and communalism

As the law of Fiji changes we the Fijians ought to co-operate firmly and work together on a wide front. 'If we are united there will be progress.'


So the Fijians today will listen to the N.F.P.; they will offer its members a bilo of yaqona and bid them a courteous farewell ... They won't vote for it.

Matt Wilson, Fiji Times, 4 May 1975, p.2.

The Fijian community is the central fact of political life in Fiji. It is enshrined in the constitution and its political unity establishes the main contours of power in the national polity. Despite this, there has been a general reluctance to recognize its political importance and a slowness in establishing its place in public consciousness. Fijians take their community for granted while non-Fijians tend either to ignore it and hope it will go away, or to accept its political consequences gratefully, without any attempt to understand the values that sustain it. Academics, for their part, tend to shun community and communalism: repelled perhaps by the difficulties they pose for democratic values. As general topics they are controversial, as concepts they are vague and as terms they lack consistent usage. In the literature of developing countries communalism is identified as a locus of problems that threaten national integration, while community, as distinct from communalism, is usually ignored. The plural society idea is more popular, a result perhaps of the fact that the concept of community grew out of western experience and therefore appears to be culture-bound. In Fiji, people refer unselfconsciously to different races rather than communities. When the word community arises it is usually in the context of politics, where a need is sometimes felt to avoid the unpleasant...
connotations of race. Lacking altogether in favourable associations, communalism is ignored, despite the fact that communalism, however broadly defined, is built into the constitution.

In the face of all these difficulties it should not be surprising that I decline to offer a definition of community at the outset. The various disciplines of the social sciences cannot agree on a single useful general definition and the literature on Fiji offers nothing of local relevance. There is a large range of human activities that can be called communal and it is impossible to manipulate them usefully into a neat definition. In the context of this study I deliberately concentrate on the political aspects of community, although not to the exclusion of other aspects, which are in any case difficult to disentangle. In place of a definition I prefer to make a number of brief declarations of methodology. First, I believe it is desirable to work self-consciously to formulate a concept of the Fijian community which can address itself to two explanatory tasks. On the one hand an explanation must be sought of the manner in which Fijians maintain solidarity in national politics. This is the external or boundary aspect of communalism. On the other hand there is an internal aspect. The community is, in a sense, a polity within itself. It contains an order within which there is competition. Of course the two aspects are related. The way people compete within the communal order helps to preserve that order and the rules that govern the way Fijian political actors relate to one another condition the way they relate to actors from other communities.

The second methodological point I want to make is to say that this study is sociological rather than historical, being concerned with explanations of familiar sociological conceptions such as community or authority rather than the description of events. It is, however, historically specific. To put this another way, it is ideographic rather than nomothetic because it is primarily a study of Fiji. Generalizations about the social and political order of Fiji are not extended to other countries, although such an extension may be possible. The concepts of community, communal power and parochialism formulated in this study are in fact combinations of description and generalizations in which the two are not sharply distinguished. The methodology is that which C. Wright Mills attributes to 'classical social science':
Classical social science ... neither 'builds up' from microscopic study nor 'deduces down' from conceptual elaborations. Its practitioners try to build and deduce at the same time in the same process of study, and to do so by means of adequate formulation of problems and of their adequate solution ... The classic focus in short is on substantive problems (Mills 1959:128).

The central problem of this study is to 'explain' the unity of the Fijian community. It seems commonly to be assumed that this is attributable to no more than the inertia of tradition. According to such a view tradition is something that survives mainly in villages and faces inevitable reduction by attrition in urban areas. I take a contrary view; Fijian culture, which includes a great many traditions, is a vital force in Fiji today.

One of my primary objectives, therefore, is to articulate the Fijians' own understanding of their political activity. There is no single Fijian word for community; but the notion of community is nevertheless familiar. The expression keda na i Taukei, literally 'we the Fijians' carries connotations of community which are well understood. The English translation of keda (we) conceals its full meaning. Keda is one of six Fijian pronouns which mean 'we'. It is applied to people who number more than a small group and specifies that the person addressed is included in the 'we'.

My final methodological declaration is to say that I have employed a multi-disciplinary approach, although I suspect that this is more a description of subject matter than an important statement of methodology. I have drawn on writers from the disciplines of anthropology, history and political science for ideas of varying levels of generality about the Fijian community but the major source of the thesis about Fijian communal politics which I develop is the activities of Provincial Councils between 1967 and 1975. Surprisingly extensive records have made the activities of Provincial Councils valuable as a source of generalizations, though the detailed examination of Provincial Councils is confined to the Central Division for purely practical reasons.  

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1This covers five provinces which include a range of social and economic conditions. However, with the minor exception of Beqa, there are no significant islands in the Central Division.
The concept of the Fijian community which I seek remains, within the confines of this study, relatively inchoate; yet even in this form it is an alternative to other, established notions of the nature of Fijian society. There is a need, for example, to replace oversimplified notions of hierarchy and authoritarianism and the pointless arguments over whether to preserve or replace the 'Fijian way of life', which appear to regard Fijian culture as a garment that individuals can put on or take off according to their own convenience. The strength of a culture is its flexibility, but it is not the manipulable creature of individuals.
Chapter 1

The chiefs and the people

There is a misconception that the chiefs form a club and think as group ... The chiefs are the chiefs of a group of people. They think more in line with the groups of which they are chiefs rather than their own class.

Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara,
interview with Matt Wilson, Fiji Times, 6 Mar. 1972, p. 2.

[Chiefs] positions were inextricably interwoven with the structure of their group so that the goals for which the groups organize under the leadership of their chiefs remain common goals.

Rusiate R. Nayacakalou,
(Nayacakalou, 1975:115).

Most of the Fijian chiefs no longer serve their people. In fact most of them think that the people have nothing to do with their privileges and status. What they are forgetting is that they are what they are because they have people below them. In other words, a chief is a chief because he or she is supposed to have some people to lead.

Tevita Vakaloloma,

General accounts of traditional Fijian society are commonly presented as short, neat preambles to studies of the wider society of Fiji or sweeping footnote summaries in general anthropological works. More specialized studies, on the other hand, tend to concentrate on breaking down or qualifying the generalized model. The literature, which spans several disciplines and spreads over a century, now needs to be brought together. Early observers should not be overlooked. Lacking the specialized conceptual apparatus of modern disciplines they wrote very descriptively and, although their descriptions were selective and now often appear hopelessly ethnocentric, they contain important insights which may be denied a twentieth-century observer blinkered by sociological conceptions and observing a society that is more subtly penetrated by western culture. The conceptual scheme formulated here is a synthesis of the full range of the literature, attempting to reduce the various
points of view to a lowest common denominator in terms of which the political activities of the Fijian community are comprehensible.

**Groups and Fijian culture**

An examination of Fijian culture and the enormous changes it has undergone since contact with other cultures is a daunting task but there are good reasons for giving some attention to the problem. Clifford Geertz (1972:319) writes: 'One of the things that everybody knows but cannot quite think how to demonstrate is that a country's politics reflect the design of its culture'. Perhaps he should have added that 'in order to understand a country's politics it is necessary first to understand its culture.

The prominence of groups in Fijian society and culture is obvious but easily misunderstood, a result perhaps of the fact that the idea of group has found so many diverse expressions in sociological thinking. The version that has stimulated the thinking in this study is that of Mary Douglas. In the simplest terms she presents the concept of group as follows: 'To the extent that the family is a bounded unit, contained in a set of rooms, known by a common name, sharing a common interest in some property, it is a group, however ephemeral' (1970:viii). She combs an impressive range of ethnographic material to reveal the effects of social boundaries in groups. She suggests for example that taboos on certain foods may be imposed in order to draw a boundary around the group. Regulation of what enters the mouth, like the regulation of other orifices in the body, has a sociologically important consonance with the guarding of the boundary of the social body. Examples ranging from Jewish and Catholic food taboos to accusations of witchcraft in African societies or brethren sects help to build up an idea of the relationship between symbols and social structure in social boundaries.\(^1\)

All of the examples she chooses, however, are of very sharply drawn group boundaries. A general characteristic of Fijian groups is that the boundaries are not so sharply drawn. They divide an inside from an outside but this is

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\(^1\)Douglas (1970) examines symbolism associated with the human body. This is an extension of ideas first raised in Douglas (1966).
not a division of pure/impure or friend/enemy. It is not accompanied by Jewish type food restrictions or rituals of purification. There are other symbols which indicate the presence of boundaries which, while they are not ambiguous about where people stand, possess a degree of flexibility in allowing the boundary to be approached and sometimes crossed. To enter a Fijian house is to approach and temporarily occupy social space on a boundary, a move couched in ritual of respect.² The drinking of yaqona is the Jewish food taboo in reverse. Imbibing it, taking it into the body, is a symbol of illitity within and between groups. Fijian custom also proscribes certain food on special occasions but again it is the reverse of the purity taboo. Particular types of foods are prohibited in the presence of the chief of a particular group as a mark of respect to him and his group.

Descent and territory in traditional social organization

Most general accounts of the principles of traditional Fijian social structure are centred around the postulation of a number of hierarchical groups or layers.³ At the bottom is the extended family or tokatoka, then the clan or mataqali, then the tribe or yavusa and above this the confederation or vanua.⁴ Each group combines with similar groups to form a higher group so that the structure is that of a pyramid; for example several mataqali combine to form a yavusa which combines with other yavusas to form a vanua. Vanuas sometimes combined to form matanitu.

² For example a person waits to be asked to enter, then enters in a crouching posture, assuming a respectful position at the rear of the room. A position at the front (or a chair) is always declined even though it may be accepted after a repeated request.

³ Roth (1973) provides the most elaborate recent exposition of this model. Others, for example Legge (1958:5-6), take it for granted. It should be mentioned in relation to Roth that he is careful to state in his introduction that 'the customs described here are those of Mbau except where otherwise indicated' (p.xx).

⁴ Roth (1973) uses the words 'family group', 'community', 'federation', 'confederation' as equivalent terms for the different levels. The confusing terminology of clan or tribe is ignored by him and others in the context of Fiji.
Although the existence of groups and hierarchies is undoubtedly important, the rigid model, which is so frequently taken for granted, is misleading and ethnographers' findings have not always conformed to it. Anthropologists have often treated this problem as that of establishing the nature of the original social order in view of the fact that western contact, colonial rule and decimation of population have upset what may be thought to be the truly traditional order. But the anthropologist's scientific predilection for classification and taxonomy, for example comparing yavusa to Polynesian descent groups, often leads him to mistake his own abstractions for concrete entities.

The important point overlooked in these discussions is that, to the Fijians themselves, yavusa, mataqali and tokatoka are not universal categories (except in as much as they are words in normal language). Recognition of this makes it possible to understand the significance of a much quoted statement of Cyril Belshaw: 'If I go into any village of this area today and ask a man his mataqali, he might just as easily reply with a unit officially recorded as his tokatoka or his yavusa. This is not muddle-headedness on his part; it is an essential ingredient of the traditional system.' An observation by Quain also supports this interpretation of the meaning of group membership: 'There are no general native terms for the groups in the political framework; each is known by the place name of the land upon which its village is built' (Quain 1948:181).

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5 Thompson (1940) and Quain (1948) reported differences. Thompson assumed that the differences she encountered in Lau were a result of Tongan influence. Quain tended to make a similar assumption in regarding the people in the interior of Bua as representative of a culture of pre-Tongan times. Sahlins (1962) and Nayacakalou (1975) also found differences but did not view them as easily explained by the direct mixing of two cultures, one Polynesian, the other Melanesian.

6 Groves (1963) in a review of Sahlins (1962) tries to formulate some conclusions about Fijian ethnography and 'the nature of the so-called "descent groups" found among Malayo-polynesian peoples' (p.281).

7 Belshaw (1964). This has been quoted in Spate (1959:10) and Sahlins (1962:443).
To the people involved, named groups are more important as concrete bodies of people or divisions in their population rather than as examples of forms or types which are universal. Kubuna is a yavusa and it is also the name by which the matanitu led by Bau is known. Likewise with the whole range of groups that may be described as yavusa the particular significance of their name is more important than the general meaning of the word yavusa.\(^8\) Who Kubuna are is more significant than what they are; there is only one Kubuna.

When an anthropologist states that 'the terms yavusa, mataqali and tokatoka are ambiguous with regard to the composition and interests of the social aggregates they denote' (Groves 1963:283) he misunderstood their essential significance. When somebody refers, for example, to the yavusa Nabukebuke\(^9\) there is no doubt that he is referring to something quite different to Kubuna, which is also quite different to the number of groups referred as yavusa in Moala. But this does not mean that there is any ambiguity in the reference. The meaning is clear because the particular meaning of the name Nabukebuke is the meaningful part of the reference to the yavusa of Nabukebuke.

The source of the anthropologist's confusion is his search for 'types' of descent groups. A Fijian anthropologist has approached Fijian social structure from another perspective. Rusiate Nayacakalou writes (1975:22): 'The structure of Fijian socio-political organization may be usefully viewed primarily as a territorial organization, within which there are small groups whose basis of recruitment is patrilineal descent, coupled with adoption and purely expedient political connections of various sorts'.

Named groups relate to named groups in a manner which is expressed in an idiom of descent and seniority. A brief consideration of a named group that is often overlooked, the household, can illuminate the way in which named groups work.

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\(^8\) The general meaning of yavusa is common origin or descent. However, its use is flexible. In Nakoroka, for example, it can refer to a matrilineal moiety (Quain 1948:246). Usually it is a patrilineal group. The word mataqali in normal language means 'type' or 'sort'.

\(^9\) The senior yavusa in the province of Namosi. It is a very large yavusa and the whole Province tends to be known by its name even though not all villages include it.
Tokatoka, mataqali and yavusa, the better known corporate groups, are composed of households. The corporate status of a household is embodied in the named site (yavu) on which its house stands. Each household has a head, the owner of the house. Within the household he is accorded precedence and respect just as the chief of a village is accorded precedence and respect within the village. Anyone residing in a house can be asked by the head of the household to work or contribute money to the household.

It is quite common for people to move to other villages to join the household of a relative. Many households include collateral kin as well as lineal kin. They enter the household with the permission of the head of the household, a step which requires crossing a social boundary. It would involve, for example, a small ceremony including a presentation. Joining a household is the only way people can join a village and it is, thereby, their source of identity in the village, placing them in clear ordered relationships with other members of the village. At all public occasions, such as the giving of collection in church, they will take their place in the household.

The corporate household is thus both the basic unit with which larger social units are built and the model of their corporateness. An aspect of the internal organization of the household which is related to its corporateness is the fact that roles are very generalized. Apart from the basic distinctions between men and women and children and adults all share the generalized role obligations of household members. Duties in household work are handed out by the household head as particular tasks rather than as generalized roles. The Fijian word for duty (itavi) literally means share. If there is ever an argument over why something has not been done it will usually involve considerations of whether each individual is pulling his weight, doing his share, rather than pointing out that a particular individual has defaulted on a task which is his alone. This parallels the organization of mataqalis or villages and districts. In any collective effort tasks are divided between the

Nayacakalou makes the point that 'unity of principle' throughout Fijian society 'accounts for a great deal of the strength of the Fijian system of leadership' (Nayacakalou 1975:15). He does not, however, trace this structure down to the household.
constituent elements of the social unit. A district divides among villages; a village divides among mataqali; a mataqali divides among tokatoka; a tokatoka divides among households.

**Villages and vanuas**

Villages must not be left out of the picture of social structure. Vanuas should be viewed as associations of villages. Yavusa may be split between vanua but Nayacakalou never found an instance of a village divided between vanua. The mataqali, which is often said to be a descent group with a fictitious common ancestor, can also be interpreted as 'a local division of the village which may include two or more i tokatoka, not necessarily related to one another' (Nayacakalou 1975:21).

The point which Nayacakalou's analysis brings out is that the territorial nature of the organization is as important as considerations of descent in the formation of socio-political groups. Extended families expand and contract and often have to adapt themselves to the 'needs' of territorial organization. Small groups will amalgamate with larger groups to form mataqali so that they can perform the role of subdivision within a village.

On the other hand groups growing large may have to branch out into another village; a mataqali may thereby expand into several mataqali composing a yavusa. Also as a yavusa spreads over several villages it may lose some of its corporateness. This creates a difficulty about which Nayacakalou says: 'Sahlins tried to get over this difficulty by having two terms for the yavusa, "stock" for the yavusa as a descent line, and "local yavusa" for the third-order residential kin groups found in the villages (Nayacakalou 1975:13-4). He recommends looking at villages and vanua, 'local organizations', as the key to understanding the traditional social structure. The village, he says, 'has a certain mode of internal organization by which it achieves a unitary authority structure, the principal authority of which is the senior chief of the dominant lineage' (ibid.:14). Perhaps one could say that descent groups tended to organize themselves around a culturally based organizational need, although this would require considerably more evidence and consideration of the difficult question of the effects of European contact and colonial rule. The only questions that need to be settled here are those concerning the way villages are presently ordered. In everyday life villagers now seem
to have little to do with descent groups apart from the extended family. Descent groups only become prominent during special, customary events, *ka vakavanua*, organized so that a village or a *vanua* can raise funds for building a school or a church, or make a contribution towards the funeral of a high chief, such as that of Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau in 1973.

On these occasions the paramount chief of a *vanua* will call a meeting of the senior men from each village and allocate the various duties of each village. Within each village the chief or leader of the ranking descent group will allocate portions to the various divisions within the village. Within each division the leader of the senior lineage will divide the division's share among the family groups composing the division.\(^{11}\)

Chiefs of *vanua* do not necessarily pass orders to chiefs of *yavusa* who relay the orders to the various constituent *mataqali*. *Mataqali* and *yavusa* are involved but usually through the villages.\(^{12}\) The ranking chief of a village will belong to the senior lineage of the senior descent group; it may be called a *mataqali* or a *yavusa*;\(^{13}\) it may or may not be the same descent group as the chief of the *vanua* who issued the order.

This is not to say that the *vanua* cannot be viewed as a hierarchy of descent groups ranked unambiguously (at least in theory) from top to bottom. The ranking will include groups which are equivalent to one another but higher or lower than other groups so that everybody knows their position in relation to everybody else. A *yavusa* may not have

\(^{11}\) **Nai Lalakai**, 19 Jan. 1978, p.3, contains a detailed explanation of this process in the single-village *vanua* of Vuci in Tailevu.

\(^{12}\) The word 'usually' should be noted; this is a generalization to which there are exceptions. For example in the very small Old Tikina of Tai a festival was organized on the basis of competition between six *mataqali* rather than three villages. But this does not conflict with the hypothesis about local organization. Tai is an exceptional unit. With three small villages of about 60 persons each (1966 Census), located close together, it has the 'unitary authority' structure of a single village rather than an alliance of villages.

\(^{13}\) In the article referred to above (**Nai Lalakai**, 19.1.78) the four descent groups are referred to in one place as *yavusas* and in another as *mataqalis*. 
representatives in all villages, it may include people outside the vanua, but its ranking against other yavusa in the vanua will be, in principle, unambiguous.

It is a fact that a village is frequently known by the name of senior yavusa but it is to the village that a paramount chief will normally issue orders. The customary powers of a chief are within the village rather than within a yavusa, although membership of a yavusa will probably be a necessary part of the acquisition of chiefly powers. The point is this: when a chief is asked to supply goods for a customary event he divides the share among all people in his village but not necessarily among other people in the yavusa of which he is the senior member if those people do not live in his village.

The corporateness of yavusa, however, is something which varies from place to place. In the more elaborately organized places such as Bau certain yavusa may have distinct privileges and duties which transcend villages on important occasions. They may for example be responsible for the digging of graves for high chiefs and be entitled thereby to a specific share of the food gathered for the funeral. But these sorts of occasions are now infrequent and relatively insignificant. Sahlins did not find this sort of corporateness in the yavusa of Moala.

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14 It should be noted that the acquisition of chiefly powers does not necessarily coincide with a ceremony of installation. For example in Natewa in 1973 there were two ceremonies of installation. Both 'incumbents' have probably acquired, to some degree, the chiefly powers of the office in dispute.

15 Again this is a generalization to which there are exceptions. In the case of Namosi it is difficult to distinguish between the exercise of chiefly powers by the Tui Namosi as head of the vanua on the one hand and head of the Yavusa of Nabukebuke on the other. This single yavusa takes in most of the province. See Capell and Lester (1941).

16 Personal communication from Ratu David Toganivalu, organizer of the funeral of Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau.

17 Sahlins (1962:225) noted 'political solidarity' in the 'local yavusa' of a village but this did not spread beyond one village.
The importance of villages in Fijian social structure must be seen within the context of the *vanua*. This is a well-defined territory with its own office of chief. It may be only one village or a group of villages. The chief has a title denoting his office, usually *Tui* followed by the name of his area, for example, *Tui Nakelo*. The title *Ratu* (or *Adi* if the incumbent is a woman) precedes the chief's name. These chiefs are traditionally surrounded by an aura of the supernatural. Their anger, for example, can cause sickness and misfortune (Nayacakalou 1975:37).

If *vanua* are interpreted as confederations of *yavusa* it may be thought that there is a sharp, qualitative difference between a social structure which is based on a single *yavusa* and one which is organized into a *vanua*. In this view a *yavusa* is ordered by principles of kinship while a *vanua* is founded on political domination. Support for this explanation might be sought by comparing the two types of social organization to the typological distinction frequently made between Melanesian and Polynesian systems. R.E. Norton uses these arguments to suggest important cultural differences between west and inland Viti Levu as distinct from southeast Viti Levu and the eastern islands (Norton 1977:54-7).

Without attempting to deny that there may be important social and economic differences between the two regions there is no evidence of a major cultural difference. The important differences are basically economic and they are found within both regions.

Recent archaeological and linguistic studies have tended to establish a close relationship between Fijian culture and Polynesian culture from the very beginnings of both cultures, thereby confuting attempts to explain Fijian culture as a composition of an older Melanesian culture and a more recent Polynesian infusion. Fijian cultural unity, and the variations it contains, are equally ancient. Nayacakalou's explanation of the importance of territorial organization is perhaps

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18See Green (1963) and Pawley and Sayaba (1971). Howells (1973:168) offers some interesting evidence from physical anthropology: 'In spite of dark skin, frizzy hair and broad noses, Fiji is so much like Polynesia in measurable features and general cranial shape that the population should be viewed as Melanesianized Polynesian rather than the reverse'.
easier to understand in the case of villages organized into vanua; but there is no reason why it cannot also explain the workings of social structure based on a single yavusa. Yavusa everywhere seem to be based on clearly fictionalized kinship but groups may attach themselves to yavusa for reasons of political expedience. It is not just a case of people forgetting genealogy; they may be aware of the lack of genealogical ties but choose to overlook them. Adoption into families is something which can occur at all levels, that is from household and tokatoka all the way up to yavusa.

The lack of territorial expression at a level above village in certain inland areas in Viti Levu is probably a result of the lack of concentrations of population. Unfortunately there are not sufficient ethnographic data to allow any firm conclusions about this or any other explanations of cultural variations in Fiji. Fijians accept as normal that every particular area will have its variations in customs and dialect. Some of these are relatively trivial, such as the way people clap when presenting a tabua, but others are more significant. In some areas, for example, the ceremony and ritual surrounding the institutions of chiefly office are more elaborate than others. Undoubtedly the larger political units of the coastal areas had more elaborate forms of chiefly rule but some inland areas and western areas also had this type of chiefly rule. Fijians do not seem to be aware of any major division in culture apart from the distinction between 'inland' people and 'coastal' people which is found in all parts of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. My study is confined to the Central Division which is centred on southeast Viti Levu where four of the five provinces in the division include significant inland populations with a variety of traditional social structures. Naitasiri Province, for example, reaches almost to the northwest coast. The people of Serua Province, whose chiefly family traces its

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19 In the sparsely populated interior, physical boundaries could not be sharply drawn as in the densely populated coastal areas. If the boundaries are human rather than physical then a descent notion such as yavusa would be more appropriate than vanua.

20 For example Namosi. Lester (1942:243-6) explains the complicated yaqona ritual associated with a relatively large political unit, Namosi, a matanitu centred on an interior area.
ancestry to the western interior district of Navosa, are a coastal chiefdom and officially classified as a *matanitu*.

There are numerous differences in customs between the provinces and between the various districts which make up the two large provinces of Tailevu and Naitasiri. There are, for example, a number of minor variations in kinship, and innumerable variations in the techniques of performing what are basically common rituals. These variations, like those of dialect, help to give each area a certain distinctiveness. Often these conform to the stereotyped distinction between highland simplicity and coastal sophistication, but the distinction should not be made rigidly; the degrees of complexity of social structures and rituals vary along a continuum and some highland areas (Namosi, for example) have more complex social structure and ritual than many coastal areas.

The social structures of all villages and districts in the Central Division can be understood in terms of a common model which can be summed up in the following terms. Each village is able to act collectively by dividing tasks between a number of internal divisions which normally resemble or claim to have originally been agnatic descent groups. In all but the very small villages these divisions will be broken down into smaller groups composed of several closely related households. The village and each of the divisions which compose it will normally follow a leader in all matters that concern them corporately. Most villages are able to act collectively with a number of villages in the surrounding

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1. Pawley and Sayaba (1971) explain the differences between western and eastern dialects.

2. Nayacalou (1971) summarizes some of the main variations in kinship practices. Walter (1971:344-72) reports a variation in kinship terminology which he claims Nayacalou has not taken into account. Unfortunately consideration must be given to changes which could have arisen as a result of social changes; Nayacalou's statement that, despite terminological variation with locality, 'the basic principles underlying the kinship structure vary in comparatively small degree', should not be rejected on the evidence of one Old Tikina.

3. People from the interior are termed 'Kai Colo', a term which seems to be regarded as approximating the expression 'hill-billy'.
Fig. 1 Fiji, showing provincial boundaries
district. The district will normally have a chief who can summon meetings and decide on the breakdown of tasks for a collective effort. Positions of leadership at all levels are filled by members of the most senior lineage at that level.

This model represents the desired state of affairs which each village or vanua approximates, rather than an accurate description of the structure of all villages at all times; disputes which hamper the unity of the vanua or village are not uncommon. Sometimes this is because there are disagreements about who should occupy a chiefly office. Before cession, when sovereignty was concentrated in the institutions of chiefly rule, disputes over status could not arise so easily, and when they did they could be settled quickly and decisively, for any affront to the dignity of a chief could be punished by death. Coups d'état occurred but they were quite different from the protracted disputes and dissatisfactions which developed in the times of colonial rule. Often nowadays chiefly rule seems weak and under challenge; but what alternative is there?

The problem of leadership

The traditional order and its leadership are called into action only when special ka vakavanua affecting the whole village or district are to take place. The important question to consider is this: how important are ka vakavanua in the contemporary social, economic and political lives of the villages?

Whenever there is a public gathering in a village ceremony enters, giving the traditional leaders precedence and respect. If a dignitary visits the village the traditional leaders will organize his welcome and see to his needs, calling for contributions where necessary from the village internal divisions. Even in informal evenings

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24. Derrick (1950) contains accounts of a number of coups from the turbulent period leading up to cession. I have also heard stories of attempted coups in the period after cession.

25. The turaga ni koro (village headman) may also provide food for visiting government officials. For this he receives a payment in compensation. But ceremony or an official offering from the village should be made only by order of the traditional leader.
around a *yagona* bowl the precedence of group ranking is more or less preserved. The rituals of respect due to people of chiefly rank have declined but they are still in evidence in any public situation. In church, for example, regardless of any offices in the church hierarchy, the traditional elite will have seats up the front or the church seating arrangements will usually have some way of providing a place befitting the dignity of a chief.26 In recent times positions of technical expertise often make it necessary for Fijians of indifferent rank to assume a position in front of a village gathering27 but the traditional elite remain in their positions of prominence, even though the technical conversation may require several hours of conspicuous silence.

Nayacakalou's study of Fijian leadership, carried out in the early 1960s, revealed a heavy dependence of the Fijian administration on the traditional structure of leadership. In theory there were three spheres of authority in villages: traditional (*vakavanua*), state (*vakamatanitu*), church (*vakalotu*). 'In practice, however,' Nayacakalou writes, 'most things done in a village, including customary ceremonies, housebuilding and weeding, are set within a "customary idiom", that is in one way or another actual performance is expressible in terms of a "customary procedure", and the authority of the village chief actually extends well beyond purely customary matters' (Nayacakalou 1975:86).

This administration was a curious amalgam of traditional authority and bureaucratic rule. The offices of *Roko Tui*, *Buti* and *Turaga ni Koro* were clear-cut bureaucratic roles.28 Only the position of *Buti* was achieved mainly on the basis of traditional status. Chiefly rank considerably helped candidates for the position of *Roko* but qualifications of

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26 Tippett (1968:170) describes the seating arrangements in the church at Bau.

27 A District Officer, for example, may be addressed as a *gone turaga* (chief) even though he is not in fact born a chief.

28 The *Roko Tui* was the 'administrator' of a province. Under him were several *Bulis*, each responsible for a District. On the bottom of the ladder were the *Turaga ni Koros* or village headmen.
education and experience were the primary requirements. In the minds and activities of villagers the Fijian administration and the traditional order were closely linked. It is interesting to note that the Fijian word used to translate 'administration' means, literally, leadership (vei liutaki; Nayacakalou 1962:6), a convention which provides a clue to the role that the Fijian administration has had in the minds of Fijian villagers.

Since the restructuring of the Fijian administration the functions it fulfilled are becoming clearer. One Roko Tui expressed the problem in these terms: 'Taking away the Buli and the program of works has not stopped villagers' complaints. It has only caused new complaints. Now they complain that no one organizes village weeding and house repairing.' The basic problem of the administration according to Nayacakalou was that its personnel were expected to be leaders but in practice they could not be more than administrators.

The etymology of the word vei liutaki provides a clue to the nature of the problem of village leadership. Liu is the semantic core of the word (vei is a verbal prefix, taki a verbal suffix). Liu means leading; i liuliu is the general word for leader and is the standard translation for 'chairman'. Ki liu means in front and when applied to people always carries an implication of precedence. For example to sit i liu in a motor car must not be done without invitation. To leave company 'e liu' means to go first and requires attention to the etiquette of leave-taking. Thus an individual who takes any initiative in a village puts himself in a leading position which could easily become uncomfortable. The accusation of wanting to step above one's position (viavia levu) is one of the most serious charges that can be made, carrying implications which mean that the literally accurate translation of 'ambition' would be, in most contexts, inadequate. Arrogance is what it most frequently implies

29 Roth (1973:146). Belshaw (1964:236) agrees with Roth's assessment of the criteria for appointment to the position of Roko Tui. The preponderance of chiefs in the position after 1944 needs to be explained by factors other than preference in appointment without regard for educational qualifications.

and comparison with the Greek notion of hubris (overweening vanity that invites divine retribution) is an aspect of its meaning that I found has occurred, quite independently, to one other observer of Fijian society (Macnaught 1975) in addition to myself.

Unless justified by chiefly birth a man who puts himself in a position of prominence risks not only censure but a loss of his sense of personal security. The hierarchical element of Fijian society is often stressed but there are also powerful forces for a certain type of egalitarianism inside the same system. The demand that peers be treated equally is another way of looking at status distinctions so that no man wants to feel separate from his peers. There is emotional and physical security in remaining within ranks. This egalitarian aspect of Fijian social organization is important and should not be ignored.

Particular occupations, notably those of teacher, doctor, nursing sister and senior civil servant, have been able to establish special positions which allow commoners to step into new peer groups with distinctive identities. People in these occupations will invariably be addressed by the title appropriate to the position - 'Master', 'Sister', 'Vuniwai' (Doctor). Other positions which have not been able to create special positions so effectively - co-operative manager, school committee chairman or manager for example - have often been unattractive. This obstacle to leadership in co-operatives and schools is perhaps the crux of the Fijian leadership problem and it is not surprising that the problem of economic development has so frequently been cast in terms of leadership. Entrepreneurship, which presumably is not the same thing, enters the discussion less often or in a secondary way as an aspect of the larger problem of leadership. Without new leadership, it is suggested, entrepreneurship will be stifled.

Individual leaders have often been able to impress outside observers with the fruits of good leadership. The economic development of Naqali or Tubalevu is held up as an

\[31\] Mosese of Tubalevu appears in a chapter headed 'entrepreneurship' but Watters finds his signal achievements in leadership. 'He strove always to lead and mould public opinion ... His crowning achievement is the individualization of Tubalevu' (Watters 1969:209).
example of such leadership (Spate, 1959:para. 463; Watters 1969:206-11). A corollary of this is the proposition that poorly organized villages lack good leaders. It is suggested, for instance, that disputes over positions of traditional leadership or clashes between traditional leaders and economic innovators hold back development. The natural conclusion of this line of thought is a statement with which Spate (1959:102) concludes his report: 'neither land nor money, and least of all sympathy from the outside, will enable the Fijians to meet the challenge of dangerous times, unless they themselves can achieve a new discipline at all levels, and a new concept of leadership'.

This new leadership was to be an alternative to the chiefly rule upon which the old Fijian Administration had leaned. Now that elected Provincial Councils have been created it should, presumably, have appeared. In fact, the leadership of the new bodies bears strong resemblances to the old leadership even though the personnel has changed.

Chiefly leadership

One serious deficiency of the criticism of chiefly leadership in the 1950s and 1960s was the lack of attention to the question of 'who is a chief'. A distinction is often drawn between 'high chiefs' and the many other lesser chiefs, the former being figures of national prestige and often considerable political power while the latter are minor patriarchs, largely unknown outside their own district. Less attention is paid to the question of why lesser chiefs are willing to support the higher chiefs. Nayacakalou explains this by pointing out that lesser chiefs are themselves arranged hierarchically and that all people encourage the giving of respect to those above in order to justify the demand that respect be given by those below (Nayacakalou 1975:51). This explanation is confirmed by the present study though it must also be shown that there are strong cultural and sociological reasons for all the lesser chiefs to be contented with their own place in the hierarchy.

Many writers seem to have this idea of a self-reinforcing hierarchy in mind, though they do not spell it out, when they refer to 'the chiefly system'. The self-reinforcing nature of this order32 cannot be understood, however, unless it is

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32 The term 'order' is probably preferable to 'system', which has connotations of integrated regularity that are
first pointed out that there is no clear line of distinction between high chiefs and other chiefs even though the Fijian language does have the special category of Turaga Bale which approximates the term 'high chief'.

Some of the early writers made lists of the main chiefdoms in order of power and prestige but the number they give and their ordering are not always the same. Usually they are fewer than the thirteen who signed the deed of cession but longer lists could have been made. Before cession brought British sovereignty, warfare enabled some places to rise and caused other places to fall in stature. After cession the whole order was supposed to have been 'frozen' in that warfare could no longer expand or contract the power and status of a vanua and its chiefs. In fact disputes arose but were settled by legal rulings about 'ancient customs' and the chiefly order lost much, though not all, of its original vitality and meaning.33

This loss can be understood if a distinction is made, not between types of chiefs, but between the types of traditional social and political structures which influence the nature of relations between chiefs and people. On the one hand there is an order based on the solidarity of an office of 'chiefship' which is recognized as legitimate and, on the other, political relations between whole areas which were based purely on force (that is an alliance against the threat of force or subjugation by force). Political solidarity and political domination are terms which convey with reasonable accuracy the essence of the two concepts. Political solidarity usually found its expression in the form of a vanua (though a village or yavusa could be a unit of political solidarity).34

32 (continued)

inappropriate. As mentioned earlier, Fijians regard their social groupings in a very particularistic manner even though there are some broad principles underlying the ordering of the groups.

33 Macnaught (1974:12) gives the example of the success of Ratu Aseri Latianara in extending his chiefly domain through a combination of traditional diplomacy and colonial legality. However, without the ability to use force to back up this power, it declined after his death and the province now faces disunity (see below p.96).

34 The example of Tai mentioned above (note 13) shows how the distinction between a village and a vanua is not easy to
Political domination could also take a number of forms. Sometimes one vanua exercised control over a smaller vanua or a single village; at other times powerful vanua could exert force over many less powerful vanua.

The term matanitu was applied to a union of vanua which was under the paramountcy of the paramount chief of the largest vanua. The matanitu seemed to imitate the structure of the vanua in assigning different statuses and functions to its various constituent vanua. These differences were expressed in the ceremony and etiquette governing relations between chiefs of the various vanua, although the union was held together at least as much by force as the power of symbols.

Each matanitu had its own unique structure with its own version of ceremonies but there are three generalized relations between the various vanua composing a matanitu. Such regularized relations could also exist bi-laterally without being part of a matanitu. Vanua qali and vanua kaisi were both subject vanua with a sharp distinction in their manner of subjection. Vanua qali were 'tributaries' which offered food and goods, normally at the discretion of the paramount chief and, in return, received protection. Vanua kaisi were completely subject, with their people and gardens being plundered at the whim of their masters. In contrast to the subject vanua, the vanua bati were independent. Bati is sometimes translated as 'warrior', at other times as 'borderer' but a more appropriate translation of vanua bati is 'ally'. They would not be asked for tribute though they may offer it in order to gain favour with their more powerful ally. They were also free to choose whether to fight on the

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34 (continued)

draw. The example of Namosi (note 16) shows that it is also difficult to make a sharp distinction between a yavusa and a vanua.

35 For example Namosi ruled Deuba for a time. See Geddes (1945a:38-42).

36 Bau and Rewa are the obvious examples. Verata had also, in the past, exercised power over many places. See Deane (1921:221).

37 Lester (1941) describes the yaqona drinking ceremonies of a number of places and explains their significance in symbolizing relationships within a matanitu.
side of their chief in any particular instance; changing sides at key moments was not uncommon (Derrick 1950:24; Lester 1942:237).

In 1874 the legality of these relations was dissolved as sovereignty and the right to wield legitimate force passed from the hands of chiefs to the colonial government. However, the political influence of powerful chiefs did not disappear as etiquette and ceremony continued to recognize the prestige created by former political domination. Fijian culture contains a tendency to assume that everybody has his rightful place so that Provincial Councils and other forms of assemblage (e.g. church) normally recognize the distinctions of rank created by relations of political domination. In some provinces this has been reinforced by the creation of provincial boundaries which preserve the old mata'titu. (In the Central Division these are Serua, Namosi, and Rewa; see below, Chapter 3.) Additional prestige and influence have often been acquired by prestigious chiefly families through preference in appointment to the position of Roko Tui. The justification for this was presumably that legitimacy could be added to their function by their traditional status, although historians have shown this to be an oversimplified assumption that colonial officials sometimes invoked and other times argued strongly against.

What the colonial officials (and others) failed to perceive was that chiefs must not be viewed separately from the groups of which they are chiefs. The statements by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and Rusiate Nayacalou at the beginning of this chapter provide the key to a proper understanding of chiefly rule in Fiji. Fijian leadership at all levels involves bounded groups. In a vānua, as in a household, the head has the right, theoretically, to make unquestionable decisions and members rely on him to order their activities. But he must be sensitive to their wishes if his leadership is to be effective.

The 'ruled', whether it be within a household, a village or a vānua, have the unofficial prerogative of grumbling (kudrūkudrū) or gossiping (kakase). If this fails, passive

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38 Even the prestige of Verata which was conquered by Bau remains. See Deane (1921:221).
resistance can make the leader's position intolerable.\footnote{Nacola (1970:134) speaks of 'passive resistance: the conditioned response of people under authoritarian leadership'.}

In the case of the household it can mean frustration for the head or even loss of members. For the chief of a \textit{vanua} sensitivity usually means the difference between impotence and the ability to exercise chiefly power. The contempt of his 'subjects', for the Fijian leader at all levels of society, also creates a loss of pride and sense of identity because his subjects form the group that is the foundation of his identity. It is not surprising that there are many poor chiefs in Fiji.\footnote{Walter (1971:ch.7 and plate XV) highlights this difference in Mualevu.} The skill of distributing wealth while still preserving it is now an important chiefly skill. Macnaught has shown that chiefdoms have expanded and contracted according to their incumbent's skill in using resources to build group unity.\footnote{Macnaught (1974) examines the success of Ratu Aseri Latianara of Serua.}

It is sometimes suggested that a single-\textit{yavusa} village is more unified than a multi-\textit{yavusa} village (Spate 1959:6; Watters 1969:107ff), but the same observation could be more accurately expressed by saying that a chief builds power by promoting unity which finds its expression in group solidarity. Every village will have named descent groups; the important point for leadership is whether they all acknowledge one 'line' as the senior of them all. The use of the category \textit{yavusa} should not distract attention from this. The village of Lutu in Naitasiri has three \textit{yavusas} according to N.L.C. records. Watters reported that leadership was united because it had only one \textit{yavusa}.

Similarly it is pointless to argue over the 'true', or original criteria of succession to chiefly office. Disputes do not arise simply because of dissatisfactions with genealogies or rituals of installation. Chiefs must serve their people and this means in effect to maintain the unity and sense of corporateness of his group, whether it be a village, \textit{yavusa} or \textit{vanua}. In 1946 when Ratu Inoke Mara was installed as \textit{Roko Tui Namata} he declared in an oath of installation: I, Inoke Mara, declare before God and the Chiefs of the \textit{Vanua} of Namata that I will fulfill my duties in the \textit{Vanua}...
The choice of words is no mere flourish of rhetoric. The oath was included in a report of Ratu Inoke's funeral, almost twenty years after his installation; its remembrance over that period underlines the importance of the words he used.

Groups and hierarchy

The more general phenomenon of hierarchy in Fijian society can also be understood properly only if it is seen as part of a structure of groups. At any Fijian gathering a hierarchy in seating arrangements will be apparent. At the serving of *yaqona* the first cup will go to the highest ranking chief, thereby affirming his precedence. However, this can be misleading, for while there will be a hierarchy in the front of the room there will be an undifferentiated mass composed mainly of women and children and people coming and going from the room at the rear. In the middle there may be a group of young men serving *yaqona* who will also be largely undifferentiated.

As suggested earlier, in Fijian society there is an important element of egalitarianism in addition to the obvious hierarchies. Equals must be treated as equals just as much as superiors must be given their due. Within a family the eldest child is marked off from the rest but the other male siblings are treated as equals in most matters. Groups of all sorts are usually ranked against one another in a hierarchy but individuals within each group are less differentiated. Most groups will have a position of head (*turaga ni mataqali* and so on) but it is the position as much as the incumbent who receives respect and the position signifies the group. In a gathering a chief, that is a member of a family which supplies incumbents of chiefly office, will receive the courtesy due to the position if its incumbent is not present. If the incumbent is present the 'lesser' chief may assume a place among the undifferentiated people in the middle.

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44 For example at the presentation of *yaqona* to Prince Charles at Lomanikoro in 1974 Ratu Tevita Naulivou, brother of the highest chief in the land, sat beside Uraia Koioi, a man of common rank but a Member of the House of Representatives. At Bau Tikina Council meetings, however, in the absence of his brother the Vunivalu, Ratu Naulivou is accorded maximum respect and precedence.
This structure of groups is the basis of power within the Fijian community. It is not only the basis of chiefly rule; it is the framework of all rural organization. With the creation of new local government powers in Provincial Councils a 'new leadership', perhaps of the sort Spate had in mind, is emerging; but it is based, like chiefly rule, on the traditional structure of groups. Chiefs still play an important part in it and democracy, in its present form in the Provincial Councils, has hindered rather than assisted their effective functioning.

Church leadership

An important insight into the leadership problem can be gained by an examination of the role of the church, and this means mainly the Methodist church, in village life.

Michael Ward, writing in the context of economic development, has discerned at least two significant effects of the Christian churches on Fijian society. Firstly, churches, from the time of the first missionaries, taught obedience to higher authorities, thereby reinforcing the power of the traditional elite. Ward notes that this is partly deliberate. If the chiefs accepted Christianity the church could benefit from supporting traditional authority, although Christian teaching was inevitably opposed to traditional beliefs involving cannibalism and warfare. The second effect of Christianity which Ward detects could be described as the reverse of Weber's hypothesis that the Protestant ethic favoured the development of the spirit of capitalism. 'Persuaded by Christian teaching not to indulge too much either in the worldly pursuits of life or in the acquisition or display of material wealth, many Fijians probably subconsciously and automatically rejected all profitable endeavours towards economic development and the attainment of a higher personal standard of living (Ward, 1971:42). In support of his contention Ward mentions common observations about Fijian attitudes and behaviour such as fatalism, lack of initiative and interest in 'personal advancement' (see Spate 1959; Belshaw 1964; Watters 1969).

Both of the points that Ward raises are important, although his treatment of them is brief and insufficient to sustain his conclusions. In fact on both points he does little more than restate some of the standard ideas about Fijian society and the Protestant ethic in reverse suggestion is very dubious. It is part of the broad and largely
unresolved question of the impact of western civilization on Fijian society. Conjecture about this question seems to see-saw inconsistently between the position of saying that Fijian culture has retained its essential elements and that of saying that a complete cultural revolution has taken place. Cannibalism and pagan religion have disappeared yet Fijian Methodism has taken a form quite distinct from Methodism elsewhere. In Fiji, Methodism is the established church, tolerant of the unchurchly vices of fringe area members and containing innovations that sometimes go as far as heresy.45

One observer has suggested that the Christian church in Fiji now occupies a position functionally similar to that of the former religion as the integrator of society (Tippett 1968:168-71). Demonstrating this properly would occupy a study in itself but the prominence of the church in Fijian society is obvious and undeniable. Meetings and public gatherings normally open and close with prayer but the most important point in the present context is the place of the church hierarchy in village social organization. The ministry and other offices of the church are popular as both full-time occupations and spare-time activities. Quain, writing in 1948, observed that the 'pleasure of speaking from a dais raised high above hereditary peers is easily available to every energetic young commoner of talkative temperament; for those who are ambitious there are limited opportunities for promotion to one of the privileged positions within the church' (Quain 1948:61).

Chiefs do not dominate the personnel of the village church organization in the way that they have dominated the Fijian administration. Nayacakalou concluded that while the Fijian administration and the traditional order are interdependent the church hierarchy 'stands largely apart' (Nayacakalou 1975:94). Of course a chief with an interest in church affairs will stand a better than average chance of becoming a leader but few chiefs seem to show interest in office within the church.46 It is sometimes suggested that this is because chiefs might prefer to have a reputation for the type of manly vices that would preclude holding office in the church (though they do not usually preclude church

45 From time to time 'healers' of various types combine elements of Christianity with beliefs about the 'old gods'.
46 Quain (1948) reports this and it accords with my own experience.
membership). The desire to avoid competition (with the possibility of defeat) may be another reason why the chiefs tend to leave positions in the church hierarchy for their social inferiors.

Despite the lack of prominence of traditional leaders in church affairs, churches are important in maintaining the traditional order. Methodist church circuits and sections normally follow the boundaries of the traditional vanua and matanitu. Church services, therefore, provide an important expression of the feeling of solidarity in a village or a vanua. Church attendance is virtually universal in villages and the financial support enjoyed by the church is the envy of the Fijian administration officials. The sacrifices villagers are willing to make for the church, like the sacrifices they make for traditional obligations, have caused observers to pinpoint something they call traditionalism as an obstacle to the development of economic rationality.\footnote{47 Watters (1969), especially in the second chapter, spells out this notion of traditionalism.} Fijians not only have customs that are obstacles to modern commercial activity; they value their customs and are inclined to choose to uphold custom when it clashes with individual economic advantage. Watters expressed a widely-held view when he wrote

our evidence suggests that the modern Fijian knows on the whole what goals he is striving for: his problem is mainly similar to that of the New Zealand Maori of a generation ago. The Western-type goal of material enrichment is usually paramount, but traditional goals may at times compete with this end, or his efforts may be frustrated by his desire to gratify his immediate impulses, by deference to ascriptive leadership, or his preference for the collective interests of his kinfolk and village rather than his own self-interest (Watters, 1969: 223).

Proponents of this view frequently see the need for the growth of economic individualism among Fijians. Traditionalism is equated with communalism and communalism is closely associated with the 'chiefly system' and, in the period before its restructuring, the Fijian administration. In the mid-1960s the Fijian administration was attacked as an obstacle to economic development, principally on the grounds that it
hampered the development of individualism. With the former administration gone for over seven years, however, there had been no noticeable increase in individual initiative in the villages.48

The point is this: the vitality of the church in Fiji is important because it shows how a certain type of communalism exists independently of the chiefly order. The old Fijian administration and the chiefly order leaned heavily on one another, forming an edifice of traditionalism which was blamed for the inability of economic rationality to develop but the church as an organization and activity has flourished quite independently of the two other hierarchical orders. In short, support for the chiefly order is probably more a result than a cause of communalism.

Attacks on the church have been less frequent than attacks on the Fijian administration. No doubt this is partly because, unlike the administration, the church cannot be recommended for abolition and partly because the church has been for some time a spontaneous, localized movement. People want to support their churches. It is not possible to elicit grumbling about the church of the kind so easily invoked about the old administration.49 The people of the area within a church circuit (i.e. usually an Old Tikina or a vanua) are free to organize themselves with little direction from the outside. Apart from a small 'head tax' paid to Suva they are responsible for their own finance including the payment of their minister.50 Church services are held several times a day on Sunday, through the week, and circuit-wide services are held once a month. Each service is important because of the sense of unity and security it gives to the people taking part.

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48 At least the Central Planning Office Review of Development Plan VI reports no increase in village agricultural productivity. The Fijian administration is dealt with more fully in Chapter 2.

49 A letter to the editor in the Fiji Times makes the point nicely by asking the following question of one of the church's rare critics: 'Has the Methodist Church ever served Tevita with a warrant for not giving any collection?' (Fiji Times, 7.2.77).

50 This is based on information from an interview with Rev. Josateki Koroi.
It is not convincing to argue, as Ward does, that people contribute to church because it has successfully preached the precedence of ascetic or spiritual values over material goods. All the church has done is to emphasize Christian values of unselfishness, which fit very well with established cultural patterns where the group takes precedence over the individual.

Writing about the early years of Christianity in Fiji Brewster says: 'Many and many times I have been told that "the wages of sin is death". That is a text which the natives believe most implicitly' (Brewster 1922:98; see also Spencer 1941). Sin is generally conceived of as individual failure in group obligations, for example neglecting to provide a feast such as a Burua after a funeral. Spencer, writing about west Viti Levu, made similar observations. Brewster and Spencer also agree in assigning importance to 'open confession' as the solution to sin and its consequences. 'Under the old law and at the present time', Brewster continues, 'open confession is the best remedy for transgressors. Sin is the cause of so many ailments which are aggravated by concealment.'

The characteristic form of worship among Fijians is not hymn-singing, as many may believe, but the making of prayers. Prayer services are held at least once a week and prayers occupy an unusually long part of the normal service by comparison with Methodism elsewhere. Also prayers are regularly made by people other than the minister. Prayer, not counting the universal saying of 'grace' before meals, is not uncommon in most village households. Prayer is an important mechanism of regulating individual conduct within the group. It involves a public declaration of group values and helps to build and maintain a sense of belonging within the group. In prayer, as in public confession, an individual may put right his conscience in regard to the group.

Prayer and Christian worship have found an important place in Fijian society because they are public activities. Like the yaqona ceremony and other Fijian rituals which have shown no signs of weakening in the face of a century and a half of social and economic change, Christian worship provides a public forum in which group and individual interact. There are many groups within Fijian society. Some of these are the well-known traditional corporate groups; some are completely untraditional; most combine traditional and non-traditional elements.
An important aspect of groups in Fijian society is their role in establishing social identities. The household, the importance of which was raised earlier, is a basic source of identity. From my experience, an explanation of its functions as a corporate body in kinship relations is a promising line of anthropological inquiry. Within villages, households are grouped into the segments that are normally known as *Mataqali* and associated with corporate functions such as 'chiefs' or 'heralds'.

In a villager's relationship with the outside world Old Tikina membership is the most common source of identity. It provides a sense of distinctiveness and pride. Each Old Tikina is known for certain foods, plants or animals or tales of chiefs and ancestor-gods in former times. Its speciality is referred to as its *(i) cavu*. Fijians from different areas mixing together, students at school or fellow workers, continually joke about such things. Dialect differences also fuel such discussions which are usually in a vein of light-hearted teasing.

Examples of these identifications abound; two from my experience, which illustrate their significance, are worth recounting. In being introduced among Fijians the Old Tikina identifications of my Fijian relatives naturally arose. On one occasion, while I was in the company of a relative, somebody asked: 'Have you eaten Mana [mangrove lobster, an Old Tikina speciality]?' The relative answered with obvious enthusiasm: 'Why, he has caught Mana', an answer which evoked the familiarity and ease characteristic of such identifications.

Another example occurred during a singing contest at a theatre in Suva. One group's first song, at the time popular

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51 The formula '*E a lako sara ga mai na vuvale oya' - he came from that household/family'*- is very commonly used to establish kinship relations. A statement by Quain (1948: 244) suggests the importance of past ties between households. 'He who is growing into a place in village life may choose persons with whom to build strong bonds of kinship. To rationalize his final choices, he may refer to theoretical rules; but it is the well-established relationships of the past, rather than connection through biologic family, which determine the present.'
and often played on the radio, drew a moderate applause of recognition and appreciation. But a song about their Old Tikina drew instant applause at the opening lines, an applause of a quality noticeably different from that for the earlier song; warmer, less restrained, indicative of the establishment of a bond between the audience and the group. The mention of the foods for which the area is famous or a word of dialect was greeted with spontaneous appreciation.

The model for this kind of association appears to be the taulvua joking relationship (itself apparently modelled on the cross-cousin relationship). Taulvua ties are normally based on a cousin relationship between the ancestor-gods (kalou-vu) of two areas. People who are taulvua indulge in good-natured teasing. The 'Taulvua Song' of Adi Cakobau School, which presents a model of such teasing between Nadroga and Kadavu, has become something of an i-cavu, or point of identification, for Adi Cakobau students and may be a basis of joking with students from other schools.

A general feature of Fijian society appears to be the ability of differences between groups to create bonds. Groups in Fijian society, it is hypothesized, join people more than they separate them. But group identity is not just a matter of sentiment. Communal organization has firm bases of common interest. These may be derived, for example, from past co-operation in building churches and schools as well as strictly objective interests such as economic ones. Roth (1973:61) expressed the convergence of identity and interest in this way: 'no members of social units within a confederation (i.e. vanua), that is those normally living in the same Division (Old Tikina), regard themselves as strangers (vulangi) to one another, a fact which stimulates common effort among them'.

Parochialism, a common feature of 'traditional' or peasant societies, is found among Fijians. The Old Tikina is the main parochial unit. People tend to focus their sense of interests upon it. But Fijian parochialism has some peculiarities. It is not entirely, or even essentially, divisive. As chapters 3 and 4 will show, villagers co-operate and respect the interests of other Old Tikinas. Parochial boundaries, like all Fijian social boundaries, are ascriptive and clearly drawn in principle, but flexible in operation.

Roth's equation of vulagi with 'stranger' is misleading. The essential meaning of vulagi is 'non-native', but it has
the connotations of guest as much as a stranger. It does
not mean a stranger in the sense of unrelated. A vulagi
may be a relative (wekana, which means friend generally, as
much as relative). Indians, for example, are often referred
to as vulagi but they are also referred to, without contra-
diction, as wekada, our friends/relatives.

Flexibility in parochialism is also evident in the fact
that, over the years following cession, the main parochial
units, Old Tikinas, have changed their boundaries. Both Old
Tikinas and church circuits (Tabacakoaka) are said to
correspond to the old vanua boundaries but church circuits
and Old Tikinas do not always correspond exactly. Which is
the genuinely traditional unit? Obviously, as recent writers
have been at pains to point out, tradition allows flexibility
(Belshaw 1965; France 1969). But the nature of this flex-
ibility should not be mistaken. Belshaw is overstating the
case when he asserts that 'relationships between social groups
were highly uncertain and mobile' (1965:67). The cause of
his overstatement is his failure to take into account the
particularism of Fijian social relations. The example he
presents of the relationship between the 'Tui Serua' and the
'Tui Bau', as being viewed on the one hand as 'junior vassal'
and on the other as 'ally', is nonsense. It is not pedantry
to insist that there are no positions of 'Tui Bau' or 'Tui
Serua'. The Vunivalu of Serua is the chief of the Korolevu
and all that it entails; the Tui Kaba, Vunivalu of Bau, is
paramount chief of the lands and people known as Kubuna. The
relationships between traditional polities are not embodied
in written constitutions; but they are also not easily
manipulated. On any ceremonial occasion the Vunivalu of Bau
will, for that particular occasion, decide on the order of
precedence in seating. Somebody might be disgruntled but to
try to challenge the ceremonial authority of the Vunivalu
would be unthinkable.

In any case, under the law all men are now equal.
Fijians recognize this and, as was mentioned above, there is
an element of egalitarianism in Fijian society which should
not be overlooked. The structure of group loyalties which
orders Fijian society is flexible but not directly manipulable

52 There is a Roko Tui Bau but he is not the paramount chief.
Whether this is intended to be a hypothetical example or
not is not made clear. However, the particularism of
Fijian social organization makes hypothetical examples
logically risky and perhaps meaningless.
by individuals. Group identities are the 'building blocks' of personal power among Fijians but the ability of these identities to provide power is derived from the way in which they impose restrictions.

Economic change

So far I have concentrated on uniformities in the social life of Fijian villages. A number of important differences in village life have, however, been created by uneven economic change. The fundamental question they pose is whether differences of economic interest have arisen. There are two types of difference to be considered:

(a) differences of interest due to differing economic activity or wealth between villages;

(b) differences of interest between class divisions within villages.

Differences of the latter kind would clearly undermine the solidarity of the pattern of groups described above. It is significant that they have not developed. The reasons for this can be more easily understood after an examination of differences between villages.
These are mainly differences in the degree to which the cash economy has penetrated economic activity. This penetration comes in two distinct though related ways: through commercial agriculture and through wage labour.

In the Central Division wage labour has been very important in the areas immediately surrounding the Suva/Lami/Nausori commuting zone, though limited opportunities are available near townships and government centres (Vunidawa, Naqali, Navua, Korovou, Lodoni (Kanangara 1973)). The area within the commuting zone takes up most of Rewa Province, Nakelo Tikina, Bau Tikina and part of Verata Tikina in Tailevu Province and Naitasiri Tikina and part of Lomaivuna Tikina in Naitasiri Province. This area also seems to coincide with a relatively depressed state of agriculture (see Ward 1965:209, 230-1, 233). The reasons for this are not relevant here but the fact of the correlation between agricultural depression and large wage and earnings is important because it tends to create a difference of economic interest between these villages and the more agricultural villages.

Much of the agriculture in commuting villages is subsistence. In Rewa, 71 per cent of all holdings are subsistence only - a further 20 per cent are mainly subsistence. Tailevu and Naitasiri, which also include significant areas in the commuting zone, also have high percentages of holdings which are entirely subsistence. Subsistence agriculture can combine very conveniently with wage labour. For example a household consisting of a man with five sons may have three commuting to town and two working at home, under-employed perhaps, but providing valuable food, including sea food, for home consumption and cutting copra or working for cash as the opportunity arises from time to time.

Watters (1969:106) has suggested that people in these dormitory villages may be described as 'proletarian' villagers but this does not seem accurate. One of the most important features of their style of life is their independence by comparison with urban workers. They do not need to fear high food prices, rent rises nor even unemployment to the same extent as urban workers. Their combination of subsistence agriculture and urban employment makes for a style of life different from other parts of Fiji but it is difficult to compare it to familiar categories such as proletarian or

peasant. If a class term is at all appropriate they may be described as a type of lower middle class because of their security and independence.

However, wage labour has created income differences within these villages. Those who cannot commute often find commercial agriculture difficult because of the subsistence pattern of land use created by the commuters. There appears to be a shortage of land because the commuters or absentee landlords who do not employ intensive commercial methods of agriculture need to keep much of their land in reserve. But inequalities within commuting zone villages are not sharp and the poorer villagers do not necessarily work for the better-off villagers. 54

Commercial agriculture

A number of different types of commercial agriculture are found in the villages of the Central Division - bananas, copra, cocoa, market fruit and vegetables, cattle and pigs (and to a lesser extent goats and poultry). Distribution is determined by factors of soil, weather and proximity to markets. Inland areas have tended to rely heavily on bananas and yaqona, just as islands and coastal areas distant from urban markets have tended to concentrate on copra (Ward 1965:195-206).

The accessible coastal areas of the Central Division, and the Sawani/Serea roadside area, are quite distinctive among Fijian villages in that they are not dependent upon a single commercial crop. Timber, dairying, beef fattening, cocoa planting and a small amount of copra and coconuts, rice planting and market gardening are combined in a variety of patterns (Ward 1965:209-10).

Villages which are dependent on bananas and yaqona tend to have significantly lower incomes than those able to grow a range of cash crops. Ward (1965:279,285) found an average annual household income of £119 and £100 and an average annual per capita income of £18 and £20 in the 'banana'

54 Without the benefit of survey statistics, I have the impression, gained from many visits to villages in this area, that the wealthiest people in the villages are not very far up the salary scale. People from these villages with important occupations live in Suva.
villages of Nakorosule, (Matailobau, Naitasiri) and Sote (Verata, Tailevu). At about the same time Watters found an average annual household income of £66.10s. in Lutu, while Belshaw (1964:207) found annual average household incomes well in excess of £100 in seven villages with a wider range of cash crops available (the Sigatoka Valley where corn, melons, rice, English cabbage, tobacco and peanuts can be grown in addition to the more familiar crops).

Each of three large provinces in the Central Division contains the whole range of economic activity described above, though in different proportions. Rewa Province is dominated by the combination of wage labour and subsistence farming though there is also some successful commercial farming. Naitasiri has twenty villages in Naitasiri Tikina (and four more in Lomaivuna) which follow a similar pattern to Rewa. The rest of the province contains a range of commercial farming. Many areas have recently been able to expand their commercial farming since the building of the Sawani/Serea road but other large areas up the Wainimala and Waidina rivers are more dependent on bananas and yaqona for their cash crops. Lower Tailevu (Nakelo Tikina and parts of Bau and Verata Tikinas) is well within the commuting zone and resembles neighbouring Rewa in economic activity. Commercial farming is well established in most of the rest of the Tailevu, long open to major roads, which now have many feeder roads leading off them. Relatively few villages are isolated and dependent on bananas and yaqona.

The two smaller provinces are characterized by relatively stagnant agriculture. Serua has been losing people to urban areas for some time because of lack of opportunities in village agriculture (Ward 1965:101). Agriculture in Namosi is hampered by isolation from markets and it is one of the least developed areas in Fiji (Ward 1965:101–2, 271–6). The differences in economic activity between the two less developed provinces, like the differences in commercial agriculture within the large provinces, do not mark any major differences of economic interest. There is not the large-scale specialization that could create this and though specialization is increasing gradually all the time, it is not sufficiently pronounced to create significant differences of interest. Also, while dairying, beef fattening and pig raising are expanding, the farmers often continue to grow a

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55 Watters (1969:99–100). The average annual per capita income was £19.
range of fruit and vegetables as well because they do not have the capital to establish large acreages and the technical expertise to undertake breeding of livestock.

The division between commuting villages and villages reliant on commercial agriculture for income is the only possible line of division of economic interest, but commercial agriculture is found in all of commuting zone villages to a greater or lesser extent. They are all still, at least partly, agricultural villages. Nevertheless the differences of economic activity between villages have social effects which are apparent in the activities of Provincial Councils. There is a temptation to rank villages or provinces along a scale of 'development' according to the degree of penetration of the cash economy. Watters' study tends to make this kind of ranking judgment, using the term 'westernization' as an occasional synonym or substitute. Fijian villagers themselves tend to rank villages, districts or whole provinces in terms of development which in Fijian translation is veivakatoro-caketaki (literally moving up to a higher level and referring mainly to differences in the level of wealth).

These differences are of themselves insignificant for there is too great an overlapping in the sources of income even though the amounts may vary considerably from place to place. The major importance of these differences in wealth is their association with social changes.

As possibilities for commercial agriculture increase it seems reasonable to expect inequality to become more pronounced. However, a class type division of interest requires not only that some village farmers earn more than others but that the lower income earners tend to rely on the wealthier farmers for wages as labourers. Fragmentation of communal ownership of land may tend to make it hard for this to develop completely. On the other hand concentration of land ownership is also found and could be expected to assist the process of dividing interests where it occurs. But even where inequalities of land ownership combine with lopsided mataqali population growth, Fijian values will strongly favour making available at least small pieces of land to landless farmers. The development of a class of landless rural wage labourers is highly unlikely.

Social change

There are a number of social differences between the
districts of the Central Division, which are partly, but indirectly, the result of the economic changes described above. The analysis of social change seems inevitably to encounter the problem of distinguishing between modernity and tradition, although in my opinion this should present no difficulty. Rather than counterpose tradition and modernity I take tradition to mean only what Fijians themselves consider to be traditional (vakavanua): the considerations of rank and corporate unity outlined above. These are generally important in all villages, regardless of the degree of modernization of economic activity or other social change. New social forms may be introduced without necessarily displacing the old. Just as the establishment of Christian churches has consolidated the traditional order, so too other forms of social organization are entering the village without pushing aside tradition. Co-operatives and schools are the two more prominent examples. Like the churches they have tended to follow traditional boundaries and maintain respect for high birth on public occasions.

The most ambitious study of social change in Fijian villages is Watters' (1969) study of four villages. The conceptual basis of this study has been heavily criticized by Crocombe (1971), who nevertheless acknowledges Watters' valuable description. Watters (1969:Table 33) enumerates nine measures of economic development and social change (1969:173), though it is 'individualized social systems' which provide the critical test of social change or 'westernization'. The end result of all this is a ranking of the four villages in terms of social change (Watters, 1969:Table 34). In the most 'advanced' village change 'is generating conflicting aspirations and ambitions that make the community more heterogeneous and less harmonious or stable than any of the other three villages'. Another aspect of these differences in social change which distinguish the four villages is 'the degree to which they are inward-looking or outward-looking, or the extent to which their activities are concerned with parochial and traditional matters, or with universal and cosmopolitan considerations'.

The evidence of all my research and personal experience conflicts with this thesis; parochialism is a feature of all villages. Watters' 'mistake' is, as Crocombe points out, conceptual, the counterposing of tradition and 'westernization'

56 Watters (1969:81). The emphasis is in the original.
according to the familiar distinctions of Parsons' pattern variables (Watters 1969:175): ascription v. achievement, particularism v. universalism, diffuseness v. specificity, affectivity v. affective neutrality, collectivity-orientation v. self-orientation. This conceptual scheme does not force Waters to inaccurate observations of village life; but it leads him to misinterpret the significance of some fairly obvious descriptive differences. He sees transistor radios, use of money, store bought goods and so on, and then makes conclusions about fundamental values held by villagers. What he has seen can be described more accurately as urban influences and explained by people living in urban areas and returning to villages. They bring the culture of urban Fijians with them and this sometimes means (among other things) transistor radios, new clothes and 'ready rolled' cigarettes. It is also undeniable that they bring new ideas and attitudes but it is quite another thing to demonstrate that they bring a more individualized way of life. Waters has not done this and the evidence of Nayacakalou and my own experience point unmistakably to the contrary. Urban Fijians are no more individualistic than their village cousins. They may be wealthier, better educated and they may live and work in different circumstances but groups still dominate their lives. This point will not be proved in the present context but it will be seen that traditional groups are as strong in the provinces influenced by urban living as they are in the more remote areas.

Urban influences do, however, create social changes that are evident in Provincial Council activities. The key to these is education. The differences between areas with better educational facilities and a long history of academic success and those with meagre facilities and very few educated people are obvious at first sight and well known. And it is education, rather than participation in the cash economy that has, in most cases, paved the way for urban influences.

57 Nayacakalou (1968:35-7). Freed from the bonds of village life urban Fijians move into groups where they are subject to obligations which resemble those of the village.

58 Between 1969 and 1973 the primary schools in Namosi Province had only 22 per cent of their students pass the secondary entrance examination. By contrast Vugalei District school and Namara District school averaged 85 per cent and 66 per cent respectively (statistics supplied by Mr I. Damu and Mr S. Seruvakula).
Education has long been the easiest and most reliable way to break into the cash economy, in particular by becoming a civil servant. In this way education has created cumulative inequality. Areas with better schools have more people passing into urban life who can later return with the motivation, the money and the organizing ability to build and improve schools.\(^{59}\) Also past contact with urban areas makes available relatives and friends with whom students can stay while attending secondary school.

Education is also the chief means by which urban influence modifies social attitudes. People raised in villages are introduced to the rest of the country, its place in the world and begin to learn the skills they need to move out and participate in the economy outside the village. In this way they come into contact with the ways of life of the other races and become aware of the society outside the social order of their village, district and province. In particular they encounter new values about status or prestige which must be accommodated by ideas of the honour and respect due to chiefly position.

But this does not necessarily lead to individualism. A villager may return to his village aware that there are many people in his country who hold more power, wealth and other signs of prestige than his village or district traditional elite but it is not an easy thing for him to withhold the respect due to his social superiors within the village. Usually this would require cutting himself off from the rest of his family group and the village. As mentioned earlier the charge of ambition or arrogance (which are synonymous, \textit{vivaviva levu}) is one of the most serious that can be raised.

A more complicated situation arises when a man returns to his village with a western occupation of some prestige - as a doctor or a teacher for example. Such a man may be given respect which is more than his family's status would accord him but he would be unlikely to try to put himself

\(^{59}\)The schools from Tailevu mentioned in the previous footnote are much larger than the Namosi schools. Together the two Tailevu schools supply, on average, as many candidates for the secondary entrance as all nine schools in Namosi. The Namara District School has an annual fund raising where its 'members' travel from all over Fiji to contribute.
above his chief. By offering respect to the chief he may be sure of the respect of all and perhaps inwardly aware of a little superiority of accomplishment if he offers all appropriate respect to the chief.

Serious complications arise only when a commoner, by virtue of education or occupational experience, is needed to lead the village or district in positions such as school manager or co-operative manager. These are democratic institutions and therefore offer chances to individuals who may be silently chafing under chiefly leadership. The way in which such an ambitious individual can compete will be dealt with in a later section. Suffice it to say here, he must be careful. Whether or not a chief has the qualifications or inclinations to enable him to lead such organizations, a commoner bent on achieving such a position of leadership would normally have to show full deference to chiefly position if he is to create a strong organization. Within the village a man must show respect for the position of chief because it symbolizes the village. Disrespect for them is disrespect for the village. Respect for chiefly position is an aspect of the structure of group identity within and between Fijian villages. This structure grew out of and around traditional customs, though it must never be confused with tradition. It is the key to an understanding of the politics of local government among Fijians which will be examined below. It is only outside villages, among the independent farmers, that significant social change has occurred. These people sometimes are outside a communal framework and this is a significant social change. This is one of the reasons why Watters and others identified individualism as the signal social change through which lay the most practicable route to economic progress. Galalaism, the encouragement of independent farming, has for some time been an area of policy disagreement within Fijian Affairs officialdom (Nayacakalou 1964:66).

The academic supporters of this policy overlooked two important facts about the evidence of successful farming by galala farmers. First, as revealed by Rutz's study in Waimaro, 'galala not only generally seek out wider interpersonal and intergroup relations but they also seem to gain direct economic benefits in the form of labour services, a pool of

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Quain (1948:70) states that the native medical practitioner was granted 'chiefly courtesies' though he was still a 'stranger' (vulagi).
savings, some resources, and a degree of economic security against natural calamities and social mishaps' (Rutz 1973: 302). It is arguable that, whether inside a village or outside, the wanton generosity which may strike the western observer as waste, is often the only means available to a Fijian to convert a small surplus of income into an investment. In particular it makes possible the mobilization of large bodies of labour when needed in housebuilding or land clearance, the two major forms of investment open to Fijian villagers. A second point to be considered in relation to galala is the fact that residence outside the village may be only temporary. Rutz (1973:263) found that some of the farmers whom he had thought to be staunch village members had in their younger days been galala. Informants gave as the reason for their shift a particular need to collect money - for example to build a house or pay school fees. Presumably the people in the village understand when a man is trying to save for a particular need. It is quite a different matter, however, to sever ties permanently with relatives and friends in the village. In the isolated conditions of most Fijian villages this would be economic suicide. Where else could he obtain the labour needed to overcome problems of land clearance or marketing when his own labour is insufficient, bearing in mind that there is no class of landless wage labourers?

Supporters of galalaism have frequently resorted to the village of Tubalevu in Tailevu as evidence that galalaism is feasible as a plan for whole villages (Watters 1969:209; Spate 1959). What they overlook is that this village is small and clearly located with other villages in a district which is one of the more tightly knit parochial units. It should also be noted that the whole district is well known for its efficient agriculture. Certainly there has been no great extension of individualism in the district (Namara) in which Tubalevu is located.

Only in the case of settlers moving completely out of their district does a real possibility of individualism arise. But even in this case there are factors which tend to preserve communal living. In particular, settlers often move to places where relatives and people from the same district or province have settled. There are, for example, a number of large, well known Lauan settlements in the Central Division. Other settlers also tend to live where

61 Navua and areas along the Sawani-Sereia road are well-known areas of Lauan settlement.
they can count on co-operation with neighbouring settlers from the same province.

Most of the groups of settlers are situated as distinct minority groups around and between villages. Socially they are fragmented by the fact that there are usually a number of different provincial groups in any one area. In some places, however, there are sufficiently large concentrations of settlers from a common province for them to form, at least potentially, bases for political organization.62

The chiefs and the people

The phrase which heads this section, and the chapter, is a translation of an important Fijian expression which is frequently used in politics: Na turaga kei na lewenivanua. Too often descriptions and explanations of Fijian society have failed to perceive the importance of the relationships between the chiefs and their people. The expression which is usually used to mean 'the people' (a much-needed phrase in the days of democracy) is lewenivanua. Literally it means 'member of the land'. Its primary meaning is 'commoner' as distinct from chief but it is an appellation which combines pride and humility. It tends to suggest the status of 'villager' as distinct from an occupationally distinguished status such as doctor or teacher but it also carries more distinct implications of citizenship. A central theme of this book is that Fijian communal politics must be viewed within the framework of a structure of groups, the focal points of which are chiefly offices.

62 Lomaivuna Settlement, Naitasiri, had a population of 1107 in 1966. Waibau had a further 854. Other smaller concentrations, usually no more than 200 in one New Tikina, are found throughout the Central Division.
Chapter 2

'The land grumbles': changes in Fijian administration

Reared for ages in this atmosphere [of a feudal or tribal order] the native possesses a strong sense of obligation towards the state. Rights he does not question, the tribal structure of society affording him sufficient protection.

Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna,

There are only two major forms of leadership among Fijians; the traditional and the non-traditional, but between these two lies a third which looks like a 'cross' between them, but which is in fact a modern bureaucracy which derives much of its strength from the traditional authority system.

Rusiate R. Nayacakalou,
(Nayacakalou, 1975:114).

There are two laws in Fiji: the law of the Government (matanitu) and the law of the people (taukei).

A member of Kocoma village, Qamea, Taveuni; quoted in Macnaught (1974:6)

A separate Fijian administration of one form or another was part of British colonial policy from cession in 1874 until independence in 1970. Over the whole of this period this policy was criticised by Europeans. At first they were planters, whose self-interest was obvious, latterly experts of various types, without obvious self-interest. In different ways and for a variety of motives they raised or skirted around an important question which can be expressed most simply in this way: to what extent did British policy create a Fijian community? According to one point of view, even if it did not create the community, it at least impeded the natural progress of Fijians from a former communal state towards a modern society. Scholarly studies supported this opinion by showing how misunderstanding and over-simplification contributed to the creation of artificial conceptions of Fijian custom which were codified in law. But was this due to official obtuseness or, more fundamentally, to incongruity

* Until his knighthood he was referred to more simply by his Fijian title Ratu Sukuna.
between Fijian culture and an alien legal system? As Macnaught (1974:7) points out, it is absurd to suppose that the Native Lands Commission under Ratu J.L.V. (later Sir Lala) Sukuna 'was not aware of the arbitrary elements it imposed'. The question is: could he see any alternative, other than a complete return to tradition? The problem of establishing by law a social and political order that is based on unwritten tradition rather than written law is obviously not easily solved and its difficulties are compounded when an attempt is made to be selective about what should be preserved.¹

This chapter examines the relationship of rural Fijians to the government in the 1960s and 1970s. It considers the alleged authoritarianism of the administration before it was reformed in 1967 and its effects on Fijian politics; the increasingly multi-racial context of government; and the proliferation of the agencies of government in rural development programs. The disestablishment of an administration that was regarded as artificially preserving the traditional communal order of Fijians has received no clear vindication from the public. Since independence Fijian leadership, despite divisions of opinion, appears more content than the colonial government to let Fijian public opinion guide their policy on the Fijian administration.

Neo-feudalism? - the Sukuna administration

In 1943 Ratu Sukuna and Sir Philip Mitchell, the Governor, set about re-establishing the machinery of the Fijian administration. Both had well-formed ideas, which tended to coincide, on how Fijians ought to be governed. In summing up the objectives of Ratu Sukuna, Francis West says that

the Fijian Administration was not intended to be a step backwards to a concept of colonial rule which treated native administration as a special, separate and somewhat esoteric aspect of government which must be isolated from the ordinary government,

¹Scarr (1970) describes the process of 'muddling through' which occupied early colonial officials attempting to balance the employment of the legitimacy of chiefly rule against the requirements of bureaucratic organization.
but ... it was intended to be an isolated system of administration for the express purpose of bringing the Fijians on to terms of social, economic and political equality with Indians and Europeans while yet preserving the traditional pattern of authority in order to achieve this transformation (West 1966:262).

The desire to maintain separate identity was, therefore, not just a matter of sentiment. Ratu Sukuna did not see his policy as an attempt to preserve the dignity of chiefs at all costs, including if necessary the cost of economic stagnation. 'If we [chiefs] are merely decorative', he stated unequivocally, 'our position is finished forever'. The chiefs must be able to show the people that 'as a result of [chiefly] forethought and energy they prosper' (West 1966:263).

Ratu Sukuna's ideas have been extensively criticised. They were, it has been said, based on an unreal idealization of Fijian society and the Fijian past, or Ratu Sukuna 'may have deceived himself in part by projecting his abilities, energy and foresight into each member of his own chiefly class' (West 1966:263). On the other hand Ratu Sukuna's judgment may have been correct; not because chiefs were the ideal promoters of economic development, but because they were the only alternative to disorder and economic stagnation. Ratu Sukuna saw economic development as part of social development and linked to wider notions of culture and civilization, although his immediate aims were the fostering of improved housing, health and education rather than entrepreneurship.

An important part of Ratu Sukuna's organization which perhaps overlooked by its critics is the creation of a new basic unit of administration. Provinces were to be comprised of New Tikinas which were formed by the malagamation of smaller existing tikinas (which then became known as the Old Tikinas). This step was designed specifically to reduce parochialism as a means of preparing Fijians for democracy. In other words Ratu Sukuna regarded chiefly rule as the only

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2 See, for example, his introduction to Hayden (1954).

3 The physical conditions of the village were the prime concern of the Buli. A large first chapter of Roth's book (1973) was devoted to the physical conditions of village life.
means adequate to the task of breaking down parochialism.\(^4\)

The most important point in the present context is the fact that a set of institutions which were self-consciously fashioned as alternatives to democratic government were introduced and maintained in the postwar period. In this period of economic expansion and urbanization, when democracy was at the peak of its fashionability throughout the world, Fijians were governed under a system which was designed to lead eventually, but clearly not directly, to democracy. Ratu Sukuna expressed his fundamental views in this way:

> Now some of us regard equality as a sacred thing that should be bestowed on all Communities — social equality, equality of opportunity, equality before the law. So do I: but all in good time when every community has acquired the necessary elements that go to make equality a good (quoted in West. 1961:25).

The two principal undemocratic features of the old Fijian administration were: (a) indirect election of a hierarchy of councils; (b) the flow of initiative from the top. At the top of the hierarchy was the Fijian Affairs Board which was 'elected' by the Council of Chiefs which had been elected by the Provincial Councils which drew members from the Tikina Councils. Not all members of each Council, however, were chosen by the Council immediately below. Fijian Affairs officials such as the Roko and the Buli and other colonial officials were ex-officio members of Provincial Councils. It was only in 1949 that the F.A.B. passed regulations providing for a majority of elected members in all Councils (Roth. 1973:Ch.4).

The centre of initiative was undoubtedly the F.A.B. It could make all regulations, controlled appointment of all Fijian officials and supervised the activities of Provincial Councils, requiring, for example, that they submit all by-laws and financial decisions for approval. Day-to-day supervision was carried out by the Secretary for Fijian Affairs and the staff below him down to the levels of Buli and Provincial Constable. This bureaucratic authority, added to Ratu Sukuna's personality and traditional status, enabled him to exercise the uninhibited power which Fijians expect of a leader.

\(^4\)This, it will become apparent from evidence presented later in this chapter and in the next, was probably the chief weakness of Ratu Sukuna's scheme.
The Provincial Councils met infrequently and were usually formal occasions to ratify the decisions of the Roko and Buli, although they were also a channel of communication which was, at least in theory, both upward and downward. As a channel of communication the Fijian administration was intended to serve the purpose of the elected Legislative Council representatives of the other races. Much has been said about the way in which this allowed chiefs to dominate politics, particularly through their predominance within the ranks of Roko and Buli.\(^5\) This was as it was intended by Ratu Sukuna but it was also intended that the system of councils should provide opportunities for people of all ranks to participate, a provision which was designed to lead eventually to the possibility of democratic government.

An unspoken legitimating factor which seems to underlie the preference for downward initiative is the assumption of common goals in the process of encouraging economic development in Fijian villages. The felt needs of most Fijians were believed to coincide with Ratu Sukuna's aims of improved housing, health and education.\(^6\) Given the existence of common goals for the entire rural community, power could justifiably be concentrated in the hands of those best equipped with the education and the administrative experience to make the necessary organizational decisions. Traditional authority assisted the whole scheme by legitimating the concentration of power, especially at the village level, while the system of councils added an element of popular participation which could supplement the legitimation of chiefly authority and provide valuable experience to prepare the way for democracy.

Following the death of Ratu Sukuna a body of literature which could be called 'the development literature' has tended to approach rural development from a different angle

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\(^5\) Norton (1977:59) states: 'High chiefs from a few related families ... dominated the board [F.A.B.]. They formed a cohesive group though there were tensions between them arising from shifts in the balance of power'. This is the most direct statement of an idea that many seem to take for granted.

\(^6\) This is an accurate judgment. Note for example that in 1972 Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau said in an address to the Alliance annual convention that 'good housing', 'good food and clothing' and 'good education' were the aims of most rural people.
(see Spate 1959; Burns 1960; Belshaw 1964; Watters 1969). Development, according to this view, is more fundamentally higher income due to greater production resulting from the increased productivity of more scientific methods of agriculture. The key to this modern commercial agriculture was thought to be individual initiative. The Fijian administration was seen, therefore, as not merely expensive and unnecessary, but actually harmful to economic growth because it hampered individual initiative. A certain amount of ambivalence towards the Sukuna administration by most villagers fortified the 'science' of the development writers, assisting them to take the step of recommending the abolition of the whole administration.7

This criticism obviously helped to bring about the changes which took place in the administration during the mid-1960s but the changes still maintained much of the bureaucratic structure of the administration and, moreover, the changes that were made, were made more for political reasons than economic reasons. The more purely political effects of the Sukuna administration tended to be overlooked by the development writers (except where the point was made that its politics interfered with the process of rational decision-making).

The political effects of the Sukuna administration. The most important effect of the Sukuna administration was to divide villagers so that they could not be mobilized politically by any individual or group competing for power. It was not possible to contemplate conducting a campaign to influence the composition of a Provincial Council or the Council of Chiefs. The voters never met in a mass vote where they could be confronted with rival policies and parties. Dr Rusiate Nayacakalou, who played an important role in the reform of the Sukuna administration, concluded that the impossibility of anything like party politics had the effect of discouraging 'the development of an alternative political leadership which seeks to alter strategic policies developed under this central control' (Nayacakalou 1975:121). Politics within the old system had necessarily to confine itself to individuals, competing strictly on the basis of their personal merits.

7 Spate (1959:98); Belshaw (1964:285) is more cautious, recognizing that 'Provincial Councils are politically entrenched'. See also Watters (1969:269); Burns (1960: 29–33 and 125).
There could only be clashes of personality. There were no major clashes of policy for it was taken for granted that all aspirants for positions of leadership shared common aims - those of improving the material standard of living by building better houses, roads and schools. Any clashes about priorities would be concrete and particular - whether to build this school or buy that tractor rather than disagreements over general priorities about schools and tractors. Belshaw described relationship among senior officials of the Fijian administration as involving 'intrigue and alignments, passions and interests, antipathies and friendships ... all complicated by personal ambitions and deep-seated family rivalries, alliances and entanglements' (Belshaw 1964:236).

The Sukuna administration is also closely associated with another aspect of Fijian political culture. The close supervision and preference for initiative from the top has encouraged a certain relationship between the individual and the state. It is tempting to describe the relationship as authoritarian. Numerous writers, over a long period, have remarked that there are authoritarian tendencies in Fijian society. Sometimes they are linked to Fijian traditional culture, though one writer (Watters, 1969:218ff) has linked them to more recent social and economic change. The Sukuna administration is often singled out as exacerbating these tendencies though no one has suggested that it is the sole or the main cause. Spate (1959:9) saw the leadership issues raised by the problems besetting the Sukuna administration as requiring a deliberate choice between individualism and rigid authoritarianism.

Within these suggestions of authoritarianism two confusingly similar phenomena need to be distinguished. On the one hand there is discipline exacted under harsh penalties, corporal punishment for example, and, on the other, the preference for one-man rule rather than collegial decision-making. Both are found to some extent among Fijians but they do not add up to authoritarianism.

The general principles of household organization outlined in the first chapter help to clarify the role of corporal punishment. Roles are generalized and corporal punishment is usually handed out when a household member has, through accumulated wrongs, gone too far, reaching the point of disgracing the household or offending the dignity of its head. The expression applied to such behaviour is rui sivia, or, as the Fijian-English translation puts it,
'too much again'. (Literally it means 'too excessive'.) A non-Fijian observer looking from the outside may be astounded that people will accept beatings given for apparently trivial offences or as a result of charges which are unproven or even baseless. This misunderstanding is compounded by introducing the notion of the 'authoritarian personality' (Watters, 1969:218). Protests and proof of innocence are not attempted because the particular charge does not matter; guilt of general disgrace of the group (resulting from offences that have escaped judgment) is all that matters and a beating can assuage these. The only course open to the person who apprehends the likelihood of a beating is flight, and temporarily joining another household, so that falling out with the group is both a spatial and psychological fact. Later when matters have cooled the individual may return and rehabilitate himself with the group, a step which may be accompanied by a small ceremony of reconciliation reaffirming subordination to the authority of the household head.

Assertions about authoritarianism on the basis of a preference for one-man rule rather than collegial decision-making ignore the crucial leader/group relationship that was explained in Chapter 1. The essence of this relationship is the assumption of common goals for the leader and his group - the same assumption that has been observed in Ratu Sukuna's scheme. Nayacakalou, on the other hand, was aware of the importance of groups in chiefly rule and blamed the weakness of the Sukuna administration on the confusion of traditional and bureaucratic authority. The fact that it combined elements of chiefly authority and bureaucracy shows that from the beginning bureaucratic authority was thought to be inadequate on its own.

The researches of Spate and Belshaw concluded that the degree of success of the Sukuna administration in fulfilling its tasks depended in large measure on the personal qualities of the Rokos and Bulis. Some could exact remarkable obedience with impressive results in ordered village activity: cleanliness, well-repaired houses, clear drains and often significant prosperity. In rejecting the Sukuna administration as a model of organization these experts appear to have concluded that the chances of success were overly dependent on the capriciousness of personal qualities or doomed in the long run by the attrition of individualism on the social forces that sustained chiefly rule.\(^8\)

\(^8\)Spate (1959:96) speaks of the 'natural growth ... towards
The experience of leadership within the restructured administration suggests, however, that the major weakness of the Sukuna administration was the creation of the New Tikina. The combination of Old Tikinas often put together peoples who had been traditional rivals.\(^9\) Appointing a Buli to be in charge of them all tended to create difficulties. A fortuitous combination of tact and energy was necessary to enlist the support of villagers for "communal" work under these conditions.

The reformed administration

The steps leading up to the changes in the Sukuna administration, and their place within the overall political development of the colony, are important and invite a fullscale historical study. In 1967 the Minister for Fijian Affairs (Ratu Penaiia Ganilau) stated the problem faced in the early 1960s in these terms:

> inherent in the whole philosophy of the Fijian administration was a fundamental unavoidable conflict between the traditional and modern principles of government. While modern democratic government is based on the will of the majority, the Fijians were brought up in a tradition where seniority of descent conferred superior rights of exercising authority and making decisions binding on those younger and more junior.\(^10\)

This view of the problem was written when the solution had been worked out and put into practice. Undoubtedly the problem did not appear so clearly to the people involved in making those changes. They were divided in their opinion about both the problems facing the Fijian administration and the solution needed. Any solution had to meet with the approval of the Council of Chiefs; it was not just a question of the Secretary framing some new regulations.

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\(^8\) (continued)

individualism'; Burns (1960) quotes this with approval.

\(^9\) Traditionally \textit{vanuas} had ties of co-operation with other \textit{vanuas} but often rivalry and lack of co-operation with some of their immediate neighbours. In Nakelo New Tikina, for example, Tokatoka and Nakelo were old rivals.

Those who saw 'common roll'\textsuperscript{11} as inevitable in the long run, usually the younger, better educated Fijians outside the old administration, tended to regard the separate government of Fijians as unnecessarily divisive and as likely to prolong and exacerbate problems of national integration. The criticisms of the development literature gave additional strength to this point of view. On the other hand conservatives clung to the need for a separate administration as protection against the rising power of other races. The major policy step required at this stage presented a difficult problem to the leadership of Fijian society which had always been united ideologically.

The solution that was eventually accepted by the Council of Chiefs was based on a report prepared by Dr Nayacakalou whose own studies had indicated that the majority of villagers, while often severely critical of the Fijian administration, shared the conservative view that it was a source of unity and strength in facing competition with other races.\textsuperscript{12} Dr Nayacakalou's study recommended the democratization of the Provincial Council to allow it to function as a local government body. At the same time large parts of the administration could be abolished, thereby bringing Fijians more within the scope of the instruments of government which served all races. Thus the Fijian Magistracy, the Provincial Constabulary, the 	extit{Bull} and the Tikina Council were abolished. The functions of these officers and bodies would be carried out by the ordinary government officials who dealt with the population in general - for example the Royal Fiji Police and the law courts.\textsuperscript{13} Health, however, one of the important factors in Ratu Sukuna's administration, would be under the supervision of the Provincial Councils which would have the power to make by-laws.

'The general aim' of all of the changes, according to the 1967 Ministerial Report,

was that the close supervision and direction which used to be exercised by the Fijian Affairs Board at Headquarters should be shifted to the level of the Provincial Council which should now

\textsuperscript{11}That is a common electoral roll for Parliament.

\textsuperscript{12}See Milner (1973) p.xxxii. Nayacakalou's views are published in Nayacakalou (1975).

\textsuperscript{13}Council Paper No.33 of 1967, para.17.
be strengthened by: (1) the introduction of the principle of the direct election of the majority of the members by the residents in the areas they represent; (ii) the extension of powers, duties and functions of such councils; (iii) the development of such councils along the lines of rural local government authorities; (iv) the empowering of such councils to make by-laws to enforce their duties and functions; (v) the substitution of the present system of provincial rates by a system based on the unimproved value of Fijian owned land in the provinces.14

The Roko Tui's role under the new Provincial Council is that of secretary and executive officer, although he is still an agent of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs and acts as the main link between the villages and the central government as part of the villager's line of communication with the Divisional Commissioner's office.15 For this purpose the Roko and his Assistants make periodic tours of the villages, though they do so on funds granted by the Provincial Councils. The Provincial Office is open to Fijians for a wide-ranging variety of problems, usually concerning officialdom. An appendix shows the range of problems with which people called at the Naitasiri Provincial Council in Vunidawa over a two-week period.

The Roko Tui and the Assistant Roko Tuis along with the Provincial Treasurer have always been paid by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs. Until 1975 the rest of the Provincial staff were paid by the Provincial Council. These are normally an assistant treasurer, several bailiffs and a typist. The bailiffs have the difficult task of serving 'warrants' to enforce the payment of rates. Many of these are the 'old warrants' for rates payable before 1967 and in default of which, men may be sent to prison by order of a Fijian Magistrate retained by the Ministry for this purpose.16

15 Fijian Affairs Board Circular No.10 of 1968 made it clear that all communication from the Provincial Office should go through Fijian Affairs channels. The Provincial Council is itself subject to the Ministry in theory (Cap 100 Fijian Affairs Regulations para.44). In practice, however, the Roko is now subject to little direction from above.
16 After 1967 rates were enforceable only by civil suit.
In 1974 the Ministry of Fijian Affairs agreed to take over the burden of paying all Provincial Office staff salaries.\textsuperscript{17}

The reforms of the 1960s have left the Roko and his staff in a slightly confused position. The Provincial Office, which was formerly the seat of authority in a province, is now the bottom of a line of communication open to villages and the secretariat of the Provincial Council. The latter function provides little activity for the Provincial staff apart from the Provincial Treasurer's accounting and the task of preparing Council minutes which occupies the Roko or one of his assistants two or three times a year. Most of the time of the Roko Tui and his assistants must be spent acting as agents of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs.

In this role the Rokos face some serious difficulties. First they are dependent on provincial funds for travelling expenses. With the financial hardship facing most provinces they often cannot afford to leave the Provincial Office without arranging to obtain transport from officials of another department of agency.

When they are able to leave the office their difficulties have not ended because their function as a link in the communication chain is duplicated by the District Officer, who, in a vague sort of way, appears to be their superior. District Officers are more highly educated and are now often young men on their way to senior positions in the civil service. On the other hand the Roko Tui is normally an older man at the peak of his career. In fact, the Roko is under the supervision of the Divisional Commissioner rather than the D.O. but the D.O. is attached to the Commissioner's office and hence, to some extent, appears to be a step above the Roko. More importantly, being in the Divisional Commissioner's office, the D.O. is closer to the activities of the government departments that affect the lives of Fijian villagers. The D.O. is therefore better informed and far more able to perform the functions that he tends to share with the Roko. When touring the villages the Roko is often accompanied by the D.O., to whom he will normally defer in answering the innumerable questions of villagers about the activities of

\textsuperscript{17}Announced at Rewa Provincial Council, Vutia, Rewa, 18 June 1974.
government departments. In considering the overlap between the Roko and the D.O. it is important to remember that the D.O. serves all races and may be of any race. The fact is that the problem of how separate the administration of Fijians should be has not been settled decisively by the reforms of the old system.

Selling Veivakatorocaketaki: rural development. An administrative change in 1972 transferred the District Administration to the control of the Minister for Fijian Affairs and renamed his department the Ministry for Fijian Affairs and Rural Development. At present the Provincial Office is distinct from the District and Divisional Offices, although they are part of the same bureaucratic chain. There is mild pressure, however, resulting from considerations of efficiency and promotion of multi-racial co-operation, to integrate and rationalize the functions of District Officer and Roko.

This problem is complicated by the activities of other central government departments. The role of the Fijian administration as the point of mediation between the Fijian community and the government has been diminished by the increase in activity of other government departments in rural areas. The growing concern of the government with economic development of rural areas has almost all been channelled outside the Fijian administration and the role of co-ordinating the various agencies of development has been given to the District administration. An increasing proportion of the villager's contact with government is, therefore, within a multi-racial context with the villager facing the government direct, without the intermediary of the Fijian administration.

The Rokos often appear to appreciate the opportunity to dissociate themselves from the 'development' activities of the government. As mentioned below these are subject to considerable criticism.

This occurred during a general reshuffle of departments following the general election (Annual Report 1972, p.73).

The D.O. at Navua told me that he could easily perform the function of the Roko in addition to his own duties. Other District Office workers expressed this opinion. However, it is unlikely that the government will make any alterations to the position of Roko without testing public opinion in advance.
Some of the development agencies have established substantial direct links with villagers through fieldworkers. The Agriculture Department has the most extensive contact with specialized livestock and drainage divisions in addition to generalist field workers, going down to village level in some areas.\textsuperscript{21} The Co-operatives Department has no permanently stationed fieldworkers but Co-operatives Officers travel extensively, servicing village co-operative societies by keeping records, making audits and giving advice.\textsuperscript{22} In 1974 the Native Lands Trust Board was in the process of expanding its field operations. Divisional Officers were to be able to make final leasing recommendations and land agents decentralized under the supervision of divisional managers.\textsuperscript{23}

The Education Department has District 'Education Officers' concerned with all aspects of education in their district, who come into contact with school committees, principals and teachers.\textsuperscript{24} The facilities of the Fijian Development Bank and the Housing Authority are open directly to villagers but they must travel to Suva to use them. The Medical Department has rural hospitals, clinics and nursing stations which have regular contact with all villages and the falling death rate among Fijians, which is mainly a result of declining infant mortality, illustrates the improved effectiveness of the Medical Department in the less accessible rural areas where many Fijian villages are found.\textsuperscript{25} Health inspectors are also part of the Medical Department staff but they have no powers over village health matters unless called in to assist with the prosecution of Provincial Council health by-laws.\textsuperscript{26}


\textsuperscript{22} In 1974 there were 20 Co-operative Officers in Central Division. Stationed at Suva, Nausori and Navua they averaged 16 visits each in the first quarter of 1974.

\textsuperscript{23} Pers. comm. from Mr J. Kamikamica, General Manager, N.L.T.B.

\textsuperscript{24} Pers. comm. Mr I. Damu, Education Officer, Nausori.

\textsuperscript{25} The infant mortality rate fell from 36.67/1000 live births in 1962 to 21.56 in 1972 (Social Indicators for Fiji, p.33).

\textsuperscript{26} See Chapter 3 where the power to make health by-laws is discussed.
The District administration provides an alternative route to all development agencies and government departments in general. There are eighteen District Officers in Fiji and five of them are in the Central Division. In the past the District Officer personally performed many of the tasks now handled by the staff of government departments (e.g. social welfare, education and water supply). The D.O. then became a co-ordinator, recognizing the fact that it was often difficult for villagers to approach departmental officials directly. 27 Above the D.O. there is the Divisional Commissioner and his deputy with a special concern for development matters, the Divisional Planning Officer. The Divisional Commissioner also bears the title of Talai Veivuke or Assistant Secretary for Fijian Affairs. On this basis all contact between the Fijian Provincial Office and government departments must go through the Divisional Commissioner's office. 28

The role of co-ordinating government departments and assisting them to work more closely with the grass-roots level is not solely in the bureaucratic hands of the district administration. In 1969 a system of councils and committees was established under a rural development program. Running parallel to the Fijian Provincial Councils a system of unofficially elected non-Fijian Advisory Councils was established. Under the supervision of the D.O. members of the Council are chosen by public meetings or informal electoral colleges composed of leading members of voluntary associations. The D.O. also serves as ex-officio secretary (Davies 1971). The Council has two main functions. First, like the Provincial Council, it sends representatives to the District Development Committee. Second, the Advisory Council passes on grass-roots development needs to the Development Committees to be considered in national development planning. Some development recommendations establish priorities for the system of self-help schemes, which was established in 1970 to assist small community projects such as Irish crossings, school extensions and community halls with costs shared between the people proposing the project and the government. A small fund is divided annually among Divisions, where it is subdivided into districts. Funds are apportioned into Fijian and non-Fijian shares so that there is no racial competition. 29

Advisory Councils and Provincial Councils were also intended to play a part in the formulation of Development Plan VI by participating in a problems census. All problems, graded according to priority, were to be recorded in books and integrated into the national plan. The books were, however, largely disregarded. In the words of a Central Planning Office report, 'it seems unlikely that the people at grass-roots level closely analyzed the socio-economic context of their needs and aspirations'. 30 In fact many of the 'problems' which came up from the Fijian villages represented the sort of tasks that the Buli would organize with communal labour under the Sukuna administration - establishing village plantations, village house building with communal labour, communal clearing of drains and cutting of grass. 31 The recording of these as 'development' priorities indicates the extent to which villagers' views of development correspond to those of Ratu Sukuna.

The District and Divisional Development Committees were intended to be the vital point in the co-ordination of development agencies. At meetings of these committees representatives from the grass-roots level could meet with the top-ranking divisional bureaucrats, referred to collectively as the 'Divisional Development Team', to discuss development problems in general and to approve proposed self-help projects.

All of the development officials are accused of ignoring the wishes and needs of the people. The Agriculture Department appears to be the most unpopular of the government departments, perhaps because it has the most extensive contact with the people. Rutz has shown in detail the problems that have arisen in relations between development officials and Fijian farmers. 'The net effect of this [development] organization', Rutz states,

... can be summed up in several sentences. Decision-control over production, marketing and finance rested in the upper level organization, but here

30 Review of Development Plan VI, p.44.
31 Serua Provincial Council Minutes, 24 July 1970, attachment on rural development shows, among other similar items, the following: Naimasimasi village - communal garden; Wainiyabia village - clearing long grass; Wainadiro village - village house building.
the hierarchy broke down. The Development Team was composed of agents who were themselves members of parallel sub-organizations of communication and focii of decisions. The Commissioner Central Division was responsible for co-ordination of this development bureaucracy, but he has no real control over the activities of members whose loyalty belonged to a parallel channel of authority. The ambiguity of control in the 'upper level' contrasted with the unambiguous way in which control of the project was out of the hands of the 'second-level' organization (Field Officers) (Rutz, 1973:82).

The officials at village level reported to superiors; they had no opportunity to solve problems at their own level. Senior development officials tended to ignore villagers' complaints and advice as ill-informed and to dismiss their failure to comply with suggested procedures as 'non-economic behavior' (Rutz, 1973:98). The Development Committees were designed to overcome these problems of communication by injecting public opinion at the Divisional and District level. They could not, however, overcome the problem of officials being responsible to officials above them in their respective bureaucratic pyramids rather than to a central development co-ordinator.

_Selling Na Veimatatamata: multi-racial local government._ In 1973 a District Administration review of the Development Committees concluded that

although the committees have served a useful purpose in bringing people together to consider common problems and propose common solutions, they tend to lengthen the chains of communication which affects the implementation of projects adversely ... It is envisaged that for the long term, the Provincial Councils ought to be adapted to suit the requirements of rural local government and should therefore be used as the administrative vehicle for rural development.\(^32\)

Perhaps the main factor behind this statement is the perception that people at the grass-roots level do not have

\(^{32}\) Unpublished; shown to me by Ratu J. Mataika, Commissioner Central Division.
needs which are felt by groups of people large enough to require the action of larger-scale multi-racial committees. The examination of the activities of Provincial Councils will show that Fijian villagers generally do not see beyond the needs of the Old Tikina. If the government faces parochialism within the Fijian community it can only expect it to be intensified across communities. Also the parochial sentiments of the Fijian community are often reinforced by the geographical separation of Fijians and Indians.

Traditionally-based parochialism and physical separation do not exist, however, in certain important peri-urban areas in the Central Division. In 1974 extensive, moderately densely populated areas around Suva were without any form of local government. Only Lami has been granted township status and present government policy does not seem to favour the further extension of Suva's boundaries. The government's answer to 'the obvious question of multi-racial rural local governments and the foundation on which to build them' has been to leave it to 'evolve'. Perhaps this means that the government hopes that with time the peri-urban sprawl may resolve itself more clearly into urban and rural areas. It must not be forgotten, however, that the government still faces the question of whether to establish any form of non-urban local government which is multi-racial.

'The land grumbles': villagers' complaints

In view of the difficulties created by the proliferation of government agencies one of the most important functions of the Provincial Councils is to act as a point of communication between bureaucratic officials and people in the villages. Council meetings are attended by a variety of officials. They are styled 'Advisers' to the Provincial Council and their job is to give reports from time to time and to speak to motions that concern their department. Where motions are received in advance of meetings the Roko Tui can give notice to relevant government departments. Unfortunately many motions are not received in advance and government departments do not always send the same advisers so that

33 Pers. comm. by John White of the Town Planning Department, 20 May 1974.
34 Review of Fiji's Development Plan VI, p.44.
35 A Fijian proverb indicating the discontent of subjects with their rulers.
advisers and advice may change from meeting to meeting. This is one of a number of problems which make for poor communication, repetition of representatives' queries and demands and a general feeling of confusion and some uncertainty at the grass-roots level.

Provincial Councils frequently need to make formal requests in the form of Council resolutions. The Roko Tui in his capacity as executive officer of the Council will then write a letter on behalf of the Council. He may also be authorized by resolution to investigate a problem so that a detailed submission can be put before a government department. For example the Provincial Office in Naitasiri prepared a list of arguments stating the case of villagers in their demand for relief from the payment of dog licences. However the Roko is not permitted to write directly to any Ministry. All correspondence must go through the Divisional Commissioner who, in his capacity as Deputy Secretary of Fijian Affairs (Talai Veivuke) will answer the question directly or refer the matter to the appropriate official in another Ministry.36 This indirectness of communication weakens the voice of the Provincial Council and is one of the factors promoting dissatisfaction with government among villagers.

Communication from the Provincial Council down to the villages faces its own problems. Matas (Councillors) represent people who live in a number of villages and more than one Old Tikina. This creates social difficulties (which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 4), and can often mean prohibitive expense in travelling. Many Matas may believe they have nothing to report unless they have taken a specific matter to the Council and received a specific reply. Another problem is the fact that reports from government officials are often too technical to provide information which can be carried to villages. If villagers could channel specific inquiries to officials perhaps they could provide reports which were not so dry and unselectively full of technical information. All of which is to say that communication is a two-way process.

36 The Roko is the man in closest touch with villagers. I formed the opinion that Rokos knew village leaders and their problems far better than any other elected or bureaucratic official. It is unfortunate that he is outside the mainstream of information flow and decision-making.
The matters which Matas take up have tended to be those which constantly recur. They show that Matas have often been able to find only the most widespread and basic demands to put forward. Some of the main recurring demands are:

(a) Can greater use be made of Crown Land?

(b) Will the government pay Turaga ni Koros (village headmen)?

(c) Can the government help with the marketing of agricultural produce, in particular with the export of bananas and the buying of root crops?

(d) Can the government restore the registration of births and deaths to the Provincial Offices?

(e) Can the government provide 'production loans'?

In 1974 the answer of the government to all except the last request had been qualified rejection, but Matas must keep relaying the answers,\(^{37}\) a form of communication which causes continual frustration amongst the villagers. It is against this background that the Fijian Nationalist Party was created. In December 1974, following a by-election in which significant Fijian support for an Opposition candidate was apparent, Sakeasi Butadroka was expelled from the Alliance Party for claiming that the election showed Fijian dissatisfaction with government policy. Shortly after this he held a meeting at which the Fijian Nationalist Party was formed.\(^{38}\) (The political implications of Nationalist attempts to exploit village grievances will be examined in Chapter 4.)

The complaints which were being voiced by Matas in Provincial Councils and village and district meetings in 1974 would probably have created an uncomfortable feeling of\(^{\text{d\'\'e\'ja\' vu}}\) for Spate or Belshaw. The Sukuna administration had been dismantled, 'the despised office of Buli' abolished, and a host of government officials sent into the field to

\(^{37}\) In the case of production loans villagers often wanted to know why they could not use the money to pay for labour to clear land. The production loan scheme introduced in 1971 provided loans of up to $200 for 'purchase of farm inputs' (p.50 in Review of Development Plan VI, 1971-3).

\(^{38}\) Fiji Times, 27 Nov. 1974, pp.1 and 12. He was also sacked from the position of Minister of Co-operatives.
advise and assist the economic development of villages; yet the complaints of official lack of concern had not abated. In the Naitasiri Provincial Council in 1972 Ratu Sakiusa Navakaroko asked of the Divisional Planning Officer: 'What assistance would provide justice for those of the people who are in the position of having nothing?' The Divisional Planning Officer rejected this by saying that he did not believe anybody was entirely without a source of income and emphasizing the need for people to help themselves. Council minutes give the impression that other members of the Council joined in the discussion, pouring out their feelings of dissatisfaction.39

The 'self-help' idea is an important part of government policy which has been challenged by the Fijian Nationalist Party. However, despite complaints and the Nationalists' assessment that there is political mileage in attacking the idea, the self-help scheme of village projects has been an undeniable success; villages have responded and helped themselves by lending savings and labour to building roads, bridges, sea-walls and other village improvements.40

One conclusion that might be drawn from the continued complaints of villagers is that 'grumbling' (kudrikudru) appears to be a well-established part of rural Fijian political culture. Related to this is the phenomenon of criticism of Matas. Every Mata appears to be subjected, behind his back, to harsh criticism, accusations of ignorance of people's wishes and failure to communicate the activities of the Provincial Council. Members of Parliament, government officials, in short all holders of authority, are subjected to similar criticism (again usually in private). In many cases it is patently unjustified41 and an explanation of the phenomenon is needed. After the examination of the activities of Provincial Councils it will be possible to clarify the nature of this apparently culturally-based propensity to grumble.

40 In many cases the villagers have supplied the larger share of the funds, in addition to labour. A community hall in Lomanikoro, Rewa was built with a contribution of $800 and labour from the people and only $200 from the government.
41 For example people complained of neglect by Hon. Livai Nasilivata, MHR for Naitasiri. His diary, however, clearly confuted these charges.
The people's choice: communalism

Fijians did not demand the right to elect Provincial Councils democratically and, as the next chapter shows, when the right was granted they did not welcome it or readily adapt to its procedures. The development writers who believed that Fijians were just waiting to be released from the onerous restrictions of the Sukuna administration in order to establish new individualistic forms of leadership were wrong. In 1974 Fijian villagers tended to compare the Sukuna administration favourably with its successors. The view that complaints made about the Sukuna administration indicated that it artificially perpetuated communalism has been overturned by events, and communalism in local government is reasserting itself in a number of ways.

If it is possible to discern such a thing as the general demands or expectations of Fijians it would, in my judgment, amount to this: 'what we need to know is where we stand in relation to the government'. Fijians appear to be dissatisfied with procedures for expressing their dissatisfaction. They do not want to take from the government the right to make decisions; they want only to know exactly who is making decisions and the opportunity to express their wishes. They find frustration in a situation where Members of Parliament, assorted development officials, Roko Tuis and District Officers all seek to communicate between the people and an anonymous decision-making government. When the Bulis and Rokos stood between the people and the government they at least knew who to blame if their wishes were ignored.

As suggested earlier probably the major problem of the Sukuna administration was the amalgamation of Tikinas. In 1974, as a spontaneous movement from below, the Old Tikina Councils were restored. The Roko or Assistant Roko acts as Secretary to the Council but they meet whenever they want to and finance the small expenses needed for their operation by voluntary contribution. In selecting their members Tikina Councils revert to the undemocratic organization of the Sukuna administration. Each village sends two representatives, the Turago ni Koro and the head of the senior descent.

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42 They began in Kadavu and spread by example. By mid-1974 they still had not been given official approval by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs (pers. comm. from Mr J. Cavalevu, Secretary for Fijian Affairs, 25 May 1975).
group (Mata Turaga, i.e. chiefly representative) or his delegate. Some councils meet monthly, others meet every two or three months. They have no written constitution but their role is fairly clear in the minds of villagers. They are the official organ of communication; they can speak of the wishes of the people more authoritatively than elected representatives in Parliament or Provincial Councils. Most of their early activity concerned dealings with government departments. They cannot be attended as regularly and completely by government officials as the Provincial Councils but they can often be attended by the D.O. and they provide a regular venue for officials who have a specific need to consult a particular village. Another boon for communication is the opportunity it provides for Provincial staff to collect motions for Provincial Councils and give notice of them to government departments in advance of Council meetings.

Tikina Councils started working in 1974. By the May meeting of the Tailevu Provincial Council their effects were being felt, not only in the form of useful questions and demands but a number of motions about the role of the Old Tikina. One motion from a number of Tikina Councils called upon the Provincial Council and all Tikina Councils to give thought to changing the Fijian Affairs Ordinance so that Old Tikinas rather than New Tikinas would be represented in the Provincial Council. This motion was passed with three dissenting. Another motion called for division of land rate revenue between the Provincial Office and the Old Tikinas so that for each Old Tikina 40 per cent of revenue would go to the Provincial Office and 60 per cent to 'development' in the Old Tikina. In this way people would be more likely to pay their rates. This was also carried and received the support and interest of a member of the Fijian Affairs Board Sub-Committee inquiring into finances of Provincial Councils. 43

The revival of Tikina Councils has established better contact between government officials and villages. The demands that flow from them are more specific and more concrete, demands for a nursing station or a two-way radio link at a particular location or a request for an explanation of the delay in processing passport applications from a particular village.

43 Meeting on 10 May 1974 which I personally attended.
Conclusion

In the 1960s Fijians acquired democratic local government in rural areas and elected their representatives to the national government for the first time. This coincided with a period of quickening economic expansion and social change. The urban economy began to grow in importance and education assumed a new significance in people's lives. Government agencies began to proliferate, a result perhaps of the growing complexity in the economy and a larger, more influential local urban population which would shortly take the reins of government from the colonial administration. At first democratic Provincial Councils tended to add to villagers feelings of confusion and impotence rather than assuage them. The next chapter examines the cautious process by which grassroots leaders stepped into the Provincial Council framework, gradually building institutions which were viable but barely recognizable as products of the formal legislation that created them.
Chapter 3

Serving the people: democratic provincial councils

The Fijian 'could never regard possession of the vote as a personal right but rather as an obligation to serve the best interests of the state'.

Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna,

The chairman of your Provincial Council is your 'working clothes', your 'scapegoat' and the person to listen to anything you say. So let us keep foremost in our minds the wishes of those whom we are representing.

Hon. Livai Nasilivata,

If the people voice complaints then you also should complain; you ought to reveal them on 'top of the table', that they may be known.

Ratu Simione Matanitobua,

The democratic Provincial Councils introduced in 1967 include non-elected members known as Mata Turaga (Chiefly Representatives) who are appointed by the Minister for Fijian Affairs on the advice of the Roko Tui. They form a ratio of approximately one to every three elected members.¹ Their presence is significant because it shows that from the outset there were apprehensions about the readiness with which villagers would adapt to democratic organization.

Among the elected representatives of each Council there are two representatives of the urban 'specified areas'. It is an anomaly that all provinces have the same number of urban area representatives, as provinces vary considerably in population size and the number of people living in urban areas. For example, in Namosi Province, the smallest in Fiji, urban representatives form the largest proportion of Council membership but represent the smallest number of

¹Fijian Affairs (Provincial Councils Regulations Cap 100, pp.4668-9.)
people. All other elected members represent New Tikina electorates. Some of these are single-member electorates but most are multi-member, with as many as four members, depending upon population size. People belonging to other Provinces (vulagi) vote according to the tikina of residence (unless they live within a specified urban area). Few, however, have taken an interest in Provincial Councils; only two have ever been elected and both were subsequently defeated. Efforts by Hon. Livai Nasilivata to create interest in the Naitasiri Provincial Council among the settlers at Lomaivuna have met with little success. The chairman of a province where there are far fewer vulagi was not aware that regulations allowed vulagi to vote and stand for election.

The reasons for the failure of vulagi to take part in elections are not hard to discern. It is not 'their' province. One Mata, who was only technically a vulagi, faced this problem. Born of a father from Ba but raised by his mother in her village in Naitasiri he prospered as a dairy farmer though he tended to lack social acceptance. It is said that he only managed election to the Council by offering free bulls to villages, but it was more fundamentally attributable to a three-way split in the vote in the Old Tikina which formed the bulk of the population of the New Tikina electorate. A split like this was not allowed to recur and all subsequent representatives came from the more populous Old Tikina.

The change from indirect election of Councils to direct election by a mass vote was a radical change. For the first time villagers elected leaders secretly, thus ending the power of chiefs to dominate by their presence in an open vote. Chiefly participation was, not surprisingly, small. Few stood for election and those who were defeated did not stand again. Standing for election is not a procedure that

2 Pers. comm. from Hon. L. Nasilivata.
3 Pers. comm. from the chairman.
4 Pers. comm. from the Roko Tui Naitasiri and Samu Dakunitaroga, Mata for Waimaro.
5 It is not a simple matter to say who is a chief but there were only three incumbents of vanua office who stood in 1967 (Roko Tui Viwa, Tui Vuna and Tui Raviravi). A few other candidates are regularly accorded the title Ratu, that is they are members of chiefly families, but the majority come from the common ranks.
becomes the dignity of a chief and standing again after defeat is unthinkable. But the stepping aside of chiefs did not necessarily indicate the arrival of a new set of leaders who could claim to be the authentic voice of the people. Many able commoners also seemed reluctant to stand or stood and were defeated and failed to stand again. There are even instances of people who were elected and served their Council well for a term but failed to stand again, apparently through fear of defeat. Many Fijians who would willingly answer a call to serve their province are reluctant to push themselves forward in an election. This is basically a manifestation of the general phenomenon that was referred to earlier as the 'leadership problem'.

People are disinclined to push and they fear failure. The prospect of foolishness in public overrides any thoughts about the chance of success. Many potential candidates vacillate waiting to see who will nominate. Often when nominations are called there will be insufficient nominations even though a second call for nominations may bring a comparative flood. Very many elections, however, have been uncontested. An examination of nominations for Provincial Councils in the years from 1967 to 1974 and registration of voters would appear to indicate apathy or declining interest in the affairs of Provincial Councils.

But this would not be an accurate conclusion. There is too much evidence of interest in Council activities. All that is indicated by the reluctance to nominate is a lack of confidence in the system of democratic elections. The reason for the unsuitability of this system is its inability fully to accommodate Fijian parochialism. Fundamentally this comes down to the choice of the New Tikina electorate. Election campaigning tends to run against the grain of Fijian culture but these problems take on a whole new dimension of difficulty in the context of the New Tikina electorate. Campaigning outside the home Old Tikina is not an easy step socially and it must be done in the knowledge

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6See p.120

7This will be examined in Chapter 4. Figures supplied by the Secretary for Fijian Affairs (Mr J.D.V. Cavalevu) show a drop in overall voting registration from 56,412 in 1967 to 55,492 in 1974. Most of the drop was in urban area registration; rural area registration increased slightly from 49,718 to 50,355.
that people will probably prefer any candidate from their own Old Tikina regardless of any campaigning.

**Provincial Council activities**

Belshaw (1964:227) described the Provincial Council of the old administration as 'the weak element in the system'. He was referring mainly to its situation within a system in which bureaucratic officials held all the centres of initiative. The 1967 Ministerial Report described the reforms of the old administration as involving a strengthening of the Provincial Council but its weakness tended to persist. The two main formal powers of the Provincial Council, the power to make by-laws and the power to levy rates, have barely been exercised.

All councils passed health by-laws but by 1974 there had never been a prosecution for infringing them. Each council passed its by-laws by rubber-stamping a draft supplied by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs. The model aimed at ensuring a very high standard and seems to have thereby created its own problems. Under the former administration the *Buli* constantly tackled the problem of health by reminding household heads to repair their houses and clear their drains as the jobs became necessary and actually organizing labour which concerned individuals as well as the village as a whole.

The new by-laws therefore take a radical step when they command villagers to be individually responsible for their own house and the surrounding area and threaten them with fines for non-compliance. Provincial staff have been universally unwilling to initiate prosecutions. *Rokos* explain that it will take time for the people to become fully aware of the by-laws. When on tour they explain them to the villagers who listen respectfully, promise to put matters right and then mentally shelve the whole problem. The Ministry of Fijian Affairs set one of its magistrates the task of visiting the Provincial Councils to explain the process of prosecution. He had forms printed to be used to issue warnings to people before initiating prosecution for non-compliance. Resolutions appear on the minute books, 

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8 The *Rokos* of all provinces described the situation in these general terms. I myself witnessed the discussion of the problem in a *Roko* 's visit to Wainawaqa village, Naitasiri.
especially after a visit from the magistrate, asking that the Provincial staff enforce the by-laws, but by the end of 1974 no prosecutions had been made.\(^9\)

The problem seems to be that of producing individual responsibility in a situation in which it has always been avoided. The same explanation applies to the non-payment of rates. Prosecutions would have to be launched on a very wide scale to avoid the charge of arbitrariness. The issue of warnings would avoid the difficult case of prosecuting individuals who had committed offences of which they were unaware but it could do nothing in the case of a man who has used all of his meagre resources to build an illegal dwelling. Consequently the Rokos prefer to wait until the people have had a chance to become much more fully aware of the requirements of the regulations. Some Provincial Councils have empowered Medical Department Health Inspectors to prosecute but this has not worked because they would need to visit all villages in the inspectorate twice before they could issue a prosecution without being open to the charge of arbitrariness. It also seems unlikely that they would take this step without the consent of the Roko.

Provincial Council minutes show no evidence that the Council's efforts have ever been prompted by anything more than instructions from the Ministry. They have no policy of their own, originating in felt needs to regulate provincial health standards. There has been no attempt to determine priorities in the need for health regulations. Enforcement of particular sections of the by-laws considered to be more important would allow prosecutions, following warnings, to proceed on a practicable scale without appearing to be arbitrary (e.g. sanitation could be singled out and enforced).

The only by-laws, apart from health by-laws, made by any of the councils in the Central Division are by-laws governing the use of a park administered by the Naitasiri Provincial Council. There have been no other suggestions that by-laws be created and it seems hard to imagine any future desire for legal regulation on a province-wide basis. It has been suggested, however, by a village meeting with a Roko on tour, that villages should be able to draw up their own constitution to govern performance of village duties such as grass cutting, drain clearance and other tasks that were formerly organized

\(^9\)Pers. comm. from the magistrate, Viliame Nadakuitavuki.
by the Buli and are now in the hands of the unofficial
Turaga ni koro (headman).\textsuperscript{10} Such a constitution could
probably be created legally by the powers of the Provincial
Council to make by-laws, although the Provincial Council
would probably be reluctant to legislate in matters which do
not concern the province as a whole. The suggestion of a
village constitution is significant because it shows that a
need for regulation may be felt at the level of village (and
probably Old Tikina) even though it appears to be absent at
the level of province.

**Finances.** The basis of a new Provincial Council's
finances was supposed to be the power to levy rates. Two of
the Central Division provinces levy a land rate and the other
three charge a 'poll tax'. The land rate, a fixed percentage
of unimproved value, is levied on land-owning units, usually
mataqali which vary considerably in numbers and size of
holdings.

All rate payments have fallen in the years since the
reorganization of the Provincial Councils, though land rates
have fallen at a faster rate. It is difficult to pinpoint
the causes of a decline which has been general, but not
uniform, and obviously complicated by particular factors in
each province. One general factor which might appear to be
important but which should be looked at carefully is the
general feeling of villagers that they are not getting
enough for their money. It is often suggested that it is
absurd to have a revenue collecting apparatus which costs as
much or more to run than it collects in revenue.\textsuperscript{11} However,
this is not the same as the complaint of the villager, who
usually does not question the need for a separate adminis-
tration.

Another general factor in the revenue decline is the
change of the penalty for non-payment of rates. The
Provincial Officials now have to sue defaulters under civil
action which can force the sale of a defaulter's chattels.
This is obviously not easy in the case of villagers. In
particular, Provincial Officials are reluctant to sue when

\textsuperscript{10} Waitawaqa village, during my own visit.

\textsuperscript{11} Matas and villagers expressed this opinion constantly
during fieldwork in 1974. Undoubtedly Spate heard similar
complaints, and (1959:35) cites an earlier official report
(the McDougal Report).
they know it means selling virtually the entire contents of a man's house. Under the old criminal sanction, which still applies to rates outstanding from the period before it was abolished, a man sent to gaol can call on help from relatives, but the writ against chattels comes down very heavily on individuals in a manner contrary to Fijian values.

Fijians are nevertheless prepared to pay money voluntarily to their province. Accumulation of large sums of money has never been a problem for communal entities such as a province, tikina or village. When called upon to give in the traditional way Fijians are notoriously generous. The ease with which churches can raise money is an example of this.\(^\text{12}\) But it can also apply to provinces. In 1974 after several years of steadily decreasing revenue from land rates Kadavu Province held a land rate collection 'following the traditional way' and raised $22,000. In explaining why the 'old chiefly way' had succeeded where the official land rate had not the Roko Tui Kadavu said that the chiefs and people 'doubted' the 'legality' of the rate. He concluded: 'I for one believe that it is only possible to progress if there is mutual trust, mutual understanding and co-operation between the chiefs and people in all efforts'. The Roko's statement is characteristic of common sentiments about problems facing people in villages.\(^\text{13}\) The call for co-operation (literally a mutual joining of hands, veitawriliga) is found again and again in Provincial Council minutes.

Non-payment of rates should not be taken as an indication of lack of confidence in the institution of the Provincial Council and the Fijian administration in general. The concern is entirely with how funds are spent. Provincial funds must be spent on projects that are of visible importance to the province as a whole. This attitude seems to be a logical extension of the values of parochialism. In 1958 Cyril Belshaw noted that Nadroga and Navosa had a surplus of over £12,000, an amount which was 50 per cent higher than the rate revenue for one year (Belshaw, 1964:226). Belshaw suggested spending the money on roads. He also recommended democratic councils and yet in the years since the introduction of democracy the suggestion that funds be used for road-building has never been made. This is because of a general,

\(^{12}\) In 1977, for example, Vuci village in Tailevu raised $40,000 to build a new church.

but largely unspoken, fear of distributing funds in a manner which may appear to favour a single section or individual. Provincial funds must be spent on things that benefit all members of the province.

One important item of spending has commonly been payment of school fees for children of the province who attend secondary schools. Despite occasional suggestions to the contrary Provincial Councils have always favoured a policy of making these funds available to all children; the suggestion that benefits be limited to students with a high level of academic performance has been consistently rejected on the grounds that all people pay therefore all should be able to receive benefits from provincial funds.¹⁴

The two other major uses of funds have been investments and lending money to members of the province. The Fijian Affairs Board has encouraged all Councils to invest by offering them shares in a city office building and a housing subdivision.¹⁵ The investments are intended to provide revenue and financial strength as well as giving Councils encouragement to invest generally. Some Provincial Councils have gone ahead with their own investments. Tailevu Province looks to revenue from investments as a replacement for rates. Investment in economic activity to stimulate development in the province is a possibility being considered by all Provincial Councils in the Central Division (and the rest of Fiji).¹⁶

Provincial loans to individuals start in the shadow of the failure of F.A.B. sponsored Provincial Economic

¹⁴ In only one province, Serua, is there evidence that academic record has been considered as a determinant in allocation of school fee payment. Ratu Atunaisa Lacabuka, Chairman of the Council proposed the idea and had a form created to provide for this but the Council later rejected the idea (pers. comm. from Ratu Atunaisa).

¹⁵ Blocks of shares of $2,500 each were offered for the Dominion House building and the Nabua subdivision. These were recorded in the 1974 estimates for each province but it is not clear whether any of the provinces had actually paid for their allocations.

¹⁶ Macnaught (1974) mentions the example of Lau Council plans.
Development loans. The problems associated with lending money to Fijian villagers are well known. They do not necessarily add up to the impossibility or even improbability of success but they do mean that it is likely that any initial failure may cause the whole idea to be quickly shelved. To start with, Councils often face the problem of having a number of individuals on their books who have debts they cannot hope to repay. Belshaw, writing before the Provincial Economic Development loans were initiated, suggested that 'the official world in Fiji has an uncanny knack of backing the wrong horse when it comes to approving loans, mainly because it operates in limited political frame of reference dominated by a concern with the establishment'. He disagrees with the suggestion that 'the Fijian is unused to or unworthy of credit' and contrasts the poor judgment of the Fijian administration with that of Indian businessmen who regularly extend credit to Fijians (Belshaw, 1964:218). This is undoubtedly an unfair comparison as amounts involved differ greatly and the need to pay back the Indian businessman will usually be more urgent because the Fijian needs to do business with him. However, the question of political considerations entering into the allocation of loans is important, although I do not believe the concept of the 'establishment' can adequately explain the political frame of reference.

In looking at the activities of the Provincial Councils one important problem to be kept in mind is the fact that there are certain important needs on which Provincial Councils find it hard to spend their money because they mean necessarily favouring only sections of the province. Roads, for example, are urgently needed and will often be of benefit indirectly to practically the entire province but because they will initially appear to favour only a part of the province it is difficult to imagine provincial funds being allocated to them. The building of schools encounters the same problem. Present government policy does not favour providing funds for schools which will admit students from only one province.

17 Figures supplied by the Central Fijian Treasury show outstanding debts of $43,274.50. According to the figures supplied, Lau and Naitasiri have repaid their debts; however Naitasiri Provincial Council records show that an outstanding amount was written off rather than repaid in full.

18 See, for example, Spate (1959:66-9).
(and one race). School building, therefore, normally involves a direct transaction between individual villages (or districts) and the government.

Tailevu Province

In 1974 Tailevu Provincial Council had the most solid record of achievement among the provinces of the Central Division. This was based on two things: successful fund-raising apart from rates, and prudent use of funds. The funds raised through the Adi Tailevu Festival total in excess of $87,000 in the five years from its inception in 1970 to 1974. Unlike other Provincial Councils the Tailevu Council had been able to channel a large proportion of its funds into investments. Firstly it established the Tailevu Co-operative Dairy Farm. Secondly it purchased the Provincial Office and used rent money from half of the building to pay for its renovation and repainting. Thirdly it purchased the Roko Tui's house for which it charges rent.

Other major uses of funds have been the payment of school fees and development loans. Payment of school fees was reduced in scale in 1973 and virtually cut out in 1974. It was felt that little return could be seen for the money as, for example, many of the students whose fees were paid failed their examinations. There has never been any proposal to limit the number of scholarships according to means tests or academic performance. Payment has always been of a proportion of school fees for all students in secondary schools.

Development loans were introduced on a trial basis in 1973 and were still on a trial basis in 1974. The loan amounts did not exceed $50 initially. Successful repayment of a $50 loan would qualify the borrower for a larger loan. Loans were approved by the Development Committee with a quota for each New Tikina. Undoubtedly the memory of the

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20 Provincial Council minutes, 20 Jan. 1972. $6000 was contributed by the Council on behalf of villages.
21 Pers. comm. from Ratu Livai Volavola, Chairman of Tailevu Provincial Council.
unsuccessful Provincial Development loans is strong. Strict accounting measures have been adopted with the advice and assistance of the Central Fijian Treasury. In making the decision to restrict the size of loans the Council is following the rules of the Indian money-lender whose judgment Belshaw contrasted with the mistakes of officialdom. Nevertheless there is evidence to suggest that 'political considerations resembling those which Belshaw linked to his notion of an 'Establishment' have played some part in the allocation of loans.

Several of the people approved for loans have close links with politics. Four, two with chiefly rank in their local area, are chairman of Old Tikina Councils. Another is a chiefly (unelected) member of the Bau Old Tikina Council. One is the son of a prominent Council member and another his nephew and son of an Assistant Roko. Another successful applicant is a retired professional man who is a personal friend of some of the more influential councillors and the Rokos. Similar connections could probably be traced for some of the other successful applicants. These connections clearly demonstrate that considerations of 'who' an applicant is, are liable to enter into a decision as much as 'what' he is, that is the objective qualifications he has to place him ahead of other applicants. But evaluation of 'who' a person is does not come down simply to the considerations of kinship connections, the rivalry and intrigue, which Belshaw has suggested are centred around a Fijian Establishment. Given the aim of finding people who are trustworthy it is not surprising that the Development Committee is inclined to choose people with well-known relatives.23

An examination of the composition of the Committee reveals the basic factor in the Committee's choice of applicants for loans. Apart from the chairman of the Committee there is one member from each of the New Tikinas. Like all of the Committees of the Provincial Council the Development Committee was elected by the Council. Its choice can be explained by parochialism. In the allocation

23 A major factor in approving loans was the availability of a 'guarantor' who signed an agreement to repay the loan if necessary. People with salaried positions were attractive as guarantors. All things considered a salaried position is probably the surest way for a Fijian to improve his material standard of living (pers. comm. from Tevita Rabuku, Chairman of Tailevu Provincial Council Development Committee).
of loans each New Tikina received a quota. The three large tikinas each received eight loans, a smaller tikina received six and the smallest three. Within each New Tikina there is also evidence of a more informal attempt to give a balance among the Old Tikinas. Out of the twenty-two Old Tikinas only three did not have any successful applicants and this would appear to be a result of their smallness.\textsuperscript{24} Thus parochialism rather than intrigue or favouritism explains the process of deciding loan applications. Moreover parochialism contains inbuilt structural mechanisms which tend to inhibit intrigue. The fact that any Provincial Council member's first loyalty is to his own Old Tikina impedes the development of personal networks and alliances. Another important point about parochialism is the way in which it can assist the development loans to succeed (unlike the unsuccessful loans organized bureaucratically under the Sukuna administration). If one tikina succeeds in paying back more of its loans than others it will be eligible for more and larger loans. As will be seen in a number of different contexts people are most sensitive to their interests at the level of Old Tikina. A loss or slipping behind in any way will be felt as something of a personal loss to all people within the district.

Investment is an important part of the Tailevu Council's plans for the future. Half of 1974's Adi Tailevu funds were allocated in advance for the building of a new multi-storied office building which will house the Provincial Council and provides a source of revenue (rent) and valuable security in the negotiation of large loans.\textsuperscript{25} In 1974 the Tailevu Dairy Farmers Co-operative was negotiating a loan for $100,000 to finance the extension of their activities by the acquisition of a large European-owned dairy farm. When the Provincial Council first approached the Development Bank for a loan to start the dairy farm they were refused.\textsuperscript{26} Successful investment has given the Provincial Council an important role which has considerably increased its power.

\textbf{Rewa Provincial Council}

Like the four other new Provincial Councils in the Central Division the Rewa Council at first confined its

\textsuperscript{24} Tai, Taivugalei and Dawasamu.


\textsuperscript{26} Nai Lalakai, 17 Oct. 1974.
financial activity to the payment of school fees. Over succeeding years these payments were gradually reduced and had been virtually eliminated by 1974.\(^{27}\) A lack of funds because of the severe drop in rate collections is the ostensible reason for this cut-back but the matter is not as simple as this. It must be noted that Rewa had a relatively high proportion of its children in secondary schools and had long been one of the leading provinces in terms of education. By 1968 the province already had a debt of £376 to Ratu Sukuna Memorial School alone. In 1967 the women of Rewa donated £1500 (out of a sum of £4000 which they had raised) to the payment of school fees.\(^{28}\) In August 1968 the Provincial Council found that it would need £2700 to pay the first term fees for all students (plus a further £400 for students who needed to have their fees paid for the whole year).\(^{29}\) The fact that such a large sum of money would be needed to pay even a fraction of the school fees for all of the secondary students belonging to Rewa Province is the key to understanding the abolition of school fee payments. The Provincial Council could find the money to pay a term's fees for all if it were really valued as it is in other provinces where the number of students is small and their entry into secondary education is seen as important to the province as a whole. Rewa already has a relatively large number of people in important government positions so the need is apparently less pressing.

The spending of money should not be considered in isolation from its raising and vice versa. Although Rewans have, on average, a higher per capita income than the Fijians of any other province\(^{30}\) their rate payments are extremely low and until 1975 there had been no real attempts to raise large sums of money for specific purposes. In the case of rate payments an additional problem is created by inequality in the value of rateable land among the different tikinas. Noco has a total possible rate revenue of $524.36 while Suva has a total of $13,352. (Rewa and Beqa come in between these figures with $3091.85 and $815.43 respectively). The rates

\(^{27}\) Pers. comm. from Mr Varea Driti, Provincial Treasurer, Rewa.

\(^{28}\) Provincial Council minutes, January 1968.

\(^{29}\) Provincial Council minutes, August 1968.

\(^{30}\) There are no statistics available to support this but prominence in salaried occupations accords with popular beliefs and my own experience.
for the Suva people are far more than they can afford to pay without being forced to lease their land. If they pay only a fraction of their rates the people of other tikinas also feel disinclined to pay. As a result, the Provincial Council in 1974 asked the Fijian Affairs Board to consider reversion to the old head tax as a matter of great urgency. 31

At the same time the Secretary for Fijian Affairs, at the request of the Provincial Council, made a request to the Secretary for Home Affairs to accompany Provincial Bailiffs when they are collecting rates. The Secretary expressed the feelings of the Provincial Council when he wrote: 'Its nearness to Suva, Nausori food and employment markets give the people of the province an opportunity to relatively more over and above the rent which many of them collect from their leases in urban and rural areas'. The fact that $19,615.43 was outstanding from the period before 1967, apart from the $66,525.59 owing in land rates reveals the extent to which sheer refusal must be considered an important factor in the non-payment of rates. 32 The people in Rewa, with more money available than in the other provinces of the Central Division, were clearly less willing to give money to their Provincial Council. Until 1975 Rewa had not held a festival, although several other of the provinces in the Central Division and others elsewhere had organized festivals and raised large sums of money. There had been two other fund-raising projects but both deliberately avoided the full mobilization of traditional organization which is characteristic of a festival.

The decision not to hold festivals to accumulate large sums of money needs to be considered. A sum of $2201.72 remained in 1974 from the $800 raised by the women of Burebasaga after $1024.90 had been spent on wages for labourers building a large ceremonial bure. This is intended to house the ceremonies of the province and, at times, all of Fiji and is being built with the assistance of the government. Apart from the ladies' fund-raising in 1967 the only other major fund-raising effort for the province was a 'Rewa Nite', a series of dances and entertainments held simultaneously throughout Fiji. But this netted only

31 Council meeting of 19 June 1964 which I attended.
32 A copy of this letter was among the Rewa Provincial Office records.
$2496.59, a figure that is much lower than the amounts raised in festivals, primarily as a result of the absence of a *Yavu*, an opening contribution from each district.

One explanation put forward for the failure to hold a festival before 1975 was the general feeling in the Council that such a fund-raising was not really necessary in Rewa because schools were already adequate, the unspoken assumption being that money raised in this manner should really only be used for education. Here again is the rule that the raising of money should not be considered in isolation from what it is to be spent on. So far, the only project undertaken by the Rewa Council is the creation of a small fund to make loans to individuals for development investment. An ambitious housing finance scheme was suggested by the Housing Committee in 1968 but it does not appear again in the minutes of later meetings.

Although it is not formally part of the Provincial Council, the Rewa Provincial Development Company and its activities ought to be considered as part of the finances of the province. Established as a company in 1970 the R.P.D.C. commenced by operating a bus service between Rewa and Suva. In 1973 the company ran into financial difficulties. Vague charges of mismanagement were levelled at Sakeasi Butadroka who was both managing director of the company and chairman of the Provincial Council. The difficulties of the R.P.D.C. are part of a general ambivalence about leadership. There was a feeling that the affairs of the company should be put in order before a festival could be held or, if a definite project to benefit the whole Province were proposed, funds would be forthcoming.

The Rewa Provincial Development Loan Fund was created with profits of the Rewa Nite. Twenty-two loans of $100,

33 Financial statement attached to minutes distributed at the Council meeting of 18-19 June 1974.
34 Pers. comm. from Ratu Dovi Logavatu, Assistant *Roko Tui* Rewa and member of the senior chiefly family of Rewa.
35 A report by the company secretary, Mr Naibuka Navunisaravi, in *Nai Lalakai* (17/10/74) showed that one of the major problems of the company is undercapitalization; $26,000 had not been paid on issued shares. Sakeasi Butadroka put forward his own, more emotional, statement in *Nai Lalakai* on 26 Oct. 1974.
repayable over twelve months at 5 per cent interest, were made.\textsuperscript{36} There was some murmuring about the way in which loans were allocated as many of the successful applicants seemed to have close connections with Provincial Council leaders. The political considerations described by Belshaw seem to suggest themselves. Certainly the parochialism which set the conditions for the allocation of loans in Tailevu was not apparent. This raises the question of whether parochialism is declining as a feature of the social structure of Rewa or whether it remains but is less influential in Provincial Council affairs. It might be hypothesized that parochialism has been eroded in Rewa by extensive contact with urban areas, and is being replaced by a culture which is more individualistic. But if this were true one would expect to find parochialism similarly weakened in Tailevu South. As already shown, this has not happened, or at least there is no evidence that it has from the activities of the Tailevu Provincial Council.

There are also a number of positive indications that parochialism is still strong in Rewa. In 1973 a combined meeting of Rewa and Noco New Tikinas decided to re-establish the Old Tikina Council\textsuperscript{37} and villagers have contributed generously to self-help projects organized by villages or Old Tikinas. One community hall had been completed by 1974, two were under construction and nine were planned. The contribution of cash and labour by villagers had been high. At Lomanikoro they paid $800 out of a total cost of $1000.\textsuperscript{38} In 1974 an Adi Rewa Festival raised $10,000 to build a house for the Methodist minister in their circuit.\textsuperscript{39} The clearest evidence of the strength of parochialism is the Ro Burebasaga festival in 1975 which raised $68,000.\textsuperscript{40} However, it is the success of the festival rather than the decision to hold it that is the important indicator of parochialism. The prompting to hold the festival came from a sense of comparison with the successful festivals of other provinces,\textsuperscript{41} the problem of

\textsuperscript{36}Minutes of Council meeting of 16 Nov. 1973.  
\textsuperscript{37}Minutes of Council meeting of 16 Nov. 1973.  
\textsuperscript{39}\textit{Nai Lalakai}, 14 Nov. 1974.  
\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Nai Lalakai}, 7 Aug. 1975.  
\textsuperscript{41}The announcement of the decision to hold a festival (\textit{Nai Lalakai}, 17/4/75) expressed the reason behind the decision
what to spend the money on being temporarily shelved. There is a lack of parochialism in the Provincial Council but not in the province. The Rewa Provincial Council has been described by many, inside and outside the province, as sick. Its lack of achievements and lack of popularity with the people are obvious, and it is not surprising that it was by-passed in the organization of the festival. A committee composed mainly of talented organizers from outside the Council was appointed after an initial discussion in the Provincial Council followed by the approval of Old Tikina Councils. The announcement of the decision to hold the festival spelt out the answer to the question of authority over the organization in this way: 'there is a very important traditional element in this festival, and the Committee cannot influence this, that is that the relevant authority is in the hands of her ladyship the Roko Tui Dreketi, the traditional leaders and the Provincial Council'.

Naitasiri Provincial Council

Rate collection in Naitasiri fell in the years between 1967 and 1974 but the province was still comparatively well off. The general factors mentioned earlier in explaining the reasons for the drop in rates probably apply to some extent to Naitasiri but rate-paying has been high relative to other provinces in the Central Division. Falling rate collections have meant that there has been a reduction in school fee payment, but spending on many other items has not been significantly reduced. Travel allowances for both Matas and provincial staff have been paid promptly. The Provincial Office is well equipped and maintained at a standard which is noticeably better than all other provinces in the Central Division (with the possible exception of Tailevu).

The first Adi Naitasiri festival was held in 1974. It raised over $40,000 and was one of the most important steps in the life of the new Council, although it is not the first provincial fund-raising effort. In 1970 a Solivakavanua

41 (continued)
in these terms: 'with the practical example of Provinces all over Fiji the chiefs of Rewa announce that a festival will be held'.

42 Nai Dalakai, 17 April 1975.

43 Pers. comm. from a number of Matas and Turaga ni Venuas (traditional leaders who attend Council meetings).
(traditional fund-raising) was held to raise funds for the construction of a Junior Secondary School. The soli was called by the Qaranivalu, High Chief of Naitasiri Tikina. Because this was a traditional fund-raising the money collected does not appear in the accounts of the Provincial Council. The plan to use the money for the building of the school was subsequently rejected on the grounds that the school would be used by all races. Later Ratu Vitu Qiolevu, the Qaranivalu, raised the matter again and asserted that 'the money was raised vakavanua and does not come under the direction of the Provincial Council'. Eventually a loan of $400 was approved on the condition that all money would eventually be returned to the groups that gave it since it could not be used for the specific purpose for which it was raised.

By 1974 the only major investment by the Provincial Council was the construction of a house for the Roko Tui. The £6000 to build and furnish the house was raised by loans from a bank and the F.A.B. in 1968. Buses and cattle farms were suggested as investments for the province in 1969 but they failed to receive much support. A motion to establish a bus company as in Cautata or Vatukoula was adjourned to a later meeting and then forgotten. The mover of the motion stated as one of the reasons for his proposal that 'Indian operated buses are exploiting us'. At that stage the Council did not have the funds to consider running a bus company and the difficulties of raising the capital seemed insuperable to everybody, including, in the end, the mover of the motion.

Later suggestions for a provincially owned cattle farm also received little support. As with the proposal of buses, the suggestion was of a very general nature, unlike the Tailevu project in which a farm was bought as a going concern. One supporter of the cattle farm idea thought that prisoners from Naitasiri Province could work on such a farm. However, the influential Qaranivalu spoke out strongly against the motion: 'animal raising is something for each

44 The traditional importance of the Qaranivalu is explained below on p.86 and pp.102-3.
45 Minutes of the Council meeting of 28 July 1972.
46 Minutes of the Council meeting of 22 April 1968.
individual; we ought to consider this properly'. The chairman thought that the motion had some merit but because the Council was clearly unready to agree to it he ruled that the Development Committee should look into it in detail.\textsuperscript{48}

Another investment project that has been suggested is a Naitasiri Development Company. This company, which had already been registered but was not operating by 1974, was to be independent of the Provincial Council though the Council could have shares in it and lend it money.\textsuperscript{49} Shares can also be held by private individuals or companies. A committee of thirteen prominent members of the province was appointed by the Council to organize the company.\textsuperscript{50} When it was created they would be responsible to the shareholders.

\textbf{Adi Naitasiri Festival}. The main reason for the decision to hold a festival in 1974 appears to have been a desire to follow the example of other provinces. It was not prompted by insolvency or plans for a specific investment project. The festival was held at Naluwai, in the very heart of the province, and was consequently an affair of villagers, unlike the Tailevu festival in Nausori where money can be raised by stalls providing entertainment and village products for the urban dwellers of the whole eastern side of Suva-Nausori urban area. The Naitasiri festival had to rely entirely on outright contributions on behalf of the Queen (Adi) of each New Tikina. In this way $43,782 was raised. Competition was fairly even with Naitasiri, Matailobau and Wainimala raising $10,647, $9941 and $8876 respectively.\textsuperscript{51} The amounts raised by each tikina would have been the result of competition between Queens representing smaller areas (in most cases Old Tikinas).\textsuperscript{52}

Consciousness of loyalties to family, village and district undoubtedly prompted people to give generously. The total village population in each New Tikina is around

\textsuperscript{48}Minutes of the Council meeting of 28 July 1972.

\textsuperscript{49}Pers. comm. from the Roko Tui Naitasiri, Ratu Qoro Latianara.

\textsuperscript{50}Minutes of the Council meeting of 17 July 1970.

\textsuperscript{51}Nai Lalakai, 21 Nov. 1974.

\textsuperscript{52}A report in Nai Lalakai on 3 Oct. 1974 explains how a number of areas competed to find the representative for Waimaro Tikina.
2000 so that contributions would be, on average, more than $4 per capita (according to the 1966 Census). When one considers the low level of incomes in the province and the relatively high ratio of dependants to income earners the degree to which villagers are prepared to support their Provincial Council is comparatively high. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that all festivals in Naitasiri will show the same success. Much will depend on the reaction to the use of the funds from the 1974 festival. The Provincial Council decided the festival would be held annually for five years, but not permanently.

Bearing in mind that the festival was not held to finance any particular project, it is apparent that the decision-making process in the allocation of festival funds is significant. At first it was thought that the money would be divided three ways between housing (vanua ni vakaitikotiko), industry and agriculture. However, a Council meeting held two weeks after the festival allocated $25,000 to a provincial housing development project to be carried out on 20 acres of land donated by the Qaranivalu at the opening of the festival.53 The festival seems to mark a distinct step towards provincial solidarity, a step based on parochialism but involving a critical element of chiefly leadership. The Qaranivalu donated $1173, apart from an undoubtedly large proportion of the sum raised by the Queen of his Tikina (his daughter). Gifts such as this are usually given by the distinguished guest opening a festival but the Qaranivalu's 'noble' gesture was accompanied by his gift of 20 acres of land. This showed the depth of his sense of duty towards the province and confirmed his position of precedence in the province. The invitation to open the first Naitasiri festival went naturally to their leading chief and his chiefly response confirmed the legitimacy of this arrangement.

Namosi

Although Namosi is probably the poorest province in Fiji54 its finances have been comparatively satisfactory.

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53 Nai Lalakai, 19 Dec. 1974. A report on 12 June 1975 revealed that steps to develop the land were proceeding.

54 There are no statistics to support this but it is commonly believed to be true. Namosi's isolation from markets and urban employment (and very limited copra capacity) support this belief.
The reason given for the down-turn in recent years is not quite the same as that given in other provinces (no visible return for money), although it comes down to the same fundamental factor. The Namosi people believe that they have been paying more than their share for the dual (Namosi/Serua) administrative apparatus because rate payment in Serua has been lower.55

The 1974 Adi Namosi festival raised about $19,000, mainly through outright contributions from Old Tikinas (population 1966 = 1000), revealing a readiness to contribute money to the province, greater than anywhere else in the Central Division. From the very beginning, at the meeting which inaugurated the effort, it was clearly understood that funds would be used mainly for education and partly for development, although the way in which the money would be used for education (i.e. whether in scholarships or capital works) had not been determined.56 Capital works in education have a greater chance of being approved in Namosi than anywhere else because there are almost no Indians and only a limited number of Fijian Provincial expatriates (vulagi). Also the schools in the hills (and most of Namosi is in the hills) already have some accommodation for boarders because no one site can serve a very large area, meaning that the school may be seen as belonging to the whole province even though it is built in only one village and Tikina.

Serua

Serua Province had not yet entered into any major capital development works. A festival had been held annually since 1970 but the proceeds were not large and had been devoted entirely to 'scholarships'.57 At first it was proposed that these scholarships should be given to selected students on the basis of academic performance but the Council decided that this was unfair. It was felt that because all contributed to the festival all should be able to receive the benefits. Capital contribution to education in the province faces

55. Namosi and Serua share a Provincial Office and Roko Tui. This explanation for the drop in Namosi rate-paying was given by the Roko Tui, Ratu Manasa Kubaabola and the Tui Namosi, Ratu Simione Matanitobua.

56. Pers. comm. from the Tui Namosi, Ratu Simione Matanitobua.

57. For example in 1973 the Adi Serua festival raised only $3665 (Fiji Times report, 3 Dec. 1973, p.3).
difficulties. Many Fijians attend Indian schools which are larger and therefore have many benefits denied small schools. I attended a Provincial Council meeting on 24 April 1974 at which the Education Officer gave out detailed information on all schools in Serua, which, he explained, demonstrated the advantages of larger schools. The problem is, however, to translate this into prescriptions for action at the parochial level.

Serua rate-paying is very low. In 1970 the Ministry of Fijian Affairs intervened in the affairs of the Serua Provincial Council, placing several major items of spending under requisition; there would be no spending beyond a set limit without F.A.B. approval. The items requisitioned were travelling expenses, training expenses, upkeep of the Provincial Building, and education subsidy. Broken windows and floor boards in the Provincial Office were unable to be repaired in 1974.58 Rewa Province began to approach this situation in 1974. As with other provinces the finances of the province can be linked fundamentally to tradition and parochialism.

**Provincial finances and parochialism**

The financial plight of the Rewa and Serua Provincial Councils provided a model which the Alliance government and officials of the Fijian administration found disturbing. If it indicated the future of finances in other provinces then the whole Fijian administration faced bankruptcy and the loss of political viability. It is undoubtedly the example of Rewa that prompted the Fijian Affairs Board decision to take over from the Provincial Councils the burden of paying the wages of Council employees. The paradox is that, while Fijians cling to the desire for a separate administration, the Provincial Councils often seem to be paralysed by apathy and passive resistance. This paradox can be resolved if it is first understood that the problem is not that of raising money, but of spending it. If provincial leaders can find a project which will benefit the whole of a province then the money will follow. That is to say leadership is afraid to raise money unless they can be sure of a justifiable project to spend it on.

Tailevu Council has attempted to overcome this problem.

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58 Pers. comm. from the Roko Tui, Ratu Manasa Kubuabola.
by investing funds in the name of the province. These investments provide revenue which will, it is hoped, end the need for rates. But this does not solve the problem of finding suitable projects for the revenue generated by investments. In 1974 Naitasiri and Namasi were in the position of looking for suitable projects. In both cases the Provincial Councils were unsure of the projects on which they would spend the money when they began organizing their festivals. The main impetus came from a desire to follow the example of other provinces. The fact that they were very successful indicates a trust, based on the unquestioning assumption of common interests, that leaders will spend their money on projects which will benefit all villages. In the case of Naitasiri Province this means overlooking the fact that the province includes wide variations in economic activity resulting from the fact that provincial boundaries range from the Suva urban area to the most isolated inland villages in all of Fiji. The Council will have to spend the funds wisely if future festivals are to succeed.

The difficulties involved in finding acceptable projects for Provincial Council funds can be traced to the peculiarities of Fijian parochialism. It must be realized that parochial loyalties are not the result of simple self-interest. While it is true that each Mata is anxious to create projects which benefit his own parochial area, thereby building esteem and enhancing his prospects of re-election, this is only a minor aspect of parochial motivation. If parochialism were based solely on such self-interest it is unlikely that the result would be restraint in spending. Instead one would expect bargaining outside the Council, with each Mata trading support for another's proposals in order to obtain sufficient support for his own, the familiar pattern of pork-barrel politics. There is no evidence that this has ever occurred in the Provincial Councils of the Central Division.

Fijian parochial loyalties involve a sense of identity which is shared, and are not the property of each individual Mata. It cannot be traded. When meeting in the Provincial Council the Mata is always conscious of his identity as a member of a number of groups, especially those of district, village and family. Seating arrangements within the Council room are never accidental. There is an order of precedence in the districts which is usually preserved, even when the names are listed on minutes or agenda. This identity is a source of pride and involves a sense of honour which is sensitive to slight. References to the areas of other members must be made politely.
Membership of the province is also part of the identity of the Council members. They are conscious of a unity and kinship. This is especially evident when they 'confront' government officials who tend to be in the position of outsiders. In short, the fact that every district is felt to have an appropriate place within the province, and therefore a clearly established relationship with every other district, promotes a sense of unity within the Provincial Council. The province can be characterized as a communal group which is itself a federation of communal groups (districts) each of which is also a federation of communal groups (villages) which can be further subdivided into communal segments (mataqali). Groups at all levels in this hierarchy are not self-interested associations; rather they are ascriptive groups which, though they do not have tight boundaries, are sources of identity.

Individuals feel bound to protect the interests of their groups but do not engage in bargaining on the group's behalf. To do so would be presumptuous. Unless a Mata is a chief, and not necessarily even then, any proposal affecting his district will be the result of a meeting of the district. The interests of the group are something to be protected rather than promoted within the larger communal grouping. This contrasts with the dealings of these groups with outside bodies such as government departments. In the absence of group sentiments a feeling of conflict of aims and interests seems to be just below the surface.

Fijian parochialism is characterized by a structure of prescriptive groups in which no single group is the exclusive focus of loyalty or basis of differences of interest. This has a traditional basis that was explained in the first chapter. However, there is an important non-traditional element in this; the basic constituent units of provinces, that is the Old Tikinas, when questions of interest are involved, are regarded as equals. As the following example shows, any criticism of another Mata must be guarded and may be parried easily by appealing to the sentiments of group identity. It should also be borne in mind that this example of even minor conflict is exceptional. In 1973 in the Naitasiri Provincial Council a motion was put forward on

59 **Matas** are reluctant to summon meetings of districts. This is the prerogative of the traditional leader who, in most cases, is not the Mata. This illustrates the importance and desirability of reviving the Old Tikina Council.
behalf of the people of Wainimala New Tikina asking that the provincial rates be reduced. When the trend of discussion seemed clearly to go against the motion, Ratu Sakiusa Navakaroko, the Mata for Wainimala, had this to say:

I knew that this motion would be rejected but I wanted it to be mentioned because the people at Nabubuco have no established sources of cash. This is their wish, and I must take your harsh words in this meeting and try to carry it smiling, as I am their representative. What we must do is to try to help the people until they can help themselves, then they will help us all, throughout the whole province.

A compromise motion was then passed, deferring the proposal until the next annual budget session. After this, Ratu Ilaitia Balenaivalu, Mata for Lomaivuna, raised a question which was polite but clearly critical. He said that he had heard over the radio about large sums of money being raised for a Wainimala festival and asked if there did not seem to be an inconsistency between this and the motion. Ratu Sakiusa replied in these terms:

I would like to say that representative of Wainimala comes from Nabubuco and his motion doesn't include the lower parts of Wainimala. 60

Speaking in the third person and falling back on the wishes of the people of his own area he closed the discussion. This is about as close to conflict as Provincial Council affairs normally come.

Most Matas rely on representing the wishes of their districts knowing that they will be on safe ground. However, Matas cannot push these interests. They cannot make demands on provincial money in the name of abstract values such as justice or the need for development. To do so would be to bring down immediate censure. The funds of the province must be devoted to schemes of benefit to the whole Province. Matas are willing to try to score points off one another but they must do so carefully, according to good manners and above all respecting the integrity and honour of all communal groups. When Ratu Sakiusa moved the motion to lower rates he was opening himself to the charge of pushing his own

interest rather than merely defending it. Ratu Ilaitia's query, a clear attempt to score a point off Ratu Sakiusa, failed, however, when Ratu Sakiusa explained that he was speaking only for his own people in the more remote interior where cash is undeniably hard to earn. Ratu Ilaitia would have attracted censure if he had pushed the matter any further.

The most important conclusion to emerge from the varied financial activities of the five provinces is that Provincial Councils are not open to the competition of various local interest groups to secure benefits for themselves. Sensitivity to the interests of the Old Tikina is obvious in all Provincial Council affairs but this results in a mutual restraint from spending on anything which might appear to favour only one section of a province.

A decision which would have the effect of institutionalizing this informal arrangement was taken by the Tailevu Provincial Council in 1974. As with the organization of a festival and investments in Provincial Councils perhaps Tailevu leads the way for other provinces. By 1974 the contribution of villagers to the Adi Tailevu festival had fallen noticeably and there were complaints by villagers that they could see little return for the funds which had been invested. A suggestion was made (during the Council meeting of 10 May 1974) that a portion of provincial funds be divided between Old Tikinas according to the share of their contribution to the festival, with another portion being devoted to the activities of the Provincial Council on behalf of the whole province. This could also include land rate funds which were, according to the intention of the 1967 legislation, to be the main source. In the discussion of the motion its supporters argued that this arrangement would increase willingness to pay land rates. The vote on the motion established a clear majority, though it was not a unanimous decision. This may be because two motions had already been put forward attempting to solve the problem of dwindling land rate collections by reverting to a poll tax, a change that was already being considered by the Fijian Affairs Board for all provinces which had changed to land rates. If adopted and carried out the Tailevu proposal to devolve financial power to the Old Tikinas would appear to

61 In 1975 a serious split erupted in the Ba Provincial Council because Ba Tikina claimed that it was paying far too large a share of land rates (Nai Lalakai, 20 Nov. 1975).
diminish the importance of the Provincial Councils although it is arguable that their importance has always been larger in the theory of the 1967 legislation than in the practice of their actual activities. It is certainly significant that the most efficient Provincial Council in the Central Division has been the first to take the step of formally reducing its financial powers.

The central government has also established policies that tend to take financial powers from the Provincial Council and give them to the Old Tikina Council. Through the District Administration, the government created a self-help scheme of funding development projects. By granting money directly to villages and districts the Government bypassed the Provincial Council. This scheme proved to be a notable success and government funds set aside for the scheme were quickly exhausted, even after an additional provision was obtained. The backlog of schemes approved by Development Committees and waiting their turn for funds will grow steadily larger. As this happens the government will increasingly feel the need to determine priorities. Up to 1974 approval of schemes by the Provincial Council and Development Committees tended to be automatic.

When District Administration officials were asked why one Old Tikina had received a very large share of the funds (covering more than one project) the answer was easy: the efforts (gugumatua) of these people had earned the money. They had gathered their share of the funds, put them in a bank account and submitted their proposals. But as the self help scheme gains momentum an increasing number of villages will have fulfilled their part of the scheme and will be awaiting government funds.

This faces the government with the necessity to choose between four courses of action: (i) it can do nothing so that each project waits its turn; (ii) it can have District Officers decide on priorities; (iii) it can encourage Provincial Councils to decide on priorities; or (iv) it can encourage District Development Committees to decide on priorities. The first two alternatives would appear to be in line with past government policy, which has attempted to avoid politics and is distrustful of the judgment of villagers.

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62 Mr Mikaele Yasa, District Officer Nausori, stated this before the Bau Old Tikina Council which I attended on 6 March 1974 at Viwa island.
in economic affairs. In the 1972 Annual Report the hope was expressed that more attention would be given to 'community economic projects' such as copra driers, fishing equipment, etc., rather than permanent community assets such as foot bridges and bus shelters.63

Here again is an expression of an opinion that is commonly taken for granted in official circles: villagers are incapable of sound judgment in economic affairs because of their limited frame of reference. This opinion is the basis of the continued weakness of Provincial Councils; the lack of an effective sanction enforcing rate payments makes financing of Provincial Council activities almost purely voluntary. In the light of this, it goes without saying that Provincial Councils are not considered capable of spending large sums on capital works in the province. The only scheme in which Provincial Councils were ever given a chance to allocate money for capital works proved a failure, thus confirming the official view of villagers' judgment. This was the Provincial Economic Development loan scheme for which huge sums are still outstanding because the people who borrowed the sums were not able to convert the money advanced into investment which produced income.

Finance and credit for villagers is a problem charged with issues of communal politics. Fijian villagers cannot borrow money on the security of their communally owned land while Indian tenants can often gain finance with their lease as security. Tailevu's entry into rural credit in 1974 is therefore a critical step in the development of Provincial Councils. If it is successful, there may yet be an important role for Provincial Councils in financial matters. Festivals, rates and revenue from investments may have an outlet within the Provincial Council if councils can successfully operate rural credit facilities. Such operations on a significant scale may appear likely to bring about the development of a new relationship between Provincial Councils and villagers. Loans involve a direct transaction between individuals and the Council. They establish a means for administering patronage which might allow the creation of pork-barrel politics. However, trading of favours is still unlikely. The first criterion in the allocation of loans by any Provincial Council is likely to be that employed by the Tailevu Provincial Council in 1974, namely achieving a balance between tikinas - in a word parochialism.

63 Annual Report 1972, p.75.
Provincial power

By 1974, seven years after the creation of elected Provincial Councils, some clear patterns had emerged in their activities. In all of the provinces of the Central Division, the formal powers granted by legislation had turned out to be worthless of themselves. Money could not be raised by rates without criminal sanctions and the power to make and enforce by-laws had never really been exercised. In the absence of direction from above, however, new power was able to develop under certain circumstances. Provincial Councils were able to create their own power by establishing sources of funds outside the system of rates and two councils also took the important step of moving into investments which promised an important financial role for councils. However, the question naturally arises: why did this happen more easily in two provinces than in the other three? One explanation which needs to be considered is that the men elected to leadership of the two more successful provinces were more able. Most people involved in Provincial Council affairs in any of the provinces appear to regard this as the main reason; and it may be partly true, for there has clearly been more interest in election to the two successful councils than in election to the others, though lack of interest in elections is a problem shared by all councils.

There are no outstanding differences in education between the Councillors of the various councils. All have a few fairly well-educated men with long experience in urban life. The difference is that the members of the more successful councils, regardless of educational background, have been able to co-operate and work together. This co-operation is a new form of power. It is not traditional nor is it modern legal authority created by legislation. It did not exist in 1967 but grew slowly and continues to grow. Its source is the Fijian form of parochialism, a body of values which comprises two complementary sets of rules: firstly those demanding loyalty to one's own parochial unit, 

64 Information about candidates for Council elections was obtained from Councillors and Provincial Office staff. Excluding urban area representatives and nominated members (most of whom were chosen specifically because of their education or occupational experience) most of the candidates, successful and unsuccessful, were educated to primary level. Age, education or occupational experience appeared to have little significance for election.
secondly those demanding respect for the rights of similar parochial units.

These rules are very informal but deeply seated, and provide a basis of co-operation which is independant of both tradition and authority granted by legislation. In the three less successful councils competition from tradition, as an alternative source of authority, seems to have interfered with the development of co-operation based on parochialism.

Serua and Namosi. These two provinces are very small and, though their difficulties are exacerbated by their smallness, they are attributable mainly to other factors. Earlier a distinction was made between two types of traditional political relations - political domination and political solidarity. The two provinces contrast sharply in their respective patterns of traditional ties. Serua has a very large element of political domination, while Namosi is characterized by political solidarity. All of the villages of Namosi acknowledge the Tui Namosi as their paramount chief and for most of them he is also the head of their yavusa, Nabukebuke. Villages outside the yavusa are also linked to villages inside by ties of marriage. In fact the whole province resembles an Old Tikina in its pattern of solidarity. In contrast to this, many villages in Serua have not always acknowledged the Vunivalu of Serua as their paramount. In particular Deuba (a group of villages which constitute an Old Tikina) share some dialect and ancestral ties with Namosi people and were formerly ruled by the Tui Namosi. Recent conquest by the Vunivalu of Serua is the only claim to rule. Other areas also claim independence and the area which is united by political solidarity is small.

65 Pers. comm. from the Tui Namosi, Ratu Simione Matanitobua.
66 T.J. Macnaught, in an unpublished manuscript, has traced the formation of the Province of Serua under the skilful leadership of Ratu Aseri Latianara. Macnaught quotes the records of the Native Lands Commission of 1898: 'The Vunivalu of the Korolevu, that is, the recognized head of the tribe (the present Roko Buli) is the Turaga i Taukei of the whole of the lands within the Buliship of Serua (only)'. In 1932 the Native Lands Commission reopened its hearings. Heads of yavusas were asked afresh if they were willing to go vakarorogo to anyone. As a result of Ratu Aseri's influence they joined Serua as subordinate vanuas within a new matanitu. However they overlooked the fact that a share of their land rents would then go to the Vunivalu as Turaga i Taukei.
In view of the contrast in intra-provincial political ties it seems unexpected that both Provincial Councils should be hampered by paralysis inside the council and lack of interest in elections outside the council. In the Namosi Provincial Council the lack of interest is due to a combination of two factors. First, there is the social and economic underdevelopment of the province. Of all of the Provincial Councils in the Central Division Namosi is the only one with a significantly lower number of people with secondary or tertiary education and occupational experience in urban areas. This means that there is a pronounced lack of experience in urban type organizations. Secondly, this is combined with a strong traditional organization. Lack of interest in Council Affairs appears to be a result of lack of interest in an elected body rather than lack of interest in a body acting on behalf of Namosi Province.

The success of the Adi Namosi Festival showed the remarkable support that Namosi villagers are willing to give to their province and it is important to note that the festival was organized vakavanua (traditionally). The Tui Namosi called a meeting of the vaoua and allocated 'duties' to each village. He is also chairman of the Provincial Council but chose deliberately to work outside the Council framework, which can be interpreted as a sign of confidence in the traditional organization or lack of confidence in the elected system.

Tailevu and Naitasiri festivals were organized by their councils. The reluctance of chiefs to organize vakavanua should not be surprising; any failure would be a sharp blow to their honour. The chiefs at Bau had to be approached twice before they would give their approval for the Council to organize a festival. In Namosi on the other hand the Tui Namosi's judgment that a festival would be better organized outside the Provincial Council is soundly based. The council is extremely passive; there is little discussion of motions and most are carried unanimously. On several occasions the council minutes record pleas from the Tui Namosi that all Matas speak their minds in the council rather than grumble outside. The organization which he established to run the festival is instructive in the way it overcomes the problems of the elected council. The chairman was a doctor who is of chiefly birth in Namosi. The secretary, treasurer and two special members were Fijian Affairs Board

67 Pers. comm. from the Tui Namosi, Ratu Simione Matanitobua.
and government officials. The other five members were representatives of the Old Tikinas.68 These representatives are in a much easier position than the elected Matas. Old Tikina representatives can speak confidently on behalf of 'their people'. In addition the officials provide expertise in matters of organization. This combination of parochial representation and outside expertise is reminiscent of the Sukuna administration.

Serua Province has also held festivals which were organized vakavanua but they were small and attracted very limited support. It is significant that the Vunivalu, paramount chief of Serua, has never been elected chairman of the Provincial Council and a close kinsman of his was actually defeated when standing for election to the Council (Ratu Isikeli Latianara who is well educated and a past Roko Tui Serua and Namosi). The three past chairmen have all come from Deuba. In fact one election saw three candidates from Deuba competing. In other words parochial loyalty to Serua proper has not been important.

Parochialism is further inhibited by the division of electorates into only two New Tikinas, Serua and Nuku (formerly there were five Old Tikinas). This makes it hard for people to feel that they are representing their own parochial unit. The failure of the Provincial Council to achieve anything of significance in its first seven years must be explained by this lack of support. It cannot be attributed to a lack of educated or suitably experienced members. Long serving members in 1974 included a Junior High School principal, an experienced Agriculture Department official, a retired Roko Tui and a former fulltime Alliance Party fieldworker. The first chairman was also a well educated man and retired to become an Assistant Secretary within the Fijian Affairs Board staff.

In short, in the two small provinces conditions which are opposite in every way have had the same result. In Serua traditional authority is weak but there is no shortage of leaders with organizational skills; in Namosi traditional authority is strong but there is a shortage of personnel with organizational skills. However, in both cases parochialism is stifled in Provincial Council affairs. In Namosi traditional authority is still strong and is sufficiently

68 Pers. comm. from the Tui Namosi, Ratu Simione Matanitobua.
concentrated to incorporate parochialism, thereby making the Council superfluous. In Serua the lack of correspondence between boundaries supposedly based on tradition and the boundaries of parochial units chokes the expression of parochialism in council affairs. In Rewa a third set of circumstances has hindered parochialism.

**Rewa.** Rewa Provincial Council presents the paradox of the most traditionally-minded council in the Central Division being located within the province most thoroughly affected by modern society. It also stands out among the provinces of the Central Division because of the gravity of the problems the Council faces.

Rewa has a highly stratified traditional structure which was the centre of one of the most powerful *matanitu* in pre-cession Fiji. All parts of the province have unambiguous traditional ranking which combines elements of political solidarity and political domination. All Rewans are proud of their attachment to Rewa and even villages bound only by ties of political domination are proud to own the *Roko Tui Dreketi* as their paramount. However, even though the statuses of villages and chiefly office are clear there are personal divisions and jealousies within the main chiefly family. Ever since the death of the former *Roko Tui Dreketi* traditional leadership has not been a locus of unity in the province. The precise nature of dispute is not clear to outsiders. The claims and counterclaims are not regarded as the sort of thing which should be publicly canvassed. Many people outside the province are aware of the problem but either do not understand or do not want to understand precisely what is in dispute and whom it is between. A member of the chiefly family confided to me that there was a 'split' in his family in which he avoided taking sides.

Meetings of the Provincial Council include the *Bose Vakavanua* (Traditional Council). In seating arrangements, always an important matter in Fijian society, the traditional leaders are intermingled with the elected representatives to give proper place to each individual's standing. This standing is a combination of traditional rank, social position and position within the council. Commoners who hold office in the council or an important occupation in urban society are accorded commensurately more important positions than their traditional rank would otherwise
allow. Name tags are placed on the tables so that everybody knows his position from the outset. The government officials who are advisers to the council are also included within the seating arrangements.

The size of this assemblage and the manner in which the large number of traditional leaders are mingled with government officials make it difficult for the council to work efficiently. Speech-making rather than discussion is the characteristic medium of exchange. This is in sharp contrast to the Tailevu Council which is described below. The plethora of traditional ceremony which accompanies meetings is perhaps another factor which hinders the hard-headed discussion that is needed to undertake and plan provincial activities involving money rather than merely providing a forum for speech-making.

However, the preoccupation with tradition and ceremony is a symptom of a more fundamental problem rather than the cause of problems. The real problem is the failure of parochial interests to assert themselves within the council. This failure can be linked to the split in chiefly leadership. The activities of the council seem to be preoccupied with a concern to maintain the appearance of unity. There is a fear of putting forward schemes which might promote or reveal disunity. The Rewa Nite and the small loan fund it created were attempts to circumvent this problem by raising money in urban areas and lending it on a purely individual basis. The result should have been predictable. The success of the 1975 Ro Burebasaga Festival was due to the ability of the provincial leadership to mobilize parochial leadership. With this, the problem of divided chiefly leadership has been by-passed, at least temporarily. But the real test of unity will be the problem of deciding how to spend the money raised by the festival.

It is possible that provincial unity and parochial involvement in politics can be achieved without dramatically resolving the split in chiefly leadership. If the successful festival is followed by a satisfactory investment of funds a step in that direction will have been taken. But there is another factor which also promises to promote the articulation of parochialism. The institution of Tikina Councils was just getting under way in Rewa in 1974.

Hon. Uraia Koroi, for example, is given a seat up the front, in recognition of his position as a Member of Parliament and President of the Methodist church.
Traditional authority has not been important at provincial level in Tailevu or Naitasiri. This has perhaps assisted parochial interests to assert themselves although there is insufficient evidence to justify a generalized statement such as 'the absence of traditional authority at a provincial level is a precondition to the development of parochial power in Provincial Councils'. All that can be said is that traditional authority is a complicating factor. It is an alternate source of authority. While it may compete with parochial power it is also possible that the two could work together harmoniously.

Tailevu. The small part played by province-wide traditional political ties in the activities of the Provincial Council requires explanation. One hypothesis is that, while the Vanivalu of Bau is the traditional paramount of most of Tailevu and much of Fiji, Tailevu is not quite the centre of his dominions. In pre-cession Fiji some of the more important vanua qali of Bau were spread throughout the islands of Lomaiviti, which now form a province on their own (Hayden, 1954:4), and significant parts of Tailevu are of only marginal traditional political allegiance to Bau. Wainibuka was formerly part of the now dismembered province of Colo East and like all 'hillsmen' the various vanua of Wainibuka valued their independence (though they may have been Bati - allies - to Bau). The heavily populated New Tikina of Nakelo contains four Old Tikinas which were formerly of varying degrees of independence. Nakelo Old Tikina is known as Bati to Bau but the Old Tikinas of Tokatoka and Nuku were Bati to Rewa. Only the Bau/Rewa wars of the 1840s established Bau's rule, and then only in a purely military sense. They did not establish ties of political solidarity.

Few high-ranking Bauans have ever entered the Tailevu Provincial Council and only one has ever chanced election. 70 The first chairman, Ratu William Togainivalu, is a Bauan, though not high ranking, and elected purely because of his education, occupational experience and flair for politics. The two subsequent chairmen are both from Nakelo and though one is of chiefly rank both were obviously elected on the basis of their experience in public life. 71

70 Adi Saiki Kikau is the only high-ranking Bauan to have been elected.
71 Mr Esala Rasova and Ratu Livai Volavola.
The Tailevu festival contained some elements of political traditional ties in its first years but these gradually disappeared. When the festival was first suggested, two members of the Provincial Council, both of chiefly rank though neither a Bauan, were given the job of approaching the Vunivalu. It was felt that a gathering in the name of the whole province could not take place without his sanction. They discussed the matter with both the Vunivalu and his cousin, Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau. Both tended not to favour the suggestion. It took a further motion and another delegation from the Provincial Council to gain their approval. With the approval of the Vunivalu the Turaga ni Vanua (Chiefs of the Land) could be summoned. Without further qualification the term Turaga ni Vanua is generally applied to the traditional leaders of the Old Tikinas or their representatives. At their meeting with the Provincial Council vakavanua arrangements could be made. In particular the contributions to be made at the opening of the festival (yavu) were set. Each representative then returned to his village where shares of the Tikina's overall share were allocated. After 1970 the permission of the Vunivalu was not sought. In 1974 the chairman of the Tikina Councils were summoned rather than the Turaga ni Vanua, although this was not regarded as a significant change.

Naitasiri. Unlike the other provinces of the Central Division Naitasiri has no chief who lays claim to the position of paramount. The Qaranivalu, high chief of Naitasiri Tikina, was a powerful chief before cession and is considered to be among the prominent chiefs of all of Fiji, but the peoples of the mountain areas flanking Naitasiri have always considered themselves independent and were formerly part of the now dismembered province of Colo East. The Qaranivalu enjoys a position which may be characterized as 'first among equals'. If there is any ceremonial position of prominence to be taken it will be filled without question by the Qaranivalu. His title is always mentioned when people address the council; e.g. 'Na turaga na Qaranivalu,

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72 Pers. comm. from Ratu Livai Volavola, one of the two members appointed to approach the Vunivalu.

73 During the 1976 Adi Naitasiri festival another chief took the first bowl of yaqona, whereupon he collapsed and died before the cup reached his lips. Many people interpreted this as an indication that the Qaranivalu should have been served first. See Pacific Islands Monthly, June 1976, p.25.
Mr Chairman, members of the Provincial Council etc.' The Qaranivalu exerts close control over the Provincial Council members for Naitasiri Tikina but his son was defeated when he stood for the position of chairman. It is significant that the Qaranivalu has never sought election but he undoubtedly played an important part in the single election in which the present chairman was defeated. The chairman is the M.H.R. (Hon. L. Nasilivata) for the province and was opposed by the Qaranivalu in the 1972 general election.

All important Turaga ni Vanua have standing invitations to Provincial Council meetings. They are seated around the outside of the council when it meets at the main table in N.L.T.B. Board Room. Any order in their seating arrangements is largely informal and decided according to who turns up and in what order. They are able to take part in discussion, though they are not able to vote, a fact which the chairman occasionally needs to bring to their attention (as I observed during a meeting on 12 June 1974). In recognition of their importance the Turaga ni Vanua are paid travelling expenses. It is taken for granted that they can speak for their people as much as the elected Mata and it will be recalled from the example mentioned earlier that even the elected Mata is liable to think of himself as primarily the representative of his Old Tikina.
Chapter 4

'Customs of respect': Fijian communal politics

You should consider the front, the back, and all sides of your utterances before you utter them.

Ratu Luke of Draubuta,

We the Fijians have customs of respect, founded on humility before our High Chiefs and Leaders.


The Fijian upbringing that nurtured me was filled with mutual understanding, mutual concern and mutual respect.

Jope Rokosoi,

Colonial government introduced a system of government which established written, legal powers defining a set of institutions that were supposed to grow out of existing Fijian institutions. Since then chiefly rule has been a bone of contention in the government of Fijians. Its merits have been debated with its abolition or preservation being variously recommended. But what was to be abolished or preserved? The political culture of Fijians? Government positions such as Roko and Buli? The years since 1967 when the position of Buli was abolished and the office of Roko emasculated beyond recognition afford a new opportunity to consider the relationship between the political culture of Fijians and institutions derived from an alien culture.

The introduction of democratic Provincial Councils at first added to the confusion of proliferating government agencies and social and economic change. Later, grass-roots leaders were able to bypass the legal charter establishing Provincial Councils and form a viable institution of their own. Where did the power within the institution come from? Legislation? It did not exist before the legislation, yet the provisions of the legislation were inadequate of
themselves. No established organization was on hand to seize the framework of the 1967 legislation and yet it was moulded by some sort of political resources from within the rural community. What is the nature of these political resources? Logically it would seem to be necessary that they include some form of power and authority but it is not simply traditional authority.

This power is part of a community which is not a fixed and unchanging 'thing'. It barely existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Over that century, in reaction to the encroachments of outsiders, a sense of community developed. The formation of colonial government and the growth of a large Indian population have also helped to build a community which has a remarkable degree of unity, unity which appears to be stable and enduring.

The unity of Fijian community can be elucidated by the formulation of a concept of communal power. Any new concept of power faces difficulties at birth (though they seem to be conceived more easily); that is to say there have been many different formulations about the nature of power but they have failed to form any consistent point of view. One solution to this problem is to resolve the variety of formulations into two contrasting views of power which are regarded as complementary or alternate models, capable of elucidating different aspects of a broad phenomenon.

C.J. Friedrich has distinguished a consensual aspect of power from a coercive aspect of power (examined in Medding, 1970). Hannah Arendt (1959) makes a similar distinction between power and rule. Rule is the exercise of clearly defined authority which is usually based on coercion but could conceivably include all manner of legitimations to ensure compliance. Power is based on co-operation and consensus though it has other, more important, aspects. Its roots in Latin and Greek (potentia and dynamis) reveal its essential meaning. It is a potentiality in human activity; as a potentiality, Arendt says, it 'can only be actualized but never fully materialized' (Arendt, 1959:179). This is obviously a more ambitious conceptual formulation than the distinction between consensual and coercive power. Arendt aims at no less than 'a study of the central dilemmas facing modern man' and her ideas are not formulated to suit immediate application to empirical studies.

The heart of Arendt's concept of power is an image of
the Greek *polis* as the first and finest expression of power in human affairs. 'The polis, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose no matter where they happen to be' (1959:177). 'Power is what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence.' It is what 'keeps people together after the fleeting moment of action has passed' and 'what, at the same time, they keep alive through remaining together' (1959:180).

The question which Arendt's distinction between power and rule invites is whether the power built by Provincial Councils is authority which will endure or power which may decline or be overshadowed by other power. Power is the creature of individuals. If they decline in ability, or are replaced by new individuals, power can be reduced or even destroyed. Any political institution will combine power and rule. It will be based on the existence of authority relations but it will allow for the creation of power according to the talents and actions of individual actors.

Provincial Councils were created by regulations based on the authority of parliamentary legislation but the councils' practices diverge significantly from the letter of these laws. In fact, as the *Roko Tui* Kadavu summed it up: the people 'doubt the legality' of powers granted by the Provincial Council regulations. This raises the interesting but difficult question of the role of 'western' law in Fiji. In Africa, and more recently in Papua New Guinea, attempts have been made to incorporate customary law within the legal system (Epstein, 1974). Until 1967 Fijians were governed by Fijian Regulations that were enforced by Fijian constables and Fijian magistrates. But these regulations were not customary law. Sometimes they prohibited customs, traditional borrowing customs for example. At other times they tended to support customs, with, for example, provision for the partial preservation of personal services for chiefs (Roth, 1973:152). The Fijian Regulations were in reality modern laws designed only in part to preserve custom. The Regulations were drawn up by a bureaucratic body, the Fijian Affairs Board, and the Fijian constables and magistrates were salaried officials, not traditional leaders.

It is easier to say what tradition is not than what it
is, but a number of generalizations are possible. In broad outline 'Fijian law' can be contrasted with that of other, apparently typical, Melanesian societies (Epstein 1974:6-25). There were in Fiji no impersonal procedures for settling disputes between individuals, a result of the fact that there were few important individual rights. Property was vested in various ways in different groups; use of land within larger groups such as yavusa or mataqali was under the control of the head of the group. Disputes over land between groups were public affairs to be settled by chiefly authority or warfare. Economic organization within the household was a private matter under the control of the head of the household.

In short, there appear to have been very many restrictions on the nature of criminal laws, rather than civil law type statements of rights and duties requiring individuals to settle their own disputes. All of these restrictions backed up the power of chiefs and family leaders whose authority (lewua), although not embodied in written constitutions, was normally unambiguous, being limited only by the bounds of the groups they controlled. In other words rights and obligations were 'group-centric' rather than ego-centric. Hence the well-known reluctance of Fijians to press their rights individually. In a clumsy, bureaucratic way the Fijian Regulations attempted to imitate the structure of traditional Fijian law. A quasi-traditional law supported a quasi-traditional chiefly rule. In fact, neither the chiefly order of the Roko nor the law of the Fijian Regulations were essentially traditional.

It is ironic that the replacement of what were thought to be traditional rule and law by modern western substitutes has allowed the emergence of more authentically traditional forms. Democratic Provincial Councils were created by legislation but their activities are governed by other, unwritten, rules, the informal rules of equity and fair play, which I have termed parochialism. These rules, although allowing equality between groups formerly arranged hierarchically, can be traced to Fijian culture which, as mentioned already, permits equality between groups under certain circumstances.

Despite the flexibility of culture there are, nevertheless, stresses and strains as cultural values attempt to accommodate political change. Chiefly leadership is in many ways still the most important model to which Fijians refer in evaluating leaders but it is not the only model. Church
leadership provides a major alternative, although, as I have already emphasized, church leaders succeeded by supporting rather than competing with chiefs. More importantly, it must be borne in mind that under chiefly leadership, in traditional times, people of non-chiefly rank could still play important roles. The traditional order was a hierarchy with many tops, and chiefs at every level delegated powers and privileges to their key subordinates who, as servants of the chiefs, also served the people. Service (veiqa\text{\textbar{r}a\textbar{v}}i) is a fundamental notion within Fijian culture which is shared by both chiefly and non-chiefly leadership. Commoners with ambitions to office sometimes seem tempted to ape chiefly leadership through the vehicle of service, but this is not easy.

**Competition and rules**

Within Provincial Councils there are no 'seats of authority' or reins of government which can be occupied, seized or otherwise taken possession of by power-seeking individuals. Competition exists in Provincial Councils but it takes the form of competition to take a leading part in activities, in other words to initiate actions which serve the province, rather than to build up personal influence. There is limited competition for the office of chairman but this confers nothing more than a prominent position, though it will be seen that this is an important acquisition.

F.G. Bailey has suggested a conceptual scheme to analyse informal rules in political competition with a distinction between two types of rules. On the one hand there are pragmatic rules which embody 'private wisdom' 'about how people set about winning'. On the other hand there are normative rules which express 'ultimate and publicly accepted values'. They 'do not prescribe a particular kind of action but rather set broad limits to possible actions' (Bailey 1969:4-10). Bailey concentrates on pragmatic rules as the title of his study, *Strategems and Spoils*, indicates. As a result, most of his generalizations are focused on types of political action that are excluded by the rules of Fijian politics.

'The art of leadership', Bailey says, 'lies in judging whose hand may be safely rapped when it reaches for the pork-barrel, so there will be enough to satisfy those whom it is not safe to exclude (Bailey 1969:31). The inapplicability of the pork-barrel model of politics was examined earlier. In addition, Provincial Councils, party meetings and other
Fijian gatherings only rarely form arenas where there are 'confrontations' and 'encounters'. The short exchange in the Naitasiri Provincial Council which was examined above (pp.90-1) illustrates how carefully Fijians in public life try to avoid encounters and rarely ever become involved in confrontations. Most of the rules in Fijian politics resemble Bailey's category of normative rules. They tend to be restrictive rather than prescriptive; they are publicly accepted and absolute or ultimate in the sense that they cannot be bargained over. They allow room for manoeuvring rather than being open to bargaining.

In looking at non-western politics western political scientists have often fastened on to processes resembling the pork-barrel oriented, individualistic, competitive model of politics (which was in the first place mainly associated with American politics). When politics in non-western countries do not resemble this model there has been a tendency to label them as 'unmodern' and even 'un-political'. Certainly they would be classified as non-rational in tending to favour ascription, particularism and so on, all the 'wrong' side of the pattern variables. Yet Fijian politics are subtle, complicated and contain a distinct rationality. In particular it should be noted that they allow a remarkable degree of unity which is founded, paradoxically, on the rules of parochialism.

The most obvious rules are the rules of etiquette which govern the procedures of public meetings. At all times care must be taken to observe respect for the integrity of the Provincial Council and the groups which form it. The expression e na yalo ni veidokai, 'with a spirit of mutual respect', occurs again and again in speeches as a means of ensuring that the speaker's motives will not be taken to be selfish or disrespectful of the interests of other groups. Matas stand to speak and another Mata will not interrupt while one speaks even if he feels a strong urge to disagree. When a Mata has finished speaking he will conclude formally by saying: sa vaka saka oya na kena levu - which may be translated 'that is all thank you gentlemen'.

A government official will usually only speak when called upon to do so, taking care not to butt into affairs that do not concern him. For example Naitasiri Provincial Council minutes record that Mikaele Yasa, District Officer Nausori, prefaced some suggestions about the running of the Naitasiri festival by asking: 'please excuse me gentlemen
of the Council I would just like to suggest ...,¹ This sort
of restraint can hinder their work. Belshaw regarded such
problems of 'communication' as a significant handicap to
organization.² It should be clear, however, that this is
not just a problem of individual bad habits; it is a part of
the way Fijian groups work. Chiefly rule, with one man
being the focal point of each group, provided a way around
this problem. Elected Provincial Councils now find the need
to develop new means of clearing channels of communication
across group boundaries. Another rule of group etiquette is
that Matas and government or provincial officials must be
careful to distinguish between views and statements which
are personal and those which represent their official capacity
as spokesman or bureaucratic officer. The expression o you
vakataki au, that is 'I as myself' is used to make clear
that a personal opinion is being given. Care must be taken
to avoid the impression of putting oneself above the group.
Only a chief whose position itself symbolizes the group can
dare to speak on behalf of the group unless specifically
authorized. Any other person, no matter what his generalized
standing, cannot presume to speak for a group which is not
his own. An incident from Naitasiri demonstrates this.

Throughout all of Fiji the Qaranivalu of Naitasiri is
known as a high chief (turaga bale) but the position of
Qaranivalu belongs only to the vanua which now forms the New
Tikina of Naitasiri. Ratu Vitu Qiolevu, the Qaranivalu, is
careful to pay respect to the other groups which constitute
the Province of Naitasiri. At a meeting in 1969 a motion was
put forward by Jiutasa Boginiso of Naitasiri Tikina and Ratu
Imanueli Roseru of Waimaro Tikina that the Roko Tui should
be a Naitasiri-born man (gone ni Naitasiri). The discussion
that followed was recorded in the Council minutes in the
following terms:

F.A.B. Adviser leaves the room.
Chairman: Asks the Roko Tui and Assistants not to
think badly of the motion. All should
join in the discussion.

¹Naitasiri Provincial Council minutes, 16 April 1974. The
recording of these words in the minutes underlines their
importance.

²Belshaw (1964:258) links bureaucratic inaction to the
'general unwillingness of Fijians to confront one
another'.
Jiutasa: Agrees.
Secretary (i.e. the Roko Tui): agrees to the feeling behind the motion - this is the time to start nurturing someone for the position.
D.O. Naitasiri: agrees but urges looking at it carefully. It should not be just a matter of following customs of kinship. A Roko can be appointed to go anywhere.
Chairman: the position of Assistant Roko is vacant.
D.O. Vunidawa: agrees but mentions the dangers of kinship in situations of social change as in Africa for example.
Ratu Rinakama: supports the idea of the dangers of kinship - also there is the question of experience.
Ratu Vitu excuses himself for lateness. It is an important motion for the sake of gradual change. He says that he did not think it would be brought up. It is in fact his own son who is being proposed. He asks that he not be thought badly of for the bringing up of the motion. He speaks justly and in accordance with the customs of the land asking that members do not think him arrogant (viavía levu).³

After this, two resolutions were passed: one asking the Minister for Fijian Affairs that a person from Naitasiri be Roko Tui; and a second suggesting that Ratu Donu Qiolevu be appointed to the vacant position of Assistant Roko. The significance of the Fijian Affairs official leaving the room is not clear but it could be interpreted as some form of disapproval. It is significant that only one member apart from the mover of the motion had anything to say on the matter. Jiutasa, the mover of the motion, is the Matanivanua, that is 'herald' or traditional spokesman, of the Qaranivalu. Ratu Rinakama's reservations were probably shared by other members who chose to say nothing out of respect for the Qaranivalu. If members had any enthusiasm for the proposal they would have said something. Ratu Vitu's apologetic tone also indicates that he was aware of the sentiments behind the silence.

In moving his son into the position of Assistant Roko he is tending to push himself and his own group ahead of the

³ Naitasiri Provincial Council minutes, 13 May 1969.
larger group, the province, a move which the status of Qaravivalu, despite its prestige, does not justify. His justification for the appointment tries to appeal to the very sentiments which it is in danger of violating. The request that a gone ni Naitasiri fill the role of Roko supposes that such an appointment is desirable for the province. There were two quite distinct motions: the first expressing generally the desirability of a Naitasiri man filling the position of Roko; the second suggesting Ratu Donu as a suitable Assistant Roko for the vacancy. In the minds of the Provincial Councillors the proposal would not divide into two motions, one particular, the other general. The proposal is concrete and particular and it seems hard to imagine anyone but a man of rank being put forward in this manner. The silence of the Provincial Council could be taken as a sign (unmistakably clear to Ratu Vitu) that the proposed appointment appeared to be a regression to the old system of quasi-chiefly rule, with all its complications for parochialism.

Na Veimatataki: representation. Competition inside the council is severely limited by parochial loyalties in a number of ways. Firstly it conditions the loyalty of each member so that he will not be a party to any proposal, particularly in the spending of money, which does not accord with the interests of his parochial unit. Secondly, the fact that each Mata feels bound by parochial loyalties helps to build a second level of values within the Provincial Council, a mutual respect for the interests of parochial units. In the affairs of Provincial Councils only parochial units are recognized as constituents. This does not mean that individual grievances are not raised. Usually individual grievances involve an individual complaint about treatment at the hands of a government department. In these cases the council normally takes the side of their fellow provincial member against the government.

Just as the Provincial Council tends only to recognize Old Tikinas, so within the Old Tikina the interest of villages tends to be the unit of recognition. Within the village the unit of recognition is the household or group of households. In village activities, as in the activities of Old Tikinas, care must be taken to accord equal treatment

\[\text{4Democracy in the form of elected councils is a new thing among Fijians but the idea of representing people (matataki) is not.}\]
to all equal groups. This attitude to representation matches Reinhard Bendix's concept of 'the functional principle of representation'. The idea of function broadly designates 'group specific activities or rights and duties' (Bendix 1969:91). In other words society is conceived as being composed of groups. Authority in such a society exists in relationships between groups. This is contrasted with the 'plebiscitarian principle of representation which is based on the acceptance of the plebiscite as the paradigm of representation. 'According to this principle all powers intervening between the individual and the state must be destroyed ... so that all citizens as individuals possess equal rights before the sovereign, national authority' (Bendix 1969:90). Provincial Councils have had to overcome the problem that they were established according to the plebiscitarian principle but the political culture within which they must operate is ordered by the principle of functional representation. If this is understood then the Fijian notion of equality can also be understood. Fijians want substantive equality of groups, not theoretical equality of individuals.

In 1972 a motion was put forward to increase the representation of Wainimala and Matailobau in the Naitasiri Provincial Council. The Qaranivalu, Ratu Vitu Qiolevu, strongly opposed the motion which asked that each of the two Tikinas should have two representatives instead of one. (Naitasiri and Lomaivuna had three and two respectively.) Ratu Vitu argued that Naitasiri should have more representatives because of its larger population. Hon. Livai Nasilivata (Matailobau) supported the motion on the grounds that increasing 'development' work required an increase in the number of Matas (representatives) to help the Matas serve the people well. Ratu Apenisa Donumaivanua (Wainimala) appealed for 'the maintenance of customary regard for one another' (Me tudei tu ga na veilomani vakavanua). Hon. Livai Nasilivata then compromised and moved that 'elected representatives should look at the need to increase the number of elected members but until then the matter will be postponed'.

In April 1974 Ratu Sakiusa Navakaroko again introduced a motion calling for more representatives for Wainimala.

6 Hon. Livai Nasilivata 'belongs' to Matailobau by birth but he represents the urban areas.
7 Naitasiri Provincial Council minutes, 17 April 1974.
He was supported by Ratu Apenisa Donumaivanua in stressing the difficulties imposed by the terrain of Wainimala and Matailobau. The Qaranivalu again pointed out that Naitasiri Tikina should have a larger representation than other tikinas because of its large population (which includes Fijian settlers from other provinces). Ratu Ilaitia Bale introduced a complicating factor by asking that Lomaivuna and Waimaro Tikinas each have an appointed representative (Mata Turaga). The Qaranivalu replied that it would be appropriate only for the Minister for Fijian Affairs (na Talai ni Kovanav) to decide on the number of appointed members. Members of the Provincial Council should not have any say. An Assistant Roko (Ratu A. Veikoso) urged that elected and appointed members co-operate with the elected representative looking after the Old Tikina of Nabubuco and the appointed member covering the remaining area. The District Officer then offered a suggestion which provided a compromise. The advice of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs should be sought, emphasizing the difficulties imposed by terrain, and that the request had been the result of long and careful discussion.

The motion that followed was seconded by the Qaranivalu: 'this Council approves that the Ministry of Fijian Affairs and Rural Development be asked about increasing the number of Matas in view of communications difficulties, especially in the interior of the Province in Wainimala and Matailobau'. A similar motion was put forward by the Mata for Verata in the Tailevu Provincial Council. It originated in a motion from the Namalata Old Tikina Council. The motion requested an increase from two to three Matas for the New Tikina constituency of Verata. The justification advanced for the request was that the area was too large for two Matas to serve adequately. What the motion really meant was that they, the people of Namalata, felt neglected because in three elections only one Mata had been elected from their area despite the fact that they constitute the largest population of all the Old Tikinas forming the New Tikina. With the exception of the 1969 election in which one Namalata candidate was elected all elections have returned candidates from Verata Old Tikina. Regardless of the character of the Matas (and one of the longer serving members - Ratu Kitione Vesikula - has a very high reputation) the people of Namalata felt left out.

As in the case from Naitasiri no attempt is made to

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8 Meeting of the Tailevu Provincial Council on 10 May 1974 attended by myself.
appeal to population statistics, though they would support the claim. (Three Matas would give approximately the same representation ratio as that for Wainibuka Tikina - Wainibuka 1314 people/Mata compared with 1453 people/Mata if there were three Matas for Verata.) The important point is that a large segment of the population did not feel adequately represented, and the feeling was not based on numbers.

**Competition for the position of chairman.** The articulation of the rules governing politics within Provincial Councils has so far stressed the constraints that surround the activities of Matas. These are not only imposed on individuals: they are built into their whole approach to politics. But it should not be thought that there is no ambition or will to increase personal advantage, or that all in council affairs is mutual flattery and unanimity. There is competition for prominence which in addition to any intrinsic satisfaction may put a Mata into a position where he can hope to gain the honours that are the main 'prizes' of Provincial Council politics: representing the council on the Council of Chiefs or the Divisional Development Committee; being elected chairman or deputy chairman.

The position of chairman is a particularly valuable position. It is an honour in itself, carries a substantial allowance ten and gives any aspiring politician a chance to be officially involved in an area that fits, very conveniently, within a single electorate. Chairmen of Central Division Provincial Councils have included three members of the House of Representatives, two senators, one unsuccessful aspirant for Alliance Party nomination and a leader of the Fijian Nationalist Party (who was formerly a full-time fieldworker for the Alliance Party). twelve

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9 1966 Census figures.
10 An honorarium of $400 is allowed by the Regulations creating the Provincial Councils (Cap 100, p.4656).
11 Tailevu and Naitasiri each form a constituency and Rewa, Serua and Namosi form another.
In spite of the attractions of the position of chairman there has been little apparent competition for election to it. Three long-standing chairmen have said that they did not canvass votes among Council members. Only in one election was there clear evidence of canvassing (see pp.125-6). This restraint can be explained partly in terms of Fijian values which view individual pushing unfavourably. In open voting, for example, it is normal practice for candidates to vote for each other.

But these rules mean no more than that canvassing should be undertaken carefully; it should not be obvious or direct. Parochialism is a more serious problem. An aspirant often will not know all of the candidates well enough to make an approach or have the opportunity of catching them socially. It is probably easier for the town dweller who will know the members of his own village area, the two urban area representatives and those nominated members who live in urban areas. All but one of the chairmen, up to 1974, were confirmed urban-dwellers, although three had moved back near their villages and travel to Suva each day to work.¹³

It is difficult to determine whether it is this network being available to urban dwellers or a general respect for education and occupational success that accounts for their predominance in the position of chairman. People involved in Provincial politics have suggested that leadership usually goes to men who are skilful speakers. It would be difficult to verify this suggestion but it is undeniable that several of the chairmen of the Central Division Councils have reputations for speaking ability (in Fijian). Sakeasi Butadroka and Uraia Koroi have national reputations and several others are known, within smaller circles, as accomplished speakers. Two are Methodist lay preachers.

Support for this hypothesis can be found in the fact that at least one well-educated and highly respected man who has been defeated for the position of chairman appears to have been hampered by a comparative lack of facility in speech-making.¹⁴ Appreciation of accomplished speech-making

¹³Jo Vucago of Serua is a village-dweller but he works at a tourist centre in Deuba. Ratu William Togainivalu, Uraia Koroi and Esala Rasovo have moved back to residences near their villages and within commuting range of Suva.
¹⁴At one meeting I attended he stumbled through a long and
is evident in meetings. A good speaker will earn polite, earnest interjections of appreciation (*Vinaka! Vinaka!* which might be loosely translated as 'well said'). When he has finished the chairman or the next speaker will normally express appreciation for the manner in which he has spoken. *Vosa kamikamica ka momona*, 'sweet and substantial talk', is a commonly used expression to describe entertaining informative speaking, though these are not the only qualities which are appreciated. *Vosa rarama ka doudou*, 'bold, enlightening speech', is also praised.

A connection might be hypothesized between skill in speech-making and the ability to play on sentiments of group solidarity. This hypothesis gains credence from the fact that neither Sakeasi Butadroka nor Uraia Koroi appear in council minutes as charismatic speakers who use their eloquence to whip up personal allegiance. Rather they use it studiously to cultivate the role of servant of the council. Hon. Livai Nasilivata, Chairman of the Naitasiri Provincial Council, expressed this conception of the role of the Chairman of the Council when he said (to his council): 'the Chairman of your Provincial Council is your working clothes, your scapegoat and the person to listen to anything you say. So let us remember that we must keep foremost in our minds the wishes of those whom we are representing.'

With the possible exception of Naitasiri Provincial Council, Old Tikina loyalties have had no detectable influence on elections for the position of chairman. There have been no overt alliances between Old Tikinas in order to influence elections. There would probably be little point in an Old Tikina trying to engineer its representative into the position. The chairman is under continual constraint to serve the council and the whole province. The intense indignation of Fijians at House of Representative Speaker R.D. Patel's use of the powers of his office 'against' the Alliance government members is more easily understood if the notion

14 (continued)
tedious explanation of a motion, with Matas staring blankly at the table in front of them. The Fijian expression *tali magimagi* (platting sinnet) expresses what the Matas may have been thinking, though politeness would prevent them from saying it.

of the chairman serving the Council is considered. Legal technicalities count for less than the diffuse requirement that the chair must follow the wishes of the council.

In Naitasiri an analysis of the voting in elections for the position of chairman at times appears to indicate a division between the Tikinas of Upper and Lower Naitasiri. This hypothesis is lent credibility by the fact that there was a suggestion to organize the Adi Naitasiri festival on the basis of competition between 'queens' representing Upper and Lower Naitasiri. The suggestion referred unambiguously to the division between the two former provinces of Colo East and Naitasiri. However, it was not pursued, apparently because it seemed less workable to have two 'queens'. New Tikinas were chosen instead, although it was taken for granted that competition between Old Tikinas would produce a representative for most of the New Tikinas.

Voting for elections probably resembles a split between upper and lower Naitasiri because most of the votes of 'Lower Naitasiri' are the votes of Naitasiri Old Tikina which form a block under the control of the Qaranivalu. With the votes of adjoining Lomaivuva behind their representative there is an impression of a lower Naitasiri block of votes. However, council minutes do not reveal whose vote(s) changed to elect Uraia Koroi and then defeat him the following year. Whoever it was, the most plausible explanation for the change would be a changed perception of the suitability of Uraia Koroi as president. Only two council meetings were held in the year of his incumbency, a contrast with other years that drew criticism. It is unlikely that the change in voting was a result of canvassing. Uraia Koroi's election was in the first place mainly attributable to his education and reputation as a leader in village development. Any other candidate from Lomaivguna or Naitasiri Tikina would not have been elected.

16 In 1973 the Speaker Hon. R.D. Patel adjourned the House of Representatives sine die against the Alliance majority's wish to continue (Fiji Times, 5 April 1973).


18 Apaitia Tuivale, Mata for Matailobau, moved a motion that the council should have held a meeting a month earlier. He stated 'I am not accusing anyone but the work can move if meetings are held regularly' (Naitasiri Provincial Council minutes 28 July 1972).
Matas in general, and the chairman in particular, often seem to adopt the role of consensus maker. Producing harmony and agreement on a common course of action is a skill which serves the group. Ratu Apenisa Donumaivanua's call for the maintenance of 'customary regard for one another' is an example of this skill. It ended a disagreement in a manner satisfying to his sense of serving the Council. But consensus-making has another side. It can be used to attack an individual, to undermine his standing within the group.

The example in the last chapter of Ratu Sakiusa's plea for consideration of the financial difficulties facing villagers in the Upper Wainimala brought him close to criticism. In another case where he entered a plea for his people his position was more vulnerable and he was effectively criticized before the group. In this case Ratu Sakiusa asked the council to take up the case of his people in what he alleged to be neglect of them by the Social Welfare Department. The D.O. answered, explaining that he discussed the whole matter with the chairman who had not long before been appointed Assistant Minister with responsibility for social welfare. The chairman had recently discussed the matter with Social Welfare staff and found that they had been preparing to tour Näitasiri.

After a brief clarification by an Assistant Roko of the strict rules needed to qualify for a Destitute Allowance, Ratu Emosi Vakatawabai remarked that two Social Welfare officers, one a European, had only recently visited Nairukuruku. Ratu Emosi said that he had 'heard from the mouth of the European official just as he was about to return that he had not been able to find one destitute person in Nairukuruku'. In the ensuing discussion one Mata came to the assistance of Ratu Sakiusa by relating a story of a child born blind but unable to receive any welfare assistance. Two other Matas repudiated the whole idea of welfare. The Qaranivalu expressed his rejection in terms which council minutes record thus:

in his explanation the Qaranivalu revealed that he did not support and was not at all in agreement with this motion as we the native race [na kava i taukei] have at our disposal land and other things that we own, and we ought to be

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19 Naitasiri Provincial Council minutes, 16-17 April 1974.
industrious and provident, helping each other, rather than being caught up in all these things which will only be a nuisance to us.

The Assistant Roko finally achieved consensus by suggesting a different motion. He explained that the government should not be criticized. He suggested regarding welfare as a cake baked by the government. Anyone who wants to eat it should put in a request. After all 'the Government is not oppressing us' [with welfare]. Ratu Sakiusa's motion was therefore replaced with a motion asking that the Provincial Office put in a request asking that Fijians be considered for welfare assistance.

At the next meeting the Assistant Roko passed on an explanation of the rules governing welfare and the need to restrict welfare payments. The chairman, who had not been present at the earlier meeting, added a suggestion that the best course open to villagers would be to help each other. They should approach relatives or the head of their yavusa.20 Ratu Sakiusa, the head of the Yavusa of Nabubuco, now had his motion squarely back in his lap.

Contesting elections. The general Fijian tendency towards reluctance to contest elections has already been mentioned. Culturally it is part of a general set of values which discourage ambition or self-seeking. Fear of defeat tends to overshadow any prospect of success. The overall figures of nominations for Provincial Councils reveal a predictable decline in the numbers nominating for successive elections.21 However, a closer examination discloses two distinct patterns in nominations. In Namosi and Rewa nominations declined to the point where there was virtually no competition; most elections were determined without ballots because the number of nominees failed to exceed the number of seats.22 In Naitasiri and Tailevu nominations declined but levelled off so that ballots still occurred

21 In 1967 18/19 tikinas were contested; in 1969, 13/19; in 1971, 7/19; in 1974, 11/19. (This information was supplied by the Roko Tuis of the respective provinces.)
22 In Rewa all tikinas were contested in 1967, half in 1969 and none in 1971. In Namosi all were contested in 1967 but none in succeeding elections.
in most elections. In Tailevu and Naitasiri there had been no uniform reluctance to stand for election. A tikina may have a large field one year and the minimum another year, depending on the way in which potential candidates evaluate their chances of success.

The process of evaluating chances of success is complex. How does a man look at himself and determine his chances of gaining the approval of electors? What does he need to do in order to convince people to give him their votes? An examination of the educational and occupational backgrounds of successful and unsuccessful candidates does not disclose any significant difference. Extolling personal qualities or making promises about a general policy are irrelevant to any campaign for election. A nominee knows that he must be able to convince the electors that he will be a suitable spokesman for them. An education, knowledge of English or experience in urban life may help to build a man's reputation as a spokesman in general terms; but if he wants to earn their electoral support he must be in contact with them so as to convince them that he will convey their explicit, particular wishes and report to them on council activities.

There are numerous cases where Matas with all the qualities needed to be good spokesmen have been defeated or have stood down because they feared defeat. But how does a man gauge his standing as a suitable spokesman for his electorate? Firstly he has available to him the opinion of the people of his own Old Tikina. He will be aware of any other Old Tikina member who is contemplating standing as well as any murmuring about the way people think he will do the job or how he has been doing the job if he is the sitting Mata. Normally an Old Tikina does not field more candidates than the number of seats available and a small Old Tikina will field fewer than the required number to maximize its chances of having at least one Mata. The candidates who finally nominate have been through an informal selection process before they even file papers with the Provincial Office.

23 Also in Naitasiri and Tailevu only one tikina was uncontested in two consecutive elections. In 1974 all tikinas were contested in both provinces.

24 Apart from one tikina in the inaugural elections of 1967 there is no instance of an Old Tikina fielding more candidates than the number of seats available.
Once a potential nominee has satisfied himself that he has the support of his Old Tikina he must consider how he will appeal for support from other Old Tikinas. This does not appear to be easy. In the large majority of elections in Naitasiri and Tailevu candidates from the most populous Old Tikina within their respective New Tikinas have won all or most seats. Men from smaller Old Tikinas are disinclined to stand if they can see little chance of overcoming this hurdle. In the 1974 election, however, there was evidence of collusion between candidates from smaller Old Tikinas. In Verata and Nakelo for the first time the Old Tikinas which had supplied the names for the New Tikinas did not have one of their nominees elected. In Nakelo the candidates of Tokatoka and Buretu were elected. Each was chairman of his Old Tikina Council and it was rumoured that a vote exchange had taken place. In Verata there also appears to have been a vote exchange between the successful candidates from Namalata and Tai Old Tikinas. The Namalata candidate was chairman of his Old Tikina Council and would be well placed to make a deal with the people from the compact Old Tikina of Tai. Two other Old Tikina chairmen (Namara and Naloto) were also elected and it is likely that more will be elected in future because of the opportunity the position gives to arrange vote exchanges with other Old Tikinas. In August 1974 Tikina Councils had been in operation longer in Tailevu than any other province in the Central Division (they were introduced in January of that year) but they were still relatively new.

In only one tikina in Naitasiri and Tailevu did there appear to be any clear variation in the pattern of election. In Naitasiri the Qaranivalu exercised chiefly influence and virtually supervised elections. Apart from his two sons, his Matanivanua (traditional spokesman) and the chief (Tui Vuna) of the other Old Tikina within the electorate, only two other men had been elected up until 1971. And both of these were elected only at the invitation of the Qaranivalu. One of these had previously been prevented from nominating by the presence of the Qaranivalu in the doorway of the Provincial Office at the close of nominations.

25 In Tailevu the Old Tikinas of Bau, Verata and Nakelo won 18/21 seats available within the New Tikinas which carry their names. In Naitasiri, Naitasiri, Waidina and Viria have won 14/18 of the seats contested between 1967 and 1971.

26 Pers. comm. from the Mata.
man apparently did not even intend to stand but was summoned by the Qaranivalu in order to make up numbers.\textsuperscript{27}

The pattern of elections in Rewa and Namosi differs quite substantially from that of Tailevu and Naitasiri. In 1974 there was not a single ballot in either Rewa or Namosi and in both cases this reflected the culmination of the trend of elections since their inception in 1967. This appears \textit{prima facie} to be the result of the influence of tradition. With the presence of the traditional council not only in its midst, but taking positions of precedence, lack of interest in election to the Rewa Provincial Council is not surprising. In 1971 two high chiefs were nominated unopposed in Rewa Tikina, a sign perhaps that the system of elections had failed. Most people in Rewa would probably be happy to see the abolition of the system of elected representatives. The most important decision in the life of the new council was to be the allocation of the funds from the 1975 Ro Burebasaga festival but the council did not have formal responsibility for this; only the Roko Tui Dreketi can make decisions about funds raised \textit{vakavanua}. However, the decision would undoubtedly be made with the advice of Old Tikina Councils.

In Namosi elections without ballots have produced approximately equal representation among the Old Tikinas of Wainikoroiluva (which is the only New Tikina in the province that does not correspond to an Old Tikina). In other words there has usually been one representative for each of the Old Tikinas.

There is a fundamental similarity between the pattern of Tailevu/Naitasiri on the one hand and Rewa/Namosi on the other. In both circumstances the 'functional representation' of Old Tikinas is the underlying principle. But to what extent are people aware that this is the basis of representation? Explicit but generalized statements about Provincial Councils are not commonly made by Fijians. Nevertheless the few that are available confirm that Old Tikina representation is often taken for granted. A trainee teacher from Deuba (Serua), for example, has described council representation as follows: 'The Province of Serua has about six districts and each district elects one representative to the Council. Representatives are responsible to the people and are more or less the

\textsuperscript{27} Pers. comm. from the Roko Tui.
It is interesting that this description differs from the formal legal structure, according to which Serua has only two New Tikinas, Serua and Nuku, returning four and two representatives respectively. From the limited evidence available it appears that there has not been an even spread of seats among the districts (Old Tikinas). The trainee teacher has described the ideal rather than the actual.

A letter to the editor of *Nai Lalakai* from a man in Moturiki invokes the same principle of representation. The letter voiced a complaint that the Ministry of Fijian Affairs had gone back on a promise to create a position of Mata for Moturiki (an Old Tikina). The letter writer stated that after the promise to create a new position had been made 'A choice of one person to represent Moturiki was made and no one opposed this. The people were heartened as they would not be voting again because only one person was standing'.

**Factions and fissures: the role of intrigue.** Belshaw and others have emphasized the role of intrigue (and its tool, gossip) in Fijian politics (Belshaw 1964:236). As a general phenomenon gossip is common in Fiji among all races, but among Fijians it seems to have some peculiarities. One of the most striking to an outsider is the propensity to, indeed the preference for, gossip about the closest of relatives and friends, people that might otherwise be thought immune. There is also a surprising credulity in believing rumours, which is an effective catalyst in discussions behind the backs of officials. It is amazing, however, that it does not seriously undermine confidence in the individual as a public official. For example, one of Fiji's best known parliamentary and church figures has been accused of, among other things, embezzling money from a union of domestic workers ('housegirls'). Since then he has been elected to several important public positions.

Another confounding phenomenon to an outsider is the seemingly irresistible urge to gossip, even when it can be

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28 In *Teaching in Rural Fiji* edited by A.G. Hopkins and printed as a booklet by the University of the South Pacific in 1972.


30 By contrast, it has been my observation that Indian political gossip is confined strictly to opponents.
known in advance that it will eventually reach the ears of the person concerned. However, despite the extreme unpleasantness that this can bring, it does not seem to be as socially destructive as might be expected. Gossip does not normally lead to permanent social divisions. Enemies on one occasion may be allies on another. Where some sort of enduring hostility does form it is normally submerged publicly and belligerents find it difficult to enlist permanent allies who will take their part in public.

In politics this is paralleled by a lack of well developed factions. Leadership may be divided without dividing the whole group into warring factions. This, at least, is the evidence of the division in leadership of Rewa noted earlier. A large number of Rewans have given support to chiefly leaders who have stood as candidates for the National Federation Party. Others appear to support Sakeasi Butadroka and the Fijian Nationalist Party. Many, probably the majority, would remain basically loyal to the Fijian Association and the Roko Tui Dreketi, Adi Lady Lala Mara. Individual Rewans whom I have questioned show a uniform reluctance to betray partisan allegiance to any of the rival camps. They make statements which variously support each of the three and echo their respective criticisms of each other.

No other province in the Central Division exhibited such a split in leadership, although there were indications that intrigue may have occurred. In the election of Uraia Koroi M.B.E. in place of Hon. Livai Nasilivata as chairman of Naitasiri Provincial Council the influence of a rival in the leadership of the province may be suspected. Perhaps a counter intrigue was responsible for the re-election of Nasilivata the following year.

The chairman of another province was said to have entertained several council members the night before the election for the position of chairman. But this is clearly a very limited form of intrigue. In Naitasiri any intrigue would have been similarly limited (if it occurred at all). As

31 Ratu Mosese Tuisawau gained 1637 votes against Uraia Koroi's 2197 in the 1970 by-election for Suva-Rewa (Fiji Times, 12 April 1972, p.8).

32 The intrigue in Naitasiri would have been limited in the sense that only two or three Matas would have been approached by either candidate.
has already been emphasized it is not an easy step socially for one Mata to approach another unless there is already an established social relationship. The Chairman of the Naitasiri Provincial Council did not know all of the members of his council, apart from in their role as councillors who are official representatives of group interests.

I witnessed a meeting of politicians which illustrates these limits on interaction between individuals. In 1973 Tomasi Vakatora sought Alliance nomination to contest an election left vacant by the death of Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau. The Hon. Sakeasi Buradroka33 and several other prominent Rewans, together with Vakatora, called on the chairman of a branch of the Fijian Association. A visit to a Fijian house naturally involves the minor ritual of a bowl of yaqona. The meeting around the bowl began with a friendly discussion; the topic was broached by Vakatora's companions rather than himself; they received with apparent equanimity the reply that the branch had already nominated Mosese Qionibaravi.

Another example of 'intrigue' witnessed at first hand was in a contest for the position of chairman of a branch of the Fijian Association. The foundation chairman was displaced by a man who had the support of a small band obviously gathered for the event. True to Fijian values each voted for his opponent and the event passed with apparent smoothness. This intrigue presented a once-only 'alignment' of individuals rather than a permanent cleavage. Competition for leadership of Fijian groups forms fissures, divided at the top and united at the bottom, rather than factions. If a fissure persists it may eventually break into two groups but while there is a group the pressure towards unity will operate. Like chiefs, all Fijian leaders compete in the bolstering of group unity and the service of group interests.

National politics and the rural community

Provincial Councils are the 'official voice' of rural Fijians. The Fijian Association, which, until 1977, had been the only Fijian political party to enjoy electoral support, cannot really compete with councils in speaking for the 'people'. As an organization it had, at least until 1974, existed largely on paper. It did not hold regular meetings so that it could be a channel of communication passing up

33 It is interesting to note that Butadroka was later opposed by Vakatora in the 1977 elections.
expressions of the will of the people. In early 1974 the Suva office staff of the Fijian Association had no readily available records of grass-roots organization. Occasional membership drives produced paid up members but these were little more than lists of names. The Acting Secretary of the Fijian Association, when confronted by the lack of records, suggested that the easiest way of finding active supporters of the Fijian Association at the local level would be to ask the Rōko Tui. Later in 1974 another membership drive was undertaken but it was also accompanied by an attempt to involve Members of Parliament in grass-roots contact. An Executive Committee was set up to revive the Fijian Association. Paid fieldworkers were employed but they also arranged for Members of Parliament to visit branch meetings. With the hindsight of the drop in support for the Fijian Association exhibited in the 1977 general elections this would appear to be no more than one of the occasional 'drives'.

Contact with members of parliament. In 1974, of the three Fijian Communal Members of the House of Representatives serving constituencies in the Central Division, two claimed to have regularly visited their constituencies. One of them, Hon. Livai Nasilivata, could produce a long list of names, dates and places confirming his work. The other, Hon. Sakeasi Butadroka, having recently formed the Fijian Nationalist Party, was making many trips, both inside and outside his electorate, though it was said by people in the Serua/Namosi part of his electorate that he had not been seen before. The third Communal Member, Ratu William Toganivalu, said that visits to his constituency had been seriously restricted since becoming a senior Minister (for Fijian Affairs). None of the Fijian National Members for the Central Division claimed to have regularly visited his constituency, although all had made a couple of tours. But this is perhaps what it means to be a 'National representative'. All were active in national, and this means mainly urban, organizations. But, whether they deserve it or not, all

34 Pers. comm. from Joape Rokosoi, Acting Secretary of the Fijian Association.

35 Pers. comm. from Hon. Adi Losaline Dovi M.H.R. who assumed the position of Secretary of the Fijian Association as part of the revival. Each Division was to be under the supervision of Divisional Committee comprised of the Fijian Alliance M.P.S in the Division.

36 These organizations are also multi-racial. The distinction between 'National' and 'Communal' members is one which the Fijian Members appear to take seriously.
of the parliamentary representatives of rural Fijians seem to be regarded by their electors as poor ones. It is certainly true that the electors see more of their members of parliament at elections than at any other time. If we bear in mind the exacting standards of representation demanded by the rules of parochialism, it is not surprising that villagers complain so persistently.

Elections. Before the spectacular 'double' election of 1977 Fijians had voted in only three national elections. Each of these was accompanied by significant constitutional changes and the decade from 1962 to 1972 encompasses the period of the most rapid social, economic and political change Fiji has ever experienced. It is impossible to talk of Fijian voting behaviour as if it were a constant factor or a measurable variable. To generalize in any way seems scarcely less difficult, but I now want to attempt a generalization about involvement in general elections by logically extending the conclusions about political organization at the provincial level to see if they can accommodate the events of each of the first three elections and the two elections of 1977.

One of the striking facts about Fijian participation in the 1966 and 1972 elections is the way in which Fijians, with very few individual exceptions, gave solid support to the candidates endorsed by the Fijian Association. In view of the Fijian Association's lack of grass-roots organization this is surprising and requires explanation. Fijian support of Fijian Association candidates in communal seats is particularly significant. A united racial front might be expected on the national seats, where there was always the threat of electing a National Federation Party Fijian backed by Indian votes against a split Fijian vote, but there was no such need for a united front in communal seats.

The general rules evident in Provincial Council affairs suggest that the electoral efficacy of Fijian Association endorsement lies in its ability to enable a candidate's nomination to avoid the appearance of individual pushiness or attempting to promote a sectional interest ahead of the whole Province. The Fijian Association is an organization with the expressed aim of representing all Fijians, of promoting unity among them, even if it does not have a well established grass-roots organization. In fact it does not need, and probably could not develop, a grass-roots organization in competition with the structure of parochial units.
A candidate who has the support of Tikina councils would be assured of the necessary mobilization of voters on polling day. A candidate who did not have the support of the Tikina Councils could not hope to build it by campaigning directly in the villages. The question is: how has the Fijian Association obtained the general support of village leadership?

Political analysts' explanations of the Fijian Association's success have been inadequate because they have not understood the political frame of reference of the village level leaders. Alan Jarman (1971:33) has suggested that the 'Fijian Community is less overtly faction-ridden mainly due to the public image of communal harmony encouraged by the big chiefs who in fact control Fijian national politics'. The implication that there are covert 'factions' is not a new one. Belshaw believed that all sorts of intrigue simmered beneath the surface. J.D. Chick (1972:55) points to 'dynastic quarrels, regional rivalries and the erosion of chiefly authority [that] may create divisions within the Fijian community'.

But Fijian parochialism is as much an integrative factor as it is a divisive factor. Parochial units within a provincial council are always viewed as constituents of a whole. The interests of each constituent and the interests of the whole are assumed to coincide and there are a number of important rules to ensure that they do. Provincial Council members work always under the need to respect the interests of each district and thereby promote the interests of the whole province. However, just as there may be disputes within the Council, so there may be more than one candidate for election to a seat in Parliament. But the presence of the rules of community of interest work constantly towards achieving harmony.

By 1972 the importance of Fijian Association nomination had impressed itself on most candidates so that many of the independants claimed to have been beaten unfairly for the Fijian Association nomination. Ratu Vitu Qiolevu, the Qaranivalu, high chief of Naitasiri, claimed that the delegates (presumably his supporters) of many Fijian Association branches were not allowed to vote in nomination procedures because the head office had no record of their financial membership. Ratu Vitu's supporters said that the money had been pocketed by a full-time fieldworker for the Alliance
Their claim is lent credibility by the fact this man, who later became an important figure in the Fijian Nationalist Party, was sacked by the Alliance. 38

A common claim by other disgruntled losers of Fijian Association nomination contests was that nomination had been gained on the votes of delegates from fraudulent branches. Branches with the minimum number of members (twelve) were created just before the nomination procedure. Emosi Vuakatagane, a former Alliance member of Parliament and one of the few opponents of the Fijian Association to gain a respectable (though decisively losing) vote, claimed that his opponent used these tactics. 39

The defeat of both Emosi Vuakatagane and Ratu Vitu Qiolelevu does not necessarily refute their claims. With Fijian Association endorsement Vuakatagane defected the same opponent in 1966. 40 Livai Nasilivatā's position as Chairman of the Naitasiri Provincial Council would tend to indicate that he is the popular choice of the people but if Ratu Vitu had secured the nomination of the Fijian Association the outcome of the contest would not have been easy to predict. As shown earlier Nasilivatā does not have any network of agents at his disposal (see above, pp.125-6). The major factor assisting him would be the fact that he had acted as spokesman for the province. This means that he has legitimate grounds to reject any claim that he is just pushing himself forward as the representative of the people. This has always been the great advantage of chiefly rank. By birth a chief is called to lead and serve his people. A commoner must work long and hard in public service to attain this position. Chiefly rank is, however, not without

37 Pers. comm. from Marika Luveniyali, a member of the Naitasiri Provincial Council.
38 Pers. comm. from Robin Smith, former Secretary of the Alliance Party.
39 Mr Vuakatagane stood, he said, 'at the request of the chiefs and people of Macuata and Bua'. He claimed the 'new branches of the Fijian Association were formed unconstitutionally' (Fiji Times, 17 Mar. 1972, p.20).
40 In 1966 Vuakatagane had 2885 votes while Militoni Leweniqila had 1774. (Fiji Times, 12 April 1972, p.8). In 1972 Leweniqila obtained 5403 and Vuakatagane 1632 (Fiji Times, 1 May 1972, p.8).
disadvantages. Ratu Vitu Qiolevu would have been seen as the representative of one tikina trying to push himself and his tikina ahead of the Province as a whole.

Only one independent candidate in the 1966 or 1972 elections managed to gain the support of more than one or two parochial units. This was Solomone Momoivalu in the Lomaiviti/Rotuma constituency. Manasa Tabuadau's slender majority (615) was reputedly the vote of Rotuma so that within Lomaiviti Tabuadau was beaten. The reason for Momoivalu's high vote appears obvious; he had been Roko Tui Lomaiviti. But how did this enable him to win votes? As Roko Tui Momoivalu had an almost unique opportunity (only the council chairman shares it) of being able to visit officially all areas within the province. He was able to get to know the people personally and establish trust. In the Central Division the Rokos (including Assistants) knew the village level leadership far better than the chairman of councils. In fact chairmen knew surprisingly few village leaders and they explicitly rejected the whole notion of getting to know the people in order to gather influential supporters. But they do establish some connections with villages and districts and obtain a reputation for serving the people, which is the most valuable asset an aspiring Fijian leader can acquire. Unless he is called to public office by chiefly birth it is also one of the most difficult to achieve.

Rival political parties. Until the emergence of the Fijian Nationalist Party, rival political parties had even less success than independent opponents of the Fijian Association. The National Federation Party has never really existed as a Fijian Party. By 1972 it had a few prominent Fijians as members but they did not bring any significantly widespread support from below. This should not be explained by any suggestion of personal shortcomings of the leaders. They are not all what, Ahmed Ali (1973:180) termed 'rejected elements'. Ratu Mose Se Tuisawau is well respected by Fijians;

41 Fiji Times, 1 May 1972, p.9.
42 That is to say they were able to answer questions about the educational and occupational backgrounds of Provincial Council candidates more accurately than Provincial Council chairmen (with the exception of the chairman of Namosi who as paramount chief of this closely knit province had close contact with village leaders throughout the whole province).
the people of Rewa, the 'home' of the Fijian Nationalist Party, accord him a seat in their Provincial Council almost level with the Roko Tui Dreketi. Their support is reflected in votes they gave him in the 1970 by-election. The same would be true of Ro Asela Logavatu.

Hon. Apiasai Tora M.H.R., the other 'Federation Fijian', the man who supplied the 'National' part of the National Federation Party title, also should not be written off as a 'rejected element'. Until 1977 his Western Democratic Party stood as the only Fijian party that has achieved a moderately respectable share of votes in competition with the Fijian Association. It could have been the basis of expansion of political influence on the western side. The 'west' is a political option that Tora played down in joining the 'Indian' party but it is still available to him. Expressions of dissatisfaction with the Alliance Government are not hard to find among rural Fijians anywhere and the idea of the west receiving less than its share is not confined to Tora. In 1975 the people of Nadroga and Navosa protested when their M.H.R., Hon. P. Naqasima was passed over for promotion from Assistant Minister to Minister. Their statement that this endangered 'unity' could be taken as a veiled threat to support Sakeasi Butadroka who made the province one of his prime targets in campaigning for the newly formed Fijian Nationalist Party.43

The Fijian Nationalist Party was the first party to pose a serious threat to the Fijian Association. The Fijian Independence Party made a dismal showing in the 1972 elections but this should not have been surprising.44 Its leadership and candidates had no effective contact with the grass-roots; evidenced most clearly by the fact that none of the leaders were members of Provincial Councils.45

The Fijian Nationalist Party

The Fijian Nationalist Party was established in 1974 but, despite an obvious capacity to irritate, it did not

43Nai Lalakai, 17 July 1975.
44Its five candidates in Fijian Communal constituencies all lost their deposits (Fiji Times, 1 May 1972, p.8).
45That is to say none had ever been involved in any way with Provincial Councils in the Central Division. Two were standing in provinces outside the Central Division.
emerge as a credible political force before the March 1977 general elections. When the counting of votes in that election revealed that the Alliance Party had been defeated, Fiji was stunned. For a moment the whole political cosmos fashioned by Fijian unity and Indian factionalism seemed about to collapse. Sakeasi Butadroka, disregarding his earlier claims of 40,000 paid up members, was beside himself when 20,000 votes were polled by his party. The destruction of the Alliance's image of invincibility and the personal defeat for Ratu Mara which this entailed were obviously the sources of his elation. Clearly two things had been demonstrated: first, ideology had registered itself as a potent force in Fijian politics; second, the ethos of chiefly leadership had faced an unprecedented challenge. The important question which these changes raise is: how long can Fijian political unity last?

The September elections reversed the March defeat and reduced the Fijian Nationalist share of the Fijian vote from 25 per cent to 12 per cent but the size of the Alliance majority was largely attributable to the split in the National Federation Party and it could not erase from memory the fact that the hitherto solid unity of the Fijian community had been dented.

Before the Fijian Nationalists entered the political arena ideology appeared to hold little interest for Fijians. The National Federation Party, being the opposition party, obviously felt a need to formulate ideological principles that could appeal to both Fijians and Indians but their efforts were half-hearted and ineffectual. The proposal, for example, for an elected Fijian head of state was a dismal failure. It provided a stick with which the Indian Alliance could beat their rivals and was entirely without appeal to Fijians. Who is an elected Fijian? Considering the Fijian attitude to elections (as outlined above) the failure of the policy should not have been surprising.

Although, at first glance, the Fijian Nationalists' concentration on racial issues would appear to be the surest means of taking Fijian support from the Alliance there were other areas of dissatisfaction among Fijians which could have been taken up by critics of the Alliance government. At the end of 1973, as the unparalleled prosperity and development of the 1960s was coming to a halt, there was a discernable feeling among Fijian villagers that they had been left behind. Economic expansion associated with investment
in the tourist industry had been concentrated in the construction and service sectors of the economy. For reasons that are still not clear to economists, village agriculture did not seem to benefit from the growth in demand for food in towns. On the contrary, villages suffered a decline in living standards through the loss of many of their young men to towns. Grass could not be cut, drains could not be cleared, houses fell into disrepair and many people looked back to the good old days of the Buli and the Programme of Works.

The Alliance Government's response to these problems was to intensify its rural development programs. When the Fijian Nationalist Party began to attack Alliance policies in 1974 the emphasis on rural development was further increased, with attention to Fijian interests being increased as far as Alliance multi-racial principles would permit. But rural development policies could do little to assuage Fijian discontent. Development plans looked further into the future than the credibility of most parochially-minded villagers could be stretched and the bureaucratic channels of communication open to development planners could not hope to compete with the personal involvement and emotional rhetoric of politicians. However obvious the anti-Indian tactics of the Fijian Nationalists might seem, the sense of economic grievance among Fijian villagers seemed to offer a viable alternative line of attack to the Alliance Party's political rivals. The racialism of the Fijian Nationalists cannot be explained entirely by the obvious advantages of 'the politics of outbidding'. As will be apparent later, the anti-Indian line of the Nationalists may have lost as much support as it gained. Ratu Osea Gavidi's success as an independent opponent of the Alliance provides additional confirmation of the readiness of villagers to listen to alternatives to Alliance rural development programs. National Federation Fijian leaders also made attempts to tap village grievances but they were generally complacent and evidently well aware that their election would be accomplished with the votes of Indian constituents. A senior Fijian member of the NFP, writing under a pseudonym (Kaivata), contributed a series of articles to the vernacular paper, Nai Lalakai and, surprisingly, attracted considerable attention with criticisms of the Native Lands Trust Board.

46 Through his involvement in pine schemes in the province Ratu Osea had been able to establish a leadership role which made his nomination as a representative credible.
But nothing further came of these. Perhaps encouraged by the public response to a fellow critic, Hon. Apisai Tora established the Western Landowners Association in 1975, although its activities failed to attract the notice of *Nai Lalakai* after its foundation.47

**Butadroka's rebellion and the formation of the Fijian Nationalist Party.** Butadroka's expulsion from the Alliance Party set a precedent within the Fijian community. Fijian groups, whether traditional or non-traditional, are typically ascriptive, which is to say people are there because they belong. This imposes duties and discourages individualism but by way of compensation it provides a strong sense of security. The individual does not have to strive to earn his membership and he is free from fear of expulsion. It should not be surprising that Butadroka was shocked by his expulsion although the torrent of justificatory rhetoric that followed seems to have obscured the indications that it was in fact unexpected.

Butadroka was clearly willing to defy the warnings of his traditional superiors, perhaps hoping for some form of punishment, but the martyrdom of expulsion probably seemed unlikely. At the Alliance Party annual convention in October 1973 Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau warned, however, that there was 'no room for anyone who does not support these [multi-racial] principles'.48 At the time of the convention Ratu Mara was resting in Lau, following a reported 'confrontation' between him and his supporters, and another group identified in the press at that stage as 'a faction led by a handful of parliamentarians' who were 'adopting an increasingly communalistic stance'.49 When Ratu Penaia threw his weight so openly behind Ratu Mara, Butadroka should have sensed the prudence of retreat. Hints of expulsion should have been taken seriously.

Butadroka nevertheless had some reason to feel confident. He was simply presenting the views of his constituents, views which were not confined to the anti-Indianism with which he was credited. In fact the so-called anti-Indianism of Butadroka only enters the picture indirectly, as part of the


opposition to Ratu Mara. Butadroka, like many of his Rewan constituents, opposed Ratu Mara's 'favouritism' of Indians along with almost anything Ratu Mara did. The dynastic considerations mentioned above appear to be the source of this opposition. What else can explain the otherwise odd shifting of Rewan loyalties from the National Federation Party to the Fijian Nationalist Party? The incident that finally triggered Butadroka's expulsion was fraught with the intensely personal issues of Rewan internal politics. On 16-17 November a by-election was held for the Fijian National seat formerly held by Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau, a constituency which was centred on Rewa but which also included many non-Rewans (not to mention a large number of Indian constituents). Butadroka, the Hon. Uraia Koroi and a number of other Rewans had lobbied hard to have Tomasi Vakatora receive the Alliance nomination, but it went instead to Mosese Qionibaravi, who was known to be the Prime Minister's choice. The National Federation Party nominated Ro Asela Logavatu. On polling day there was a very low turnout (about 57 per cent) and Qionibaravi won by only 385 votes. It was a very near thing for the Alliance but, more significant than this, Fijian support was very much in evidence for Ro Asela and it was clear that she had lost only because Indian NFP voters had turned out very poorly.

Butadroka burst forth in self-justification. The Alliance was losing Fijian support and the Prime Minister's lack of attention to their interests was to blame. The emotive force behind these outbursts is thought to lie in difficulties Butadroka experienced as manager of the Rewa Provincial Development Company bus service. He attributed the inability of the company to obtain a licence for a more profitable route to the opposition of rival Indian bus proprietors. Presumably the Prime Minister should have interceded on behalf of the Rewans. Support for Ro Asela demonstrated that the majority of Rewans also blamed the Prime Minister, and Butadroka therefore regarded himself as vindicated.

50 The incident described on p.125 was part of this lobbying.
52 According to the Fiji Times report 'Alliance and NFP sources said ... most Indians showed little interest in the by-election. Their feeling was that the by-election was predominantly a Fijian affair.' Fiji Times, 20 Nov. 1973, p.16.
Ratu Mara, however, interpreted this criticism of Alliance multi-racialism as the last straw. On 27 November Butadroka was asked to resign from his Assistant Ministership. He refused. 'I feel that I cannot resign because I know that I am speaking for a big majority of supporters of the Alliance.' The following day he was sacked by the Prime Minister. Within hours of receiving formal notification of this from the Governor-General he was expelled from the Alliance Party by a meeting of Alliance parliamentarians.

Butadroka later attempted to characterize his expulsion as a deliberate choice, a turning aside from the comfortable life of an Assistant Minister in order to express the feelings of his constituents. At the time, however, he seemed rather less cool and deliberate. At one point he went so far as to refer to the loss of the vessel Uluilakeba in hurricane Bebe, hinting that it was in some way a poor reflection on Ratu Mara. This was going too far by anybody's standards. Ratu Mara said that, in the circumstances in which it was said, it was 'the most disgustingly insensitive and inhuman remark' he had heard in his twenty years of politics. True to Fijian style, however, Ratu Mara showed a measure of restraint in capitalizing on his opponent's gaffe and suggested that Butadroka appeared to have 'lost his senses'.

Butadroka was also aware of the vulnerability of his position. In a long statement published in Nai Lalakai he admitted that 'many of us' 'think that the types of things I have been doing are too much' (rui sivia, see pp.49-50). In his own defence Butadroka argued that the dispute with the Prime Minister was a political one and 'European politics and traditional matters [ka vakavanua, see p.14] are two different things'. Indeed Butadroka declared that 'in traditional matters I greatly respect this man of noble birth and I also have reverence and try at all times to do what is right'.

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56 Nai Lalakai, 7 July 1977, p.2.
Butadroka's expulsion brought to light the potential incompatibility of two principles of Fijian political organization. On the one hand Butadroka claimed, with some justification, to represent the feelings of his people; on the other hand he openly disputed the authority of his legitimate and natural superior. In his statement to *Nai Lalakai*, referred to above, Butadroka disclosed that he had been advised to go to Vieu to (the Prime Minister's residence) and *soro*, submit to his rightful superior. Stiff-necked to the end, however, he refused; he could see 'nothing wrong' in fighting for Rewa and 'its traditional existence'.

The path that he had chosen now led inevitably, though not immediately, to a full-scale affront on the legitimacy of chiefly rule. At first Butadroka was cautious and hesitant in his leadership aspirations. When the Fijian Nationalist Party was formed on 10 January 1974 Butadroka occupied the position of secretary, not president. As a commoner it behoved him to adopt the role of servant rather than director. In the long run, however, if the party was to gain credibility in Fijian eyes it had to have a leader. Butadroka had to evolve from spokesman and servant into initiator and executor. The first major step Butadroka took in this direction was his motion that Indians be repatriated, a move which otherwise makes little sense. Despite its flamboyance, which is now recognized as the Butadroka style, the motion appears to be pointlessly impractical. How can over half of the population of a country be repatriated? Its real import was, nevertheless, unmistakably clear within the politics of the Fijian community; it was a challenge to the legitimacy of Ratu Mara's leadership. Butadroka was saying, in effect, 'This is what the Indians deserve, yet look at what Ratu Mara and his government allow them'. In moving this motion he had moved beyond the role of spokesman. Ratu Mara's response was unexpectedly defensive. While opposing the motion, he said that from his personal knowledge of Butadroka he felt that the main burden of his motion 'and all of his political endeavours is that not enough is being done for Fijians'.

Any attempt to undermine Butadroka's credibility was left to others. Hon. Manasa Tabuadua suggested that Butadroka only raised the question of the expulsion of Indians

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60 *Nai Lalakai*, 10 Jan. 1974, p.11.
because of his sacking by the Prime Minister and was trying to show the members of his party that they could move up quickly and assume the leadership of Fiji. He asked if Butadroka or any other member of his party could assume the leadership of Fiji. Butadroka replied that this was 'one hundred percent'. Tabudua then asked whether this person had the abilities of good leadership, listing such desirable qualities as foresight, industry and decision-making ability. Butadroka replied that he had all these things, probably precisely the answer Tabudua hoped to draw from him.  

Fijian Nationalist ideology. The anti-Indianism of the Nationalists is therefore not the simple phenomenon it might appear to be at first sight. During campaigning for the 1977 general elections there were rumours of collusion between the FNP and the NFP. Federation supporters nominated Nationalists, their candidates were seen travelling together and there were strong suspicions that the Nationalists had received financial support from some of the wealthy supporters of the NFP. An Alliance M.P. said that, even before these facts came to light, while watching Koya and Butadroka talking over a cup of tea at the House of Representatives, he had formed the definite opinion that there was collusion between the two of them. Talking privately with Butadroka in 1974 I had found him relaxed and surprisingly credible in his assertion that he was pro-Fijian rather than anti-Indian. Ratu Mosese Tuisawau and Rev. Mosese Naivolasiga, as endorsed candidates of the Nationalist Party, openly disavowed the deportation motion.  

As the 1977 elections approached Butadroka began to take time to try and refine the concept of the primacy of Fijian interests. Ultimately this came down to the demand that the constitution be changed to give Fijians indisputable control of Parliament, although a number of different means of achieving this general goal were recommended. The party's submission to the Royal Commission on the electoral system had asked that either 75 or 100 per cent of seats in Parliament

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62 This is a translation of a Nai Lalakai report of the debate, 23 Oct. 1975.
63 In Nai Lalakai of 30 Dec. 1976 Rev. Mosese said, quite simply, 'the sending away of Indians from Fiji is not part of our party platform'. Ratu Mosese declared that 'there is no other Fijian who knows and loves [the Indian community] as I do'. He concentrated his criticism on wealthy vulagi of all races. Nai Lalakai, 20 Jan. 1977.
be reserved for Fijians elected by universal franchise of all races. Butadroka was probably safe in assuming that the details did not matter. The most important point was to insist that the Alliance Government, in accepting the present constitution, had 'sold out the rights of the Fijian, humiliating him on his own soil'. Questions of bus schedules and rural development were but minor details in the larger political picture.

The question of leadership was more important than the legal and constitutional questions. Butadroka had to attempt to discredit the leadership of the Alliance and prove that he and his party could provide unity for the Fijian community and thereby guarantee the rights of future generations. In 1975 when Manasa Tabaudua asked Butadroka whether the Nationalists could provide the Fijian community with leadership, he obviously intended the question to be purely rhetorical. Likewise Butadroka's ready boast that the party had all the leadership qualities required was probably made with crossed fingers.

Widespread support for the Nationalists did not manifest itself much before the 1977 general elections came into view. Indeed the party attracted little public attention. In the Nai Lalakai, for example, there were occasional reports of their activities but over a 12-month period they attracted only four letters to the editor. At the same time, however, Butadroka was campaigning intensively along the south coast of Viti Levu. Alliance Party leaders were disturbed by his activities and attempted to re-establish their own links at village level. Ratu David Toganivalu flew by helicopter to a village in upper Serua and made offers of a cash grant for the building of facilities for a wholesale co-operative society. But this did little to reduce Butadroka's popularity. Why, the villagers asked, had the government waited until then to pay them a visit? Alliance campaigners could counter by asking what Butadroka had been doing before his expulsion, but most of the credit probably went to Butadroka.64 He had provided the initiative.

There was a widespread feeling of respect for Butadroka's boldness and he rapidly gained confidence in his leadership capacity. In October 1975 he staged an intimidatory demonstration outside the home of an Indian tenant in order to

64 This, at least, was the conclusion of the Roko Tui.
enforce payment of rent arrears, an action which the editor of *Nai Lalakai* said many Fijians 'admired' and 'applauded'. Among Indians the reaction to such provocations often tended towards an hysteria which, in some ways, enhanced Butadroka's reputation. He began to project something of a strong man image, which assisted him in his endeavours to create a leadership role that could overcome the deficiency of his lack of a calling by noble birth. He was standing up for the rights of the Fijian, refusing to accept the 'insult' (*na kena beci*) of rule by 'non-Fijian people' (*tamata vulagi*); 'there are 33 of them and 22 of us' in the Fijian House of Representatives. This line of reasoning struck a sympathetic chord with many - perhaps most - Fijians but it did not create a party with mass support. Rallies, slogans and marches notwithstanding, the Fijian Nationalist Party was not a modern mass party. The hard core of activists and organizers in Suva were mostly Rewans with parochial motivations. The unexpectedly large electoral support that the party received in March 1977 and then lost five months later was also a reflection of communal politics rather than ideological appeal. It is an essential feature of the communal nature of Fijian politics that individuals can agree with statements by both Ratu Mara and Sakeasi Butadroka and express respect for both of them.

One letter to the editor of *Nai Lalakai*, typical of many others, said that Fijians faced the difficulty of choosing between two 'leaderships'; one, the government of 'our various high chiefs and their traditional followers', and a second, which attempted 'to safeguard the rights of Fijians in this our true land'. After weighing up the qualities of both 'leaderships' the writer expressed qualified support for the Alliance Government. It was suitable at 'the present time' because it provided 'development' in areas such as 'water supply, education, roads and health'. On the other hand: 'Of the Fijian Nationalist Party I can say that I greatly and truly respect the manly stand of their sole representative fighting alone ... in his belief that the Fijian is looked down upon and improperly treated as the native race of this land'. Such expressions of support for both contending 'leaderships' are not confined to uneducated villagers. Dr Ratu Iferemi Buaserau, one of the organizers of the Adi

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Namosi festival, contributed a piece of verse to *Nai Lalakai* which contained the following stanzas:

The leadership of our chiefs  
Runs slowly and runs well  
They think of their people  
Bloodshed they will not countenance.

Butadroka, my thanks  
For the party you have been able to found  
To stir up the thinking  
Of those on our side.

After expressing the hope that the Nationalists would win two seats in Parliament in the election Ratu Iferemĩ concluded with the following:

My song, may it finish if you please.  
All of Fiji hopes  
For you Ratu Kamisese Mara  
May you live long and be blessed.  

As for voting, swings of 50 per cent are rare in stable democracies but, in the context of Fijian culture, the rapid rise and fall of the Nationalist vote should not have been entirely unexpected. If, as Ratu Sukuna has suggested, the Fijian 'could never regard possession of the vote as a personal right but rather as an obligation to serve the best interests of the state', what could he do when ideological disputation had obscured his perception of the best interests of the state? Many Fijians simply did not want to choose. The low turnout of Fijian voters in the March general election should not be attributed to apathy. In the Lomaiviti/Muanikau constituency, the only Fijian communal constituency not contested by the Nationalists, 95 per cent of the electorate voted. In Butadroka's constituency, on the other hand, there was a turnout of only 53 per cent. In one village where Nationalist influence had been strong I witnessed many voters turn on their heels when faced with the rival party camps near the polling booth. Others paid their respects, with a degree of embarrassment, at both camps. A number approached the Alliance camp with heads bowed after being summoned by their chiefs. In the September elections

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69 *Fiji Times*, 5 April 1977, p.15.
most of the 'supporters' of the Nationalists would have been relieved to be able to return to the comfortable groove of conformity when the interests that it was their 'duty' to serve had been clarified.

The most obvious reason that might be used to explain the return of Alliance defectors in the September elections - the need to preserve racial unity and keep the NFP out of power - although undoubtedly valid, requires careful examination. When Butadroka voted to dismiss the Alliance Government he obviously did not expect the complete reversal which followed and he was undoubtedly confident that he, at least, would be returned in Rewa. If the second general election had resulted in a further stalemate he might reasonably have expected the Alliance Party to split and it is not inconceivable that the majority might have moved over to his side. In such circumstances any sign of assertiveness by the NFP would have considerably assisted him.

Butadroka has created what I have termed above a fissure in the Fijian community. It was not necessary then and it is not now to have a permanent faction of any great size. Under the right circumstances support for Butadroka could easily mushroom with little warning. On balance, however, Butadroka should have known that he would lose heavily in the second general elections. Voting to bring down the Alliance Government was the act of hubris which had been threatening his every move from the day he refused to go to Veiuto and soro. The extravagant language he used to try to justify his step betrays an awareness that this time he had gone too far. He suggested that the Alliance Members of Parliament were 'snivelling curs' and 'cowards' who had taken 'the easy path', 'like thieves', 'unrighteously'.

As with many of his actions, Butadroka attempted to justify himself by saying that he had no alternative, a position which seems to combine the roles of leader and servant.

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70 The danger of helping Butadroka's cause was undoubtedly the main reason for the Alliance rejection of coalition proposals after the March elections. 'We feel', Ratu Mara said, 'that once we form a coalition with an Indian dominated party Butadroka will have to form branches all over Fiji because Fijians will be flocking to his side'. Fiji Times, 7 April 1977, p.15.
71 Nai Lalakai, 7 July 1977.
Probably the most consistent element running through all of Butadroka's actions, but most visible here, is an irresistible urge to self-justification. As a commoner he has not been called to lead; what right had he to stand up and judge others? This was one of the points Butadroka overlooked or repressed from his consciousness when he voted to bring down the Alliance Government.

In his campaign for the September elections Butadroka claimed that the leadership provided by the Alliance Government was no longer credible. One of the major statements of his campaign was entitled 'Faith in the Leaking Cup'. By this stage, however, Butadroka had sealed his own fate, at least for the time being, and seriously damaged his image as a leader. Voting against Ratu Mara was petty, negative and shortsighted. It was not the noble action of a chief and served to emphasize more strongly than ever the difference between the 'chiefly' style of Ratu Mara and the aggressive style of his commoner rival. Throughout, Ratu Mara had been composed and restrained, consistently arguing for the future common good. Butadroka, on the other hand, had been shrill, frequently over-emotional and, now, to complete the picture of ignoble behaviour, he had revealed himself to be motivated by personal vindictiveness. The vulnerability of Butadroka's position did not escape the notice of Alliance propagandists. They compared his attitude to that of the fox in the story of the fox and the vine: the fox attempts to reach some fruit on the vine but, finding that the stick he carries is too short to reach the fruit, he curses the vine - 'oh, you bitter vine, I did not want you anyway'.

Butadroka's defeat provided chiefly leadership with reinforcement from a most unexpected quarter. At the national level the adaptation of chiefly leadership to modern democratic institutions was incomplete. Ratu Mara's combination of rank and ability had postponed the problems arising out of the differences of style and bases of legitimacy between the roles of high chief and prime minister. A P.M./chief of less ability might have enabled the differences to be resolved, one way or the other, but Ratu Mara's indisputable qualification as a democratically elected leader made it difficult, and perhaps undesirable, that he appeal to his

72 *Nai Lalakai*, 7 July 1977.
rank as a source of legitimacy. It was Butadroka's rebellion that forced the issue and Butadroka's *hubris* that swung the scales so far in favour of chiefly leadership. It should not be thought, however, that chiefly leadership is now unassailable or that Butadroka is finished forever. The appeal of Butadroka's strong man image among Fijians trapped at the bottom of the non-traditional hierarchy in urban areas is likely to increase in the wake of economic development and urbanization. Against this, on the other hand, there is an emerging Fijian middle class within which Butadroka's anti-Indianism was deplored. Even people critical of the Alliance Party could not accept racism. Butadroka himself seems less emotionally anti-Indian than those of the supporters of his party who feel dispossessed and robbed of their identity in an urban environment which they believe to be dominated by aliens. The strength of this feeling in a status-conscious culture should not be underestimated. An exchange between Nationalist candidate Waisale Bakalevu and Tomasi Vakatora during nomination procedures illustrates the importance of feelings of status difference. Vakatora made a pun about a pseudonym used by Bakalevu as a teller of jokes on a radio program, producing a loud guffaw of laughter from his supporters. Bakalevu was obviously stung by this. Forsaking his reputation for wit, he coldly warned Vakatora: 'Do not take me lightly, as a low class Fijian; I am a high class Fijian as I have not sold out the rights of Fijians'.

The resentment evident within this statement is not simply racial. Middle-class Fijians such as Tomasi Vakatora possess a status granted by an alien society, and they, as much as the aliens who seem to be responsible for this society, arouse feelings of dislike. Middle-class status, unlike the status of the traditional elite, does not create bonds between superiors and inferiors.

Sakeasi Butadroka's rise and fall are the most important events within Fijian communal politics since the acquisition of the vote by Fijians in 1963. They mark an important stage in the long process of the adaptation of communal politics to democracy and illuminate the points within the order that are able to respond to changes within the national polity. Clearly, exchanges between Fijian politicians have become more frank and open, demonstrations have become more familiar and the question of the desirability of leadership by chiefs is no longer purely academic. The promotion of unity remains

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74 *Nai Lalakai*, 10 Mar. 1977, p.3.
the most important principle within Fijian communal politics but its traditional association with chiefly leadership has been strengthened. Butadroka was listened to in the first place because Alliance neglect of the grass roots was regarded as a threat to unity. In the end, however, Butadroka could not be followed because he showed a disregard for unity. Writing two months after its return to power the Alliance Party summed up the sins of the Nationalists in the following terms: 'They have divided families, Mataqalis, villages, vanuas and our race, severing our Fijian bonds, weakening our traditional and religious life and our political unity'.

At the meeting of the Great Council of Chiefs in Lakeba in May 1978 the lessons of the Butadroka episode were considered. The writer of a letter to the editor of Nai Lalakai summed up the results of the Lakeba meeting as follows: 'We in Fiji are fortunate to see again in Lakeba all of the good things we can achieve if we continue to adhere to the true foundation of Fijian leadership, that is mutual reverence, mutual respect, and mutual regard for one another in sincere adherence to the Chiefs'. Butadroka's name is not mentioned but the message is clear. The Lakeba meeting also carried a motion ruling that the expression kemuni na noda (my people) should only be used by chiefs. As this is one of Butadroka's favourite expressions the motion is critical of him, without the mention of his name, carrying the implication that he is trying to ape his betters. There can be no more serious charge than this in Fijian society.

76 Nai Lalakai, July 1978. The expression 'mutual reverence' (veirokorokovi) seems a little odd and would make more sense as 'respect' except that 'respect' is the only meaningful translation for the word that follows (veidokadoka).
77 Literally it means 'you ours', which is meaningless in English.
Chapter 5

Leadership and unity: the Fijian community

The [Fijian Nationalist] Party is not genuinely trying to attain leadership but is only attempting to divide the Fijian vote in two so that the Federation Party can win.

Setoki Temo,

We do not want leadership we want only that we should possess our rights.

M. Sila,

They [the Fijian Nationalists] have divided families, mataqalis, villages, vanuas and our race, severing our Fijian bonds, weakening our traditional and religious life and our political unity.

Alliance Party statement,
_Nai Lalakai_, 14 Nov. 1977.

The concept of community foreshadowed at the outset and woven throughout the body of this study can now be examined and its implications sought. It must again be pointed out that this concept is historically specific rather than universal. The Indians of Fiji, for example, do not form a community in the sense denoted by the present concept and its applicability to other societies is a matter for empirical research.

The concept has been developed in three distinct, though inter-connected dimensions: cultural, institutional and political. The cultural dimension proceeds at a number of different levels of generality. The most general is a notion of group. No attempt has been made to formulate a neat conception. Rather the notion is heuristic, suggestive of new insights into the 'group-mindedness' of Fijians which has been too frequently taken for granted. Following the ideas of Mary Douglas, emphasis has been given to the role of social boundaries in groups.

One aspect of Fijian groups which was found to be
important was their particularism. Each group is regarded as unique in its identity and relationships with other groups. Yet at the same time there is what Nayacakalou has termed 'unity of principle' throughout Fijian social structure. Fijians moving from one place to another are readily accommodated and there is familiarity and consonance in organization and ritual all the way from household to matanitu. At all levels groups tend to be comprised of sub-groups. Similarly groups tend to be able to unite easily with other groups to form larger groups. Differences, rather than dividing groups, often form the basis of unity. These differences normally involve hierarchy and precedence but equality is also possible between groups on the same level in a hierarchy. In a society conscious of status differences equality is noted and carefully observed, though such equality is between groups rather than individuals.

It cannot be over-emphasized that individuals are everywhere conscious of groups. Given the paradoxical combination of particularism and unity of principle it was asserted in the first chapter that the structure of group loyalties which orders Fijian society is flexible but not directly manipulable by individuals. Group identities are the building blocks of personal power among Fijians but the ability of these identities to provide power is derived from the way in which they impose restrictions. In the fourth chapter this theme was picked up again and analysed more fully. The journey from the notion of group within the dimension of culture to the dimension of politics spans the full explanatory power of the concept of the Fijian community.

The link between the three dimensions is made by the concept of parochialism. 'Deduced' from the general literature in Chapter 1 it is found to be of basal importance in the activities of the institutions of the restructured Fijian administration. In the fourth chapter parochialism provides the basis of an explanation of communal politics.

The logical foundation for the concept of parochialism in the cultural dimension is the group relationship between leaders and followers. Leaders must serve their groups: the Roko Tui Namata swears 'before God' and Turaga ni Vanua that he will serve his vanua; or, in the new democratic idiom, Hon. Livai Nasilivata declares himself to be 'the working clothes and scapegoat' of his Provincial Council. The statements of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and Dr Rusiate Nayacakalou which head the first chapter reveal, even more
significantly, that educated Fijians, quite self-consciously, are aware of the relationship between leaders and their followers in Fijian groups.

The service *par excellence* that leaders can render their group is the maintenance of unity. Understanding the way in which they must do this requires a move to the political dimension. A link between the argument in the cultural and political dimensions is provided by the institutional dimension. The effects of changes in the Fijian administration illuminate the nature of the relationship between Fijian culture and politics. The replacement of what were thought to be traditional rule and law by modern western substitutes had the paradoxical result of allowing more authentically traditional forms to emerge. The causes of this are complicated and require reference to both cultural and political perspectives. Culturally it may be traced to the fact that the Fijian administration, before the reforms in the 1960s, attempted to institute a form of chiefly rule severed from communal roots by the abolition of the Old Tikina. Freed from bureaucratic restraint by the reforms of 1966, provincial leaders were able to revive the Old Tikina. The particular importance of the Old Tikina should not, however, be mistaken. It was a unit which emerged over half a century rather than a traditional entity which colonial rulers enshrined in law. Disputes over Old Tikina boundaries often persisted, though they could be resolved by skilful leadership. Differences in leadership also mean that Old Tikinas are able to vary, between one another and over time, in degrees of unity. It should also be noted that the Naitasiri Provincial Council found it convenient to organize their festival on the basis of competition between New Tikinas, although it was assumed that each New Tikina would organize competitions between its constituent elements (in most, but not all cases Old Tikinas).

The fact is that there is a multiplicity of groups and though the Old Tikina has often been a convenient unit of organization in church, education and Fijian administration matters, it is not the exclusive focus of loyalties. Past rivalries between neighbouring Old Tikinas apparently created difficulties in the formation of New Tikinas but these difficulties should not be overestimated. Past rivalries may be traditional but this does not mean that relationships are not flexible. Whole villages may go to a chief and request incorporation in his domain as they did in Serua under the astute and powerful leadership of Ratu Aseri Latianara.
This is where the political dimension becomes relevant. The flexibility which Fijian culture allows groups cannot explain completely the way they form and reform. The activities of leaders, which can only be explained in a political dimension, must also be examined. One of the major shortcomings of the Sukuna administration was that its bureaucratic nature hindered political activity. Nayacakalou's judgment, noted above, that the administration's 'personnel were expected to be leaders but in practice could not be more than administrators' points to this problem. The reforms of the 1960s, by encouraging politics, helped to remove it.

As stated at the outset, this study conforms to C. Wright Mills characterization of classical social science as combining description and generalization. The activities of Provincial Councils in the years since their democratization reveal the traditional basis of Fijian communal politics. My study of the Fijian community and its politics encompasses generalizations of two types: those concerning Provincial Councils and those concerned with Fijian communal politics in general. The latter set of generalizations are deductive rather than inductive and remain more hypothetical than substantiated on the basis of evidence presented in this study.

Within Provincial Councils conflicts of interest seem scarce and arguments of any sort are infrequent. Yet issues within Provincial Council affairs often involve consideration of differences of interest and distrust, jealousy and intrigue are by no means absent. From both macroscopic and microscopic perspectives parochialism provides the key to understanding the conduct of council affairs. Provincial Council funds were established by the mobilization of Old Tikinas and the spending of these funds has been dominated by attempts to ensure that each Old Tikina receives its fair proportion of spending. Council members are aware of the shared values behind the equality of Old Tikinas although this equality has no basis in pre-cession tradition. But the restrictions of shared internalized values are only one aspect of the role of parochialism in conditioning the activities of political actors in Provincial Councils.

Mutual awareness of the parochial roots of loyalties allows intrigue and gossip to play a part in politics.

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1 Traditions formerly allowed some political units (vomuas or yavusas, etc.) to be treated as equals but there was no presumption of equality.
Intrigue and gossip are, of course, deprecated by all. The man who speaks 'boldly' on top of the table wins respect and admiration while gossip 'outside' is universally deplored. But rumours abound and all political actors are aware that intrigue has achieved electoral coups at all levels. In order that this pattern of activity be understood it is important that the natural connection between the deploring of intrigue and its successful use be understood. This connection has been conceptualized in the notion of 'fissure' which has been distinguished from factions.

It is important to note that 'faction' and 'fissure' are conceptually of a higher order than parochialism which should, of course, be read as 'Fijian parochialism', a descriptive concept which is more historically and culturally anchored in Fijian society. The notion of fissure supplies an hypothesis about the Fijian style of politics which can only be tested conclusively by reference to the full sweep of twentieth-century history. In the present context, however, there is a need for some methodological clarification of the notion of fissure.

Firstly it should be stated that it arises from my own conviction that generalized conceptions of politics need to be freed from ideas which might be loosely grouped together under the heading of social structural reductionism. Such perspectives tend to view politics as merely epiphenomenal to more fundamental social and economic structures. Secondly the notion of fissure can be clarified methodologically by a comparison with two conceptualizations of factionalism, a phenomenon which has often attracted the attention of scholars who apply western derived conceptions to non-western cultures and societies.

Andrew Nathan has formulated a model of factionalism which he has applied to the Communist Party of China (Nathan 1973). The model is arrived at 'deductively' and intended to be 'applied' to Chinese politics by the comparison of its postulations with the activities of Chinese leaders. It is 'not intended to explain everything about CCP elite politics'. Rather the model deals 'only with what might broadly be called organizational constraints on political behaviour and not with other sets of constraints - e.g. ideological and cultural - which provide additional "rules of the game"' (Nathan 1973:35-6).

The foundation of Nathan's model is 'the clientelistic
relationship', a 'one to one relationship' involving some kind of exchange and distinguished from corporatist ties (where relationships are not one to one) and power relationships (which are not based on exchange). 'Patron-client relations, godfather-parent relations, some types of trader-customer relations' are examples of clientelistic relationships (Nathan 1973:37-8).

Factions, unlike bureaucratic, formal organizations, are flexible. The faction 'is capable of the greatest flexibility in seizing political opportunities and in engaging in a general political strategy on the basis of scattered positions throughout a political system or an organization'. Strategies adopted depend on the activities of individuals in one to one exchange relationships so that 'a faction depends for its growth and continuity on the ability of a leader to distribute rewards to his followers' (Nathan 1973:42-3).

Factional politics arise within formal organizations and it is within bureaucratic organization that 'complex factions are most likely to develop to the largest size'. There is nothing inherent in factions to prevent them from organizing themselves formally (or any other way) but the proposition that they tend not to do so is significant. It is linked to a more central proposition that parties to factional politics operate on the assumption that a 'faction engaging in conflict with other factions' 'will not be able decisively and finally to defeat its rivals'. From this proposition Nathan 'posits' fifteen 'modes of conflict' that are 'typical of factional systems'. Two characteristics of a factional system are, for example, that factions operate according to a 'code of civility' or that ideology is not of primary importance (Nathan 1973:44-6).

A critique of Nathan's model and an alternative conceptualization of the role of informal groups in Chinese leadership has been put forward by Tang Tsou (1976). Rather than 'construct a model deductively from certain premises' Tang seeks to 'adhere more closely to history'. He formulates 'abstract constructs' that 'are only one step removed from reality'. These are based on a dual premise:

one or more of the informal groups or leaders aim at supremacy or hegemony in the Party, destroying some other informal groups as significant political forces or subordinating them to their control;
there are objective conditions, organizational-structure factors, ideological compulsions, institutional elements and cultural conditions which make it possible for one leader to achieve supremacy or hegemony (Tang 1976:107-8).

Tang's three abstract constructs characterize three states between which Chinese elite politics have moved: (i) 'one of the leaders or groups has achieved supremacy or hegemony'; (ii) 'an informal alliance or coalition of two or more of these groups has achieved domination'; (iii) 'two or more informal groups or coalition of groups reach a stalemate' (Tang 1976:107-13). Within the sequence of events as structured by Tang's three abstract constructs there is a relationship between formal and informal structure which differs from that posited by Nathan in at least one important respect. Changes in positions of dominance often bring about changes in formal organization.

An informal coalition of leaders and groups becomes an informal group when the supreme position of one leader is acknowledged by the other leaders and groups and a superordinate-subordinate relationship replaces that between equals. The power relations within this informal group and between this dominant group and other groups tend to be institutionalized into a structure of authority (Tang 1976:108-10).

Like Tang's 'abstract constructs' the notion of fissure suggested in Chapter 4 is 'one step from reality'. It takes into account historical factors, not merely organizational structural factors. Tang's criticisms of Nathan's attempt to formulate a model which segregates 'organizational constraints on political behaviour' from culture and history are of signal interest to the concept of fissure.

If the notion of fissure is logically reversed it produces a notion of unity. Fijian politics are characterized by the frequent promotion of the value of unity. Parochialism, it has been shown, is not essentially divisive. Unity is a value which political actors frequently find it to their advantage to invoke. But if the notion of fissure is to be clarified methodologically two points need to be made about the theme of unity.

Firstly it should not be subsumed simply under a
general notion of consensualism as a normal feature of 'traditional' politics. There is no tradition of consensual politics in Fiji. Before cession Fijian chiefs undoubtedly had to take into account the feelings of their people but this did not mean implementing decisions that were the result of consensus arrived at by conciliatory deliberation. On the contrary, chiefs were expected to show initiative, to lead rather than follow. Farsightedness (rai yawa) and courage (yalo qaqa) are still the leadership qualities which Fijians speak of and associate with chiefly rule.

While the fact that chairmen of Provincial Councils are not chiefs should not be forgotten the chiefly model is applicable to their leadership. Chairmen are expected to show initiative and while they need to be careful in speaking on behalf of their provinces other members can say nothing at all. In the first decade of office chairmen of Provincial Councils were still gathering confidence in their role. The first Tailevu festival was called in the name of the Vunivalu; succeeding festivals were organized under the authority of the chairman. In time chairmen will probably resemble even more closely the chiefly model of leadership.

The importance of consensus within Provincial Councils consists in the sharing of certain values rather than a requirement that all decisions be reached by consensus. The nature of these shared values which were spelt out in Chapter 4 should not be misperceived. These 'customs of respect' impose constraints on political actors but they do not proscribe conflict; they require only that respect be shown for the interests of each other's groups. It is in this mutual respect, rather than the legislation of their creation, that the sources of authority in Provincial Councils can be found. Individuals seeking power within Provincial Councils clearly are aware of the customs and practices of 'mutual respect'.

Unity, however, must be conceptually differentiated from authority. Unity does not spring directly from authority; rather it is a product of power which has been distinguished from authority. Authority orders Provincial Councils ensuring that councillors 'behave' but it does not provide power. The unwritten rules which order Provincial Councils are easily detectable in all the councils of the Central Division, but power is not. There is more power in Tailevu and Naitasiri than Rewa and Serua, in the sense that the Tailevu and Naitasiri Councils are more united and better led.
The significance of the distinction between power and authority will be further elucidated by the second point of clarification about the unity theme. This is that it should not be mistaken for an attempt to employ a functionalist interpretation of social order. It is important to understand that the unity of a communal and political order can be distinguished from a social order. The distinction between politics and society, like the concepts of power and authority, is derived from Hannah Arendt. Society, according to Arendt, is only one form of human association. Society achieves order by expecting people to 'behave', imposing rules which tend to 'normalize' people. 'The trouble with modern theories of behaviourism', Arendt (1959:295) says, 'is not that they are wrong but that they could become true'.

With this insight it is possible to understand why there is difficulty in the application of theories of bureaucracy and elites to societies other than those for which they were created. Bureaucracy, Arendt says, is 'the most social form of Government', the ruling of behaving men by 'nobody'. The modern age has seen the 'rise of society' (Arendt 1959:37).

Tang adopts a perspective that is in some ways similar in regarding Nathan's model as part of a general attempt to 'integrate theories of bureaucracy and elite' which fails to close the 'intellectual gap between the social sciences and Chinese studies' (Tang 1976:99). In fact the whole idea of social science has a built-in bias toward universal theories which deflect practitioners' attention from the cultural and historical foundations of theories and concepts. In non-western societies there is a need to resort to concepts which are 'one step from reality'. It is worth noting that the concepts which Arendt derived from the ancient Greek experience have proved valuable in the context of Fijian society. Ancient Greece was in many respects a pre-western culture.

In Fijian society the creation of unity requires action, not merely political behaviour. Leaders must be able to build trust that enables the council, and indeed the whole province, to act collectively. Such power may expand or contract according to the talents and actions of individual leaders. The Naitasiri Provincial Council, for example, would undoubtedly have encountered difficulty in accomplishing

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all that it has without Livai Nasilivata as chairman.
Similarly, a gifted leader may yet restore unity to Rewa
Provincial Council.

But jealousy, discord and conflict can arise instead of
unity. As leaders compete for prominence they may attempt,
within the prescribed rules, to damage one another's chances.
They may, in short, create fissures in groups, be they
Provincial Councils, vanuas or villages.

Groups as a general phenomenon are part of Fijian
culture. Their activities can be comprehended in a general
way by the twin notions of 'particularism' and 'unity of
principle'. Attitudes to chiefly authority may also be
described in general terms. But if the events of a particular
chiefdom are to be understood general cultural notions are
inadequate and the conventional ideas of social structure
are often irrelevant. Only the actions of leaders can explain
the particular structure of groups within the chiefdom.
Although Rewa is presently troubled by disunity the late
Roko Tui Dreketi created enormous power.\(^3\) The vanua of
Naitasiri, by contrast, is now united whereas in the early
twentieth century it had experienced disunity which found
expression in disputed successions.\(^4\) It should be noted
that the conventional ideas of social structure have not been
entirely dismissed. They have some relevance to the rural
activities described in the present study and may have even
greater relevance to the social life of urban Fijians.

A concept of community. The concept of the Fijian
community, it should now be clear, is constructed by a complex
interweaving of generalization and description which combines
the perspectives of culture and politics. A fundamental
feature of the Fijian community is that it is not a simple
creation of Fijian culture. Fijian culture and the Fijian
social order permit an important role to be played by politics
and this means, essentially, the actions of leaders. Power
within the Fijian community depends on leaders' actions, not
merely the authority prescribed by cultural values and social
institutions. This is what it means to speak of the flexibil-
ity of Fijian culture.

\(^3\) I have encountered a number of stories about the power of
Ratu George Tuisawau. The present disunity may be, in part,
a manifestation of latent disaffection resulting from his
power.

\(^4\) Pers. comm. from T.J. Macnaught.
In this study I have concentrated on the influence of traditional values on political activity in rural areas and drawn a number of conclusions about their relevance to our understanding of national politics during an examination of the Fijian Nationalist Party. The parochial pattern of villages cannot, however, be transferred simply to the situation where people tend to live in one place and work in another. Nevertheless Fijian culture is alive in urban areas and has given the urban life of Fijians a distinctive stamp.

The influence of this culture on the social life of Fijians invites further study, to uncover, for instance, the influence of new family patterns, economic roles and class identifications. As stated at the outset, a primary cultural aim of this study has been to articulate the Fijians' own understanding of their political activity. The statements by Fijians which head each chapter bring together some of the ideas of Fijians about their political activity. Some are from educated leaders and were originally spoken in English, others from villagers and spoken in Fijian. The similarities of the statements, made in a variety of contexts, are significant but their significance should not be mistaken. It should not be thought, for example, that the similarities between these statements (and others quoted within the body of the chapters) amount to a doctrine or a code of values.

Agreement or similarity in such values is vague and often leaves room for ambiguity. These are cultural values not the rules or aims of a political ideology or platform. Cultural values are such that in different circumstances they may be used to justify quite different actions. It has been seen, for example, that the values invoked by the Qaranivalu in moving his son into the position of Assistant Roko Tui could easily have been turned around and used against the proposal.

The flexibility of cultural values allows them to change over time, according to changing circumstances. Chiefly rule, for example, has changed remarkably over two centuries. Expanding in the late eighteenth century, powerful chiefdoms warred with one another until the battle of Kaba produced a stalemate that consolidated their power. Under colonial rule various policies were pursued regarding the power of chiefs. Christianity and western culture, and social institutions which had intruded earlier in the nineteenth century, also influenced the position of chiefs.

I began with an examination of the elements of chiefly
rule and their present significance, particularly as they affect rural areas where the traditional structures of villages, *vanua* and *matanitu* encapsulate chiefly rule. It was shown, for example, that chiefs are expected to serve their 'people' or that precedence is important but equality between groups is also observed scrupulously in many situations. The flexibility of these values needs to be stressed. In the 1840s the various Bati (warrior allies) of Bau were treated as equals by Cakobau (in distributing spoils for example). In the 1970s *vanua kai si* are treated as equals with their traditional superiors who formerly exercised a power of life and death over them.

In urban areas the values of chiefly rule have been adapted in obvious ways to the new circumstances. In the days of heavy traffic it is no longer the custom for people to lower themselves to the ground in the middle of a road in order to pay a chief his due respect; yet there are many ways in which distinctions of rank are recognized. An examination of the new forms which the values of chiefly respect have taken, along with the social institutions in which they are now embedded, is an area of research which could further extend the concept of the Fijian community developed in this study. Urban Fijians are no longer villagers but it would be a mistake to assume that they are westernized or individualized.

The concept of community put forward in this study employs ideas of culture, power and social structure but it attempts to anchor them in history to produce what Tang has termed a construct which is one step from reality. The aspect of historicity inherent in the concept is also linked to the idea of action and the related conception of power. The actions of leaders are necessary to produce and preserve the Fijian community. Communalism in the most general sense has its roots in traditional, that is to say pre-European contact, Fijian society but *the* Fijian community of the present day is a complex order arising out of particular historical events and is, in large measure, a result of the actions of particular leaders. There are no in-built structural assurances of its continued existence. Without Ratu Mara, for example, it could not be the same. Nevertheless there are continuities. The actions of leaders are circumscribed by social and cultural rules. This study has examined these rules to show how, together with the political activities of leaders, they produce the Fijian community.
## Appendix

An extract from the Visitors' Book at Naitasiri Provincial Office, Vunidawa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Visitor's name and occupation</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>10.6.74</td>
<td>Ratu Nemani Seru Vunivalu, Waibalavu</td>
<td>Waibalavu</td>
<td>Matailobau</td>
<td>Matters concerning the Adi Naitasiri.</td>
<td>Message to the Adi Naitasiri will be filed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171</td>
<td>18.6.74</td>
<td>Ratu Penaia Vaka-vulibau, Villager</td>
<td>Navolau</td>
<td>Lomaivuna</td>
<td>Ask if payment of District Track could be made today.</td>
<td>Payment approved and made out today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Petero Rokodere, Villager</td>
<td>Serea</td>
<td>Waimaro</td>
<td>Seeking Roko's advice and assistance about one piece of Crown Land named Naluwai.</td>
<td>Advised to bring with him an application form to be completed and be sent via Naitasiri.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Apenito Vanivatu, Farmer</td>
<td>Vuisiga</td>
<td>Matailobau</td>
<td>Weeding of Vuisiga Feeder Road.</td>
<td>Cost of weeding to be paid to Savings Bank deposit a/c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Emosi Mara Turaga ni Koro</td>
<td>Nawaisomo</td>
<td>Matailobau</td>
<td>Ask if a letter could be written to the Ministry of Labour to recommend some villagers from Nawaisomo who wish to go to New Zealand in aid of their new village school.</td>
<td>Advised to see the D.O. to process the application to work in New Zealand on the temporary permit basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>21.6.74</td>
<td>Mitieli Vulaono Locality Field Officer, Agriculture Dept.</td>
<td>Vunidawa</td>
<td>Matailobau</td>
<td>Matters concerning the Y.M.C.A. at Vuisiga.</td>
<td>Will see Manasa to go and arrange a meeting at Vuisiga for the Y.M.C.A. people and the elders to find some solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Autiko Naiqoqo Villager</td>
<td>Navurevure Waimaro</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask if he could be given a licence for a Retail Store.</td>
<td>I recommend and send it down to D.O. Naitasiri.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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</table>
John Nation graduated from Monash University with a BA (Honours in Politics) in 1971 and an MA in 1977. He worked as a secondary teacher in Fiji in 1972-73 and undertook field-work for this study in 1974 and again briefly in 1977. He is currently employed by the Department of Trade and Resources.