

**REPORT ON CONSULTATION ON FIJI'S
CONSTITUTION REVIEW**

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**INTERNATIONAL ALERT
AND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
USP, SUVA**

I would like to begin this morning's proceedings by firstly welcoming you all and I will ask you to observe a moment of silence in memory of dear departed friend and colleague Simione Durutalo who was actively involved in this consultation process.

I will now ask Rev. Paula Niukula to say grace to bless our proceedings for the next couple of days.

The chief guest, Ratu Jo Nacola, the Minister for Regional Planning, National Development and Multi Ethnic Affairs, Hon. Members of Parliament, leaders of our various communities, leaders of non-governmental organisations, representatives of political parties, friends who have come a long way, Rev. Akuila Yabaki from London, Prof. Jomo Sundaram from Malaysia, Andy Carl from International Alert, Prof. Yash Ghai from Hongkong, Dr Nigel Roberts from New Zealand, Prof. Steinberger from Germany, and Dr Peter Larmour from Australia, to all you people a very warm welcome. On behalf of the University of the South Pacific and the Vice Chancellor I'd like to very warmly welcome you.

When the Vice Chancellor opened the first National Consultation meeting that was held last year, he said that the University had a number of functions and the functions that we are all familiar with had to do with teaching, research and publication and to some extent people are aware of the function of expert consultancy. But he emphasised the point that apart from dissemination of knowledge we were also in the very privileged position of encouraging discussion and debate about issues that are important to our nation, Fiji, as well as to the region as a whole. He said with respect to the consultation process, "We are not so familiar with the third aspect, which is of a dialectical enquiry of discussion,

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exchange, or consultation. This consultation on the National Agenda sees the University in the latter aspect of its role. It provides an open, non-partisan but disciplined forum in which the community can gain a better understanding of itself by discussing topics and issues that are topical from a rather wide range of perspectives and community views."

The University is therefore very happy to be associated with this consultation. And it does in fact encourage more of such consultations as we go forward. In that light and on behalf of the University I am very proud to provide the forum this opportunity which I believe is the first of its kind in Fiji certainly, for the University to promote this kind of process in our continuing work in the enhancement of knowledge and the promotion of understanding. This is the role the University sees itself in, as encouraging discussion and dialogue, and we provide this venue very happily. The University does this entirely on a non-partisan basis. Later on in the morning, I am going to speak on the electoral process from 1970 to 1987. My paper contains my views, not the University's.

Once again on behalf of the University I would like to bid you a very warm welcome and hope you succeed in your discussion. I have now the pleasant task of introducing to you our Chief Guest this morning, Ratu Jo Nacola, Minister for National Planning, Regional Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs. Ratu Jo is a former colleague of ours in the University, who worked here for many years inspiring us in our activities as a colleague and a friend. But he had profound aspirations to serve the people of this country, and in particular his own community in Ra. Ratu Jo has won elections in various capacities including as an independent, which itself is an indication, a manifestation, of his popularity amongst his people. He has been a popular Minister. When it was rumoured last year that the portfolio of Women's Affairs was going to be taken away from him, there was a spate of letters in the newspapers from women strongly advocating his retention of women's affairs. In this day and age with feminism taking hold, it is a measure of Ratu Jo's success in

his capacity as Minister responsible for women. We are truly very grateful for the government of the Republic of Fiji for agreeing to provide us a representative on a formal and official basis to open these deliberations. Having the Government side officially opening this morning's proceedings and our deliberations for the next few days is actually something that is very encouraging for us.

I now call Ratu Jo Nacola to address us and officially open our National consultation.

6.0 THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

6.1 ELECTORAL POLITICS UNDER THE 1970 CONSTITUTION - SOME LESSONS: VIJAY NAIDU

This paper outlines the characteristic features of the electoral system established by the 1970 Constitution, political parties that contested the five elections during the period 1970-1987 and patterns in the electoral politics. It identifies patterns in voting and seeks lessons for the future.

Electoral System under the 1970 Constitution

The 1970 Constitution established a bicameral legislature - the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The membership of these two bodies were as follows:

Table 1: Membership of the House of Representatives and Senate

COMMUNAL SEATS	NATIONAL SEATS	TOTAL	% OF NATIONAL POPULATION
<u>House of Representatives</u>			
12 Fijians	10 Fijians	22	42.3
12 Indians	10 Indians	22	42.3
3 General Voters	5 General Electors	8	15.4
<u>Senate</u>			
8	Nominees of the Council of Chiefs	22	
7	Nominees of the Prime Minister		
6	Nominees of the Leader of Opposition		
1	Nominee of the Council of Rotuma		

Although modelled on the Westminster system, representation in the Lower House was based on ethnic (racial) categorisation inherited from colonial practices. This encouraged ethnic rivalry and confused ideological elements. Three broad categories, Fijian, Indian and General Electors were identified for electoral purposes.

Ethnic (racial) representation was fixed. There were to be 22 seats for Ethnic Fijians and 22 seats for Indo-Fijians and eight seats for General Electors. The seats were further differentiated on the basis of those that were "communal" in which both the candidates and the voters were exclusively from the one ethnic category and those that had ethnic candidates but a multi-ethnic electorate. The latter were referred to as national or cross voting seats. There were 25 national seats, 10 each for Ethnic and Indo-Fijians and 5 for General Electors. Each voter had four ballot papers, one for the communal representative, and three for national representatives.

Elections were held every five years on the first past the post system. Candidates who had the most votes cast in their favour were deemed to have won the election.

Political Parties

The two major political parties up to 1985 were the Alliance and National Federation Parties. The former comprised predominantly of Ethnic Fijians and General Electors with small proportion of Indo-Fijians. It relied on Ethnic Fijian and General Voters support. The latter was primarily Indo-Fijians with a very small following among Ethnic Fijians and General Electors.

The Fijian Nationalist Party (FNP), has contested elections since 1977 and as its name suggests, is reliant on Ethnic Fijian support. In 1982, the western regional-based Ethnic Fijian Western United Front (WUF), had an ephemeral existence. The Fiji Labour Party (FLP) formed in 1985, contested a by-election in 1986 and fought the 1987 General Election in coalition with NFP.

A number of other parties have had a short lived existence but have made no significant impact in the political landscape.

The Elections

Since independence, the country has had five general elections (1972, April 1977 and September 1977, 1982 and 1987) and with the exception of the 1987 general election, race awareness was heightened on each occasion (Lal, 1983; Ali, 1982; Premdas, 1982).

The Alliance Party had ruled Fiji for the first seventeen years of independence. During this period, it had enjoyed the support of a vast majority of the Ethnic Fijian voters and almost en bloc solidarity from European, Chinese and mixed race elements. It has been perceived as the Party of the wealthy. A significant proportion of Indo-Fijians have supported the Alliance in comparison with the other "races" support for the opposition party. The dominant party in the opposition, the NFP, has enjoyed the support of a large proportion of the Indo-Fijian electorate but is controlled by petty bourgeois fractions (wealthy lawyers, landlords, rich peasants, shopkeepers and other owners of capital). Table 2 below shows that the Alliance Party has always received more than 60% of Ethnic Fijian votes. It was easily victorious in general elections when it received more than 85% of their votes (1972, 1977 (September) and 1982) and only experienced electoral difficulties when it received less (1977 (April) and 1987). Almost ninety percent of the general electors have voted Alliance Party in each of the general elections in the post colonial period (Hagan, 1988). The swing of some General Electors to the NFP/Fiji Labour Party Coalition contributed to the Alliance Party's defeat in 1987. Table 3 shows that more than 70% of the Indo-Fijian votes have chosen NFP and its allies at each election. However, about 15% of the Indo-Fijian voters have consistently backed the Alliance Party. In certain constituencies such as the North Central and South West, the proportion exceeds 25% of the Indo-Fijian voters.

Table 2: Ethnic Fijian Communal Votes

	1972	1977(4)*	1977(9)**	1982	1987
AP	83.1	64.7	80.5	83.2	77.8
NFP	24	0.0	0.1	0.8	-
FLP/NFP	-	-	-	-	8.5
FNP	-	24.4	14.6	2.7	5.0
WUF	-	-	-	7.0	3.8

* (April)
** (September)

Table 3: Indo-Fijian Communal Votes

	1972	1977(4)*	1977(9)**	1982	1987
AP	24.1	15.6	14.4	15.3	15.5
NFP	74.3	73.2	84.9	84.1	-
FLP/NFP	-	-	-	-	82.4
OTHERS	1.6	11.2	0.7	0.6	2.1

Source: Calculated by the author from *Fiji Times* and *Fiji Sun* reports of the general election results.

Since the mid 1970s, a third party, the Fijian Nationalist Party (FNP), based on the ethno-nationalism of disgruntled, aspirant Ethnic Fijians and appealing to Ethnic Fijians who feel deprived by the present order, has had some influence in Fiji politics. In 1982, the Western United Front (WUF) arising from the disaffection of Ethnic Fijians of the Western parts of Viti Levu, particularly over pine development, has tried to enter national politics.

Tables 2 and 3 above depict the trend towards ethnic polarisation between 1972 and 1982. Indo-Fijian support for the Alliance Party declined from 24% in 1972 to 15.3% in 1982, whereas their support for the NFP increased from 74.3% in 1972 to 84% in 1982. Ethnic Fijians either supported the Alliance Party or one of the other "Fijian" parties, especially the FNP.

Election Issues were Racial Issues

A number of issues dating back to the colonial period provide the basis for communal or "racial" mobilisation. Land, whose ownership by the Ethnic Fijian people was entrenched in the 1970 constitution, was a useful source of voter mobilisation. Ethnic Fijians are solidified around a 'fear' of losing their land if an Indo-Fijian led political party were to win. The NFP meanwhile persuaded the Indo-Fijians that their security on land leased from the NLTB has been dependent on voting for NFP candidates. The relative absence of Ethnic Fijians in commerce and the apparent 'domination' of the economy by Indo-Fijians is also a factor in politics. The availability of scholarships, educational opportunities and employment, particularly in the bureaucracy, are other sources of racist propaganda. Ali (1982, 143) has observed that "education is to Indians what land is to Fijians - the means of survival. Since opportunities for Indians in other fields were no longer unrestricted because of the politics of racial balance, they consider the possible denial of education as the last straw".

Following the Royal Commission Report on Education of 1969, both the major political parties agreed that special provisions be made for Ethnic Fijian education which had lagged behind since the late 1950s. Initially these provisions involved the establishment of junior secondary schools in rural areas and the allocation of 50% of all scholarships to Ethnic Fijians. As competition for scholarships intensified among non-Ethnic Fijians, and especially among Indo-Fijians, the Ministry of Education increased the marks required for them to enter universities. The differential entry requirements for Ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians (for instance, in the natural sciences 216 to 266) caused considerable disaffection out of which the NFP made political capital in the April 1977 general election.

The notion of racial balance in the civil service has meant equal numbers of Ethnic and non-Ethnic Fijians being recruited. Besides the public service procedures Indo-Fijians as much as Ethnic Fijians attempt to "help" their family

members and friends - there has been a tendency for Ethnic Fijians to gain rapid promotion. In the period 1970-87, the proportion of Ethnic Fijian permanent secretaries has been 70% (Sutherland, 1984). The Alliance Party's attempt to have loyal supporters in this capacity has caused periodic allegations about racial discrimination. Soft loans by the Fiji Development Bank to Ethnic Fijians to help them enter the mainstream commercial arena was another bone of racial contention (see Ali, 1982, 139).

The major political parties have followed the rules of the game as established by the colonial state. The basic principle is to select leaders from each racial category and at the same time urge wider multiracial commitment. Therefore racial incorporation in the state's legislature is designed to promote inter-racial corporation or 'consociationalism' in the language of pluralist writers (Lijphart, 1969; Milne, 1975, 1980; Premdas, 1982, 1986). According to Premdas, communal conflagration in Fiji is imminent below the surface of superficial multiracial harmony (1982). Even Vasil who noted the pro-capital position of the two leading parties, felt that the inequitable communal electoral system would lead to violence (1971, 39). However, the cross-cutting ties among the mass of the people in their daily interactions, their interdependence and common predicament, and sharing of cultural traits have hitherto prevented racial politics from taking the form of large scale communal violence (Street, et.al., 1975; Naidu, 1979).

This form of incorporation and controlled racial awareness for electioneering was severely tested in the general elections of 1977, 1982 and 1987. Table 4 below gives the distribution of seats by party over the post-colonial period. In the April general election of 1977, the Fijian Nationalist Party (FNP) challenged the legitimacy of the Alliance as an Ethnic Fijian party. The leader of the party, Sakeasi Butadroka, having been between 1972-1974 an Alliance MP and Assistant Minister, noted the inequalities among Ethnic Fijians, the role of the chiefs as facilitators of non-indigenous enterprise and the apparent ascendancy of Indo-Fijians in various arenas. He

called for the repatriation of Indo-Fijians and popularized the slogan 'Fiji for the Fijians'. Outside Parliament he harassed Indo-Fijian tenants who had not paid their land rents in time (Ali, 1982, 142).

Electoral predictability was predicated on ethnic Fijian unity and General Elector solidarity behind the Alliance Party. Ethnic Fijian outbidding as well as changing class configurations across ethnic divisions fundamentally destabilised the 1970 electoral arrangements which favoured the Alliance Party.

Table 4: Seats in Fiji Parliament by Parties

	1977	1977 April	1977 September	1982	1987
AP	33	24	36	28	24
NFP	19	26	15	-	-
OTHERS	-	2*	1**	-	-
NFP/WUF	-	-	-	24	-
FLP/NFP	-	-	-	-	28

2* FNP and Independent

1** Independent

A constitutional crisis followed the election as the FNP and NFP made inroads into the Alliance Party-held constituencies resulting in the latter's defeat at the polls. Although the NFP captured 26 seats in comparison with the Alliance's 24, (the FNP and an independent candidate each took one seat), the NFP was not allowed to form a government. The NFP was taken aback at the unexpected windfall of seats and attempted to form a cabinet amidst rumours of a leadership crisis and squabbles over ministerial positions. The NFP offer of a coalition was rejected by the Alliance. Although the Governor General had invited Koya (the leader of NFP) to form the next government and had called him over to be sworn in as Prime Minister, he re-

appointed Ratu Mara as Prime Minister. Subsequently, Koya declared that he was denied the PM's position because he was an 'Indian' and an 'Indian' Prime Minister was unacceptable (Ali, 1980, 216-219; Fiji Times, April 9, 1977). The minority Alliance government resigned after a vote of confidence in it failed. Jai Ram Reddy, who replaced Siddiq Koya subsequently as NFP leader, explained that the Party had not been sure of the loyalty of the armed forces, the police, the senior Ethnic Fijian bureaucrats and recognised the effective veto power of the Great Council of Chiefs.

Samy (1977) has cogently argued that the split-vote theory of the politicians, the press and academics (Ali, 1980; Premdas, 1982) was unfounded. In contrast to their view that the Alliance lost because FNP had taken crucial votes away, he has shown that the Alliance lost 2 seats in the Fijian communal electorates, one to the FNP and the other to an independent, overall conceding 20,000 or 24.5% of 'Fijian' communal votes (see Table 2).

The NFP did not contest any of these communal 'Fijian' seats, although independent candidates took a further 8 of the votes in these electorates. By adding together FNP and Alliance votes in the national cross-voting roll, Samy has convincingly shown that NFP "... won 5 of its 6 Fijian national seats with comfortable, absolute majorities ... The NFP could not have won these seats without considerable non-'Indian' votes" (ibid, 117). Further, Ali has shown that many Ethnic Fijians had refused to vote at all in that election. (1977,7). Table 2 clearly shows that in the April 1977 General Election there was a sharp decline of Ethnic Fijian support for the Alliance. Disaffection with the Alliance government had influenced voters of all races including Ethnic Fijians to vote for NFP candidates. This was especially so in western and north-western Viti Levu. The racial preoccupation of the NFP politicians blinded them to this fact.

To keep the nationalists out of the second 1977 election, the Fiji Public Order Act (1969) was used to imprison Butadroka for inciting racial strife by a public 'blood will flow' remark (Fiji Times, 16 April, 1977, 2). His

campaign in absentia gained him considerable personal support and the FNP retained some 15% of Ethnic Fijian voters.

A major factor contributing to the Alliance success in the September 1977 election was that before the general election, the NFP was ripped apart from the top down by factionalism over leadership. This division was a long standing one as factions had emerged around Koya and NFP General Secretary, Ramrakha, reaching a level that threatened to break up the party especially over the land issue. But when it came to voting for what appeared an unsatisfactory 20 year extension of leases, Ramrakha and others voted with the Alliance, enabling the legislation to be passed. This behaviour underlined the split because Koya and his supporters opposed the ALTA lease period and the rent calculation mechanism. Ramrakha, Irene Narayan and their supporters in Parliament were labelled "sell outs" by the Koya faction.

During the September elections of 1977, two NFP factions, the Dove and the Flower factions, (named after their election symbols) contested all the 'Indian' communal and national cross-voting seats. Personality clashes and the lack of any ideological position resulted in the use of religion (Hindu-Muslim) and ethnic differences among Indo-Fijians (North Indian, South Indian, Gujerati, Sikh) and further subdivisions to mobilize support (Ali, 1982, 146;)

The Alliance Party won the second 1977 elections with a majority of seats 36 in all, while the NFP secured 15 seats; 12 went to the Flower faction and 3 to the Dove faction. Indo-Fijian support for the Alliance had declined to 14.5% of their votes. The FNP meanwhile retained 15% of the Ethnic Fijian vote. The ethnic divisions within the Indo-Fijian category had been heightened to a point where the supposed primary racial cleavage in Fiji politics took a backseat.

In the general election of 1982, the Alliance was returned with 28 seats and the NFP-WUF coalition won 24 seats. The FNP was a spent force. The involvement of Australian consultants in the Alliance election strategy led to considerable acrimony that eventually took a racial turn. The

consultants' recommendations in the Carroll Report suggested using ethnic and religious divisions among Indo-Fijians, buying off Butadroka, the FNP leader, and expediting court proceedings against the WUF leader as strategies to ensure Alliance Party success.

The Alliance's Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara regained considerable Ethnic Fijian support by racial appeal when it seemed that the NFP and its Coalition partner, the Western United Front (WUF), were going to be victorious. The Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) allegation that cannibalism was the means used by chiefs to gain power in Fiji and Reddy's alleged remark that Mara would open toilets to gain Indo-Fijian support provided the raw material for this mobilisation (Lal, 1983, 5). The NFP and its Western United Front (WUF) partner had made more than three hundred copies of the ABC Four Corner's programme which did an expose on foreign involvement in Fiji politics. Concern over the Alliance Party's use of foreigners was subsequently overwhelmed by racial tensions over the ABC's allegation that the chiefly rulers of Fiji had "clubbed and eaten their way to power". Mara maintained that this was a gross insult to the chiefs and the Fijian people. Ethnic Fijian solidarity was enhanced by the sense of outrage that was generated and their support for the Alliance (83.2% of the voters in communal electorates) was unprecedented.

The absence of any ideological divide between the two Parties facilitated the acceptance of Vijay R Singh, the former Alliance Attorney General as a leading NFP contestant. Singh was deprived of his position because of his alleged involvement in the transfer pricing and other corrupt activities of the Flour Mills of Fiji Ltd. The Alliance accepted into its fold Vijaya Parmanandam, a politician who had crossed the floor from both sides.

Paralleling the class differentiation taking place in Fiji, there is growing racial polarisation at the political level. Whereas Ethnic Fijian and General Elector voters have always backed Alliance, the Indo-Fijian support for the Alliance Party declined from 24% of the voters to 15% (Ibid, 4). Despite the

coalition of WUF and NFP; Ethnic Fijians largely remained in the Alliance fold.

Shortly after its formation in July 1985, the FLP assumed the mantle of the opposition outside the Parliament. It made critical comments on government policy much more effectively than did the faction-ridden NFP opposition. FLP criticised apparent official corruption, the TV deal with Australia's Channel 9, official secrecy and the government's economic policies. It also called for a common national name for all citizens of Fiji. Realizing that a three-way battle between the FLP, the NFP and the Alliance would only lead to the Alliance's victory, the FLP and NFP negotiated to form a coalition. The leader of the FLP, Dr Bavadra, was to be the leader of this coalition.

In the 1987 General Election, this NFP/FLP Coalition gained 28 seats as against the Alliance's 24 seats. In addition to gaining all the "Indian" communal seats, the NFP/FLP Coalition won all the national seats where Indo-Fijians were numerous. The NFP/FLP coalition also won four crucial national cross-voting seats in the Suva-Nausori region that were previously held by the Alliance. Vital to its victory in the two constituencies of Suva National and South Eastern National was the swing of General Electors (especially Part-Europeans) and Ethnic Fijian workers to the FLP-led Coalition.

After a month of being in government, Prime Minister Bavadra and his Cabinet (seven Indo-Fijians, six Ethnic Fijians and one General Elector) were overthrown in a coup-d'etat by the Royal Fiji Military Forces. A government of largely Alliance Party elements including former Prime Minister Mara was imposed. Subsequently when negotiations to establish a government of national unity between the democratically elected MPs of the Alliance and NFP/FLP Coalition was reaching fruition in the Deuba Accord, undemocratic Ethnic Fijian elements and the military took over government yet again. Fiji's Constitution was abrogated and the country was declared a Republic against the wishes of a majority of Fiji's citizens (Robertson, 1988).

Cross Voting or National Seats

These 25 seats were designed to encourage political parties to rise above parochial ethnic concerns and address broader issues. Political parties had to appeal to voters across ethnic lines as well as nominate and support candidates from the three ethnic categories. National or cross voting seats provided some scope for cross-ethnic interaction and therefore national integration at the political level.

Table 5: Ethnic Composition of National Seats

SEAT	FIJIAN COMPOSITION		INDO-FIJIAN COMPOSITION	
	1972	1987	1972	1987
Lau/Cakaudrove/Rotuma	87.2	86.6	8.7	6.3
South Central	62.5	74.4	29.0	21.0
East Central	69.5	69.0	28.0	30.0
South Eastern	52.4	51.8	46.0	46.2
Suva	43.0	41.0	48.0	50.5
North Eastern	42.2	41.0	56.2	57.0
South Western	38.0	38.0	61.0	61.0
Vanua Levu Northwest	30.0	33.2	68.0	65.2
North Western	30.0	33.0	69.0	63.5
North Central	26.5	30.5	72.0	68.0

The preponderance of Ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians in particular constituencies as indicated in Table 5, affected the extent to which some cross-voting seats contributed to integration. Thus in Lau/Cakaudrove, South Central and East Central Ethnic Fijians were clearly dominant, whereas in North Western, South Western and Vanua Levu North West, Indo-Fijians were predominant. It could be argued that these were communal rather than cross-voting seats. However, the

point could be made that both the candidates and the voters were compelled to consider cross-ethnic issues. The voters made choices of candidates across the ethnic divide.

In four other national constituencies, namely, South Eastern, Suva, North Eastern and North Central where the voters were more evenly distributed along ethnic lines, seats have changed hands. These have contributed to greater cross-ethnic appeals and integration during election campaigns. However, swings in voter-behaviour have also resulted in either a weakening of the ruling party's position or even to its defeat in the general election. This had various other serious ramifications.

There is a trend towards greater urbanization of all communities and especially of Ethnic Fijians. This tendency is reducing disparities in number between Ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Indeed, it is expected that Ethnic Fijian numbers would supersede those of Indo-Fijians.

Two other observations need to be made with respect to national seats. Firstly, cross-ethnic solidarity can be discerned in constituencies where there is greater balance between ethnic categories, for instance Suva National, North Eastern National, Northern General and South Eastern National. Secondly, voter turn out in the elections in the national seats do not reflect ethnic competition in the sense that a significant proportion of voters do not vote, irrespective of ethnicity.

The point needs to be made that as an integrative mechanism, the national or cross voting seats have had mixed success. This has been due to the fact that they have existed in the context of communal constituencies and political parties that were communal in nature.

Lessons

In an interview with Pacific Islands Monthly, the long standing "Indian" MP, Mrs Irene Narayan, stated that "Fijian interests [were] taken good care [of] by the Alliance Party" (December, 1985, 14) and that,

As a communal Indian member I have always thought in terms of my community, and let me be very frank, I will not be apologetic for being communal in my approach, because we have a constitution which is very communal. It is a racial constitution. The electoral system is racial and the Prime Minister of the country [Ratu Mara] has often said that race is a fact of life. I accept that (ibid. 13).

The Royal Commission on Fiji's Electoral System (1975) as well as other commentators have observed that the 1970 Constitution's electoral arrangements encouraged racialism/communalism as both candidates and voters were prescribed to think and act along racial lines.

Unfortunately, the national cross voting seats were influenced by such racial preoccupations because candidates were again grouped along racial lines. In those constituencies where the voters were almost equal demographically, the strengths of political parties, their candidates and the characteristics of the electorate influenced the final outcomes. These constituencies were more integrative than the others. However, when the ruling party was displaced from power, the legitimacy of those who were victorious was challenged along racial lines.

Fiji has been unfortunate as a state because the electoral system since independence has not only kept its people divided but has unnecessarily perpetuated a sense of insecurity among them. These have in turn affected many other aspects of their relationships as well as society as a whole.