

Living by Bread Alone:

Contemporary Challenges

Associated with Identity and Belongingness in Fiji.

Tui Rakuita

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Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy

189 Ratu Sukuna Road, Suva, Fiji Islands

GPO Box 15473

Phone - (679) 3307 588 Facsimile - (679) 3311 248

Email - info@ecrea.org.fj Web - www.ecrea.org.fj

'It is for the sake of the hopeless that we are given hope'

(Walter Benjamin 1892-1940)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

[Page numbers will have to be adjusted once layout is complete]

Acknowledgements 4

Part 1

A Prelude 5

1.1 Aims of the Research 7

1.2 Research Problem 7

1.3 Structure of the Study 8

Part 2

Research Methodology 12

2.1 The Qualitative Approach 12

- 2.2 On Interviews 13
- 2.3 The Interview Guide 13
- 2.4 Focus Group Dynamics 14
- 2.5 Sample Sizes and Profiles 14
- 2.6 On Racial and Ethnic Categories 16

Part 3

Theoretical Framework 18

- 3.1 A Theoretical Brief 18
- 3.2 Justification for Title 19

Part 4

A Historical Overview 20

- 4.1 Ethnic Relations and Conflict in Fiji 20
- 4.2 Vanua 21
- 4.3 The Making of the Colonial State 23
- 4.4 Divide and Rule 24
- 4.5 Post-Independence 28

Part 5

Analysis of Field data 30

- 5.1 Method of Analysis 30
- 5.2 Coding and Analysis of Responses 31

Part 6

Summary of Findings 47

- 6.1 On Identity, Religion and Culture 47
- 6.2 Role of the State 48
- 6.3 Overlapping Identities 50
- 6.4 Perceptions of Structural Biases 51
- 6.5 Multiculturalism, Justice, Security 51

Part 7

Conclusion and Recommendations 53

7.1 Concluding Remarks 56

References 58

Appendix 60

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1.0 A Prelude

On the 5th of December 2006, the Republic of Fiji's military forces (RFMF) overthrew the legally elected government of the day on the grounds of endemic corruption and, much more vaguely, bad governance. This was to be Fiji's 4th coup in the span of its 36 years of existence as a sovereign nation. One of the more interesting aspects of this latest coup ['insidious development' seemed unclear whether it was referring to the December 5th coup or all four coups?] was how it redrew lines of allegiances, mobilization and social engagements between the various ethnic social formations that make up Fiji, especially the two major cultural groups - the indigenous Fijians (henceforth 'Fijians') and the Indo-Fijians.

The history of engagement between these two groups in post-independent Fiji has been contentious at the best of times. For instance in 1987, the year of the first and second coups, the allegiance of the Fijians was definitely with coup strongman, then Lieutenant Colonel, Sitiveni Rabuka and his army officers, who were generally perceived by the Fijian community to be 'saving' Fiji and its Fijian inhabitants from the vices of an Indo-Fijian dominated coalition government. As such, Rabuka and his motley crew were feted as modern day 'warriors' by the Fijian community. The subsequent ethno-nationalist call for the prevention of Fiji becoming 'little India' struck at one of the innermost fears of the ordinary Fijians at the time. It also became a stark reminder of a discordant chord that has been lying dormant under the veneer of Fiji's multicultural development.

The slogan of 'Fiji for the Fijians' was again the rallying call in the year 2000, when failed businessman George Speight became the spokesman of a group of disgruntled army officers and chiefs who tried to relive the heady days of 1987 by attempting to imbibe from the same chalice - or so they thought - that Rabuka used. Even though the attempted coup unseated the first Indo-

Fijian Prime Minister, it was judged not as successful as what transpired in 1987, with the more visible members of the coup instigators ending up with gaol sentences.

The coups of 1987 and 2000 served as stark reminders to the Indo-Fijians of how precarious their positions are in this country. The statistics on the number of Indo-Fijians who left due to 'coup-related issues' are staggering.

The December 5th 2005 coup instigated by the predominantly Fijian Fiji Military Forces and its Fijian commander, Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama, is interesting in many respects. First, it redrew lines of allegiances between the major ethnic and religious groups in the country: Long regarded as the bane of Indo-Fijian aspirations in Fiji, the army through its actions initially gained a substantial amount of support from the Indo-Fijian community. A lot of this support arose from the perception that the army was trying to right the wrongs perpetrated against the Indo-Fijian community since 1987. Be that as it may, the redrawn lines of allegiance served to further entrench the division between the two major ethnic communities; a division that has threatened to bring the country to the brink of the abyss not less than four times in just a span of twenty years.

The collective experience of the Fiji Islanders is that the coups, and the shifting loyalties and divisions that they create, are symptomatic of the 'struggle for recognition' that is fast becoming the template for political mobilization in the new millennium. In Fiji, this struggle has assumed a predominantly ethnic character. Historically, for Fiji, ethnicity or 'race' has always supplanted class interests as the rallying call for political action. This has been viewed as unfortunate by some commentators since it masks the real problem of class cleavages in this country (Robertson R & Sutherland W 2001). Indeed it has been Fiji's experience that the struggle for cultural or ethnic recognition becomes more acute in the face of increasing class inequalities.

1.1 The Aims of the Research.

The aims of the research are twofold:

Firstly, it is hoped that the exercise will offer critical insights into the nature of identity formation processes that take place within different ethnic groups in Fiji. That is, the research will attempt to illuminate the unique character of these processes of identification within the different ethnic groups and show how these have contributed to fragmentations within our society. [I borrowed phrasing from the description of the aims in 1.3 because I want to suggest not repeating them there.] ok

The second objective, following from the first, is to attempt to find the most practical ways to usher in a more inclusive form of democratic practice that will effectively mediate between competing interests and subject positions within and between the various communities in Fiji. These would include opening up dialogue between ethnic and religious groups in a quest for greater integration, participation and collaboration between them. The significance of the research lies in its potential to address current tensions between traditional and civic values as well as

mediating, via a deliberative process, between the different value spheres that are an intrinsic part of modern Fiji.

It is envisaged that by re-looking at our problems **in terms of delineating the specificities of identity formation processes within different ethnic groups as well as examining the fault-lines and convergence sites between them**, traces of a new pathway can then be delineated - a pathway that can form the legitimate basis from which to launch our quest for a more meaningful society that is based on an honest truth and a more honourable justice.

1.2 Research Problem

Any recent evaluation of the epistemic compatibilities between the different ethnic and religious groups in Fiji and between traditional and civic values pertaining to the notion of *belongingness* reveals a chasm of differences. This is curious indeed in light of the fact that the communities involved have been living alongside each other for more than a century and that the existence of our nation-state presupposes a general adherence to civic attitudes. These differences have fuelled (at least in part) growing animosities between the groups concerned and public dissatisfaction in the role of Fiji's democratic institutions in instilling multicultural values. In Fiji, ethnic nationalism, religious fundamentalism and sectarian conflict have all accompanied the emergence of the liberal democratic order and its multicultural thrust. The research will illuminate these problems and set out tentatively a way forward. Hence the central focus will be on how open dialogue between the knowledge bases of various stakeholders can foster a deeper and more meaningful practice of multiculturalism in Fiji.

Some of the tentative questions that the research seeks answers to are:

1. How have the incompatibilities in knowledge bases and signification processes contributed to our current impasse?
2. To what extent can a deliberative process that takes account of local contexts be successful in re-embedding civil society back into a national culture?
3. How can the basic compatibilities inherent within the various 'traditions' and issues of multiculturalism be used to foster a more democratic and open society in Fiji? [Do you mean compatibilities between one tradition and another, or compatibility between the traditions and the principle of multiculturalism?] **I mean between one tradition and the other and between these traditions and the principle of multiculturalism.**
4. What kind of deliberative processes can be developed in Fiji that will actively facilitate the promotion of the principles of multiculturalism?

1.3 Structure of the Study

Part 1: Introduction:

This section introduces the nature of the research problem and the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which the problem is investigated and analysed. It does this by providing an overview of the different social dynamics that are at play in race/ethnic relations in Fiji.

After establishing this, the section then goes on to outline the aims of the research and provide a rationale for the investigative exercise. One of the main justifications of a research of this kind in Fiji stems from a lack of understanding as to the way contemporary identity formation processes are implicated [unitalicized] in the way people of different cultural and religious backgrounds relate to one another. This section also introduces the general theoretical framework adopted throughout the study. A discussion of how the paper is structured follows.

[Since the research objectives were stated only a page or two earlier, it seems like *deja vu* to state them again.] ok

~~The two aims of the research come towards the end of this section. These are:~~

- ~~1. The development of critical insights on the nature of the identity formation processes that take place within different ethnic groups in Fiji. That is, an illumination of the unique character of these processes of identification within the different ethnic groups will be attempted.~~
- ~~2. An attempt to find the most practical way to usher in a more inclusive form of democratic practice that will effectively mediate between competing interests and subject positions within and between the various communities in Fiji.~~

~~A discussion of how the paper is structured will follow on from above.~~

Part 2 Methodology:

This section provides a commentary on the data collection exercise that I undertook in the three sites of Suva, Lautoka and Taveuni.

My overall research method is clearly spelt out in this section as well as my data collection techniques. Suffice it to say at this stage, that because of problems relating to logistics and volume of respondents I made a judgment call in the middle of my data collection activities to employ other quantitative [Do you mean quantitative or qualitative?] methods such as the use of questionnaires. This is because of the volatile nature of some of the situations that I found myself in and to the general reticence on the part of my respondents to have their voices recorded. This is especially true in the village of Somosomo where the wounds of a titular dispute for the paramount ~~regent~~ regency of the province were reopened by the December 5 2006 'clean-up' campaign. This change to data collection necessitated ~~the adoption of~~ triangulating the research methods.

Part 3: Theoretical Model

The theoretical model that was finally adopted for this research was one that was pioneered by Ervin Goffman(1956). It is about the 'Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life' and how self identity is a product of interactions between people. It is set out in three simple stages propositions:

1. That the social world is a big theatre
2. That there is a front stage
3. That there is a backstage

When responses are viewed using this scheme, an interesting phenomenon emerges; messages about justice, love and equality are often relegated to the backstage in the interactions between the two major ethnic groups. This is curious in the sense that one would normally expect a competition between these groups to champion these values as to occupy the moral high ground. Yet in their interaction, one senses that these values are confined in their respective back-stages while caricatures purporting to be justice, love and equality (which really are there to serve their respective interests) are mounted in their places. [combined paragraph] This in a nutshell is what is argued in the paper. The challenge is for us to redeem this process of social engagement by initiating a move that will put the stages back in their rightful places.

This initial modeling is then juxtaposed with a ~~Habermasian~~ framework based on Habermas' concept of the 'system' and the 'lifeworld' in an attempt to put forward some tentative parameters of a democratic practice that is rooted in the equal and cordial participation of all the members of the different communities in Fiji.

Part 4: Historical Overview

This section offers a broad historical overview of the various cultural evolutionary trajectories of the different ethnic social formations in Fiji. An intrinsic part of this is an account of the construction of specific socio-cultural markers that distinguish one ethnic group from another, which in turn became a critical factor in the interactions between these groups. The social constructions of the various social labels that are attached to particular groups can be attributed to the power and knowledge structures inherent within the social fabrics of these communities.

~~It was interesting to note that~~ In the course of the research I gradually became aware of the fact that some of my respondents were at least partly conscious of the power and knowledge constellations that patterns their thought and perceptions, and in turn guide the kind of interactions they have with 'other' people. Yet, despite this awareness, they would willingly reproduce these same structures in their every engagement with the 'outsiders' thus further entrenching the already precarious conditions of interactive participation between the different communities in the country. How do we reverse this?

Part 5: Analysis of Field Data

This section provides a detailed rendition of the various responses. These were coded [What does this mean and why is it important?] in order to arrange all the responses into common thematic categories before analysis. **Coding is a method of analysis used in qualitative research. This is when responses are grouped together under various themes as to bring out their saliency.**

Part 6: Summary of Finding and Analytic Overview of the Results

This section outlines the main findings based on the analysis of the field data.

Part 7: Concluding Summary and Recommendations

The section simply recapitulates the major themes of the findings and puts forward various suggestions that can form the legitimate basis from which to re-launch our quest for a more meaningful society that is based on an honest truth and a more honourable justice for all.

Part 2

2.0 Research Methodology

The field research data was collected from three geographical regions in Fiji namely, the Suva City Area, the Lautoka City area and its peri-urban vicinities, and Taveuni where the various communities residing on the island, especially in Somosomo, Niusawa (Methodist), Wairiki, Weilagi, Soqulu and the surrounding settlements, became the locus of the research. The underlying objective in studying the people from these diverse areas was to try and derive a cluster of data that would meaningfully represent the ideas, opinions, and beliefs of the majority of the population on a number of salient issues, chief amongst them being the notion of who we [‘we’?] are and how we relate to others around us. **‘We’ is correct**

The research itself employed both library survey and fieldwork interviews in the abovementioned geographical areas.

2.1 Justification for a Qualitative Approach

Following on from the theoretical parameters adopted for the research, a methodology that would address the inter-subjectivity that plays a central role in any deliberative framework was embraced. The ‘qualitative turn’ was also able to take into account the ways in which communities within Fiji accommodate and practice multiculturalism within their social and cultural milieu. Because of the nature of the study, the approach took on a very pragmatic outlook. Time limitations and the size of the research team also contributed to the adoption a qualitative methodology. In-depth understanding from qualitative methods can be usefully employed to provide a more holistic portrayal of the group dynamics and knowledge bases that underpin inter-ethnic relations in Fiji today.

The breakdown of the approach is outlined below:

1. Literature Review - an examination of existing literature on the subject

2. Historical analysis - takes into account specific trajectories pertaining to group identification processes and how these have impacted on current dilemmas.
3. Analysis of cultural standards/ language games - constituent elements
4. In-depth interviews with key informants
5. Focus-group discussions

2.2 On Interviews - Focus Groups and Key Informants

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used in all focus-group discussions as well as interviews with key informants. Data derived from the interviews was examined through basic coding and interpretive analysis. This is in light of the fact that the overall purpose of the research was to comprehend the roles of identity formation processes and their corollaries and how these have influenced perceptions of multiple, and often conflicting, realities. This we must understand if we are to begin to delineate how these antagonisms could be resolved amicably. These kinds of understanding cannot be derived from simple statistical analyses or by means of measuring the distribution and correlations of the variables concerned. Interviewees in the various locations were identified and recruited via the snow-balling method with current students at USP being used as initial intermediaries.

2.3 On the Interview Guide

The open-ended design of the Interview Guide was to allow for maximum variation in the views expressed by the respondents within focus groups while at the same time meeting the requirements of issues pertaining to validation and objectivity. The same also applies when interviewing key informants, that is, they were given a lot of leeway in articulating their life-stories while the researcher keeps a lookout for how these personal narratives might, at certain junctures, coalesce with the historical trajectory of their respective communities.

The responses were then coded [removed italics] in order to tease out the salient aspects of the research exercise. The coding results in turn became the basis on which the findings were juxtaposed with the respective historical accounts of the ethnic groups to check for alignments, overlapping and anomalies. This was then subjected to a ~~reflexive~~ reflective exercise from which suggestions of a way to transcend the current impasse in race and ethnic relations were offered.

Reflexive is the correct philosophical term – it denotes an attitude of being ‘critically conscious’ (on the part of the researcher) of the socio-political and economic matrix that influences the kind of responses in the interviews.

2.4 Focus Groups Dynamics

The focus group sizes were on average between 5 to 7 people, including the facilitator. The size was to allow the facilitator greater control of the discussions while at the same engendering an

atmosphere of privacy and familiarity in which the discussants feel that they could frankly air their opinions and beliefs.

The whole exercise involved sitting around in a circle with a group of people in open and friendly discussions. These interviews were invariably conducted in homes, while sitting in sitting rooms, at the dining tables or around the *tanoa*. Although there were the occasional disturbances from other family or *tanoa* members, these were far and few between. Such interruptions [removed quotes] in a lot of instances become 'pressure valves' when discussion revolves around contentious issues.

The interviews lasted from one and half hours to a maximum of two hours and forty five minutes.

2.5 Sample Sizes and Profiles

2.5.1 The breakdown in terms of Region and Ethnic make-up is shown below.

Region	Fijian	Indo-Fijian	Others	Total
Suva	57	55	21	133
Lautoka	33	38	6	77
Taveuni	95	37	9	141
Total No.	185	130	36	351

Note:

There were 141 discussants from Taveuni included in 26 focus group discussions and 20 key informant interviews. Lautoka had 77 discussants, 16 focus groups and 7 key informants, while Suva had 133 discussants, 23 focus groups and 11 key informants.

All in all there were 351 discussants, with Fijians making up 52.7%, Indo-Fijians 37%, and 'Others' making up 10.3% of the total.

2.5.2 Sample breakdown in terms of ~~ethnic make-up~~ and Religious Affiliations:

Religion	Christians	Hindus	Muslims	Others	Total
Number	215	115	14	7	351
Percentage	61.3	32.8	4	1.9	100

Note:

The difference in religio-cultural configuration between table 2.5.1 and table 2.5.2 is due to the fact that some of the Indo-Fijians interviewed, and most of those who fell within the rubric of 'Others' as their ethnic group, were Christians.

2.5.3 Sample breakdown according to Age Group:

Age Group	<15	15 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	>51	Total
Number	0	68	96	91	61	35	351
Percentage	0	19.4	27.4	25.9	17.4	9.9	100

2.5.4 Sample breakdown in terms of Gender Distribution

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Number	187	164	351
Percentage	53.3	46.7	100

2.5.5. Sample Breakdown in terms of Education

Ethnic Group	Primary School (yr1-8)	Secondary	Post-Secondary (Vocational)	Post-Secondary (Tertiary)	Total
Fijian	52	103	19	11	185
Indo-Fijian	72	36	19	3	130
Others	4	24	6	2	36
Total	128	163	44	16	351
Percentage	36.5	46.4	12.5	4.6	100

2.6 A Note on `Race' and `Ethnicity'

There is a tendency to use the terms `race' and `ethnicity' interchangeably in Fiji. This is due chiefly to the murky discursive terrain that these twin notions straddle. For the purpose of this study, race will be understood as the use of physical markers or characteristics to generate social `differences' amongst and between people. Often, these `differences' become the basis of indisputable dogma about the social nature of human beings

Historically, the concept of race is rife with controversies. For example, Social Darwinists incorporated race theory into their analytic framework in an attempt to generate `knowledge' about how some people are naturally superior to others.

Ethnicity, on the other hand, refers to the use of social or cultural markers to differentiate between people. These social variables usually include:

- Language
- Culture

- Beliefs
- Tradition

In other words, the social nature of ethnic categories is much more apparent. Social contexts shape the way people formulate (‘construct’) their perceptions and expressions of ethnicity

It is in this way that the concept of ethnicity is much more fluid, with changing boundaries and memberships.

This in no way is to suggest that ethnic categories are much more stable because of the absence of the kind of suppressive ideologies that support race theories. [What do you mean ‘stable’? Saying that ethnic categories are “fluid” doesn't seem to suggest that they are more stable.] One has only to look at the conflicts between Croatians and Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, between the Russians and the Czechs in the former USSR, and between the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, to see the futility of pursuing that line of thought. [combined paragraphs] However it is easier to differentiate people along ethnic lines. [Easier than what? What do you mean ‘easier’?] Furthermore, when compared to ‘race’, ethnicity is a relatively free of the problems besetting racial stereotyping. It is because of these that ethnic categories are used throughout the report.

Part 3

3.0 Theoretical Framework

3.1 A Theoretical Brief

As noted above, the theoretical matrix used in this research was derived from two sources. The first was the concept of ‘impression management’ by Erving Goffman while the second was derived from the Habermasian perspective that views the constitutive elements of the social world as ‘system’ and ‘lifeworld’.

Erving Goffman's seminal study on ‘*The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*’ (1956) continues to have a telling impact on the humanist interpretist tradition in sociology. The main argument put forward by this text is that individuals ‘perform’ as if they are on a stage in their daily interactions. Just as stage performances are directed by scripts, so are there ‘rules’ that influence behavioural patterns in social interactions. It is in this way that the ‘self’ becomes the product of the interplay between a person and his or her audience - what you believe about yourself is influenced by what you think others think about you.

The main aspect of Habermas' work that is employed here is his concept of the ‘system’ and ‘lifeworld’. According to Habermas (1984, 1987) the social world has two constituent elements - the ‘system’ and ‘lifeworld’. The ‘system’ is made up of *institutions* [added italics] such as the state and the economy, while the ‘lifeworld’ is made up of *groups of people* [added italics] who engage inter-subjectively with each other in their daily lives. For Habermas, both the system and the lifeworld evolve in the direction of increasing rationalization. For the system, this would mean increasing differentiation and complexity of the structural dimensions of life and a growth of

technological control over nature and, by extension, of social life itself. Rationalization of the lifeworld would mean, on the other hand, the emergence of unforced and increasingly rational communicative patterns between individuals and groups. It is here that the emergence of two different rationalization processes is made obvious: The system, according to this reading, is guided by *instrumental reason* aimed at the domination of nature and at a society administered by specialists well immersed in scientific logic. Because of the linguistic nature of the lifeworld, on the other hand, Habermas contends that this sphere is driven by *communicative reason*

For Habermas, the main problem besetting the social world has to do with the subjugation of communicative reason by instrumental logic. This will inevitably result in the *colonization of the lifeworld* and the concomitant transformation of social relations into relations between objects. This is to say that transformative politics become increasingly difficult in an environment chiefly defined by instrumental understanding. The answer therefore is for individuals and groups to reclaim the normative base of society for the reason that social consciousness cannot be a mere reflex of systemic imperatives (money and power).

On another front, a problematisation of [removed italics] the linkage between group relations and capitalist development is, in my view, [Question: Is this problematisation your idea or Habermas'?' **Mine of course, but using a Habermasian vein**] a significant exercise. This is crucial if we are to rejuvenate the critical discourse of social and political criticism so that it will meet the need of our present circumstances. The advent of the technologically driven neo-liberal age, exemplified by the globalisation process, and the implication this has on social relations, makes it imperative that we undertake a quest to examine the parameters of our society. The argument here, mirroring above, is that it is primarily the distorting effects [removed italics] that Capitalism brings to communicative interchanges [removed italics] that have led to what Habermas (1987) has termed, 'the colonisation of the lifeworld'.

This is the basis of the critical stance that is assumed in this report. Under the aegis of knowledge as science and bureaucracy as organisational form [removed italics], neo-liberal capitalist impediment to 'free dialogue' [removed italics] has given rise to the complete marginal being - distracted, displaced and intensely passive. It was three decades ago that Martin Jay lamented that '...the word "alienation," used to signify the most banal of dyspepsias as well as the deepest of metaphysical fears, has become the chief cant phrase of our time.'(1973: xiii) The maxim still holds true today.

3.2 Justification for Title

'Living by Bread Alone' was never meant to introduce a theological emphasis into the writing of the current report. It was originally intended to signal the increasing penetration of our social lifeworlds by totalizing systemic imperatives (i.e. the state and market). This has led to, for want of a better term, the commodification of social life.

It is in this way that the Habermasian framework of analysis is made more apparent in the report. As noted above, Habermas divided the social world up into two spheres - the system and the

lifeworld. The system is epitomised by means-ends calculation or instrumental reasoning. This, according to him, has seen the successful manipulation of the natural environment for our benefit. It also is the logic that drives the market towards greater efficiency and profitability.

In the Habermasian scheme, this kind of logic - that is, instrumental reason - is not applicable in the social world. In fact, the current impasse in social relations is due to the increasing usage of this logic in interethnic relations. This has resulted in manipulative or strategic actions in our social engagements with each other as well as with other groups.

For Habermas, the lifeworld should be governed by a logic that emphasises cooperation, intersubjective understanding and rational exchanges. This logic is called communicative reason. But, as a rule of the thumb, the increasing colonization of the lifeworld has meant the entrenchment of instrumental reason in a sphere that should be governed only by communicative logic. This is at the heart of our problems to relate to each other.

It is in this way that 'Living by Bread Alone' remains true to the critical framework delineated by Habermas. That is, the use of the name becomes a signifier that actually defines the process of the colonisation of the lifeworld by systemic imperatives.

Part 4

4.0 A Historical Overview

4.1 Ethnic Relations and Conflict in Fiji: A Historical Overview

The nature and origin of contemporary Fiji's inter-ethnic and racial problems can be traced back to processes of significations embedded within different indigenous communities, for these processes conditioned to a very large extent the interactions amongst the indigenes themselves and, after cession, the social exchanges that took place between the Fijian people and other 'migrant' communities that made Fiji their home.

4.2 Vanua: A Synopsis of the Dynamics of Indigenous Communities.

A conceptual understanding of the *vanua* [I have italicized but not capitalized Fijian words like 'vanua'] cannot be overstated if one is to comprehend how indigenous signification systems pattern and condition Fijian worldviews or mindsets.

Pre-colonial traditions in Fiji were largely based on the concept of the *vanua*. *Vanua* as a noun literally means 'land'. However the social as well as phenomenological dimensions of the *vanua* illuminate its communicative character. Indeed *vanua* has always been contextualised within a network of social relations that is in turn conditioned by normative standards embedded within the social fabric of society (Huffer E & Rakuita T 2005). [Elise isn't in the bibliography, and do the question marks mean you are looking for a year or page reference?] In other words, the *vanua* is both physically and linguistically constructed and mediated.

As a source of identity within the communities who inhabited these islands prior to Cession, the notion of *vanua* remained unparalleled in its influence on and sway over the ways the indigenes thought about their 'selves' and their rightful places in their respective communes. These forms of understandings then became the basis from which people related to each other. Indeed people were generally acknowledged by the *vanua* they hailed from. The identity bestowed by the *vanua* is an eternal one and precedes all other identity formation processes. The *vanua* identity is a geographical as well as a social one. From this duality stems the twin notions of 'taukei' and 'vulagi'. One is either a *taukei* or a *vulagi* in a *vanua*. A *taukei* is a person who can identify himself or herself as *belonging* to a specific geographical area and furthermore *place* himself or herself within the nexus of social relationships that makes the *vanua* possible. These [Which 'these'? These social relationships or these criteria: **geographical belonging and social placement- this was what I meant?**] cumulatively become the elementary basis of social stratification within Fijian communities or within the different Vanua. If one cannot fulfill the two conditions above in the place (i.e. *vanua*) one finds oneself in then one is very likely to be a *vulagi* - a *taukei* of/in another place. The interplay between *taukei-vulagi* identities were the primary ways in which indigenous Fijian societies relate to each other during the pre-colonial era. If, for instance, one finds oneself as a *vulagi* in a *vanua* then one has to assume the appropriate demeanor to the *taukei*. This has often meant the perpetual subservience of one's self to the wishes (and often vices) of the *taukei*. Failure to observe these would mean ostracisation and its concomitant implications.

There are, of course, a myriad of identities between the axes of *taukei* and *vulagi*. These identities emerge out of second order relationships. Some of these are outlined below.

Tauvu - This identity acknowledges that the relationships of the gods between the *vanua* concerned are friends. It is a secondary identity that is premised on the basis *taukei-vulagi* dichotomy. Nevertheless this form of relating to each other allows some leeway into the strict regime that governs a *taukei* and a *vulagi*. The air of joviality that is embedded within this relationship is manifested by how people who are *tauvu* relate to each other. A present day example of this kind of affiliation could be seen in the rapport that exists between people from the Lomaiviti group with those from Vanua Levu.

Mataqali - Apart from it being the term used for groupings that could trace their lineage back to a common patrilineal ancestor, the term is also used to denote a common stock that runs through the different Vanua that make up the Kubuna confederacy.

Naita - A term that identifies the affiliation between people from the two confederacies of Kubuna and Burebasaga

Tovata - A political alliance that was forged by the Tongan warlord Enele Ma`afu in an attempt to perpetuate his influence in Fiji.[A time reference would be useful for this event, and is there a source to go with the question marks? **The source will have to be David Routledge's 'Matanitu – will you check out the reference and add it also to the bibliography??'**] This term is now used as a rallying call **between the** people from the Lau group with those from the three provinces of Vanua Levu. [I don't understand the 'with' relationship. Is Lau invoking some kind of pre-existing alliance

with Vanua Levu? Does Lau want support from Vanua Levu, or is Lau calling on its own people to live up to their obligation to support Vanua Levu?]

Is that a bit clearer??

Needless to say, all these relational connections illuminate illustrate the different kinds of relationships one can forge or for that matter the kinds of identities one can assume in a social milieu. They also presuppose a set of obligations to one another. However these secondary distinctions are still played out within the basic duality of Taukei and Vulagi.

4.3 The Making of a Colonial State.

The ceding of the different *vanua* that inhabited the islands now known collectively as Fiji in 1874 brought with it cataclysmic changes the consequences of which can still be felt today. Perhaps the greatest of these changes was the formation of a new nation-state. The new power constellation based on *Pax Britannia* was able to quell enclaves of native resistance through the simultaneous use of coercion and persuasion. The former was achieved through the use colonial-cum-native constabulary while the latter was, to a high degree, credited to the work of the churches and their missionaries. In the end the nascent colonial state was built on a broad conglomeration of different *vanua* under the auspices of British colonial rule.

In terms of identity formation, the emergence of the colonial state and the widespread acceptance of the Christian belief became watersheds in the processes of signification that existed at the time. The people of different *vanua* were now brought together as common subjects of the new colonial entity. In this way a common bond, wrought by the church and the state, was woven between the *taukei* of the different *vanua* that make up Fiji. From an identity that was based on a specific geographical and social landscape, the new affiliation was to be premised on a form of collective identification that reflected the new socio-political realities. `Na noda Viti' (our Fiji) became the catchphrase of the time. Incidentally this also marked the emergence of the `Fijian' [the person, the term, or the identity category?] or *taukei kei Viti* (*Kai Viti* for short). The identity category of course.

It was under Sir Arthur Gordon, Fiji's first governor, that another profound change took place. In an effort to preserve what the colonial administration perceived as the `Fijian way of life' in the midst of the growing need to build a sustainable economy, Gordon decided to acquire indentured labourers from India. The influx of these new migrants put an indelible imprint on subsequent social, political and economic configurations in Fiji. Gillion (1977) observed that between the years 1879 and 1916, a total of 60,000 Indian labourers arrived in Fiji. On the eve of Independence in 1979, Indians, mostly of indentured origins, surpassed the number of Fijians in Fiji.

4.4 Divide and Rule

It was during this time that the colonial administration came up with an ingenious way of ordering the lives of people in Fiji. The twin objectives of protecting the `Fijian Way' and creating a viable economy within the nascent political colony meant a dual system had to be introduced to rule over the Fijians and the Indians. This became known as the `Divide and Rule'. This system of rule

simply facilitated the entrenchment of separatist cultural development trajectories. Over time, this played the function of protecting the hegemonic position of the colonial state and the interests of the white plantation owners as well as the Colonial Sugar Refinery company by eliminating any possible alliance of the two major races (Norton R 1990).

For Fijians, a strict regime defined by 'Native Ordinances' or 'Fijian Regulations' were administered by the colonial state via its provincial administrations with the active collusion of Fijian chiefs. The Fijian Regulation was 'a system espoused by law to organize some of the activities of the Fijian people for their own social, economic and political development, as well as for the preservation of their traditional way of life.' (Nayacakalou R 1975: 85)

It is exactly this colonial perception of an authentic native lifestyle that gave rise to a neo-traditional order which later ossified into an orthodoxy that became known as the 'Fijian way of life'. One of the immediate consequences of this form of stereotyping was the formation of a Fijian enclave that was in turn disfranchised from the economic realm (Gillion K L 1977). Roth (1957) further noted that this new orthodoxy was helped along by the coinage of 'new' chiefly titles like '*Turaga ni qali*' and '*Turaga I Taukei*'.

The Indians on the other hand were left to the vices of the Colonial Sugar Refinery company. It was primarily in this way that they were confined to themselves with very little meaningful interaction with others outside their social groupings other than as 'labourers and menials' (Gillion 1977).

However, the separatist mechanism of divide and rule was not confined to the political and economic spheres only. Geographically Indians were confined to the cane belts while Fijians needed special passes to leave their villages and venture out into urban areas. Racial schools were set up to ensure that the colonial exclusionary strategies permeate into the educational arena. Norton (1990) further noted that the 'linguistic, religious, and dietary differences' already intrinsic to the two races simply culminated in the apotheosis of Divide and Rule. The toll on racial conciliation and identity formation processes that the colonial indenture system, or for that matter the Fijian Regulation, had on the Indian labourers and Fijian landowners respectively cannot be overstated. Naidu (1980) for example, directly attributed the social estrangement of the Indian community ~~from their past~~ to the collective experiences of the Giritiyas under a malevolent colonial yoke. This condition was further exacerbated by the colonial regime in its rigid separation of the races. This ensured the perpetuation of ethnocentric viewpoints within the racial enclaves.

It was under these socially dislocating conditions that the Indians began their resistance against what they saw as '...diametrical forces exemplified on the one side by the *taukei-vulagi* philosophy and from the other by [their] own wish to emancipate themselves from the yoke of political and ideological tyranny' (Rakuita T 2002: 96). The agitation against colonial oppression began with strikes in the cane fields in 1920 and 1921 (Gillion 1977). It was mainly geared towards, but not confined to, the amelioration of working conditions in the cane fields. Indeed Indian resistance was also tied to issues of justice, political representations and equality as well as to the more fundamental question of the Fiji Indian identity and its rightful place in the colonial

order. In other words the agitation was a cry not only for justice and equality but also for recognition. It was in this quest for recognition that the influences of the *Arya Samaj* and the *Sanatan Dharm*, the two major Hindu divisions in Fiji, were felt throughout the colony. A perfect exemplification of this was the construction of Arya schools all over Fiji in the face of an attempt by the colonial government and the Methodist church to have a monopoly on the education of Indians (Kelly J 1991). Furthermore, the establishment of its own newspaper, the *Fiji Samachar*, in 1923 solidified the Arya Samaj's influence on the identity formation processes of Indians in Fiji. Indeed the role played by religion within the Indian population became more salient with the demise of the Indian anti-colonial movement in Fiji - the Fiji Indian National Congress (ibid). This is to say that the reaffirmation of the Indian identity and its rightful place in the colonial polity was spearheaded by the Hindu religion.

This development of course did not go unnoticed by the colonial administration and the white settlers in general, for it was in this context that the Deed of Cession, a set of agreements and obligations that bounded the chiefs and the Fijian people to Queen Victoria and her heirs, began to undergo a rather liberal reinterpretation. According to the colonialists and the white settlers, that legal binding document was really a 'deed of trust' for the protection of Fijian interests by the white population of Fiji in general. Of course the tacit assumption underpinning this ingenious translation of the maintenance of Fijian interests was the perpetuation of European dominance (Norton R 1990).

[Started new paragraph.]

This new stance by the colonial state was fervently embraced by the Fijian chiefs and by extension their people because of a number of factors. The first of these was the perceived economic and political importance of the Indians from a Fijian vantage point. For example, as early as 1897, sugarcane production from Indo-Fijian farmers within the Navua region alone surpassed the cumulative cane volume produced by the white settlers *and* the Colonial Sugar Refinery (Gillion 1977). This development underlined the growing importance of Indians in the sugar industry. It also added impetus to their political demands for greater recognition from the colonial state. By the time the Indenture stopped, some 42 years after it first started, a substantial number of 'free' Indians had successfully diversified into other sectors (ibid). Indeed by 1929, they had managed to secure 3 elected seats, the same number as Fijians, in the law-making Legislative Council. This remarkable turnaround in their economic and political fortunes created tensions within the Fijian mindset. This was further exacerbated by the enforced political and, to some extent, religious separation between the two ethnic communities.

This perceived affluence within the Indo-Fijian community, from a Fijian vantage point, did not sit well with the old age philosophy that conditions the *tauvei-vulagi* relationship. The *vulagi* is supposed to be perpetually subservient to the *tauvei*. In making good and demanding more, the Indo-Fijians were seen to be contravening the terms of a sacrosanct agreement. The fact that very little social intercourse took place compounded the matter by making the issue of Indo-Fijian acceptance on the part of the Fijian community a controversial subject.

Another issue was, from a Fijian point of view, the inexplicable reluctance of the Indian population to defend Fiji in WWII. The refusal to heed the call of chiefs to fight for king and country has always been a sore point of contention amongst Fijians (Ravuvu1991). Again this contravened the protocols that govern the *vulagi* in Fiji. This socio-political and economic configuration in the colony at the time was further aggravated by differences in religious beliefs: the Fijians by this time were, like their political masters, more or less Christianized.

Therefore on the eve of Fiji's Independence in 1970, a volatile concoction of religious, cultural and socio-economic impulses were at the base of our newly minted multicultural society. This potentially intoxicating beverage, like the siren song in Homeric mythology, proved to be too beguiling for demagogues to resist in their search for validating narratives of what transpired in 1987, 2000 and finally in 2006.

4.5 1970 to the Present: Post Independence

The poet William Butler Yeats (1865 -1939) in his poem, 'The Second Coming', lamented about the general loss of meaning in a world whose rationality has gone berserk. He immortalized this condition by the verse:

TURNING and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity...

(in Geddes G 1969:7)

This verse, ~~written around 100 years ago~~ [not really – **what I meant was circa**] proved to be prescient in light of Fiji's post-independent development trajectory.

The schisms between the major ethnic groups manifested themselves in the various ways people identify themselves and relate to others. For instance, the voting patterns in the 1972 first general election were primarily along ethnic lines. This pattern became the precursor of all other subsequent elections held in Fiji from the years 1972 to 2006. There were of course ethnic conciliatory gestures made from time to time as could be seen in the make-up of the Alliance Party or for that matter the Labour-led coalition government that first came to power in 1986.

As in all forms of development, there were consequences to contend with. Perhaps, in hindsight, the demarcation that was set up between religion and the state was premature in light of the complementary roles they have with each other in the exercise of nation building. This division between religion and state, very much in accordance with the new gospel of liberalism, further entrenched differences across the ethnic divide by institutionalizing seemingly irreconcilable

divergences in thoughts, beliefs and customs into religio-cultural enclaves. These in turn became the ideal environment for the nurturing of an insularity that ultimately resulted in chauvinistic impulses emanating from each ethnic category and directed towards each other.

This, in a nutshell, is the context from which the current research was thought out. Furthermore it is also the basis for the analysis of the responses that were gathered during my trips to the field.

Part 5

5.0 Analysis of Field Data

5.1 Method of analysis

Following Ratuva (2002), the following approaches were adopted for focus groups:

1. Since most of the discussions revolve around issues of common interpretations, the approach adopted was to try and delineate the major points of agreement between all the respondents in a particular focus group.
2. The second approach was to compare and contrast the different interpretations from different focus groups. These differences were observed to be largely based on the grounds of ethnicity and age.
3. These responses were then contextualised so that a more objective understanding of the different responses could be garnered.

The contextualisation of responses were primarily done in two ways:

1. The first process was to examine the linkages between common points of agreement and the social and political contexts.
2. This was further appraised by looking at the data from my key informants from the different ethnic and age groups. [Do you mean that you analysed the key informant data from the perspective of ethnicity and age, or that you looked at the data from the key informants and from the ethnic and age groups?]

The reason for this form of contextualisation was highlighted by C. Wright Mills (1959) when he talked about the need to link the fate of individuals to the social dynamics of the society they are living in. These dynamics include the structure of that society, the kinds of people living in that society and the pattern of development for that particular society that affects the personal lives of its people. As he noted (ibid: 3)

When a society becomes industrialized, a peasant becomes a worker; a feudal lord is liquidated or becomes a businessman. When classes rise or fall, a man is employed or unemployed; when the rate of investment goes up or down, a man takes new heart or goes broke. When war happens, an insurance salesman becomes a rocket launcher; a store clerk, a radar man; a wife lives alone; a

child grows up without a father. *Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.* (Italics added)

In order to minimize the risk of misrepresentations, careful consideration has been accorded to the presentation of the responses. This meant that all responses were coded [removed italics. It would help to know what 'coded' means here] in order to tease out the salient aspects of the research exercise. The coding results in turn became the basis on which the findings were then juxtaposed with the respective historical accounts of the ethnic groups to check for alignments, overlapping and anomalies. This in turn was subjected to a reflective exercise from which suggestions of a way to transcend the current impasse in race and ethnic relations were offered

5.2 Coding And Analysis of the Responses

Focus groups and key informants were asked questions broken into four categories. Section A of the questionnaire elicited demographic information (see section 2.5 on 'Sample Sizes and Profiles'). Section B of the questionnaire dealt with issues of identity, religion, culture, and the state. Section C focused on economic issues and Section D revolved around the question of 'rights'. [I've taken out the Appendix (the questionnaire) and written out the questions in the body of this section. I added an intro paragraph to explain the layout of this section, and added questions from the questionnaire where they were not already included. In a few places, where the subsection title was the question, I changed the title so as not to be repetitive.]

Section B: Issues of Identity/Religion/Culture/State

5.2.1 On Multiple Identities and Master Status

- How do you see yourself? [Fiji Islander (Constitutional), Fijian (Define), Indo-Fijian, *i Taukei*, Rotuman, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Other.]
- If you were to categorize yourself with the identities outlined above, how would you see yourself first and foremost?
- Do you think that religion has a role in determining people's identity?
- Is there a relationship between how you identify yourself with your religious convictions?

These questions revolve around the issue of essentialism. People have multiple identities and at certain times and contexts they would favour a certain identity as opposed to others that they may also have. The questions therefore was an attempt to bring to the fore the 'master status' of the respondents.

The discussants were given a few identities from which they were to select the ones that they see as most appropriate in defining themselves. The responses were suggestive in their diversity. Most Fijians refer to themselves first and foremost as *I Taukei*. Furthermore there seems to be widespread agreement within this group that being a *taukei* is closely related to Christianity. That

is, the identity of the *tauvei* is augmented by Christian beliefs. The intertwining of religious and cultural identities in the makeup of the Fijian ethnic category shares close affinity with the development of Indo-Fijian ethnic identity. Indeed, respondents from the Indo-Fijian community often place a lot of emphasis on the connection between their religion and who they are. There is more than a suggestion in the utterings of the respondents that the makeup of their Master Status is comprised chiefly of cultural and religious dynamics. (In this way, being a 'Fiji Islander' is simply an identity of the second order.) This brings to the fore a lot interesting possibilities for religious and cultural institutions to transform the prevalent social environment in the country.

5.2.2 Role of Religious Faiths

- In your view, do all religious faiths play the same role as yours in molding useful citizens?

This question tested the familiarity of the respondents with other religious faiths in Fiji and the general perceptions they have of them. Their own religious convictions become the litmus on which other religions are observed. [Combined paragraphs] The discussions by respondents from the different ethnic groups in relation to this question are insightful in a lot of ways.

Firstly, the various discussions illuminate the fault-lines or tensions that underlie the different signification processes between the different cultural groups. There seems to be a consensus around the premise that the differences in religious faiths within different cultural orbits has led to 'incommensurable language games'. [Did the focus groups use that term, or is that your interpretation?] This is to say that the incompatibilities in world-views between Fijians and Indians are driven, to a large extent, by religious beliefs. Needless to say in this instance, the importance of religion is highlighted once more. Let us take the issue of money for instance: It has been highlighted in some of the discussions by Indo-Fijians that wealth or the accumulation of it has a religious basis. This in turn has been viewed by Fijians as a cultural as well as a religious heresy and has contributed to the negative stereotypes that Fijians have of Indo-Fijians. In fact Fijian ethno-nationalists have always erected a dichotomy between 'their way of life' and 'our way of life' with the former being driven by money while the latter is given impetus through divine sanction.

Secondly, all the discussions reveal a curious myopia concerning the positive contribution of other religious faiths in the molding of useful citizens. A respondent likened this to a kind of 'intellectual Alzheimer's Disease' where the two major ethnic groups forget about their shared past and in the process fail to remember the ways in which they have changed. This simply reiterates reconfirms the social and political compartmentalization of our society into different ethnic and religious enclaves.

The findings here gloss over the fact that upon further probing a plethora of amazing convergences appear between the philosophies of different religions. These convergences include, amongst other things, concepts of justice, knowledge, truth, reverence towards nature and to each other and the search for spiritualism.

5.2.3 The Role of the State and Religion in Nation Building

- Is there a role for the state/government to play in bringing about harmonious relations between different ethnic groups in Fiji? Please explain your answer.
- In what way(s) can the different faiths support the state's work in the area of reconciliation?

These questions introduce the state into the dynamics of social interaction in Fiji. They also try to highlight the respondents' views on the rightful function of the state and religion in the mediation of interethnic conflict and identity formation processes.

The state, in the opinions of the majority of Fijian respondents, is simply a component of a larger amalgamation that also includes the different *vanua* as well as *lotu*, or religion. These three components culminated in the social construct that we identify as Fiji. Together they form a sacred trinity in the Fijian mindset - *Na Vanua, na Lotu kei na Matanitu*. Literally translated this would stand for: The *Vanua*, Religion (Christianity) and the State. Their ordering also signifies their order of importance from a Fijian point of view. In the Fijian 'order of things', the existence of the state is legitimated by the assumption, shared widely by Fijian respondents, that it (the state) further embellished the impact of the *Vanua* and *Lotu* on the people of Fiji. It is in this way that the state is often viewed as a cultural agent. Some respondents ~~alluded~~ suggested that the State is should be there to bring all the different ethnic groups in Fiji under the ambit of the *Vanua* and *Lotu* with its concomitant corollaries. It is in this way that tensions between different communities could be ironed out once and for all. Further questioning highlighted the fears of the respondents of being alienated culturally and socially in a country that rightfully belongs to the different *vanua*. In other words they see assimilation as basically an erosion of cultural values and identity.

The minority communities including Pacific Islanders who have close ties with Fijian communities believe that the security of their livelihoods hinges on the total acceptance by their Fijian kinsfolk of their existence. To this end they were agreeable [Does this mean they liked the idea or that they agree that that's what's happening – **they argue that if everybody coming together under the Vanua and Lotu means total acceptance into Fijian indigenous societies then this is acceptable**] when the notion was put forward to them of the state bringing everybody under the umbrella of the *Vanua* and *Lotu*. In fact they indicated that their current level of existence belies the important linkages that they have with the Fijian community. As such they viewed the suggestion above as recognizing what has been transpiring over the years between the two communities. There were a few respondents, however, who expressed reservations about being rendered 'second class' *I Taukei* in ~~the proposed~~ such a scheme. ['Proposed scheme' sounds like you, or someone else, are putting forward a specific plan.] **ok**

Indo-Fijian respondents, on the main, are of the view that racially divisive or discriminatory policies of the state have in a very large way contributed to the current impasse in ethnic relations. It is in the Focus Group Discussions that the point was made about the need to maintain the autonomy of the state so that it could effectively address the anomalies that beset the social and

political environment that plays so much havoc on group relations. The proposal about the State bringing all under the auspices of the *Vanua* and *Lotu* was met by strong resistance. The respondents pointed out that this would mean an erosion of their culture and identity. In a lot of ways, they argue, the scheme is not congruent with the dynamics of multiculturalism.

The responses above underline the extent to which the state could effectively mediate between ethnic conflicts in Fiji. The overall tone is that the religious faiths should work in resetting worldviews so there is gradually a 'fusion of horizons'. This is to be done primarily through greater emphasis on commonalities. Using this logic, it would be reasonable to assume that the interim regime's quest for greater social integration within the different communities while at the same time suspending the Great Council of Chiefs and alienating the largest Christian denomination in the country will only further entrench ethnic hostilities.

5.2.4 'Shared Things'

- What are some of the 'shared things' that make us people of Fiji? What are the things that bring people together? (Rugby, Flag etc)

This question was designed primarily to gauge the respondents' empathy levels in relation to other social formations that lie outside their group boundaries. It also serves as a stimulant to the respondents by urging them to look at possible convergence sites or affinities that link their groups to others.

Many participants viewed things like a shared love for sports such as rugby and soccer as conducive to social integration. On a more fundamental level, respondents pointed to how the fate of the two major ethnic communities have always been interlinked throughout Fiji's history. The more obvious exemplification of this affiliation is manifested by tenant-landowner relationship in the cane-belts. This has been, on the main, a symbiotic relationship. Indeed many Fijian and Indo-Fijian respondents agree that this relationship is beneficial to both, while the specific degree of just how this is so varies from group to group. It has been suggested by many respondents that this basic economic relationship is symptomatic of how the fate of the two major ethnic formations in Fiji are irrevocably entwined. According to a key informant, it is erroneous to view the Sugar Industry as nothing more than ~~the sum total~~ of economic cooperation between the two major communities. Its significance is also played out in social relations between the two. The construction of Arya Amaj, Sanatan and Sangam schools by cane farmers has also contributed immensely to Fijian education in rural areas.

On another front, the urbanization process has led to class alliances between the different ethnically-based trade unions. This has also been seen by some as a precursor to greater societal integration in the future.

So the question about the 'shared things' that make us people of Fiji? - the answer has been prompt - 'our shared life or destiny'. This simply points to the fact that we need to emphasise our commonalities and exercise caution whenever there is a need to put forward divergent views.

5.2.5 Readiness for a National Identity

- Given the work already done in the area of reconciliation, do you think that we are ready for a national identity? (*Na yaca e umani keda vata na dui mata tamata*) (This presupposes the formation of a national culture)
- What does national identity mean to you? (*Na yaca me da kila vata kece kina na veimata tamata*)

These two questions were designed to appraise people's reaction to the idea of a national identity and what should this constitute in Fiji.

This was a contentious question as far as answers go. There was a general reticent on the part of the respondents to come out with forthright declarations. The general perception is that a national identity means the erosion of ethnic ones. This was keenly felt by Fijian participants in Focus Group discussions.

Some Indo-Fijian respondents argued that a national identity for all would negate the contemporary repressive political connotations that surround the concept of I Taukei. This they claimed has been the main way in which ethno-nationalistic sentiment has reared its head time and time again. [combined paragraphs] Interestingly a Fijian Pentecostal minister also pointed this out when lamenting the general insularity existing within the Fijian community. Speaking specifically about the Fijian community he had this to say:

E leqa tiko nanoda rai baleta ni da raica sobu tiko e dua na mata-tamata ka da nanuma ni o ira ga go era vakaleqai keda tiko.....sega.....o keda eda sa kila na dina ka da kaya tiko ni da Lotu ka qarava na Kalou; e dodonu meda vakaraitaka eke na cava na loloma ka' a tasova mai Kalivari... [Translated: 'The problem is in the way we perceive other people as the cause of the problems we are facing.....No....for those of us who know the truth and worship God; it is our duty to show the meaning of the love that flowed from Calvary'.]

Furthermore he pointed out that such ~~portent~~ potent imageries that underline this message are crucial for self reflections within Fijian communities.

The ~~whole gist of the~~ arguments presented above point not only to the need for greater dialogue but for the different religious faiths to actively 'trail-blaze' greater conciliation by intervening directly in cultural signification processes. This should be done by engaging in critical self reflexive self-reflective exercises.

5.2.6 The Functions of National Identity

- What would be the functions of a national identity?

The general consensus on this question is that a national identity should engender greater social cohesion and solidarity among different ethnic groups. This in turn would ensure a sustainable level of coexistence in Fiji which would in turn lead to happiness and abundance.

In the course of my field research, I often ~~get~~ got [unless the reference is to ongoing field work beyond the scope of this particular research project] the feeling that a national name, if agreeable to all, ~~is~~ would be the magic elixir to all our social ills. Again when probed, respondents from the two major ethnic groups would draw parallels between these linkages with religio-cultural imageries peculiar to their ethnic groups. Again, an uncanny resemblance in the interpretations of 'the good life', 'justice' and 'prosperity' is evident. This commonality can be usefully employed by the different religious faiths given the overlapping of religious and cultural orbits in Fiji.

5.2.7 Difference Between National identity and Ethnic Identity

- How is this different from ethnic identity?

The question evaluates people's readiness to open up or enlarge their group boundary markers so that they are incorporated into a greater social microcosm. It also teases out some of the problems of the process involved.

There was a high degree of consensus on this issue. Respondents from the two major ethnic groups agree that a national identity must ensue from wide consultations between the different stakeholders. Its inevitable encroachment on ethnic identity must not culminate in the wholesale erosion of the latter. Indeed, the respondents from these groups felt that contemporary identity formation processes in Fiji are to a very large extent influenced by religio-cultural markers. As such, a sudden shift to a national identification system would subsequently result in marginalization and ensuing disempowerment at the ethnic level. This in turn would rend the moral fabric which informs the normative horizons of the ethnic groups involved.

A national identity must be a reflection of the consensus reached by the ethnic groups themselves and must not be in any way imposed from above.

5.2.8 Notions of multiculturalism

- There has been a lot of debate about the idea of multiculturalism (*Bula Vei Curumaki*). What are your thoughts on this? (as a way forward for our society?)

The idea of multiculturalism in Fiji has always been a contentious idea at the best of times. This question assesses the understanding people have about the notion and the best way to deal with the concept as a way forward.

Respondents from across the ethnic divide agree that the term 'multiculturalism' has been the portmanteau [double check: Is this the word you want - **YES**? Its metaphorical use (a 'carry-all' term) seems less common than its linguistic use (a blended word, like smog or motel).] of a wide cross-section of people, from political mavericks to community leaders as well as serious students

of society. The popularity of the term lies in its currency with the age of political correctness. It is also in this way that the term ~~could~~ can be used as a mask for devious machinations in highly polarized social environments.

The agreement also revolves around the notion that multiculturalism must be preceded by a change in mindsets. But it is also at this point that divergence in views emerges. Some respondents were of the view that the differences lying between and within ethnic boundaries seem insurmountable. Fijians who subscribe to this view saw no way other than the wholesale conversion of everybody in Fiji to the Christian faith. This of course is premised on the understanding that there are incommensurable differences in the teachings of the different faiths.

For those who agree that the differences can and should be transcended, the process of multiculturalism should start from within the different cultures themselves. They argue that the lesson of 'reaching out to each other' or 'negotiating the space between us' must be taught in our homes. A Fijian respondent noted the irony of mouthing the gospel of multiculturalism ~~and~~ in the context of the non-renewal of leases in the Western division.

The point that comes through very strongly from the discussants is the need to link multiculturalism back to ethnic conciliations; that it must be compatible with ethnic processes of significations. This in turn would only eventuate if there are some basic congruities between identity formation processes within the different ethnic groups. Multiculturalism, according to an Indo-Fijian key informant, must be reconceptualised as a 'voyage of discovery...it never ends', rather than an end in itself.

5.2.9 Compatibility Between Multiculturalism and Religious Faiths.

- In your opinion, is the idea of multiculturalism compatible with the teachings of your faith? (civic concept/attitudes) (*E vakayavutaki vakacava na bula veicurumaki?*)

This question evaluates the degree to which religious convictions provide the frames from which a plural society is rendered sensible. It also aims to tease out the respondents' thoughts on how their faiths and the concept of a multiethnic society could be related.

There was a resounding yes from all respondents. The interesting aspect of this agreement was the usage of religious principles as justifications for their answers. For Fijians, reference is made to 'love thy neighbour as you love yourself'. For Indo-Fijians, the underlying basis of Hinduism is, in the words of a respondent, 'respect bordering on veneration'.

The question that remains is: why isn't this convergence of religio-cultural worldviews brought to light and utilized to bring about more meaningful social cohesion?

Section C: Economic Issues

5.3.1 Group Perceptions on Economic Standing Compared to Others

- How would you categorise your ethnic group economically (*Bula vakailavo*) compared to others?
- In your view, is this opinion generally shared amongst members of your ethnic group? How do you know?

The responses to the questions above are quite telling in the uniformity of ethnic responses. The Fijian respondents agree that the Fijians as an ethnic group are at a disadvantage economically when compared to Indo-Fijians. Most of the respondents, when asked, said that for them 'economic activity' refers explicitly to the process of accumulating money. As such Fijians are at a clear disadvantage. Furthermore, they argue that this perception is quite prevalent within their communities.

However, there were some within the same group of discussants who tempered their observations by noting that acute poverty seems to be more prevalent within Indo-Fijian communities. For these respondents, ownership of land and natural resources are mitigating factors hence to be landless is to be really poor.

Indo-Fijian respondents agreed to a very large extent with the argument proposed by the second group of respondents above, that is, that the state of being a non-resource owner (landless) is indeed an influential factor in the emergence of acute poverty. It is from this vantage point that they point to the affirmative actions, or 'Blue Print', for the betterment of the Fijians as highly discriminatory.

5.3.2 Effect of Economic Perceptions on Relations

- In what way does this view influence relations between your group and others? (Are relations positive or negative?)

The question seeks to evaluate how the perceptions of being economically advantaged or disadvantaged may influence the way people of the groups concerned interact with those outside their own groupings.

This question generated a high degree of agreement from all the respondents. The agreement centers around the idea that the perceived or real existence of economic cleavages between different ethnic social formations will generate a lot of negative stereotypes all around.

For Fijian respondents, the degree of economic success of the Indo-Fijian community is in direct proportion to the level of 'individualism' embedded within the social fabric of that group. Individualism, from the communally-based Fijian vantage point, is equated with the worst kind of vices ~~within a communal milieu~~. The nearest approximation that I got from the respondents were '*nanumi koya vaka I koya*' or simply being selfish.

Indo-Fijian respondents return these uncomplimentary interpretations of their perceived way of life by insinuating that communal work ethics is just a euphemism for lazy or idle individuals.

Interestingly these negative perceptions are tempered by other conciliatory normative observations, from both sides of the ethnic divide, about each other. Much as Fijians would sardonically denigrate the individualistic lifestyles of the Indo-Fijians, most would agree that the quest for material success associated with individualism in Fiji is a worthwhile objective. For their part, the Indo-Fijians also put a high premium on the perceived Fijian dispositions such as friendliness and contentment.

In looking at the different interpretations above, one is left questioning if the lifestyles are antithetical to each other. To paraphrase: are the Fijian and Indo-Fijian cultural outlooks 'incommensurable language games'. Historically the differing perceptions highlighted above used to be the mainstay of most developmental literature on Fiji; individualism was deemed a modern variable while communalism was categorized as an anachronism. Indeed, 'Tradition' and 'Modern' were deemed mutually exclusive categories. These quasi-dichotomous frameworks of analyses have since been critically reviewed. Some notable attempts at synthesis are evinced by the works in social capital. This is evinced specifically in the ways in which social relationships are harnessed towards a desired (economic) end. Examples of this range from family-run businesses to mataqali-owned prime real estates in urban centres throughout Fiji.

5.3.3 Perceptions on Affirmative Action in Fiji

- Affirmative actions are generally seen as an effective way of redistributing resources in a society. Do you agree? Please explain.
- What are your thoughts on affirmative actions in Fiji? (Positive or negative?)

The main thrust of the questions was to appraise the merits or demerits of affirmative action programs.

There was a high degree of consensus on the efficacy of affirmative actions as a mechanism of redistributing resources to the less fortunate. The disagreement revolves around how Fiji's affirmative action programs are applied unilaterally to an ethnic group without accounting for the class tensions within that group or the fact that poverty or disempowerment cut across ethnic boundary lines.

Indo-Fijians discussants were quick to point to this perceived anomaly in the implementation of affirmative policies by the various governments of the past. For them, this has exacerbated the problem of poverty and generates unnecessary tension between the ethnic groups.

Section D: Rights/Minority - Majority Positions

5.4.1 Understanding of 'Rights'

- What do you understand by the concept of 'rights'? (*Dodonu vakayadua/vakamatatamata*)

This question was mainly to solicit views on, and evaluate respondents' understanding of, the concept.

The question generated some very interesting discussions on ethnic perceptions and cultural interpretations. Indo-Fijian respondents tend to agree on the main that the concept of rights involves first and foremost the protection of human dignity. This is further translated to mean freedom of worship, security, the right to employment and protection of other civil liberties. Some further pointed out that the issue of rights entails a set of *freedoms* and *obligations* or *duties* for everyone. Apart from the rights delineated above there was some suggestion by the respondents that a concept of 'right' would also mean 'doing one's duty to the best of one's ability.'

Fijian respondents on the other hand equated rights to individualism. In this way the concept of rights were cast in a bad light in their worldviews. There were some respondents who made the connection between 'rights' and increased secularization. This again shows just how profound the influence of the *Lotu* is on the Fijian cultural psyche, for these respondents equated this process of increasing secularization with the breakdown of the normative values that hold their society together.

5.4.2 Individual/Group Perceptions on the Right of Others

- What are some of the main understanding/beliefs that you have about the rights of other groups in Fiji?
- How did you come by these beliefs? Please explain

This question generated some lively discussions from the respondents. The answers vary as we move from one ethnic group to another and even within these social formations.

Indo-Fijian respondents on the main would predominantly point to how the rights enjoyed by Fijians have been seen to be discriminatory to the rest of the groups in Fiji. Specific examples of these were: government policies pertaining to employment opportunities in the Public Service, land rights, scholarships, and intakes into tertiary institutions.

Fijian respondents were ~~polyvalent~~ ambivalent [?] in nature. Some said that the rights of the other groups in Fiji should be conditioned by the philosophy of *taukei* and *vulagi*. To them, this would ensure that Fiji remains securely within the ambit of the *vanua* and the *taukei*. A nationalist key informant put all this in blunt terms by using the lyrics of a well known nationalistic song, first played by the Rootstrata in one of the political rallies organised by the Alliance Party in the lead up to the 1986 elections in Fiji:

O cei o ira mera mai lewa noda qele meda bobula,

Sinai noda valeniveivesu, beitaki nida tawayaga,

ena nodra bula vakai lavo

ena noda bula vakalou.

[Translated: 'Who are they to control our land so that we are rendered slaves?']

Our prisons are full, they say we are good for nothing,

they have a materialistic lifestyle,

our way of life is divinely sanctioned.] [Is it OK to break the lines this way since they are lyrics? **I have no idea – just seemed to me that Fred Fesaitu (the composer) would have written it that way if he planned to sing it at all lol!**]

Other Fijian respondents did not subscribe to the views above. Indeed another key informant believes that it is an injustice to keep on discriminating against Indo-Fijians in light of their contribution to nation building. Furthermore, he says, [**the key informant?**] this does not reflect well on the kind of normative values that all Fijians hold dear.

The interesting aspect of the main Indo-Fijian responses is how their rights are inevitably eroded because of what they saw as discriminatory policies of the State. That is, it is not the Fijian way of life that is a threat to their security but the debilitating effects of one-sided policies. For Fijians, the fact that there are two main opposing outlooks means that the matter is not set in stone. [I don't know what the previous sentence means. – **I am just referring to the fact that the Indigenous viewpoint is split on the issue –**] Again this leaves a lot of leeway for Christian faiths to stamp their own imprints on the Fijian mindset by intervening directly in the production of Fijian world views.

5.4.3 Consensus Within Ethnic Group on Rights

- In your view, are these beliefs shared by the majority in your ethnic group?

The question is premised on the assumed linkage between group signification processes and individual outlooks.

Even though the answers vary between and within ethnic groups, there is still enough consensus on the main arguments within the respective groups to signify a tangible link between group identity and individual outlooks.

5.4.4 Relationship between Values, Views and Religious Doctrines

- In your opinion, are these group views based on a religious basis?
- Are these religious beliefs compatible with the notion of multiculturalism?

The questions assess the degree of 'embeddedness' between group signification processes and religious outlooks.

The discussions surrounding the questions above ~~put~~ demonstrated beyond any doubt the intertwinement of religion and culture in the different communities in Fiji.

Fijian discussants who advocated the *tauvei-vulagi* arrangement made specific reference to the Bible and the land that was given by God to Abraham and his descendants to be theirs forever. The ~~other~~ dissenting Fijian group made particular appeal to, in the words of a respondent, 'one of the greatest commandments': Love your neighbour as you love yourself.

Indo-Fijian respondents talk about the quest for justice and true knowledge in the Vedas. 'Is not this the most worthwhile exercise of all?' a key informant wistfully asked.

Apart from making a concrete connection between group signification processes and religious outlooks, the discussion on the two questions above highlighted the philosophical affinities between different religious doctrines.

5.4.5 Explanation of Multiculturalism From the Viewpoint of Ethnic Group

- How would you explain multiculturalism from the viewpoint of your ethnic group?

This question was designed to solicit views on popular religio-cultural imageries pertaining to multiculturalism.

The answers given by the respondents vary from group to group. Some Fijian respondents interestingly do not equate multiculturalism automatically with '*bula sautu*'. [Translate this.] When posed with the question, they would in turn want to know just how we will make multiculturalism work in a society where there is a proliferation of differences [removed italics] in terms of belief systems and values. Furthermore they questioned the feasibility of it in the face of the compartmentalization of ethnic groups.

Some Indo-Fijian respondents would, like other Fijian discussants, point out that much of this compartmentalization is historical in nature and could be pinpointed to our respective [removed italics] colonial experiences. When probed, they further noted that since colonial legacies do not have an everlasting tenure, much of the current impasse in ethnic relations has to do with ~~current~~ exclusionary practices at different levels of society. For instance, perceived discriminatory state policies are seen as entrenching an already precipitous relationship between the two major ethnic groups.

The axis of notable agreement revolves around ideas of justice for all. This to the Fijians would mean the protection of their identity and their status as first inhabitants of the country, or *tauvei*, and the implications that go with this. For the Indo-Fijians, justice revolves around the recognition of their true worth in a country they rightfully regard as their own. This would eventually translate into security of livelihoods.

5.4.6 Individual readiness to protect ethnic markers/boundaries

The question was another one in a series of check questions. It was designed mainly to check on the consistency of answers rendered by the respondents on some of the salient issues raised before.

The discussions on this issue, by the respondents, simply cemented what they had already said on the importance of belonging to their respective ethnic groups. The socio-economic and political environment in Fiji has been evolving in such a way that it has become a site that is conducive to regressive group relations.

Indeed for most Fijian respondents, the perception of their inferior economic status compared to the others or '*vulagi*' ~~has not set in~~ does not sit well with them. Paradoxically this perception has resulted in Fijian communities closing their ranks against 'outsiders' who have everything that the Fijians would want for themselves as *tauvei*.

This is a sensitive area and needs a cautionary approach. From a purely analytical point of view what we are witnessing are two different dynamics at play - ethnicity and class. On one hand is the struggle for ethnic recognition. However, this struggle takes place in a social environment whose contours are defined, to a very large extent, by class inequalities. This makes the situation quite volatile. For instance any sudden negative shift in the class dynamics of Fiji will inevitably adversely affect the ethnic relations. Our history has shown that ethnic relations also affect class dynamics. In light of this, it is not passé to reiterate that the problems of ethnic conflict and class inequalities must be tackled in conjunction with each other - only this time the various religious faiths must step up and try to actively influence the configurations of ethnic signification processes. The class dynamics, of course, must be tackled by the State.

Part 6

6.0 Summary of the Research Findings

6.1 On Identity, Religion and Culture

1. Fijians see themselves first and foremost as *tauvei*.
2. The notion of '*I tauvei*' is tied up intrinsically with the Christian religion.
3. The Hindu religion plays a pivotal role in identity formation processes among the Indo-Fijians. For example, for Sanatanists (members of the Sanatan Dharam division of the Hindu religion), the Vedas guide the moral development and identity of its followers. The same goes for followers of the Arya Samaj division. [Could you say, 'For members of both the Sanatan Dharam and the Arya Samaj division of the Hindu religion, the Vedas guide the moral development and identity of their followers. '?]
4. Identity formation processes in the various ethnic groups in Fiji are driven by the dynamics of culture and religion.

5. The misconceptions and stereotypes about the roles and values that different cultures and religions in Fiji propagate are profound. These have led the widespread rejection of any possibility of an amicable union between the various groups concerned.
6. Contrary to popular perception, the abundance of doctrinal convergences between the philosophies of the various religious faiths is amazing.
7. Religions in Fiji are become citadels of ethnic chauvinism.
8. The secularization process happening in Fiji has rendered churches as symbols of our material affluence.
9. The different faiths are not doing as much as they can under the circumstances to play a critical role in building bridges across the ethnic divides given the profound influence they have on cultural dynamics.
10. The fallacies about different religious doctrines as incommensurable should be tackled immediately by a rejuvenated Inter-Faith or ACCF. [Is this a finding or a recommendation?]

6.2 Role of the State and Civil Society

11. There was a high degree of agreement that the State, through its institutions and policies, has a big role to play in the overhauling of the prevalent social and political spheres that different ethnic groups engage in. This is primarily through policies that aim specifically at enhancing trust between the different communities.
12. However the role of the State in terms of building bridges across communities should be limited, that is, the State should confine itself to the dual role of reinvigorating its social institutions and improving the socio-economic and political landscape of Fiji. [finding or recommendation?]
13. The rational reconstruction of our society should be spearheaded by the different ~~religions~~ religious institutions, with the active participation of Civil Society organizations and other social movements.
14. The State should not, at least in the foreseeable future, engage in large scheme social engineering. Any social engineering on a grandiose scale must be led by the different ~~religions~~ religious groups in light of the fact that religion and culture in Fiji are closely intertwined.
15. There was widespread agreement that greater collusion between the State and the different religious organizations so that actions on both sides are synchronized would be good.

16. The strict demarcation lines between religion and state that are included in most liberal democratic paradigms need to be re-looked at in light of Fiji's peculiar contexts.
17. The State must do away with ethnically divisive policies that are perceived by others as bestowing an unfair advantage on a particular group at the expense of others.
18. The State should take a secondary role, compared to that of religion and civil society, in the remodeling of worldviews or mindsets.
19. Mutually inclusive arrangements between major ethnic groups [What does this mean?] must be supported by the state in light of the fact that the social spin-offs can facilitate interethnic cooperation.

6.3 Reconceptualising Overlapping Identities & Destinies

20. The argument of refashioning the concept of *taukei* found favour with the ~~other~~ [unless it refers to the category 'Other'] minority groups that see themselves as extensions of the Fijian communities.
21. The destinies of the major ethnic formations are so irrevocably entwined that it is foolhardy to alienate one or the other in Fiji's development process.
22. The urbanization process has led to class alliances between the different ethnically-based trade unions. This has also been seen by some as a precursor to greater societal integration in the future.
23. That any shared future 'fusion of horizons' must be preceded with religio-ethnic alliances.

6.4 Perceptions of Economic and Other Structural Biases

24. For most Fijian respondents, the perception of their inferior economic status compared to the others, or '*vulagi*', ~~has not set in~~ does not sit well with them.
25. ~~Paradoxically~~ This perception of economic disadvantage has resulted in Fijian communities closing its ranks against 'outsiders' who have everything that the Fijians would want for themselves as *Taukei*.
26. Indo-Fijians also see themselves as disadvantaged in that their struggle for recognition has met with staunch resistance from an environment wrought with structural biases.

6.5 Multiculturalism, Justice, Security and 'the Good Life'

27. Perceptions about justice, the good life, prosperity and freedom are usually defined via religious imageries.

28. Any attempt at constructing an 'all-encompassing identity for all' must take into account the various fears of alienation and marginalization that could possibly ensue from the attempt.
29. There is a need to link multiculturalism back to ethnic conciliations. This is to say that a more enduring multicultural environment can only come about if it reflects major 'fusion of horizons'. Furthermore this will only come about if there are some common normative standards incorporated into the identity formation processes of the various ethnic groups in Fiji.
30. The concept of 'rights' is one of the main areas of contention as far as cultural interpretations go. Indo-Fijians more or less understood this in its *western* form while Fijians equated this concept with an apotheosis of the vices of individualism.
31. There was a strong suggestion by some Fijians that the concept of rights must not usurp the '*taukei-vulagi*' dynamics.
32. Security of livelihoods is a pertinent area that has to be addressed as a prerequisite to future cooperation.
33. Any perception of injustice perpetrated by or in the name of a particular group on another will only result in 'community closure' given the highly contentious socio-economic and political environment that this is played out in.

Part 7

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Fiji is a deeply fragmented society. The divisions that are presently embedded within the nation's social fabric need to be attended to for they have threatened our collective life-worlds time and time again. How do we create a qualitatively better society? How do we construct a more inclusive life-world? These are just some of the questions that confront us collectively as members of the various communities that make up Fiji.

In light of the current social dislocations and realignments of the fault-lines on which interethnic interactions are based, the conditions are ripe for active interventions to be done on a number of important fronts as far as national rebuilding goes.

One of the more salient themes that came out quite clearly in the interviews are the innumerable issues that we have to deal with on the back of what occurred on December 5th 2006. A substantial number of these issues actually preceded the event. In fact they have been glossed over as we grapple with the legal implications of what had transpired. The predominant view of what occurred late last year is informed largely by the 'legal paradigm' resulting in the emergence of a legal/illegal dichotomy from which all other issues are analysed. This widespread adoption of the legal framework also highlights the legalistic bent that is becoming more and more salient in our

reasoning. Perhaps this is because the one-dimensional cognitive thrust offered by the legal community is convenient in a time of great transformation; in the face of uncertainty and flux this paradigm is offering certainty and conviction. However this stance is not without its concomitant costs. Our cognitive frameworks are so completely immersed in this duality that a certain lethargy in conceptual thinking has quietly crept in. This has been exemplified by a certain reluctance to see beyond the legal/illegal impasse. For instance, ~~debates on~~ discussions of such issues as the role (or lack of it) of the different religious faiths in building bridges across the ethnic divide given their sway within cultural formations, the positive or negative impacts of an expanding Fijian middle class on Fijian development in general, and the role of the chiefly system as a repository of cultural values [cut comma] in contemporary Fiji are just some of the on-going debates that have lost currency in the new order of things. This is not in any way to dismiss the importance of the legal dimension pertaining to validity claims, but rather to point at other issues that do not derive their justificatory premises from the legal framework of understanding. For instance, ethnic conciliation by religious groups and Civil Society organizations does not need a legal basis, for its legitimacy is derived from the broader normative (moral, ethical, etc.) foundations that also inform the legal point of view. As such, these sort of issues can be tackled simultaneously with the legal/illegal wrangling that is taking place.

In a nutshell, what this research paper proposes, in light of the prevalent lacunae in critical thinking, is a multi-dimensional approach to thinking and reasoning. It is a call for a more critical awareness of the changes happening to ourselves and to those around us in surroundings that are, in a profound sense, of our own making. Above all, it is an appeal to a way of thinking that is more reflective and less dogmatic. Dogmatism in this particular sense emerges out of one-dimensional approaches and as such is synonymous with conceptual bankruptcy. It is against this backdrop that the main findings of the research must be comprehended.

The research has highlighted a lot of insights into the dynamics at play in both intra- and inter-ethnic relations in Fiji. These insights, properly understood will go a long way in helping us to comprehend the nature of our current social impasse, as far as inter-ethnic conciliations go, as well as providing a sounder basis from which to reinvigorate inter-ethnic relations.

One of the more recurrent themes that emerged from this study is the urgent need to harness a collective will that transcends the differences that are there. This is to say that nothing short of a complete overhauling of our society and its normative foundations is warranted. This specifically will entail a differentiation of the different forms of knowledge and reasoning that we must employ in our everyday lives. This has to be done in a deliberative and reflective fashion. It is on the basis of these themes that a number of recommendations are put forward:

1. That there needs to be a re-conceptualisation of what constitutes a *tauvei* and a *vulagi*. This process ~~is to be~~ should be headed by cultural and religious leaders with active cooperation from Civil Society organisations. However this reconceptualisation should not in any way undermine the *tauvei* but mediate it by introducing an enlarged concept of '*mataveiwekani*' to complement the *tauvei ni vanua* in much the same way as traditional second order relationships such as *tauvu*, *mataqali*, etc.. *Mataveiwekani*, or 'kinship

relations', is a concept that is present in all communities in Fiji and is based on the commonalities that enable people within and between groups (mainly within the same ethnic category) to interact meaningfully with each other. An enlarged concept of this will necessitate the usage of this term as a linking tool to other ethnic groups. The commonalities in our religio-cultural life-worlds can become the enduring basis from which to launch this integrative social process.

2. That the *'mataveiwekani'* concept be adopted by different faiths in Fiji in the search for a more binding truth and sense of justice that would encompass and transcend the differences that are there. This would entail the rectification by a *'coalition of the faithful'* of prevalent misconceptions about different religious doctrines being incommensurable. Indeed we basically teach the same values to our children in our homes, yet the social and political environment that we interact in is such that these values are jettisoned as soon as we put our feet out of our front doors. Failure to ~~do this~~ overcome this perceived incommensurability will perpetuate the practice of transforming religions into exclusionary ethnic citadels. The Archbishop Petero Mataka alluded to the ~~existence of~~ desire for freedom, good government, just laws and *'happy homes'*, (see FT 2/07/07) as common themes that cut across religio-ethnic boundaries and as such are tentative starting points in the search for a more enduring basis for democracy in Fiji.

3. That our notion of democracy must involve an open dialogue between the State and the different religions and cultural groups. This is where Civil Society can come in to facilitate the process. It is not an impossible task given the lines of congruities that connect cultural and religious values.

4. That the strict demarcation lines between religion and state included in most liberal democratic paradigms needs to be re-looked at in light of Fiji's peculiar contexts.

5. That the State, through its institutions and policies, should confine itself to the overhauling of the prevalent social and political spheres that different ethnic groups engage in. This can be achieved through rejuvenation of state institutions and through policies that aim specifically at enhancing trust between the different communities. As part of this endeavour, the State must do away with ethnically divisive policies that are perceived by ~~others~~ [*'some'?* *'many'?* *"Others"?*] as bestowing an unfair advantage on a particular group at the expense of others. By the same token, mutually inclusive arrangements between major ethnic groups must be supported by the state in light of the fact that the social spin-offs can facilitate inter-ethnic cooperation.

6. The State should not, at least in the foreseeable future, engage in large scheme *'social engineering'*. Any social engineering on a grandiose scale must be led by the different religions in light of the fact that religion and culture in Fiji are closely intertwined. This is to say that the State should take a secondary role, compared to religion, in remodeling of worldviews or mindsets.

7.1 Concluding Remarks

In an insightful synopsis on the intricacies of group relations, Qalo (FT 18/07/07) pointed to the usefulness of harnessing these socio-cultural resources in our collective attempts at improving inter-ethnic interactions in Fiji. In fact, he used the concept of `veiwekani' [Question: How is this different from mataveiwekani – **the same**? Does the link between the two words need to be explained?] to epitomize the process of inter/intra ethnic integration. This, in my view, is quite resonant with the objective that is sketched out in this report. Indeed this concept brings to the fore the need to address our current problems by looking at the fault-lines from where we can meaningfully engage in the transformation of our society. The timing has never been better, for the structure of our society has been undergoing a lot of changes - changes that have widespread implications to the kind of society we might have in the future. Indeed it is exactly because of this that the time is ripe to engage once more in the dialectics of our existence and in that way carve a way of thinking and living that is more resonant with the times we are living in.

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The fact that the government at the time was headed by a Fijian and had Fijians occupying key portfolios of the state was lost amidst the rhetoric of the time.

These issues include outright discrimination in government workplaces and development policies pertaining to education to name a few.

I have borrowed ideas from Nancy Fraser (1995) here.

These structures are in turn conditions by macro-structures such as globalisation for instance. There is an interesting argument made by Amy Chua (2004) on the *positive* direct relationship between what she calls 'Free Market Democracy' and ethnic violence. See also the argument made by Arthur MacEwan (1999) about the cognitive difficulties that arise from uncritically viewing the concept of Democracy as a logical extension of Neo-Liberal impulses. **I have taken out the last line.** [What report? This one?]

These *tanoa* members would be either awaiting their turns in the focus group discussions or have finished.

Marx referred to this dehumanizing process as 'reification.'

Define the Kubuna Confederacy [Do you want to provide a definition, or should we cut the footnote?] **The Kubuna Confederacy is an association of the different vanua within the provinces of Tailevu, Ra, Lomaiviti and Ba under the leadership of the Vunivalu of Bau.**

Burebasaga [Same here? Or one footnote glossing confederacies and citing Kubuna and Burebasaga as examples.] **The Burebasaga Confederacy is traditionally led by the Roko Tui Dreketi (Paramount Chief of the Vanua o Rewa). The confederacy consists of vanua in the provinces of Rewa, Kadavu, Namosi, Serua, Nadroga/Navosa, and Ba.**

These distinctions are still in use today in relation to the lease payments handed out by the Native Lands Trust Board.

The Fijian experiences have been accounted for above.

Kelly (1991) further observed that the Fiji Sanatanis tried to emulate the achievements of the Arya Samajis but without the same level of successes. However this is in no way suggesting that most Indians subscribed to the Arya Amaj or that the influence of the Sanatan Dharm sect on processes of identity formation was of lesser consequence.

The Fijian members were all appointed by the Governor.

To make this point is in no way to suggest that all Fijians were in active collusion with the colonial administrators. MacNaught (1982) outlines Fijian resistance to the colonial order in a narrative about the life of Apolosi Nawai.

This has been exemplified in traditional rituals of installations where increasingly the `talatala' or God's representative is also there to validate the process. It is ~~in this way~~ because of this that this paper is of the view that a reconceptualisation of *taukei* could only start from the Christian leaders themselves.

This is quite interesting in light of Max Weber's (1974) analysis of the `elective affinities' between the protestant religion and the emergence of capitalism.

Indeed an increasing number of Fijian parents are deliberately enrolling their children in `Indo-Fijian' schools (sangam or sanatan or even committee [Do these need capitalization or italicization? Or explanation?]) in the hope that some of the `individualism' would rub off hence ensuring worldly success for their families. **I think we should leave them as they are.**

The dynamics of the last two variables have been pointed out [by whom?] as the main reasons for unequal development within Fijian society.

See Ropate Qalo's article on the issue in the Fiji Times (18/July/2007)

This concept is interesting in the way it allows us to link the roles of religion and civil society in an ingenious manner.