

NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET?: CAUSAL FACTORS IN FIJIAN-INDIAN
INTERMARRIAGE

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For my mum, Thelma Richmond

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The Immigration officer at Nadi Airport asked me what my research topic was about. Then he fixed me in the eye and said, “It’s not enough to study it. You have to practice it.”

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A smart friend remarked that I should approach the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs in Suva, considering my thesis topic. Unfortunately, the ministry doesn’t deal with inter-ethnic relationships...

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CHAPTER 1 AN INTRODUCTION

The setting for the study of Fijian-Indian intermarriage

Fijians and Indians. Indians and Fijians¹. These two “races”, “cultures”, or “ethnic groups”² – call it what you will – are dominant figures in the everyday practices, discourse and imagination concerning Fiji. Certainly, there is the considerable presence of non-Fijian and non-Indian peoples in Fiji. The Chinese, Rotumans, Polynesians, Banabans, Solomon Islanders, Europeans and mixed race populations have also all significantly contributed to and influenced the shape and character of Fiji’s history and will continue to do so. Yet it is the Fijian and Indian communities that seem to command, dominate and polarize events that affect Fiji. One obvious contributing factor to the perception of dominance is the demographic competition of sorts between them since 1946, when Indians first overtook indigenous peoples in the population stakes.³ Consequently it is difficult to comment upon contemporary Fiji without reference to either community. Each is inextricably tied in myriad, complicated ways to the significant institutions of the country – in politics, economics, social life, religion, and culture. Fiji is a place

¹ Although these designations may appear to be straightforward to the reader, they require further explanation and elaboration, in order to account for labelling differences employed elsewhere in Fiji-related literature and *parole*, as well as to address homogeneity versus heterogeneity issues. These terms are explained in greater detail under Definitions, Chapter 1, p.12.

² It is my guess that the word “race” is most popularly applied in discourses on Fijian-Indian relations. If we subscribe to common notions of “race” – i.e. that race is based on phenotypical or physical difference – then to a large extent, Fijians and Indians are fairly distinguishable. The use of the word “race”, however, can be problematic. Some maintain that the concept of “race” is socially constructed and argue that it has little scientific validity (Corcos 1984, Banton 1988, Shanklin 1994, Wade 2002). Generic definitions of “culture” agree that culture consists of shared and learned values, beliefs, behaviour, and material possessions, organised along racial, religious or social groupings. Since 99% of Fijians are Christians, and 78% of all Indians are Hindus, then Fijians and Indians are obviously culturally different (these figures are derived from unpublished 1996 census figures in Ratuva 2002:15). “Ethnicity” seems to involve a subpopulation within a larger society that claims common racial and/or cultural descent (Cornell & Hartmann 1998). In the Fiji context, the application of “ethnicity” might be appropriate if one refers to a specific sub-group within the greater Fijian/Indian sectors. For example, the inland Colo people might have distinguished themselves from coastal dwellers in the late 1870s; similarly, persons of South Indian descent might distinguish themselves from those of North Indian descent. In the mass media political problems in Fiji are sometimes defined in terms of “ethnic tensions”. It is not my intention to delve deeply into the variant uses of these three terms, except to suggest that they are slippery and to acknowledge that they are all used interchangeably in the Fiji context.

where the life courses of the two communities seem to be intertwined in a mutual dependency of sorts. The sugar industry in Fiji, for example, which for so long has driven and accounted for much of the country's economy, and depends largely on the labor of Indian cane farmers, is heavily indebted to the lease of agricultural lands held by Fijian landowners in what is today becoming an increasingly complex land problem.

In short, treatises on Fiji are precarious without reference, however brief, to both parties. The past, present, and future of Fiji has, is and may continue to be caught up in the relationships between Fiji's indigenous peoples and the Indians who are the descendants of Indian indentured laborers and Indian "free settlers"⁴. Much of Fiji's contemporary history has been shaped by relations between Fijians and Indians since British colonialism in 1874 and subsequent colonial policy⁵.

Undoubtedly, political affairs between Fijians and Indians receive the most publicity, and the general tone in the discourse leans towards the bad. Witness the scale of international attention and media frenzy when the political coup took place in 2000. Fiji's primary reputation as a holiday paradise – "Fiji: The Way the World Should Be" – was shattered and shunted in favor of a new image as a hotbed of racial politics. Temporarily the images of familiar friendly smiling faces were superseded by menace. Fear and uncertainty began to characterize the country, and it is my belief that while Fiji has recovered its initial allure as a holiday paradise, the omnipresence of its racially-charged political tensions lingers and continues to color people's

³ The Indian population has consistently outnumbered the Fijian since 1946, although the 1996 census shows that Fijian numbers have once again surpassed the Indian. According to the latter, Fijians now make up approximately 51% of the total Fiji population and Indians 44%.

⁴ The presence of the Indian "free settlers" is often glossed over or lumped together with the history of the Indian indentured labourers. The history of the free settlers follows a rather different course and distinctions need to be made in order to present a more accurate, if not more honest, account of race relations in Fiji where necessary. These terms are explained in Definitions, Chapter 1, p.12.

⁵ Although Great Britain removed itself from legal administration upon Fiji's independence in 1970, the colonial legacy runs deep. It has been argued that the British administration was an active third party instrumental in the creation of a model of race relations that continues through to today (see for example, Mamak 1978, Spate 1990, Lal 1992).

imaginings. Racial politics will continue to taunt Fiji for as long as the country's two main political parties are drawn along Fijian-versus-Indian divisions.

On a macro political level, therefore, Fiji is characterized by antagonistic relations centered on Fijian/Indian oppositions. But what happens on the ordinary social level?

The historical co-existence and sharing of time and space of Fijians and Indians has not automatically been marked by harmonious, amicable relations. Various observers enigmatically portray the ongoing interaction as one of tolerance, friendliness, having goodwill, of a reciprocal nature, having no overt conflict – basically, as being somewhat good – while simultaneously, (and sometimes in the same sentence or paragraph!) marked by avoidance, hostility, superficiality, and consisting of two separate existences playing out on parallel fields where never the twain shall meet (see for example, Belshaw 1964, Ali 1980, Spate 1990, Jalal 2001). Scholars seem to be ambivalent when depicting ordinary Fijian-Indian relations, and perhaps this ambivalence really does reflect their character – these relationships are not easy to pinpoint or define – there will always be exceptions to the rule, relations are always fluid and subject to change, and scholars too, are privy only to certain perspectives.

My personal interest centers on the relationship between Fijians and Indians on the ordinary social level, away from the political spotlight, although admittedly politics does affect social affairs. The questions I bring to the study are numerous. To what extent do Fijians and Indians interact? How meaningful is the interaction? And why is it that social relations are painted as less than optimal after one hundred and twenty-four years of substantial Indian residence in Fiji?

A study of marriage allows one to investigate just one component of the broad field of social relations. And in the Fiji situation, the incidence of marriage between its two most populous peoples, given the heretofore understanding of the oppositions between them, provides a fruitful site from which to gain insights into relations between them.

Marriage is, after all, one of the most intimate realizations of human relationships. In an ideal marriage, one expects to find total commitment between two people to an institution that is both universal and fundamental⁶. It requires concentrated effort over time in negotiation and compromise, and a constant working through differences in personality, ideals, goals, etc., even within homogeneous sectors.

Marriage rarely exists in the confined one-to-one cosmos of the marital pair. Instead, marriage also generally involves immediate nuclear and extended families, the neighborhood community, religious groups, and even at times the national interest. In the general literature on marriage, particularly in anthropological studies on traditional societies, marriage is generally depicted as a form of exchange or a building of alliances between groups of people, ensuring the reproduction of economic, religious, and social ties over time (Waldren 1998). Societies invest a great deal of energy in the institution of marriage. Marriage ensures the overall well-being, social cohesion, stability and continuity of human societies (Semafumu 1998:113).

Notions of endogamy and exogamy⁷ are important aspects in the practice of marriage. These principles are dependent on the defined boundaries prescribed by the ethnic, cultural, social, political etc. groups themselves, and it can be argued that all societies are to some extent both endogamous and exogamous, depending upon the group's defined "outer limit" (see Cerroni-Long 1984). Many societies follow the exogamy principle wherein marriage between one's immediate relatives is generally prohibited (except in some exceptional cases), therefore requiring wedlock to someone outside the immediate kin circle. In a larger sense exogamous marriages help to create or recreate marriage alliances for political and practical interests. It is a practice that is particularly observed in groups that are smaller in number.

⁶ Marriage is a way in which to regulate the mating urge, a fundamental human need, according to Cerroni-Long (1984:25).

⁷ Endogamy refers to marriage within a specific social group and exogamy to marriage outside of a specific social group (Gove 1965).

Endogamy can be applied to race, caste, religious or other cultural sub-categories depending upon the definition assigned by the group in question. Various theories circulate regarding the phenomenon of endogamy. According to Sumner and Keller (in Barron 1946), endogamous marriages had to take place given the isolation of groups of people. Mayo-Smith (in Barron 1946:16) accords endogamy to the fact that people inmarry because they have more relationships among themselves than with others. Boas (in Barron 1946:16) attributes endogamy to ethnocentrism, wherein inmarriage is preferred due to a desire for group solidarity and perpetuation. Cerroni-Long (1984:26) believes that endogamy is encouraged in order to maintain group boundaries by forbidding the introduction of outsiders into the kinship network, and also to reinforce notions of intra-group ties and identity.

If one accepts the fact that endogamous marriage is a socially-acceptable norm in certain societies, the prospect of a non-endogamous, i.e. an exogamous marital union or intermarriage, defies the social standard. Intermarriage is likely to be a cause for concern for the immediate family and the wider social circles to which one belongs. Even in contemporary times, after centuries of previously unimagined cross-global crossings and mixings and a present-day technology that allows instantaneous connections between strangers from the far corners of the world, along with supposed modern-day, politically-correct and hip intellectual and emotional ways of viewing the world, people still like to talk about cross-cultural marriages as if the institution is an anomaly and as if their enjoyment or human curiosity depends on it. In the Fiji context, the Indian preference for endogamous marriage is pertinent to the discussion on intermarriage.

Understandably, given the ordinary personality differences between any marital coupling, and add to it values, traditions, customs, religion, child-rearing, the proper way in which to enter a room, and more, onlookers might speculate that a mixed marriage will either be an outstanding success or a failure. To what degree will a couple transcend evident cultural differences to make a go of marriage? To what degree will a cross-cultural couple risk family or community censure?

Some see intercultural marriage as a unique mode for the intense study of adjustment between cultures (McDermott 1977:ix). Others view intermarriage as a perfect index of cultural assimilation. Intermarriage has been said to act as a “panacea for problems of intergroup relations” and as “an index of cultural similarities and dissimilarities” (Duffy 1973:9), or to indicate the social distance between distinctive groups of peoples living in the same area (Barron 1946:2).

A study of Fijian-Indian intermarriage allows one to investigate these issues and more. Marriages between Fijians and Indians, after all, represent just one window into the world of social relations. The degree to which the two communities interact in the extreme form of wedlock or cohabitation might reveal the extent to which cultural integration has been achieved in Fiji. It also suggests the scale of Indian assimilation into Fiji culture⁸. The study of intermarriage permits occasional insights into the greater world of social relations, culture and politics in Fiji, while at the same time providing microscopic glimpses into individual case stories and histories.

Aims of the thesis

Anecdotal evidence, personal observation, and the all-too-brief literature on Fijian-Indian intermarriage all allude to the hypothesis that Fijian-Indian intermarriage is rare. Statistical data from the 1996 census supports this idea (see Chapter 3 – Statistics on Intermarriage). The central objective of this thesis is to uncover the major reasons for the perceived absence of these marriages. Why are they rare? What factors that have contributed to its low incidence? If there are incidences of these marriages, why did they eventuate? What incites a couple to take the plunge, in view of possible family and community censure, the scarcity of these marriages, and with all of the hang-ups and concerns that accompany any such marriage? To what extent does

⁸ I cannot state with confidence that Fijian culture is the overarching system subscribed to in Fiji. Rather, what I call “Fiji culture” is the result of the mixing of traditional Fijian, colonial British, Indian and other immigrant influences, as well as the pervasive predominance of contemporary capitalism and globalisation.

the individual have to compromise? Are there external events in history that have had a major role in influencing the (non)incidence of these unions?

There is also growing evidence that although intermarriage is rare, incidences of these marriages are on the increase. The persistent question “why” seeks to disclose explanations for this perception.

The first aim of the thesis is to uncover the history of intermarriage as it has played out in Fiji. This is an ambitious venture, given the hypothesis of its historical rarity. It is also difficult because there is very little in the literature on Fiji that directly pertains to the topic. Where citations on intermarriage do occur, they are employed merely to enlighten greater or alternative issues regarding Fiji.

The piecemeal and ad hoc references to Fijian-Indian intermarriage in the general Fiji literature provide fragments of information. In this attempt to present a history, I hope to weave in these fragments with references to other significant aspects of life in Fiji, such as broader social relations, significant political events, colonial policy and economics, to name a few – each of these different aspects may help to explain the absence or presence of Fijian-Indian unions. This history necessitates a borrowing from the broader, larger history of Fiji. In so doing, one may be able to fill in the gaps. One not only becomes privy to a focused look at intermarriage, but also to the greater schema in which society in Fiji has evolved over time.

The presence of the Indians, who are not indigenous to Fiji, is explained in light of the colonialism project in “A historical background on Indian indenture in Fiji.”

“A history of social relations” draws attention to the character of social relationships between Fijians and Indians, beginning with initial contact through to present-day analyses.

“A political history” focuses on critical political events and issues that have helped to define the polarization of Fijians and Indians over time. The items include the explosive land problem, the strong arm of colonial policy and colonialism, and acute political occurrences such as World War II and of course, the coups.

“A history of intermarriage” plots a fragmented intermarriage history against this backdrop of the Indian presence and the histories of social relations and politics in Fiji. The accounts here are raised in several different contexts (colonial reports, a traveler’s narrative, social inquiry, an election campaign etc.) and most point to the overwhelming conclusion of the rareness of these marriages.

The second aim of the thesis is to provide statistical evidence for the phenomenon. The broad view that advances the case of rarity needs to be supported or refuted. To this end, I was privileged to receive data from the Bureau of Statistics in Fiji. This data is extracted from the 1996 census and provides a glimpse not only into Fijian-Indian marriages, but also other mixed marriages in Fiji. The larger system of intercultural marriages in the country can therefore also be observed. Who marries whom more? What kinds of marriages are more frequent than others? The analyses reveal that intermarriage is indeed rare in Fiji, and that the most common patterns observed are Fijian female-Indian male marriages, marriages between Fijians and Indians who are both Christians, and that most of these marriages take place in the west.

The third and primary aim of the thesis is to present causal factors. What major factors have directly or indirectly contributed to the phenomenon – or lack of it? Fiji is a multifaceted, multiracial, multireligious, and multilingual society. Gauging from the interview material, there are manifold individual and yet interconnected, cross-cutting causes that account for intermarriage. Explanations that cover sometimes disparate aspects such as history, religion, education, bodily appearance, food and social attitudes illuminate the issue. Multiple voices, from members of Fijian-Indian unions to outside observers, representing different races, religions, political persuasions, economic classes, educational experience etc. inform the topic. The interview material is supported and supplemented through wider readings on Fijian and Indian marriage systems and culture and also general Fiji literature.

In summary, segregation appears to contribute to the absence of intermarriage in a major way. Colonial policy sought the physical separation of Fijians and Indians since the inception of

indenture. Fijians were relegated to the villages and Indians to the plantations. Laws were implemented to keep them from residing near one another. Cultural segregation results from this enforced colonial separation. Neither community was encouraged to integrate. Instead, Fijians were confined to a homogeneous brand of “traditional” life characterized by communalism and the authority of chiefs imposed on them by colonial authorities, while the culturally diverse Indians (North and South Indians, Gujaratis, Punjabis, Hindus, Muslims, Christians etc.) adapted to their new environment, becoming more individualistic in social organization and yet retaining certain longstanding cultural beliefs such as arranged marriages and the practice of *pardah*⁹. Religious separation also marks the relationship between Fijians and Indians, for Fijians are Christians today and Indians are mostly Hindu, with a smaller Muslim population also present. Acute differences and attachment to these cultural differences mark the separateness of Fijians and Indians. As education, modernization and urbanization begin to take hold, Fijians and Indians begin to interact more in the marketplace, the schools, the workplace, and to live alongside one another, suggesting more of a homogeneity within greater Fiji culture and improved prospects for increased Fijian-Indian marriages.

In the concluding chapter, a summary of the thesis findings is presented. Also inserted are the insights of respondents concerning intermarriage. What does intermarriage mean to them? How is it meaningful? Most of the opinions indicate their perceptions of the strong connection between intermarriage and racial harmony in Fiji. Last, the question of the future of intermarriage in Fiji is posed.

Statement of personal interest

My sense of identity is rooted in Fiji, the country of my childhood. My loyalties, therefore, are directed towards the people who populate Fiji, the many different peoples – Fijians,

⁹ *Purdah* refers to the confinement of women to enclosed spaces, the veiling of women, the segregation of the sexes, and a moral code of conduct (see Lateef 1990:61).

Indians, *kailoma*, Gilbertese, Samoans, you name it – who in various ways contributed to my upbringing, giving myself and my family our faith in humanity, who taught us about themselves and their cultures, and who peppered our lives with laughter, song and the occasional sad story. In so many ways we were able to transcend the narrow prescriptions of race, culture or what have you, and celebrate our commonality as members of global humanity. The political crises of 1987 and 2000 represented a major setback in my hopes for Fiji, in its potential to be a truly remarkable country, as idealistic as that may sound. Even though the concerns at the heart of these crises appeared to be more complex than simple race hostilities, the mere fact that race was being depicted as the sole catalyst, at home in Fiji and abroad, is cause for concern. This characterization does not fit well with the romanticized memories from childhood. People are generally acquainted with the friendly, open, fun-loving nature of the Fijians, that is true. I openly acknowledge my debt to so many Fijians who nurtured and continue to help me today. People are not so familiar with the admirable hardworking drive that identifies most Indians. And since I also am of part-Indian heritage, half of my allegiance is sworn there. It is difficult to have your loyalties torn between the two, but also rewarding to celebrate the merits of each culture. Both communities play significant, fundamental roles in the making of Fiji – and that is my personal opinion. The motives, imperatives, shortcomings and strengths of both communities therefore need to be understood, analyzed, and critiqued if Fiji is to move beyond its recent infamous history.

That said, and in the context of this study, I do not wish to present myself as an outright advocate of Fijian-Indian marriages. It is not appropriate for me to prescribe increased Fijian-Indian unions as a solution to Fiji's racial problems. The interest I have in this topic also involves some partial detachment: to what extent do two equally populous groups in a country relate to each other, particularly in the form of marriage? I am equally interested in Fijian-Chinese or Indian-Rotuman marriages. I am intrigued insofar as the topic reflects one aspect of general social relations in Fiji. Its relationship vis-à-vis the current state in politics furthers the interest.

This thesis represents the first known attempt to tackle the topic of Fijian-Indian intermarriage at some length. References to intermarriage in the literature are few. In many cases, the mention of intermarriage is limited to one sentence only, along the lines of: “Intermarriage between Fijians and Indians is rare.” I believe that the study of Fijian-Indian intermarriage is an important one. For one thing, this work will fill a gap that has heretofore required attention. Second, as one informant emphasized, it will serve as an acknowledgement that such marriages do take place – the underlying premise being that Fijian-Indian marriages are not seriously talked about in official circles; perhaps there is some accusation of government suppression at play. Third, a study of intermarriage is meaningful when we consider the polarized status of national politics in Fiji today.

This work humbly claims to be exploratory in nature. It cannot and does not attempt to be definitive. It covers two of the three basics of a study of intermarriage as laid out by Barron (1946): intermarriage patterns and causal factors. Barron’s third approach concerns intermarriage consequences (i.e. marital success, divorce and child-rearing), a topic that invites further, future research.

This study of Fijian-Indian intermarriage naturally deals with some items of a sensitive nature. The purpose of the study is not to shock or offend people. Instead, it is hoped that some of the more delicate issues and ideas are placed in their context of their telling; after all, the items raised reflect the views, values and beliefs of the people concerned.

Definitions

Intermarriage

Perhaps a more appropriate term for use in this thesis would be “miscegenation” instead of “intermarriage”. Miscegenation is a broader term which encompasses all types of (sexual) unions between persons of different races. “Intermarriage” in its strictest sense is confined to legal unions, be it between persons of different races, religions, or ethnicities. Personally I prefer

the term “intermarriage” because “miscegenation” is a mouthful – a difficult word to get around. Furthermore, “miscegenation” implies a “mismatching” of sorts: “mis” connotes a state of being incorrect, improper, bad, and mistaken (Gove 1965).

Where the term “intermarriage” is used in this thesis, it specifically describes marriages or unions between Fijians and Indians. Other mixed marriages, for example between the Fijians and the Chinese, will be designated Fijian-Chinese marriages.

As we shall also see in Chapter 3, “Statistics on Intermarriage”, the definition of “marriage” in the Fiji census is not limited to legal marriages; instead, de facto relationships are also considered (Bureau of Statistics 1998). Furthermore, in the course of research, I am certain that informants blurred distinctions between marriage and cohabitation.

Ideally, I would have preferred to concentrate on legalized marriages. Official unions suggest a concerted commitment in the face of probable family, community and national censure. However, given the available data set, and the way in which intermarriage appeared to be perceived by my informants, it is best to stick to a broader perspective for the time being. Therefore, the term “intermarriage” as used in this thesis is loosely employed: it covers both licensed and de facto couplings. Where appropriate, the distinction will be stated.

A general note on the race/ethnic group/culture definitions employed in this thesis

Boas (1962:63) dismisses the concept of race, particularly from a biological point of view. However, the anthropologist does acknowledge the existence of *race consciousness*, a point particularly pertinent to the case in this thesis. A racial, ethnic or cultural designation might not carry any scientific validity, but in the eyes of those who espouse, impose or create those categories, the distinctions carry political, cultural or social efficacy. Many arguments contend that such designations are social constructions (Banton 1988, Shanklin 1994, Wade 2002). Barth (1969:15) affirms that it is the boundary which defines the group, not the cultural matter that it encloses.

In the Fiji setting, the existence of certain labels require some examination. For one, the nation state of Fiji is an artificially constructed one: there had been no Fiji prior to European exploration. The subsuming of the peoples who happened to live within the land masses later to be collectively called “Fiji” according to a “race”, “culture” or “ethnicity” raises questions of authenticity. The assumption that a cultural homogeneity characterizes these disparate peoples is erroneous. In fact, “Fiji” itself is probably a corruption of “Viti”. “Fiji” is a colonial construction. “Fijian” probably has more to do with nationality rather than race, culture or ethnicity. The onset of British colonization sought to preserve notions of a single Fijian identity by imposing their own version onto the indigenous peoples (Robertson and Sutherland 2001). Subsequently Fijians have generally embraced this model, as exemplified in ongoing efforts by certain segments of Fijian society (Fijian nationalists, for example) to define themselves as a united group in opposition to Indians.

Are Indians who carry a Fiji passport considered Fijians? How valid is the term “Indian”? Some of the indentured laborers who came to Fiji were Nepalese, and I have heard of Afghanis in Fiji also being subsumed under “Indian”. In the context of British colonialism, officialdom found a need to differentiate between the two groups, for after all, they were subject to different systems of administration. These colonists are the actors who organized, maintained and reinforced the boundaries between groups, boundaries which over time have been absorbed, accepted, and further reinforced by the people of Fiji themselves. Food for thought when we consider the definitions outlined below.

Fijian

“Fijian” as used in this thesis generally refers to those who regard themselves as the indigenous peoples of Fiji, that is, the descendants of Fiji’s original settlers from southeast Asia some 4,500 years ago and subsequent Melanesian migrations (see Robertson and Sutherland 2001).

Although the term “Fijian” may seem straightforward, it connotes many variations and permutations that defy simple definition. Fijians are, after all, strictly not a homogeneous peoples. Fijians can be classified according to their *vanua* (tribe), *yavusa* (clan), *mataqali* (sub-clan or lineage), *tokatoka* (sub-lineage), province, or confederacy, for example (Ravuvu 1983). Long before the attempted unification of Fiji under Ratu Seru Cakobau in 1871, battles and wars were waged between villages and islands, between coastal peoples and those of the interior (Ravuvu 1991). The political troubles of 2000 unearthed deep-seated provincial rivalries and divisions. Distinctions between the chiefly classes and commoners became more prominent (Robertson and Sutherland 2001). A Fijian from the western side of Viti Levu might hold a variant set of attitudes and values from a Fijian of the eastern side. A Lauan Fijian might differ culturally and physically from a Kadavu Fijian. A Methodist Fijian carries a different set of values and notions of nationalism from, say, a Presbyterian Fijian. Hence there is a danger in generalization...

The way in which people use the term “Fijian” might not be so clear-cut either. The Fijian being referred to might actually be part-Fijian, as I found out in the course of research. Perhaps this designation stems from the assumption that that Fijian culture is seen to be the dominant culture in a part-Fijian’s life. A Fijian with some Solomon Islander extraction is also sometimes identified as Fijian. For the purposes of this thesis Rotumans are not considered “Fijian”.

Furthermore, according to census classification rules, a person is identified according to the race to which the person considers he or she belongs, but if there is any doubt, the race of the father is recorded (Bureau of Statistics 1998:281). Therefore, a person whose father is Fijian but whose mother is Chinese usually takes on the identity of “Fijian”. This person should also be registered on the Fijian Register, the *Vola ni Kawa Bula*, which records him or her as a member of a land-owning family (Gittins 1946, Robertson and Sutherland 2001).

This all makes for a complicated reading of what it means to be Fijian in the context of this thesis. What one should perhaps keep in mind is that the definition of “Fijian” is fluid and

changes contextually according to the circumstance and situation in which the information is being relayed.

Indian

Many academics and political commentators prefer the term “Indo-Fijian” to refer to the descendants of Indian indentured laborers and free settlers who came to Fiji from 1879 on.

Another popular term is “Fiji Indian”. I prefer “Indian” since that is what most people call them in normal, everyday conversation. The Fiji census also uses the term “Indian”.

Like “Fijian”, the term “Indian” also does not reflect a single, united cultural group. The Indian community can be differentiated along many diverse lines. The first distinction that probably comes to mind concerns religious differentiation. The majority of Indians in Fiji are Hindus (78%), followed by Muslims (16%), and Christians (6%)¹⁰. Within the Hindu faith itself is a further separation: the majority of Hindus belong to the Sanatan Dharm sect, followed by the Arya Samaj. Muslims in Fiji belong to two different strands of Islam, the Sunni and Ahmadiyya.

Another important difference is the division between North Indians and South Indians. Most of the indentured labourers (approximately 45,000) were pooled from the provinces of North India, with the first batch of South Indians arriving later in 1903 (Mayer 1963). In total South Indians accounted for approximately 15,000. Language, diet, marriage values and customs, and some religious beliefs demarcate North and South Indians from each other.

The emphasis on caste is not employed strongly today, nor ever was upon Indian settlement in Fiji – life in the depots and on the indentured labor ships compelled the different caste groups to mix and interact, and the mere fact of crossing the black seas meant a loss of caste (Lal 1992). Social structures imposed on the plantations and separation from networks of extended kin in India also hindered the continuation of the caste system.

¹⁰ The figures supplied here are derived from the 1996 census, courtesy of the Bureau of Statistics (in Ratuva 2002:15).

One of the greatest markers of difference in the Indian community today rests on one's status as a descendant of an indentured laborer versus a descendant of a free settler. In Fiji, a problematic assumption is continually made about Indians in Fiji: that all Indians are wealthy (Robertson and Sutherland 2001). This is not the case. Many Indians are poor. The Indians perceived to be better off are mostly the descendants of free settlers to Fiji, particularly those who came from the provinces of Gujarat and Punjab. Many of them went on to own successful businesses and Gujaratis are still noted for their business acumen. To a large extent, their world did not coincide with that of the indentured laborers, who faced extreme hardship and poor conditions during indenture and for many, a diminished future upon the completion of indenture contracts.

European

The term "European" requires definition, for it is a loosely employed word in Fiji. A European in Fiji can mean anyone who is "white", regardless of country of origin. For example, this may include any "white" person from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA or Europe.

Other

The 1996 census data acquired for this thesis subsumes the ethnicities that are not Fijian, Indian, Chinese or European under the term "Other". The term would include such categories as part-European, Rotuman, Banaban, Samoan, Tongan, Other Pacific Islander, and Other Ethnicity.

The Research Process

The research process consisted of three major components: 1) a literature review, 2) fieldwork research in Fiji, and 3) a statistical analysis.

As mentioned earlier, references to Fijian-Indian intermarriage are rare in the literature and the literature review often involved scanning larger works for limited one-liners on the

subject. The search included general treatises on Fiji which importantly provide clues as to why the phenomenon of intermarriage has played out as it has. The work of noted Fiji scholars such as Ahmed Ali, K L Gillion, Brij V Lal, Shireen Lateef, Adrian Mayer, Rusiate Nayacakalou, and Asesela Ravuvu were consulted.

Other written works reviewed included newspaper articles and plays by Larry Thomas¹¹ and Vilsoni Hereniko. The play *Sera's Choice* by Hereniko (1987) focuses on the plight of an intermarried couple experiencing culture conflict, extra-marital pressures, and the difficulties of extended family involvement in their lives. The documentary *Where the Rivers Meet* (Emberson-Bain 1998) presents a short case study of an intermarried couple, documenting how the initially reluctant Fijian woman overcomes her prejudices about Indians upon marriage to her husband.

Fieldwork in Fiji took place from May to July in 2002. I spoke to four Fijian wives of intermarried unions along with one of the Indian husbands. I was not able to secure an interview with an Indian wife of an intermarried union. Other persons I spoke to included teachers, academics, students, politicians, and community and religious leaders who either knew intermarried couples on a personal basis, were the offspring of such marriages, had or were romantically involved in cross-cultural relationships, had extensive experience in community matters or simply held opinions on the topic. Most interviews were conducted in Suva, Nadi and Lautoka along with a few in Tavua.

When calling around to ask for interviews, I was struck by the degree of enthusiasm shown. I believe that the topic of intermarriage lies close to the bone for many people: it provides an opportunity to speak about a host of issues, including Fiji's race problems and the coups. Even the media displays a similar enthusiasm: I know of two wedding ceremonies that received front-page coverage in the newspapers accompanied by large photographs.

¹¹ Thomas' (2002) plays provide social commentary on issues such as multiculturalism and racial politics. In "To Let You Know" one character is the child of a condemned Fijian-Indian relationship.

The interview format usually followed an open-ended style. The interview would generally begin with a question asking about the number of intermarried couples interviewees personally knew of. This question was a popular one, generating eager responses. Each person quoted an average of about four couples. This first question was quite an effective opener, for respondents would usually launch straight into a related topic of their own choosing, talking about a range of subjects such as observed marriage patterns, why these marriages do or don't occur, their perceived frequency, and so forth. The identities of informants have been protected and altered for this thesis.

Since it was deemed important to provide statistical support for the phenomenon of intermarriage – there being scant and insignificant statistics published to date (see Chapter 3, Statistics on Intermarriage) – I approached two potential sources in Fiji: the Fiji Bureau of Statistics and the Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages. I was fortunate to receive valuable data based on the 1996 census from the Bureau of Statistics. The Bureau, and in particular the Fiji Government Statistician Mr Bainimarama, were especially supportive and encouraging. Similar cooperation may be available for a future statistician or researcher who wishes to embark on a comparative analysis based on previous censuses. Attempts to seek approval from the Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages to access their records was not as easy, although I believe that had my research stay been longer, this approval would have been forthcoming. This Registry is an ideal archival source for securing data on registered marriages.

Conclusion

In this Introduction, an attempt has been made to locate the topic of Fijian-Indian intermarriage in the context of broader social relations and political circumstances in Fiji. The topic's placement in the scope of Fiji-related literature, and the author's personal interest are also addressed. Definitions have been supplied to clarify the terms "intermarriage", "Fijian", "Indian", "European" and "Other" as they are employed throughout the thesis. A brief outline on the

research process revealing some of the more practical aspects of the project has also been provided.

The chief objective of the thesis is to seek explanations for the perceived rarity of these marriages. As hinted earlier, colonial strategy, a strong attachment to culture and acute cultural and religious differences account for this rarity. Modernization, urbanization and educational processes subsequently contribute to the perception of growing numbers of these marriages.

The following chapter, “A History of Fijian-Indian Intermarriage”, discloses the results of the initial process of research, i.e. the literature review. As will be demonstrated, references to the subject matter are scarce, reaffirming the notion that incidences of these marriages have been rare in Fiji’s history. These piecemeal citations are given a broader context against the historical backdrop of the Indian presence and accounts of general social relations and politics in Fiji.

CHAPTER 2 A HISTORY OF FIJIAN-INDIAN INTERMARRIAGE

This thesis is the first known attempt to focus solely on the topic of Fijian-Indian intermarriage. As such it requires the laying of a foundation upon which future studies can be based, and in this chapter the groundwork is laid via the provision of historical material. As noted previously however, the topic is rarely touched upon in the general literature on Fiji. References to these unions are piecemeal, scattered and sometimes oblique (for example, a mention of the presence of a Fijian-Indian child alerts one to the relationship of the parents). Consequently, other histories including that of the indenture program, social relations and politics are presented in order to provide related background information which may suggest the kind of environment in which intermarriage is played out.

A historical background on Indian indenture in Fiji

Fiji¹ became a colony of Great Britain on 20 March 1874 through the auspices of Ratu Seru Cakobau, the great chief of the island of Bau who claimed to be the army commander (*vunivalu*) of Fiji and the Tui Viti (Derrick 1950:139). This represented the second attempt at voluntary cession to Great Britain, the British having rejected an earlier request in 1862. Growing pressures from locally-settled Europeans for land and the added intimidation of American officials trying to extort compensation for damages to American property (for which Cakobau was not responsible) incited the offer for cession (Derrick 1950, Ravuvu 1991). The conditions of cession included the setting aside of crown lands for British administrative control, rights in trade and commerce and some land ownership for British subjects in the colony in return for the British settlement of American claims. Although this case of cession is one of voluntary submission to a colonial power, it fundamentally arises out of an environment of coercion and duress in Fiji.

¹ Prior to this, Fiji could never be claimed to be a single unity (Kaplan 1988:101). Ravuvu (1991) describes Fiji as existing primarily of independent and autonomous kinship groups before Cession.

The newly established colonial government under the tutelage of Sir Arthur Gordon sought to protect Fiji's indigenous race from extinction². Gordon had previously been governor of Trinidad and Mauritius, two British plantation colonies served by Indian indentured laborers (Lal 1992:12), and was noted for being a champion of the protection of indigenous peoples and their interests. In the Fijian setting, Gordon's policy of protectionism was implemented according to the following criteria: 1) the establishment of a separate Fijian administration through traditional leadership of the Fijian people, 2) taxes in village produce, not cash, and 3) the safeguarding of Fijian ownership over Fijian lands (Bain 1988). Fijians were exempted from working in the plantations and instead were encouraged to continue with the traditional subsistence lifestyle in the villages³. Certain regulations prevented Fijians from leaving their villages for wage labor⁴. It is during this era that what is later known as the Great Council of Chiefs is created.

At the same time, Gordon's other priority involved the economic development of the colony. Sugar was to be the mainstay of Fiji's economy, and a viable source of cheap labor had to be found. To address the labor problem Gordon looked elsewhere for an alternative workforce. Since the British colony of India had already administered indentured labor programs to other colonies such as Mauritius, Trinidad, and South Africa, it followed on that it was from India that Gordon would obtain a reliable and continual labor resource for Fiji.

In 1879, the ship *Leonidas* brought 489 Indian indentured pioneers to Fiji. By the time the last shipload of laborers made its way to Fiji's shores in 1916, a total of 60,553 indentured

² A measles epidemic swept through Fiji in 1875, reducing the population by one quarter (Mayer 1963). Gordon also feared that the employment of Fijians in the plantation fields would worsen the condition of their population by transforming them into bands of itinerant labourers, harming the preservation of the race (Lal 1992:13).

³ Mayer (1963:11) reports that Gordon refused the large-scale recruitment of Fijians for plantation labour, a move supported by Fijian chiefs themselves. Smaller numbers of Fijians were employed for these purposes, however, and in the early days of indenture Fijians and Indians sometimes worked and lived together on the same plantations (Ali 1979, Gillion 1962).

⁴ Where employment conflicted with communal obligations, from 1883 on single and married men were prohibited from entering into labour contracts (Bain 1988:123). All women and children under 15 years were expressly forbidden from engagement in wage labour.

immigrants had entered the colony. In addition to this, it is estimated that the total Indian immigrant population included at least 3,000 free settlers (Mayer 1963).

Indentured laborers were housed in 'lines' on sugarcane, copra, tobacco, tea and rubber plantations and also dairy farms in Rabi, Rewa, Ba, Mago, Taveuni, Labasa, Navua, Penang, and Nadroga, amongst others (Gillion 1962). Others worked in Levuka and Suva as domestic servants and government employees in the police force, gaol and lighthouses. Conditions on the plantations are generally described as harsh: laborers were subjected to long hours of back-breaking work under the eagle-eyed supervision of foremen and *sirdars*, and there are also stories of the physical and sexual abuse of laborers.

One of the most striking features of plantation system was the disproportionate low number of females to males. The indenture recruitment system required a quota of 40 women for every 100 men, as stipulated by the Government of India. The measure was implemented to ensure some degree of a stable family life (Gillion 1962), although one has to question how this was considered possible considering the vast disparity in the ratio of females to males. By 1912, after 30 years of indenture, the number of females remained fairly much the same at 43.17 (Lal 1985).

The imbalance in the sex ratio was a contributing factor in the many reported cases of violence, suicides and deaths in the indentured colonies. Competition for available women was strong, and sexual jealousy was often attributed by colonial officials to be a major source of quarrels between men⁵. Since women were fewer, polyandry and serial cohabitation (Lateef 1993) were some of the means by which people coped with the situation.

Since fewer Indian women were available as spouses, why then did Indian men not marry Fijian women? One of the answers lies in general government policy. Indians were forbidden

⁵ Lal (1985:138) argues that the sexual jealousy charge is misleading. He maintains that "sexual jealousy was a symptom rather than the cause of the problems", and instead points to the disturbance of social norms such as family, marriage, caste, kinship, and religion that created social problems in the plantation context.

from living in or near Fijian villages⁶ (Mayer 1963). Governor Thurston circa 1888 warned Fijians against harboring Indian deserters (Ali 1979). The motive for these regulations included the fear that Indians would encourage gambling and quarrelling amongst the Fijians (Lal 1992:107). Colonial officials also believed that Indians would not understand the Fijian way of life in the villages nor abide by Native Regulations, and thus endanger the policy of protectionism. By instituting and issuing these policies and directives, the colonial government effectively and indirectly prevented meaningful communication and interaction between Fijians and Indians during the early stages of Indian residence, which had direct consequences on the probability of Indian males encountering Fijian females for marriage purposes.

Broader Indian culture might also inform on this issue. It involves the customary Indian aversion for exogamous marriages, for example, interreligious marriage (particularly Hindu-Muslim), interethnic marriage (e.g. North Indian-South Indian), and across caste. Outmarriage was not common in India nor generally encouraged (Mayer 1963). In the Fiji context, one may well then imagine how the idea of interracial marriage would be understood given the long-ingrained cultural preference for religious, ethnic and caste endogamy⁷.

In the indenture context, however, some religious, caste and provincial barriers broke down. A general absence of hostilities on the plantations between traditionally-opposed Hindus and Muslims grew out of a desire to maintain a degree of harmony and cooperation in the face of adversities in their austere lives (Ali 1980). There are stories about attendance at each others' weddings and at life-crisis events. Rigid reliance on caste norms also broke down upon the entry of Indians into Fiji. Sea voyages customarily meant an automatic loss of caste which undoubtedly affected Hindu passengers to Fiji, particularly those of the higher castes. Traditional caste support systems were absent in the Fiji context. Furthermore, the lack of available women meant that some marriages had to be contracted without regard to caste or religion. This did not mean,

⁶ Europeans were also forbidden from living with Fijians (Mayer 1973:12).

however, that all religious and caste barriers were forgotten or eradicated: to some degree, intercaste and interreligious unions, especially those between Muslims and Hindus, were still discouraged or shied away from.

In summary, the historical background into the existence of the Indian population in Fiji is provided here, and placed in the context of greater British colonization and economic imperatives. Attention is also given to the sex ratio anomaly, which figures importantly in life on the plantations but also raises questions about the lack of unions between Fijians and Indians.

A history of social relations

Here the broader picture of social relations in Fiji is presented, with brief accounts of initial contact, social attitudes, stereotypes, and subsequent social investigations and commentary. In so doing, a historical picture may be drawn concerning the social conditions and circumstances that may have facilitated or impeded prospects of intermarriage.

The initial encounter between indentured immigrants and Fijians occurred under inauspicious circumstances. The story involves the *Leonidas* (the first indenture ship) in 1879 running aground on her entrance into Levuka harbor, fears of disease onboard creating alarm for government officials who hastily organize quarantine measures, and the employment of Fijians to keep the potentially-ill Indians from mixing with villagers (Lal 2000). Fijians and Indians were, and quite understandably given the circumstances, forcefully kept apart during this first meeting. An ominous beginning.

Another snippet occurs with the sinking of the *Syria* in 1884. At least 59 people drowned at sea. Those who survived were received hospitably by the Nasilai chief where warm food, water and shelter were provided for the night (Lal 2000:161). Apparently the next day (despite the very

⁷ See Chapter 4, "Factors Influencing Intermarriage" for a general discussion on other determinants which may have led to the absence of Indian men-Fijian women marriages during indenture.

recent trauma and possible mental and physical fatigue), the survivors are “marched” to Rewa, and along the way Fijians supply them with food. This is an early instance of cordial relations.

Social attitudes also provide important insights, and in this context, the initial reactions of Fijians and Indians to each other conveyed in a series of interviews with indentured laborers encapsulate some of the stereotypical notions of the other that still persist today (in Ali [intro.] 1979). These reflections are occasionally amusing, yet they reflect some of the natural deep-seated fears, prejudices and ignorance of the newcomers to the country.

When I came to Fiji Fijians used to wear a loin-cloth of masi or a mat of leaves. They did not appear to know how to use shirts and singlets. When we used to go anywhere we used to go in a group of seven or eight with a stick because we were frightened of Fijians.

Rahim Buksh (in Ali 1979:20)

When we first saw Fijians we were scared. We were worried that we might become like them when we saw their hair. On our estate we were told that these were the natives of the country. Their disposition towards us was quite good. In those days they seemed rather frightened of Indians. When we first came to Fiji all the Fijians wore banana leaves as skirts. They used to keep their money in their mouth and when they got into a shop they used to take it out of their mouths and give it to the shop-keeper. Sometimes Indians used to buy fruits from them. There were some Indians who could converse with them in Fijian.

Lotan (in Ali 1979:21)

In my early days here, when Fijians were given roti or rice, they took a sniff and then threw it away. Equally we did not appreciate their food, such as cassava or breadfruit. This was in the beginning, of course, now the situation has changed. Fijians were generally very friendly. There was, however, an occasion when we came into conflict with them during my girit in Tavua. They were hitting some of the old Indian hands. So we, the newcomers, took the stick out of our hoes and struck some of the Fijians and chased them away. In pursuing them we got as far as their village.

Devi Singh (in Ali 1979:42)

References to hair, clothing, and food make up the bulk of these selected extracts; they indicate the laborers’ superficial responses to a people who look and behave quite differently from themselves. By describing Fijians in this way, Indians define themselves as a community apart from the Fijian.

More importantly, and on a deeper level, these extracts also contain within them the indentured laborers’ perceptions of their relationships with the indigenous community. The kinds of views offered reflect wavering and ambivalent opinions. On the one hand, Fijians are friendly

and kind. Fijians helped refugee Indians. Relations seem conflict-free. Some Indians could even speak Fijian, reinforcing the popular idea that speaking each other's languages automatically means better social relations. On the other hand, fear and fighting exists. The tone seems to alternate between friendliness and mutual tolerance to outright hostility. This vacillation in the interviewees' observations mirrors my previously-mentioned comment concerning general scholarly commentary on social relations in Fiji.

Some of the common stereotypes perpetuated by Indians towards Fijians in those days included ideas that Fijians were *rachaks* (cannibals), *hoos* or *jungalees* (bushmen). In turn, Fijians called the Indians "coolies", which sounds like the Fijian word for "dog". The 1950-1951 research work on Fiji Indian settlement communities by Mayer (1973:182) reports that Indians considered their culture superior in contrast to the Fijian, which to them lacked the "antiquity and range of Indian civilization". The Fijians are portrayed as a tribal, pre-modern group unable to confront the modern world as the Indians have been able to. Yet these Indians also acknowledge some of the merits pertaining to Fijian culture. Fast-forwarding to the present, the Fijian nationalist historian Ravuvu (1991:57) sums up the negative stereotypes held by each group: Fijians see Indians as mean, stingy, and crafty, amongst others, whilst Indians view Fijians as backward, lazy, and unreliable. Reverend Sahayam (1979) in contrast appeals to the better natures of both Fijians and Indians by calling for a redemptive relationship, whereby Indians can learn from the better qualities of Fijian life and Fijians can in turn acknowledge the background and history of the Indians to understand the Indian situation better.

Several decades after indenture, Cato (1955) valiantly attempts to describe the state of social affairs between Fijians and Indians according to personal observations and surveys carried out over a period of 19 years. Fijians in Kadavu, Viti Levu and other Fiji centers were asked to classify their opinions on Indians according to a scale ranging from complete rejection to complete tolerance. Indians were also spoken to. Nonetheless, 63% of the Fijians showed complete intolerance towards Indians. Indians in turn regarded their culture as superior to the

Fijian. The article testifies to the problematic nature of culture-contact between the two races. Fijians and Indians are divided because of cultural difference. The Fijian fears being numerically overwhelmed by the Indians, is suspicious of Indian prosperity and success in education, and the Indian use of Fijian lands for cultivation. The Indian is portrayed as feeling superior and being (overly) confident of the Indian position in Fiji. Yet Cato foresees a weakening of cultural austerity through processes of Westernization and education for both the Indian and the Fijian, and hence some hope for a solution to the Fijian-Indian contact problem.

Thomas (1969) conducted an exploratory psychological study of (male) social attitudes in Suva and observed that Fijians seemed to show more social distance towards Indians than the inverse, but that attitudes were becoming more liberal amongst both groups. Thomas (1974:183) explains the Indian man's lesser degree of social distance as being a condition of the Indian man's business interests: dependence on the patronage of Fijians required one to be accepting of interaction with them. By contrast, Thomas' second study involving Fijian and Indian women reveals a different story. Indian women are shown to be less accepting of outgroups due in part to their restrictive social interactions outside of the home, whereas the open and communal nature of Fijian culture explains their lesser social distance towards other groups. Singh's (1977) later study of social distance involving a random sample of Fijians and Indians (genders are not defined) finds a divergent conclusion to that of Thomas' initial work. The study indicates this time that Fijians show less social distance towards Indians. There is no accounting for this critical change in social attitudes. The results probably have little to do with minor technical matters such as the varying sample size of each survey group (Thomas' 1969 study involves 41 respondents and Singh's 123) and the temporal distance of 10 years between the two publications.

Mamak's (1978) study of pluralism in Suva in the early 1970s seems to indicate generally tolerant, if not good, relations between Fijians and Indians. An intricate survey of about 160 workers in European-owned firms and one government department reflects cordial intercourse between Fijians and Indians. It is the Europeans who are depicted as being more difficult to relate

to. While some Fijians and Indians express negative stereotypical sentiments of the other as discussed earlier in this chapter, and others at a public housing estate practice avoidance behavior, Mamak (1978:123) declares that in this urban social setting, “Fijians mixed most with Indians...Indians mixed most frequently with Fijians.” This investigation of social relationships in Suva is remarkable for its depiction of overall generous, if not friendly, associations in the period immediately following independence.

Taveuni is an island south-east of Vanua Levu and has a plantation history against its name. The sociologist Naidu (1979) conducted a pluralist study of the urban area of Somosomo, which records a population of 72.67% Fijians and 20.87% Indians. Contrary to the hypothesis laid out by the author prior to research, it appears that most Fijians and Indians say that they have friends from the other race. Naidu (1979:173) however notes the difference between the statements of primary school children professing these friendships and reality, for he observes that the children still essentially interact within their own ethnic groups. He concedes however, that “...there was a preparedness among these children to establish friendly relationships with individuals of other races.” In the high school setting ethnic barriers tend to collapse more and relations are closer. On the whole the study finds that the majority of people interviewed consider themselves to be friendly with the opposite race, with only a very few exhibiting express dislike.

Reflecting upon these last four “works”, it would appear that the first two (i.e. Cato and the social distance psychology investigations) emphasize *difference* between Fijians and Indians. There appears to be more of a relaxing of social boundaries in Mamak’s and Naidu’s studies.

Geraghty (1997:1) in his submission to the 1997 Constitutional Review Commission introduces a fresh, thought-provoking perspective when he ascertains that it is the Indian who is engaged more in Fijian activities today than the opposite. In this scenario, the enterprise is monodirectional; the endeavor to become socially involved is undertaken by Indians. Moreover, he argues that the effort to effect more harmonious relationships between Fiji’s two major races

by colonial authorities was nullified by their attempt to westernize and Anglicize them, not by employing them to associate directly with each other and their cultures.

To summarize, the stories of initial “contact” between newly-arrived immigrants and Fijians are significant insofar as they represent the beginnings of the whole category of social relations, even though these interactions were probably fleeting. It is also made evident that indentured laborers did come into contact with Fijians on a somewhat regular basis (despite colonial imperatives) according to the narratives in Ali (1979). Their tales suggest how some of the resulting stereotypes formulated by Fijians and Indians might have originated. The submissions by Mayer, Ravuvu, Cato, Thomas, and Singh illustrate varying and vacillating but generally negative Fijian and Indian perceptions about the other which have been maintained over a period from about 1950 through to the present. By contrast, the pluralist studies conducted by both Mamak and Naidu in the 1970s unravel a scenario of less hostile, somewhat friendlier relationships, and Geraghty’s general social treatise suggests that Indians today are becoming more Fijianized in their outlook.

A political history

Political events and political business can significantly affect social relations (and also intermarriage, as argued later). Witness the drama of the 2000 coup, for instance. One of the more unforgettable outcomes was the establishment of an Indian refugee colony in Lautoka for people fleeing victimization in rural areas. These acts of violence received immense media coverage, and are likely to remain in people’s memories for a long time to come.

In the following presentation, certain political events and issues deemed to be critical in Fiji’s political history have been selected for comment. These concepts have been chosen because, amongst others, they illustrate and heighten the political polarization of Fijians and Indians, they introduce the crucial role of colonialism in the engendering of these oppositions,

and because some of the issues continue to create controversy and tension between the two communities.

In Fiji, politics generally plays along racially divisive lines, i.e. the Fijian versus the Indian. Historically, Fijians and Indians have been pitted against one another. Fijian politicians, personalities, organizations and parties (Apolosi Nawai, Ratu Sukuna, the Great Council of Chiefs, Viti Cauravou, Sakeasi Butadroka and his Fijian Nationalist Party) from time to time have questioned the presence of Indians in Fiji, some to the extent of demanding Indian expatriation. Indians have been active politically, exemplified in the establishment of many factional groups such as the Muslim League, Arya Samaj (Hindu), the Indian Reform League, the Then Ikya Sanmarga Sangam (South Indian), and the Fiji Kisan Sangh (Farmers' Association). At times the Indian community has acted as one in the pursuit of political goals (e.g. the push for representation on the Legislative Council in the late 1920s), while at other times sectional interests have overridden collective unity. In the 1920s Indian activism was driven by a desire for political and social equality alongside the European; this political activity then did not entail conscious direct confrontation with Fijians. In the era leading up to independence, however, Fijian-Indian political conflicts become more conspicuous, as each group struggles to seek a foothold in the newly independent nation.

Certain events have contributed to the history of political antagonism between the races. The Indian-led strikes of 1920 and 1921 augured the Indian political opportunism to come. The colonial government added to tensions by employing Fijian policemen to deal with strikers. Most of all, the events of the World War II period invite critical attention. Fijians valiantly and successfully rallied to the war effort alongside the British, but Indian participation was minimal. This non-cooperation is often cited as an example of the lack of Indian loyalty to Fiji. Several explanations can be offered in the defense of the Indian case. For one, equal service pay on a par with Europeans was demanded yet subsequently refused by the government (Lal 1992). Offers made by several Indian organizations to provide voluntary assistance or to enlist were also

spurned or ignored. A small Indian platoon which had been established in 1934 was disbanded in 1940 due to opposition from European soldiers. It is also argued that the government feared the military training of Indians in view of possible future troubles. Tensions worsened with a cane strike in 1943, seen as an act of insensitivity, ingratitude and arrogance by Europeans and Fijians (Mamak 1978).

Land is also an issue that constantly provokes tensions. Eighty-three percent (83%) of Fiji's land base is inalienable; it is earmarked solely for Fijian ownership and control. And since land is the prime resource needed for farming, this land is desired by Indian farmers, who by right can only lease these lands. To the Fijian, land is a source of life (Ravuvu 1983) and a marker of Fijian identity; land carries more than an economic value. The Indian farmer in turn values the economic potential inherent in the land; for the farmer, the ownership or long-term leasing of land would ensure security and stability of one's livelihood. In 1976 the land lease term was set at a minimum of 30 years, and many of these leases were up for renewal before 2005 (Robertson and Sutherland 2001). Recently landowners have refused to renew leases for various reasons, including the desire to use the land themselves and the demand for better rental agreements (increased rent charges and a reduced lease period). The non-renewal of land leases has become a source of considerable conflict between Fijians and Indians in the recent past.

The British colonial administration has also played a vital role in the political history of Fiji. Without British intervention, Fijian history might have played out differently. One wonders what might have happened had Gordon's policy of Fijian cultural preservation not been implemented. Fijians may have been allowed greater freedom to participate in the cash economy, thus negating the need to bring in an external labor source. However, one major benefit of the colonial scheme still acknowledged today has been the retention of native lands. Of course, the British are also responsible for bringing in about 60,000 Indian settlers to Fiji in the service of European planter and British economic interests.

What is striking about the colonial project is the way in which Fijian and Indian relations have been molded and defined. A policy of divide and rule, of separate administrations was instigated whereby one group was confined to the villages and the other to the plantations. British colonial interests were the common denominator here (Kaplan 1993). Fijian and Indian matters and their (prohibited) interactions were mediated through the offices of colonialism. No integration policy was instituted to enhance interaction between the two (Ravuvu 1991:45). When needed, Europeans enlisted Fijian support to counter Indian demands (e.g. the employment of Fijian constables to control Indian strikes). Thus Fijians and Indians were externally defined and allocated their respective roles in Fiji society, and were often played against one another in the service of colonialism. British colonial strategy certainly and significantly contributed to the polar construction of Fijians and Indians.

Without the third party presence of the British from independence in 1970, political opposition between Fijians and Indians become more evident. The 1977 general election brought these divisions to a head: it certainly looked like the Indian National Federation Party (NFP) was to take control of the reins of government until the Governor General intervened⁸.

The coups of 1987 and 2000 are defining moments in Fiji history. Without doubt, these acute political events now coexist with visions of sunshine and friendly smiles in people's images of Fiji. At the core of these coups lies the Fijian wish to retain control of Fijian lands and political affairs and deep-seated fears of Indian political and economic dominance. Occasionally physical conflict was demonstrated towards Indians and their properties: Indian shops have been looted and burnt, and on other occasions physically harmed⁹. The first coups of 1987 certainly had a dramatic effect on one social trend: the outmigration of approximately 30,000 Indians from Fiji.

⁸ The 1977 election was won by the National Federation Party (NFP), the Indian-dominated opposition party. Several days after the election result, the Governor General took matters into his own hands by appointing Ratu Mara, the prime ministerial incumbent and head of the defeated Alliance Party, to be the leader of a minority government (Lal 1992).

⁹ Kaplan(1988) wonders why Indians have not staged their own rebellion.

Most of the political business presented in this short history expresses acute differences between Fijians and Indians. The important role of the British colonial government and its policies are integrally connected to the establishment of Fijian-Indian political antagonisms. How do these items relate to the phenomenon of intermarriage? For one, without the hand of British colonialism, Indians might not have come to Fiji (thereby negating any basis for a discussion on this topic). Colonial policies separating Fijians and Indians regarding residence or administration, etc., also had an effect on people's abilities to interact more regularly and on a more meaningful basis, limiting intermarriage. The coups in Fiji have also had an impact, although further discussion will be catered to in Chapter 4 – Factors Influencing Intermarriage.

A history of intermarriage

The first direct reference to Fijian-Indian intermarriage is raised in 1888 (nine years after the start of indenture) by the Native Council. It reports that Indian men who had recently completed their indenture contracts were “living like natives in the Fijian villages...and some have intermarried with the natives and have families” (Mamak 1978:128-129). It is also in 1888 that the issue of the Indian presence in Fiji is strongly objected to by members of the Great Council of Chiefs, who question the future position of Indians in Fiji and also express concern about Indian deserters found in the villages and the punishment meted out to those who harbored them (see Gillion 1962, Ravuvu 1991).

Another report in 1898 from the Agent-General of Immigration makes mention of liaisons between Fijians and Indians: “Only two cases have come under my notice of a coolie living with a Fijian woman” (Ali 1979:xx). This statement is accompanied by an expression of regret at the lack of affinity between the “coolie” and the Fijian.

The story of Jiale Taragi from the early 1900s highlights the rigid colonial approach to race categorization, boosted by the ideology of preservation of the Fijian culture, and helped along by the policy of the deliberate separation of the Fijian and Indian (Kelly & Kaplan

2001:168¹⁰). Taragi, an ex-indentured laborer, was married to a Fijian woman and had lived in a Fijian village for 20 years. As his Fijian name implies, Taragi appears to have become a fully-fledged member of the village, having contributed to communal duties and the like. Taragi apparently applied to be “treated as a native”, that is (and it is presumed), that Taragi wished to gain rights to land. His application was supported by the Roko Tui Ra, a Fijian chief and the highest government officer of his province, and by the Secretary for Native Affairs.

The upper echelons of the Fiji colonial government put a stop to Taragi’s plans. The Fiji Executive Council determined that an Indian could not be formally recognized as an Fijian. At stake were issues such as the (Indian) use of native land without the payment of rent, the registration of children as members of the *mataqali*, and the prevention of an undesirable precedent which might lead to more marriages of Indians to Fijians for the purposes of securing land.

The Viti Cauravou was a Fijian youth movement formed in 1923 to deliberate on Fijian-related issues, including colonial policies and the control of Fijian affairs (Lal 1992:72-74). One of their objectives included the discouraging of intermarriage with “Asiatics” (i.e. Indians and Chinese) in order to preserve the purity of the Fijian race. However in 1930 the Great Council of Chiefs rejected the society’s hopes to prevent Fijian women from marrying non-Fijian men, claiming this was “derogatory to the dignity of Fijian womanhood and an unjustifiable restriction of liberty.”

Foster (1927:253-254), a traveler, spoke with Hakim Din on the topic of intermarriage. Din’s remarks weave in references to Fiji’s race relations, social attitudes towards mixed marriages, the plight of the mixed heritage child, and the relative merits of both the Fijian and the Indian. I quote this excerpt verbatim:

Before leaving Lautoka, I talked with Hakim Din, the leading Indian educator in Fiji, on the subject of this interracial animosity.

¹⁰ The source for this story comes from CSO 3657/12 (Kelly and Kaplan 2001).

He was a robust, handsome man, an outstanding figure among his people, with liquid brown eyes of the Brahmin – soulful, poetic eyes, yet with a keen penetrating light shining from their depths, mysteriously hypnotic.

“There is only one solution to the problem,” he said, “and that is intermarriage. I do not believe that the half-caste inherits only the vices of his parents. If he does, at present, it is because of the prejudice against such marriage, it makes him from childhood a social leper, robbing him of both ambition and pride, and bringing out his baser traits. If we can only do away with such prejudice here, we might develop a new people who would combine the physique of the Fijian with the intelligence and industry of the Indian. That would be the salvation of these islands.”¹¹

During colonial times, Fiji swarmed with the presence of outside observers, travelers, anthropologists, government officials and business people who have commented sporadically on the issue of interracial marriage. Here are some of their contributions.

Brewster (1922:234) writes about his stint as a magistrate in Ba, whereby he comes into contact with a Madrasi (a South Indian) who was one of two Indians he knew to have a Fijian wife. Interestingly, this writer confidently asserts that the degree of the Indian dislike for Fijians is so strong that even temporary liaisons were “never even formed.”

Of course, the observation that intermarriages were rare is often expressed. The scholar Coulter (1942) points to the presence of very few children of Melanesian-Asiatic mixture. Children are again proof of Fijian-Indian unions: “I heard of only one such half-caste – a woman whom Fijians considered comely except for hair which was sadly “weak”, like an Indian’s” (Quain 1948:2).

In 1932 the retired Secretary for Indian Affairs observes that although Indians live in close proximity to Fijian villages over large tracts, there is practically no intermarriage (Gillion 1977:15).

The scholar Mayer (1973:181-182) conducted field research in Indian settlement communities from 1950-1951. The Fijian attitude to money, especially the propensity to share assets among kin, is credited by Indians as the reason for the lack of intermarriage. They cite *kerekere* (a Fijian customary practice whereby one must submit to requests for material items

¹¹ See Geraghty (1997) for a humorous take on Din’s remarks.

from one's relatives) as an almost insurmountable proposition, particularly in the case of the offspring of these unions who might become "fair game for the demands of their Fijian relatives".

Manoa (1979) writes sensitively about his experiences with Indians as a child growing up in Savusavu and later as a working adult on Levuka and Viti Levu. He remarks upon the thriving mixed community in Levuka (Levuka being the former capital of Fiji) which is marked by the presence of at least four Fijian-Indian marriages, a credit to Levuka considering the scarcity of those marriages in Fiji.

The survey carried out by Cato (1955), whose work is referred to earlier in "A history of social relations", also investigates marriage issues. In terms of intermarriage, Cato notes the Fijian propensity to outmarry more with the smaller ethnic groups in Fiji than the Indian. Forty-three (43) of the Fijian men interviewed declared that they would not marry Indians, and would also prevent their children from doing so. The Indian opinion seems to concur on the topic of marriage with Fijians.

Cato also makes reference to the incidence of Fijian women cohabiting in temporary liaisons with Indians. There is some disdain on the part of Fijian women with regard to childbirth issues. They believe that Indian men expect their wives to bear children every year, unlike in the Fijian tradition wherein a husband will not cohabit with his wife for two to three years after childbirth.

Cato reports that education officials also apparently considered the topic of inter-racial marriage in an attempt to reshape Fiji's educational system. In an amusing sideline, the concept of intermarriage is raised courtesy of a rumor from the Nasinu Teachers' Training College. The story goes that some Fijian male and Indian female students wished to become engaged, which of course is not favorably received by some administrators.

Intermarriage is proposed by Cato as a solution to the problem of land tenure in Fiji. Furthermore, he makes the suggestion that a mass conversion to Christianity by Indians would increase the chances of improved social relations and interracial marriage.

Thirlwell's (1966:110) examination of inter-religious relationships in Koro, an Indian settlement in Labasa, reveals an unlikely reference to interracial marriage in Fiji. Apparently a South Indian father of a prospective bride is heard to advocate the marriage of all Indians to Fijians, since this would overcome interracial jealousy and misunderstanding. But when it is pointed out to him that his daughter might well be given in matrimony to a nearby Fijian village, the man is brought back to reality with a wide smile.

Three social distance psychology investigations conducted in 1969, 1974 and 1977 posed the general questions, "Would you marry a Fijian/Indian?" and "Would you allow a child to marry a Fijian/Indian?" (Thomas 1969, Thomas 1974, Singh 1977). In the 1969 survey, the sample consisted of 19 Fijian males and 22 Indian males in Suva. On the question of intermarriage, 37% of the Fijian males and 64% of the Indians males replied in the affirmative: yes, they would consider such a marriage. The 1974 investigation was administered to 30 Fijian and 30 Indian women from rural areas. Forty percent (40%) of the Fijian females responded positively to the question of outmarriage with Indians, compared to 23% of the Indian females. The last survey involved a random sample of 66 Fijians and 57 Indians, but the results concerning intermarriage are strangely absent in this report. Looking at the first two investigations, however, one can see that Fijian males looked less favorably upon intermarriage than did Indian males, while the converse occurs in the female study.

In Mamak's (1978) study on pluralism in Fiji, mixed marriages are examined in the light of social relations in Suva. The author provides a brief historical account of intermarriage, probes into some of the factors that have affected its presence – or absence, supplies a few figures (see Chapter 3), but more importantly, provides intriguing case studies of three couples who belong to this category. Through these case studies one can see the challenges and obstacles faced by the persons involved, and how they negotiate their relationships and the rearing of children. Mamak concludes from analysis of the case studies that general opposition from family and friends appears to be the norm before the marriage has taken place, but that after the marriage no

condemnation is expressed. He also concludes that there is no social stigma attached to intermarriage; instead, the couples only seem to invite general curiosity. Mamak posits that the kinship and marriage system of the Fijians and the Indians are common or at least symmetrically congruent, thus assisting in the relative success and increasing tendency of these marriages. Last, Mamak argues that the individuals involved are usually very adaptable, and that concessions in terms of religion, diet, language, and child-rearing are necessary for conjugal success.

The masters thesis by Naidu (1979) advances novel information about intermarriage on the island of Taveuni. From the outset Naidu hypothesizes that there are no marriages between Fijians and Indians. However, in the course of enquiry Naidu discovers that there are three Indian men legally married to Fijian women, and seven Indian men who “live” with their Fijian partners. Furthermore, Naidu finds that most Indian men’s first sexual encounters are with Fijian women, although these men eventually end up marrying Indian women. The author also notes that sexual awareness in a high school setting is often expressed between Indian boys and Fijian girls, but is rare between Fijian boys and Indian girls. Respondents were asked if they thought intermarriage was desirable. The reasons given by Fijians and Indians alike for not regarding intermarriage as desirable include notions that the children would have no identity, that racial purity would be compromised, and that within the Indian community Indian mothers-in-law would prefer having Indian daughters-in-law. Naidu (1979:211-212) concludes that on the whole respondents had mixed feelings about inter-ethnic marriages: a large proportion thought it desirable, but a few were prepared to practice it. Instead, Fijians and Indians preferred that their daughters marry Europeans who were perceived to have a higher status and access to “the good things in life”.

The 1977 general election constituted a dramatic turning point in Fiji’s political history. In a somewhat odd statement during the election campaign, the prime ministerial incumbent, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, apparently tells Indians that “Fijians would share their land when Indians shared their women” (McFerson 1996:28). The statement is curious for various reasons: 1) that it is made in the context of an election campaign; 2) the issue of land ownership in Fiji is a sensitive

and precarious one, continually fraught with tension. That intermarriage should be introduced as a possible “solution” throws into question and makes light of long-ingrained beliefs and laws concerning land heritage issues. It also raises delicate issues about Fijian identity; 3) it suggests that the cultural distance and separation between Fijians and Indians is keenly felt, with Fijians in particular resenting the distance; 4) Does this imply that Fijian men have been wanting to marry Indian women? Have they been considering these marriages for some time, but for the seeming Indian over-protection of their women (*purdah*, for instance) and the stringent controls over whom Indian women may marry. Or was Mara simply being flippant?

Geraghty (1997) brings an interesting perspective to the topic of intermarriage in his submission to the 1997 Constitutional Review Commission. It regards the role of the Indian man in Fiji today. Geraghty suggests that the indigenization of the Indian man is a significant factor in the increase in these liaisons. In particular he points to the more common trend of the Indian man-Fijian woman marriage, whereupon the Indian man in this case is the kind who is comfortable in Fijian society. Furthermore, he emphasizes *de facto* relationships as being the more prevalent form of these unions rather than official marriages.

In many of the accounts presented above, the overwhelming impression is that incidences of these marriages are presented as uncommon. Several commentators feel the need to enumerate the few instances they have come across. In larger general works on Fiji (for example, Quain, Foster, and Coulter), the writers elaborate on the one isolated incidence encountered in the course of research or travel. This historical survey also omits the many one-liner references to intermarriage which basically reiterate that intermarriage is rare.

Where more description is offered, interesting issues emerge. The story of Taragi reveals the close associations held between the idea of intermarriage, the prescription of Fijian identity, and land. The youth movement Viti Cauravou boldly expresses its antipathy to intermarriage and raises the issue of racial purity. In Thirlwell and in Foster, intermarriage is viewed as a possible

solution to Fiji's race problems. Inter-marriage also becomes a curious topical addition in the 1977 elections.

Cato, Mamak, Naidu and Geraghty provide deeper analyses, looking at issues such as social attitudes, marriage patterns, land, and identity, issues which are detailed and expanded upon by respondents in Chapter 4 – Factors Influencing Inter-marriage.

Conclusion

Since indenture is responsible for the strong presence of Indians in Fiji, the historical context of the labor program began this general historical survey of Fijian-Indian inter-marriage. In the study on social relations, social affairs are depicted ambiguously, through presentations of both positive and negative accounts, although over time the depiction seems to favor improving relationships. This ambiguity could well reflect the non-incidence of Fijian-Indian unions, while the latter conclusion may well tally with the growing perception of their increase. In comparison, the tone of the political story contrasts that of the social history, because for the most part it relies heavily on oppositions. Political affairs have crucially influenced the absence of these marriages, particularly through the auspices of British colonialism. In turn, the specific history of inter-marriage constantly repeats the conception of rarity, and reiterates important themes such as colonialism, land, cultural differences and social attitudes as raised elsewhere in the chapter.

The next stage of the thesis involves a statistical analysis relating to data from the 1996 census, against which the perceptions of long-term rarity, a recent increase and the presentation of marital patterns as raised in the history will be compared.

CHAPTER 3 STATISTICS ON INTERMARRIAGE

Overall historical accounts and prevailing impressions of Fijian-Indian intermarriage allude to the assumption of its rare incidence. This chapter provides an opportunity to employ a numerical perspective for addressing this assumption. To this end, the rate of intermarriage will be estimated. A related enquiry based on proportionate sizes of ethnic groups is included. Patterns of intermarriage according to gender, religion and province will be presented¹. Moreover, an attempt will be made to “humanise” the numbers by comparing them with people’s observations. It will be interesting to establish whether prevalent perceptions and the statistics match or disagree. An attempt will also be made to ascertain whether intermarriage has increased over time, and to this end an analysis based on the age of Fiji’s residents is offered. Also in this chapter an ad hoc and brief statistical history of intermarriage dependent on the few available sources in the literature will be provided.

Most of the data presented in this chapter is extracted from a goldmine of information generously provided by the Bureau of Statistics in Fiji and is based on 1996 census material². The information allows for a broad view of marital relations in Fiji. First, the Bureau of Statistics does not restrict its definition of marriage to legal, civil or religious marriages³; instead, de-facto or “consensual” unions are also accepted should the interviewed persons regard themselves as married (Bureau of Statistics 1998). And as explained in the Introduction, the definition of intermarriage as used in this thesis includes both official marriages and de-facto relationships.

Second, the overall data is not limited to Fijian and Indian marriages; it also includes information on European, Chinese and Other unions. This broader information is helpful in that it

¹ Future researchers of intermarriage may develop the analysis by examining intermarriage figures according to educational attainment or occupation.

² For further information regarding this data, please contact the Fiji Government Statistician, Mr Timoci Bainimarama at the Bureau of Statistics in Suva, Fiji.

³ For those interested in legal or official marriages only, the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Suva holds these archives.

allows for comparative analyses. Fijian-Indian marriages do not operate in isolation but are part of the greater scheme of marital relations in Fiji.

There are certain limitations inherent in using the census data⁴. The enquiry pursued here is not intended to be the final word on intermarriage statistics; rather the intention is to suggest possible scenarios that essentially reflect an exploratory work.

On a technical note, the census data presented is arranged according “head of household” and “child of head of household”. I make the presumption that in most cases, the head and the child of household are male persons.

It is also important to remember that the 1996 census is the first census conducted after 1987 coups. It has been estimated that approximately 30,000 Indians emigrated from Fiji after 1987, accounting for a significant drop in Indian population figures. In the 1986 census the Indian population stood at 49%, whereas by 1996 the figure drops to 44%. Whether or not the mass emigration of Indians (or that of Fijians, for that matter) has had an impact on the phenomenon of intermarriage remains to be seen. Whether significant numbers of Fijian-Indian intermarried couples are also represented in the emigration statistics is to be speculated upon.

Statistical information is important for gaining a numerical sense of intermarriage in Fiji. However, it is also meaningful to remember that the statistics represent real people, whose lives inform about intermarriage and greater social relations in Fiji.

Is Fijian-Indian intermarriage rare in Fiji?⁵

The 1996 Fiji census data suggests the following rate of Fijian-Indian intermarriage⁶:

⁴ A case for the limitations in employing this data is offered at the conclusion of the chapter.

⁵ Again, much thanks to Jean-Louis Rallu of the East-West Center for providing support, advice and technical expertise concerning this chapter.

⁶ The data provided for this segment captures the marriages of heads of households only and thus is incomplete; most other data supplied includes both the marriages of heads of households and children of households.

Table 1. Total Number of Marriages Recorded in 1996⁷

Fijian-Fijian + Indian-Indian marriages	103793
Fijian-European marriages	1298
Fijian-Other marriages	1175
<i>Fijian-Indian marriages</i>	<i>1008</i>
Indian-Other marriages	290
Indian-European marriages	270
Fijian-Chinese marriages	248
Indian-Chinese marriages	116
Total	108198

If the number of Fijian-Indian couples is divided by the total number of couples, the rate of Fijian-Indian intermarriage can be estimated at 0.93%, or roughly 1% of all marriages.

This figure supports the perception that Fijian-Indian marriages are rare. It can also be hypothesised that since initial Indian settlement in Fiji, intermarriage has always been rare, perhaps at a rate even far lower than that of 0.93%.

The above calculation gauges the frequency of intermarriage based on the total number of marriages in Fiji. To arrive at a more realistic index of the rarity of intermarriage, an analysis based on the proportionate sizes of each racial grouping can be used. It ought to be remembered that while the size of the Indian population far outnumbers that of the European, the incidence of Fijian-European marriages, for example, surpasses that of Fijian-Indian marriages.

In the following table, the theoretical proportions of *expected* intermarriage based on population distribution (i.e. the relative size of the various ethnic groups) is compared against the *observed* numbers of these marriages⁸.

⁷ The information provided does not contain figures for European-European, Chinese-Chinese, Other-Other, European-Chinese, European-Other, etc. marriages. The inclusion of this material would increase the total number of marriages, resulting in an even lower estimated rate of intermarriage.

⁸ See Appendix B for the methodology employed.

Table 2. Comparison of Expected and Observed Marriages

	F-I	F-E	F-C	F-O	I-E	I-C	I-O
M expected %	22.2	0.9	0.3	1.5	0.8	0.3	1.3
Observed %	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.3
Ratio expected/observed	47.2	1.1	2.6	1.7	3.4	2.3	4.1
Fe expected %	22.2	1.0	0.3	1.5	0.9	0.3	1.3
Observed %	1.2	1.4	0.3	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Ratio expected/observed	17.8	0.7	1.1	1.3	4.3	4.6	9.5

Key: F-Fijian, I-Indian, E-European, C-Chinese, O-Other

Key: M-Male, Fe-Female

NB: All designations marked "F-I" follow the format: F (male) – I (female)

From the table, observed numbers of Fijian male-Indian female marriages fall far short of what is expected, registering a ratio of 47.2. Observed Indian male-Fijian female marriages still differ substantially from what is expected, although they record a smaller proportional difference with a figure of 17.8. Compare this to Fijian-European, Fijian-Other, Indian-Chinese, and Indian-Other marriages, where the expected figure is similar to the observed (with ratios of 1.3, 2.4, 2.6, 5.5 in the male category respectively, for example). Fijian-Indian marriages seem to occur at a much smaller scale than is expected, given the population sizes of each group and given the patterns indicated via Fijian and Indian marital partnerships with Europeans, Chinese and Others.

On the whole, the majority of respondents supported the view that Fijian-Indian marriages are rare and insignificant. Here are some of their comments: "Ten years ago, you could single out Fijian-Indian couples but now it's not so easy", "Ten to fifteen years ago, if there was such a couple, it would be the talk of the town." Some boldly estimated proportionate figures: "When I was young, it was 2 or 3 out of 100", "For every 1000 marriages, there are 5 or 6 intermarriages." One person correctly summed up the situation: "There is less in proportion to the rest of the population."

Fewer respondents ascertained that these marriages are common. "There are quite a lot now," one admitted. One confidently estimated that they represent 25-30 out of 100 marriages.

Some of those who advocate this line also seemed to have a higher agenda in mind, that is, that it now be acknowledged that Fijian-Indian marriages do happen in Fiji.

Only two said that there were plenty of these marriages. One even said, tongue-in-cheek, “Too many.”

Gender patterns in intermarriage

There is a universal belief that there are more Fijian female-Indian male unions than there are the Fijian male-Indian female variety. There also seems to be a popular assumption that Indian females outmarry the least. The following table presents gender patterns in intermarriage based on crude marriage figures only⁹.

Table 3. Gender Patterns in Intermarriage

Females		Males	
Fijian females married to Europeans	806	Fijian males married to Others	502
<i>Fijian females married to Indians</i>	736	Fijian males married to Europeans	492
Fijian females married to Others	673	<i>Fijian males married to Indians</i>	272
Fijian females married to Chinese	176	Fijian males married to Chinese	72
<i>Indian females married to Fijians</i>	272	<i>Indian males married to Fijians</i>	736
Indian females married to Europeans	121	Indian males married to Others	207
Indian females married to Others	83	Indian males married to Europeans	149
Indian females married to Chinese	39	Indian males married to Chinese	77

As can be seen, Fijian female-Indian male marriages are far more numerous than the converse. These constitute 73% of the total number of Fijian-Indian marriages. Fijian male-Indian female marriages represent 27%. Research respondents agreed that Fiji’s intermarriages seem to follow these patterns.

Fijians tend to marry Europeans more than they do Indians. Interestingly, respondents supported this conclusion but also believed that there were more marriages with Chinese¹⁰.

⁹ A more accurate reading of gender patterns based on the proportional sizes of each ethnic grouping is available in Table 2, “Comparison of Expected and Observed Marriages”.

¹⁰ Anecdotal evidence suggests that Chinese (male) immigrants have outmarried in greater numbers with Fijians since their first arrivals in the early twentieth century. Perhaps the figures accounting for fewer Chinese-Fijian marriages is due to the census classification system in which one’s race is captured

It also appears to be the case that Indian females do outmarry less than any other group.

What also emerges is the perception that Fijian males outmarry considerably less than do Fijian females. This raises an interesting question, for this point was not *directly* broached anywhere during research nor found in my general readings on Fiji. This idea has not been specifically stated anywhere to my knowledge¹¹, and requires further exploration. The infrequency of unions between Fijian males and Indian females can also be understood given that both Fijian males and Indian females appear to be less prone to outmarriage.

Religious patterns in intermarriage

Fiji is blessed with a plethora of religious denominations, given the cultural diversity of its inhabitants. The 1996 census data accounts for at least 22 different religions. The most popular and dominant religion is the Christian faith at 58% of the population, and Christianity for the most part is the religious domain of the Fijians. Most Indians practise Hinduism (78%), with a smaller percentage following Islam (16%). Various denominations and sects within these larger religious orders add to the variety. The two main Hindu sects represented in Fiji are the Sanatan Dharm and the Arya Samaj. The Islamic variants are the Sunni and Ahmadiyya.

In the 1996 Bureau of Statistics census material denominational classifications are used. In terms of Fijian-Indian intermarriage, the following statistics account for the religion of the head of household.

according to the race of the father. The Chinese are perceived that to have assimilated better into Fiji culture.

¹¹ Some respondents did hint at or indirectly suggest reasons for this pattern – see Chapter 4, “Factors Influencing Intermarriage”.

Table 4. Total number of intermarriages by religion

Religion	Total	%
Methodist	322	31.94
Catholic	146	14.48
Sanatan Dharm (Hindu)	104	10.32
Assembly of God	79	7.84
Sunni (Muslim)	66	6.55
Other Christian	53	5.26
Other Hindu	50	4.96
Seventh Day Adventist	44	4.37
Other Muslim	34	3.37
Jehovahs Witness	31	3.08
Latter Day Saints	19	1.88
Christian Mission Fellowship	11	1.09
Arya Samaj (Hindu)	9	0.89
Apostolic	7	0.69
Gospel	6	0.60
No Religion	8	0.79
Anglican	9	0.89
Ahmaddiya (Muslim)	4	0.40
Baptist	2	0.20
Presbyterian	1	0.10
Salvation Army	1	0.10
Sikh	1	0.10
Other	1	0.10
Bahai	0	0.00
Total	1008	100.0

The greatest number of marriages take place between Fijians and Indians who belong to the Christian faiths. Since the marriage data is recorded according to the religion of the head of household, it is assumed that the Christian numbers speak for mostly Indian husbands. This is an interesting outcome considering Indian Christians only comprise 6% of the Indian population. Sanatan Dharm Hindu-Fijian marriages occupy third position, while the fifth highest number of intermarriages occur where the head of household is Sunni Muslim.

Three informants stated that they thought more of these marriages took place between Muslim men and Fijian females. This is an interesting conclusion given that the figures accord only a fifth placing for this particular arrangement.

Residential patterns of intermarriage by province

Table 5. Total number of intermarriages by province

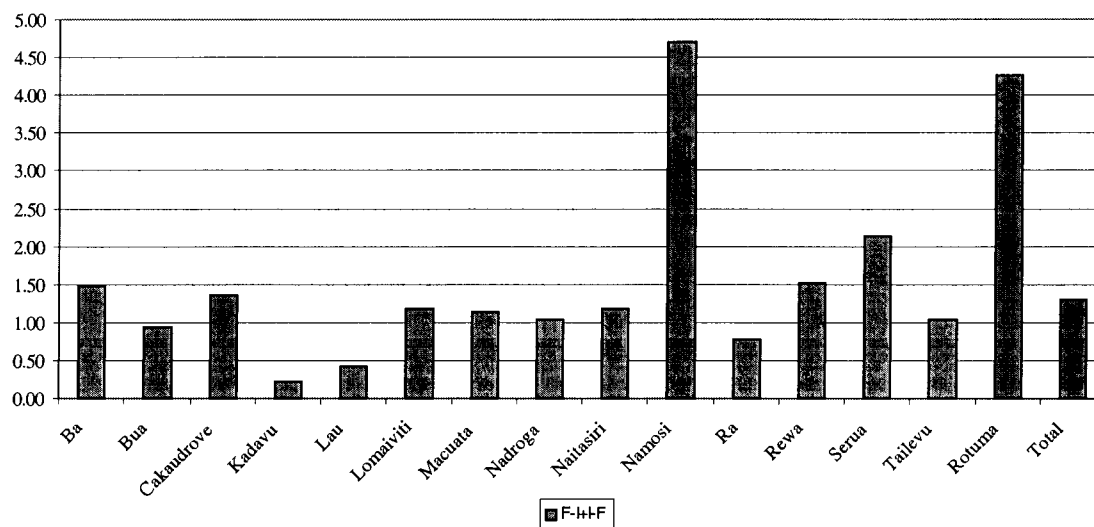
Province	Total
Ba	312
Naitasiri	150
Rewa	153
Macuata	91
Cakaudrove	60
Tailevu	50
Nadroga	56
Ra	24
Serua	33
Lomaiviti	19
Bua	14
Namosi	27
Rotuma	12
Lau	5
Kadavu	2
Total	1008

Ba records the highest number of Fijian-Indian marriages in Fiji. This is not surprising, given the historically higher population of Indians in the area. Ba Province contains the major sugar towns of Ba, Lautoka and Nadi. Naitasiri, the province with the second highest number of intermarriages, is the location of most of the peri-urban area of Suva (Bureau of Statistics 1998). The capital city of Suva, which accounts for the largest urban population in Fiji, is located in Rewa Province. Macuata and Cakaudrove were also sugar centres historically and the urban area of Labasa is located in Macuata.

Research informants unanimously conferred on the “west”, that is, Ba Province (Ba town, Lautoka, Nadi and Tavua) as the site of most intermarriages in Fiji. Some did not believe that there were many such marriages in Suva, although Labasa town received several nods of support.

The following chart looks at residential patterns of intermarriage wherein the size of the provincial population is taken into account.

Figure 1. Proportion of intermarriages per 1000 of provincial population



According to this analysis¹², Namosi province accounts for the highest number of intermarriages per 1000 of its population. Serua, which contains the largely Indian town of Navua, rates second. Ba Province, which records the highest number of intermarriages, comes a mere fourth. No simple explanation can be provided to account for these outcomes, and as such invites future clarification.

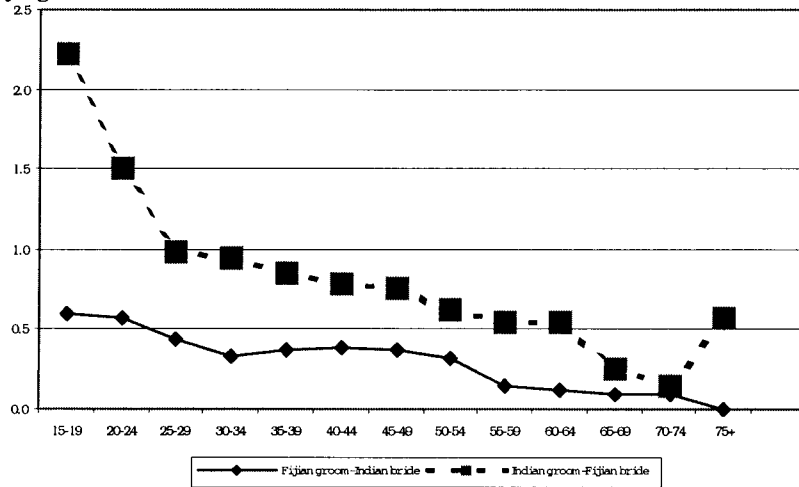
Intermarriage data according to age suggesting an increase

In order to speculate on the hypothesis of increased incidences of Fijian-Indian marriages, the Bureau of Statistics was asked to provide the following information based on the age of the census respondents¹³.

¹² For the purposes of this enquiry, the Rotuman values will be discounted given the distinct history accorded to Rotuma and given my perception that the figure seems to be unusually high.

¹³ The statistics provided account for heads of households only; it does not contain figures for children of households who might also be married. This is not the perfect method in which to gauge an increase in the rate of intermarriages; however, it was considered to be the best approach considering the limitations of the data available at the time.

Figure 2. Proportions (%) of intermarriages between Fijians and Indians by age of heads of households



This graph¹⁴ shows that the proportions of intermarriage are greater in the younger age brackets and generally decreases as the age group increases (with the curious exception for Indian male-Fijian female couplings from 70-74 to 75+). The sharp descents notable in the 15-19 to 25-29 Indian groom-Fijian bride sectors illustrates a constant and rapid increase at the younger ages. This leads one to conclude that intermarriage has been increasing over time.

A few research informants confidently stated similar conclusions. Interestingly, upon introducing the title of my thesis project to two independent informants, they immediately announced without any prompting that “there are more cases of Indian women marrying Fijian men now.”

A statistical history of intermarriage

Published statistics on Fijian-Indian marriages are rare. This general absence parallels the historical deficiency of scholarly attention to the topic of intermarriage.

The 1946 census (Gittins 1947) carries the first (and only?) census reference to the number of Fijian-Indian offspring, which enables one to speculate upon the number of Fijian-

¹⁴ See Appendix, Table A.6 for calculated figures.

Indian unions at that time. There were 100 males and 93 females classified as Fijian-Indian, totalling 193.

Mamak (1978) provides figures for registered Fijian-Indian marriages for 1971. In this year, a grand total of 8 Fijian women had married Indian men, and 2 Fijian men had married Indian women. Hence the total number of registered intermarriages is 10, reflecting percentages of 0.32% and 0.13% respectively for Fijian women-Indian men and Indian women-Fijian male partnerships.

Geraghty (1997:17) conducted a study of official records for January 1979 and January 1981, and reports that the percentage of Fijian women-Indian men marriages for those years was 0.55% and 0.16% for Indian women-Fijian men marriages, indicating a slight increase since 1971.

Conclusion

It has been shown that the statistics support the notion that intermarriage is rare, reporting an estimated rate of 0.93% recorded unions in 1996. A more intricate survey based on the proportionate sizes of each ethnic group indicates that Fijian-Indian marriages occur at a level far lower than is expected, thus emphasising the rarity.

One major observed pattern involves the dominance of the Indian male-Fijian female marriage, which is in keeping with historical information alluded to previously. As expected, Fijian male-Indian female alliances are reported as fewer. Looking at the broader scope of general intermarriage in Fiji, it would appear that Fijian females and Indians males tend to outmarry more, while Fijian males and Indian females outmarry less. While explanations for the Indian female preference for inmarriage are readily available (see Chapter 4), there appears to be a hole in the discourse regarding the case of the Fijian male. This absence invites clarification in future research.

Looking at the figures on religion, more intermarriages seem to occur within Christian households. And even though Indian male-Fijian female marriages predominate, marriages of Sanatan Dharm Hindu and Sunni Muslim males to Fijian females only register third and fifth place respectively.

A provincial perspective based on raw numbers indicates that Ba province, where cane farming has historically predominated, reveals the highest number of marriages, followed by Naitasiri and Rewa, the peri-urban and urban areas of Suva. When these raw numbers are taken into consideration with the population size of each province, Namosi, Serua and Rewa record the highest proportions of marriages.

The analysis based on the age of heads of households shows that intermarriage has increased over time. In particular, intermarriage in the youngest age brackets indicates a rapid increase.

As explained in the Introduction, this study of intermarriage is an exploratory work. The statistical analysis here is based on macro data provided by census office in Fiji. More intricate analyses might be possible in future studies given the existence of a micro data set. While the census data is a worthy source of information, there are limitations involved as well.

Judging by the procedures followed by census enumerators (those who conduct the household to household interviews), the data procured might not reflect precise values. For example, the person being interviewed is asked which race he or she *considers* he or she belongs to (Bureau of Statistics 1998). Similarly, census personnel are instructed to accept the answer on marital status as it is given to them (no questions asked). The Bureau of Statistics is itself aware of the discrepancies involved. For example, it notes that in Fijian de facto partnerships, young males are inclined to state their status as single, while their female partners declare themselves as married.

The data provided is organised according to head of household. The assumption is made that in most cases, the head of household would be a male. It would be interesting to establish

what percentage of that category actually comprises females, and whether that percentage is enough to significantly affect the prior assumption. Similarly, the data presented is not always uniform or complete, so that, for example, the calculation for the rate of intermarriage is affected to some degree by the absence of figures on other cross-cultural and endogamous marriages.

Finally, a better method for determining the increase in intermarriage would be to compare data using previous censuses.

So far, the historical record and statistics promote the idea of the rarity of intermarriage. They also agree that Indian male-Fijian female unions are the most common and are likely to occur in Ba province. In the historical account some clues are provided as to why these observations occur as they do. In the next chapter, “Factors Influencing Intermarriage”, the results of the fieldwork interviews are unravelled. The opinions of research respondents help to fill in the gaps, and in the process the hand of colonial and cultural forces, and modernisation and education become apparent.

CHAPTER 4
FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERMARRIAGE

It was hard in the beginning. I worked hard to keep the family going and also to prove to my in-laws that I could save and provide for my children. I'm proud that all my children are working.

female Fijian informant A1 married to an Indian

Marriage to an Indian is hard. Marriage to a Muslim is hard.

female Fijian informant G1 married to an Indian

My in-laws have been good to me. My mother-in-law looks after our children...People don't find it unusual that I am married to an Indian because they know about it, they are used to it.

female Fijian informant O2 married to an Indian

His mother did not make an effort to attend our wedding. My family too was very reluctant but they fulfilled their obligations to me. I can clearly remember the people on his side of the family who attended the wedding...(However) as soon as the baby was born my mother-in-law seemed to come around.

female Fijian informant V1 married to an Indian

The above quotes are excerpts from interviews taken with four of my Fijian female informants who happen to be married to Indian men. These quotes have been chosen because they seem to epitomize the women's conjugal experiences. The excerpts hint at cultural conflict, in-law antipathy and/or acceptance, and the desire for approval from one's in-laws. A closer reading of the women's stories reveals a host of circumstances, reasons and factors that have contributed to their choice of partner and continue to affect their marriages.

Since it has been estimated that the Fijian-Indian intermarriage rate in 1996 rests at a 0.93%, one might naturally question why the incidence of these marriages is so low, even after the lengthy period of substantial Indian residence in Fiji. In this chapter the reasons, factors, and conditions that may provide answers to this quandary are explored. Apart from addressing reasons for the low incidence of intermarriage, respondents also intimate at a new emerging model that suggests that these unions are on the increase. Much of the material presented here is organized around the opinions and views of research respondents, and this is supplemented and complemented with analyses from Fiji and cross-cultural marriage scholars.

In essence, the combination of colonialism and strong attachments to culture powerfully affect the nature in which intermarriage (or the lack of it) evolves in Fiji. The British colonial strategy effectively segregated the Fijian and Indian communities, and in so doing, imposed and then strove to preserve a certain brand of Fijian-ness upon the indigenous population (Robertson and Sutherland 2001), which previous to that had never subscribed to one homogeneous cultural model anyway. The early Indian laborer community, far from being a cultural unity itself, was left to its own devices, and while creating new cultural forms in adaptation to the new environment (the development of Fiji Hindi, for example), also retained certain key elements of pan-Indian culture which themselves hindered prospects for intermarriage. Not only did the two groups live according to separate cultural systems, but colonial policy also legislated against interaction between them.

This powerful structure of segregation is adhered to over time in Fiji, with the development of schools, political parties and even residential communities (Indian settler settlements, Fijian peri-urban villages (Geraghty 1997)) being based on racial lines. Simultaneously though, some barriers begin to break down upon the encroachment of globalization, which sees increasing urbanization, engagement in wage labor, and a more multicultural educational policy being implemented. As a consequence, it appears that Fijian-Indian marriages have also begun to increase. The changing role of women plays a critical part in this process.

Throughout research, informants provided an array of possible theories to account for Fiji's intermarriage record. A multitude of topics were offered: culture, religion, education, sport, hairstyles, modernization, sexuality, marriage values etc. Many of their arguments are a confusion of interlocking and multi-layered factors that defy their description as isolated entities and refuse simplistic reductions. The phenomenon of intermarriage in Fiji cannot be anything more than a complex, complicated process, informed by a host of sometimes contradictory, sometimes agreeable, sometimes detached, sometimes connected components and processes.

What is also fascinating about the material is that the informants' presentations reflect personal perceptions – these are not ideas extracted only from “objective”, “scientific” scholarly reports but are the results of experience and observation over time, reflecting their personal backgrounds, values and motives, and individual and social group orientation.

An analysis of the interview material illustrates that the success rate of these marriages, issues of compromise, the reactions of family and community members, etc. are a source of interest. People reveal their own stories – sometimes amusing and sometimes sad, but always meaningful. We gain an insider's perspective into the internal conflicts and differences that characterize and affect both the Fijian and Indian communities. Interviewees also do not limit themselves to the topic of intermarriage: broader issues are introduced. For example, general social relations and Fiji's volatile political situation pepper and enrich the material.

It has to be remembered when viewing this material that none of the items functions alone to cause or prevent intermarriage; rather, intermarriage (or the absence of it) comes about as a consequence of a combination of factors working together.

Colonialism

Without Fiji's specific brand of British colonialism, Fiji's history (and the history of intermarriage) might have followed a totally different course. Gordon's desire to preserve the Fijian race and culture meant relegating them to the villages under the guidance of a native administration. For example, early colonial policy prevented male Fijians from leaving the village to enter wage employment if it was seen to conflict with communal obligations (Bain 1988). In so doing, a particular model of the “Fijian way of life” was imposed upon on what was essentially a disparate set of cultures and people (Robertson and Sutherland 2001¹). The conversion of Fijians to Christianity is also an integral aspect of the wider project of colonialism. Today, Christianity,

¹ The authors also hint that the policy of preservation disguised the more important British imperative to ensure social (and political) control.

communalism, and the top-down authority of the chiefs are viewed as the “traditional” Fijian way of life (Kaplan 1993).

The presence of Indians also owes itself to the peculiar kind of colonialism enacted in Fiji. The global network of British colonialism meant that there had already been a history of Indian indentured labor in places such as Trinidad, Mauritius and South Africa, and Fiji’s first governor’s own administrative experience in two British colonies provides the framework upon which the indenture program is laid out in Fiji. Since Gordon feared the potentially negative impact of plantation labor on the wellbeing of the Fijian race (Lal 1992), his experience and the already established system of indentured labor worldwide facilitated the program in Fiji. Upon arrival in Fiji, Indian workers operated under a separate system of colonial administration. They also resided separately, mainly in the plantations. The rigors of agricultural labor meant that laborers were too tired to pursue leisurely pastimes, including interaction with Fijians.

They just couldn’t interact. Also they worked till late. They would probably come home, eat just a little bit, and want to rest with their families. They had no time for other stuff. So you see social and economic pressures had something to do with it.

Indian informant J1

Hence, the overall strategy of British administration in Fiji ensured that the two peoples lived under separate systems and different ways of life, with the Fijian being privileged “tradition” and the Indian being exploited as an “agricultural implement” (Naidu 1980). Moreover, they lived in two separate locations: the Fijian in the village and the Indian in the plantation estates. Fijian and Indian concerns appeared to be lesser players in the greater colonial plan: colonial interests superseded and directed Fijian and Indian concerns, and Fijians and Indians were related to and interacted with each other through the agency of the European colonial.

Not only did the two communities live apart, but the colonial administration wanted to keep it that way. Certain regulations were consequently enforced to ensure this. Indians were forbidden from living in or near Fijian villages (Mayer 1963), and Fijians were punished for

sheltering refugee Indians (Ali 1979). Hence, not only were the Fijians and Indians physically unable to mix on a regular basis, but the enactment of laws reinforced this. Naturally, the lack of effective intercourse would have contributed to the absence of intermarriage.

The colonial government's divide and rule policy, labeled "apartheid" in some quarters, sets in place a structural framework which promotes the segregation of Fijians and Indians. This is a long-lasting legacy which only in recent times has slowly begun to dissolve. The separation of Fijians and Indians via colonial means results in cultural segregation, and this is to have an enormous impact on consequences for intermarriage.

Culture

Cultural and religious differences² are advanced as the primary barriers to intermarriage. Both cultures are broadly portrayed as being very strong and very, very different.

Social organization

Culturally the two cultures are so different. Diametrically opposed. On the one side you have the communal, on the other you have a more individual, nuclear type family.

Indian informant F1

This is a commonly-held perception of a crucial distinction between the Fijian and Indian communities. The communal character attributed to Fijian culture is linked to what is considered to be traditional Fijian social structure wherein kinship ties to the extended family within the village and between villages are continually reinforced through ongoing social, cultural and economic obligations and exchange relations. Cooperation is sought and expected regarding land use, birth, death and marriage rituals, food preparation and exchange, and domestic and village-wide chores and activities. This notion of communalism also figures in family composition. The traditional Fijian family structure is not confined to the Western notion of the nuclear family (the concept of the nuclear family being equated with that of individualism). A boy may have more

than one “father”, for example. His uncles on his father’s side are also called “father” and one’s behavior to one’s fathers ought to follow that of one’s relationship to one’s own father (see Ravuvu 1983). Furthermore, the communal aspect is also apparent in the occupation of a *bure* (house) by not only a nuclear family but also one’s other relatives.

There is an impression that the Fijian household receives constant visitors, where an unspoken “open house” policy functions. The Fijian custom called *kerekere* (literally “to request”) prevails whereby one cannot refuse requests for material items from one’s relatives or neighbors. According to Indian informant F1, “Marriage into a communal arrangement would mean uncertainty about one’s possessions because everything there is communally shared.” This is one aspect of Fijian culture which differs markedly from the Indian, and conforms with the common stereotype that Fijians are a sharing people and Indians are tight-fisted. Another Indian respondent O1 said, “An Indian woman will think about what will happen if she marries a Fijian. She will know that she will inherit a whole family and there’ll be people coming and going and they’ll never have any money for themselves”. Therefore for certain Indian families, the communal character of Fijian culture acts as a deterrent to intermarriage.

Contemporary Fijian life is characterized by an increasing drift from the villages to urban areas. The basic kinship principle does not seem to have changed in a very dramatic way. Although nuclear families constitute more of the family norm in urban settings, it is still quite common for members of the extended family to also reside in the family home.

Indian culture by contrast is often identified as individualistic and oriented to the nuclear family model. There is a measure of some truth in this description. Indentured immigrants came to Fiji mostly as individuals, with men outnumbering women. Some marriages were contracted between these individuals in the recruitment depots in India and upon arrival in Fiji. Very few family units made the journey (Gillion 1962). Upon leaving India, the migrants also left behind a familiar social setting in which the social structure was based on intricate, tightly-structured

² Religion will be covered in a separate section.

clustered village arrangements. Kinship ties were strong and centered around hierarchical authority, the caste group and the village (Mayer 1973:5). The harsh and foreign conditions of plantation life that greeted the immigrants upon arrival in Fiji could not allow for the development of social models similar to the home experience. There was little recourse to customary dispute councils (*panchayat*) or to an established network of kin in times of need and support, especially at the beginning of the indenture experience. Further difficulties included barriers of language, disparate regional origins, and religious differences. There are numerous stories of sexual jealousy, violence and suicides which occurred as the result of the difficult and unfamiliar environment of the plantations (see Lal 2000).

New liaisons and relations of kin had to be forged in the unfriendly plantation environment. One can surmise that the new family composition was comprised simply of a wife, a husband, and their children living in the “lines”³. New associations were formed. Bonds that had developed between fellow passengers on the indenture ships matured into lifelong ties which approximated those of brotherhood. Even religious differences between Muslims and Hindus were attenuated because the laborers were forced to concentrate on the more immediate sources of their hardship: the back-breaking, relentless work on the plantations and the sometimes regular victimization inflicted upon them by overseers.

As indentured laborers completed their indenture tenure and sought to make a living on farms, they set up home in scattered homesteads wherever good land was available (Gillion 1962). Hence the individual character of Indian settlement in Fiji is largely a product of the indenture system and economic necessity. Furthermore, although it is generally perceived that Indian families today are nuclear in organization, it is not uncommon for the parents of the groom or grandparents to also reside in the family home.

³ The lines were housing structures containing dividing walls. These rooms accommodated three bunks and were either allocated to three single men or to family units (Mayer 1963).

Since social organization is often deemed to be core to the identity, attitudes and customary ways of a culture, perhaps the fact that the social structures of the Fijian and Indian communities are considered to be so wildly different helps influence the belief that this is a central factor in the low incidence of intermarriage. Thus, if the key organizing principles in a culture are seen to be so polarized, how can two persons from those opposing cultures (and their families) get along at all, especially in the intimacy of marriage?

Attachment to culture

In addition to being perceived as “very different”, both the Fijian and Indian cultures are also depicted as being “very strong”. This viewpoint implies a cultural rigidity of sorts, i.e. the inability to be flexible or open to change or new influences. “When people get rid of their rigid attachment there will be more intermarriages” (Fijian informant T2, clenching his fist close to his heart).

In particular, the Indian culture is singled out (by Indian informants themselves) as being more reserved and strict than the Fijian. One informant (J1) compared the Indian culture to other Asian cultures (the Chinese and the Filipino) as all being strong in culture. The insinuation here is that cultural strength is a natural condition, common to many peoples around the world – and that the Fiji Indian attachment to their culture is no different. Cultural rigidity is therefore understandable given this context.

Indian culture is also charged as being in a state of cultural freeze, for “while there has been a holding onto the past since indenture, culture in India itself keeps changing” (Indian informant L1). There might be a grain of truth in this latter statement, for given the unsettling experience of life in the adverse environment of the plantations, immigrants might have sought refuge and solace in familiar cultural rituals and values (Ali 1981). With geographic distance and an absence of ongoing contact with the homeland culture during indenture, it is also likely that the cultural memory of the Indian laborers will have remained stationary in the remembered past.

One strong opinion maintains that the Indian culture (in Fiji, in India, and elsewhere) regards itself as a superior culture. Mayer's (1973) research amongst Indian residents in three settlements corroborates this. "No matter where Indians have gone, they've kept to their own culture" (Indian informant I1). Here, the Indian cultural superiority complex is argued to be evident in the general Indian plantation diaspora, where it seems that Indians have not wanted to assimilate or integrate into the societies they have settled in⁴.

Elsewhere Indians have been urged to take the initiative in bringing about necessary cultural change for a more harmonious co-existence (Jalal 2001). The challenge for Indians is to either preserve a way of life or to evolve one that is mutually compatible with that of the whole of Fiji. And since Fijians are acknowledged as the first settlers of the country, Indians have been exhorted to take up the gauntlet, since the greater responsibility to commitment to Fiji and their identity as Indo-Fijians lies with themselves.

By the same token, the Fijian culture is not exempt from internal criticism either. Just as the Indian experience is noted for the "cultural freeze phenomenon", so too is the Fijian. "Fijian culture froze when the colonials arrived" (Fijian informant W1). Critics and scholars alike have often reflected upon the wisdom of Gordon's protectionist policy for the Fijian community (Kaplan 1988, Spate 1990, Lal 1992). Keeping the Fijian culture preserved in stone may have denied Fijians from active participation in the modern economy, for example. The keen interest shown by Fijians today regarding education, as advanced by a few informants, suggests that the Fijian community was somewhat slower in taking full advantage of the opportunities schooling had to offer probably as a result of colonial policy.

⁴ Beginning in the early 1800s large numbers of Indians travelled to various British colonies (e.g. Fiji, the West Indies, South Africa, Mauritius, Surinam, Malaysia) to work as indentured labourers. While it is difficult to summarise their across-the-board experiences, it is fair to say that certain traditional elements (such as the role of the woman, the propensity for arranged marriages) seem to have remained firmly entrenched. On the other hand, the enthusiasm with which diasporic Indians have taken to education and business has also led to important changes (the family model resembling more Western characteristics today) (Davids 1964). And if cross-cultural marriages are deemed to be suitable indices of assimilation or integration, a cursory glance at the scholarship on Indian marriages in South Africa, Trinidad, Guyana,

Therefore a strong attachment to one's (traditional) culture is seen as a deterrent to intercultural marriages. This may have been especially true of the past in Fiji. However there are definite signs that both communities are undergoing cultural change, especially in the light of modernization and urbanization.

Marriage practice and marriage values

The importance of marriage and attitudes to general intermarriage in Indian culture

Marriage is considered to be a key institution in Indian culture and is highly valued (Smith & Jayawardena 1959:349). Marriage is an important undertaking within the broader Indian culture regardless of one's religious beliefs. All adults are expected to marry. In Hinduism, marriage is deemed a sacrament; to be unmarried is to be unholy (Lateef 1985:13). The Islamic tradition encourages marriage to foster social order, to promote the family, and also to regulate sexuality. Given this insight into the fundamental importance of marriage, one can imagine how considerations of matrimony with persons of other races, religions, or ethnicities etc. become serious issues in the Indian worldview.

Endogamy appears to be the favored form of marriage in Indian society. Marriage within one's own religion, caste, ethnicity (i.e. North Indian, South Indian, Gujarati, Punjabi etc.) and race is generally preferred. Unions between Hindus and Muslims are especially frowned upon, given their historical mutually contrary relationship, and granted their differences in ideology, custom and practice. Hindus still generally marry Hindus, and Muslims only Muslims. North Indians do not marry South Indians. Thirlwell's (1996:113) study in the 1960s on a South Indian Labasa settlement reveals a specific hierarchy of preferred spouses: a South Indian must marry, first, a cross-cousin, second, other relatives, third, other South Indians, and fourth other Indians. Christian Indians who married either Hindus or Muslims found themselves excommunicated in

Surinam, and Malaysia indicates that endogamy still appears to be preferred (see Jayawardena 1960, Kuper 1967, Schwartz 1967, Smith & Jayawardena 1967, Speckmann 1967, Sandhu 1969).

this community. In the case of Punjabi and Gujarati males who came to Fiji as free settlers, marriage partners were not sought out from the existing pool of indenture descendants; instead they arranged for wives from continental India. There are of course slight variations in attitudes towards exogamy within certain Indian sub-groups. For example, one can assume that racial endogamy is not so important for Indian Christians. For Muslims racial exogamy is tolerable for as long as the inmarrying partner becomes a convert.

Interestingly, exogamy across caste and religious boundaries did occur during indenture. The primary reason was the shortage of available and compatible marriage mates. My own great-grandfather was a Hindu who married my Muslim great-grandmother. However, the overriding pressure is for marriage to remain within religious, ethnic and racial confines even today (Lateef 1993, Singh 1998).

The Fijian attitude to general intermarriage

Unlike in broader Indian culture where general intermarriage is ideologically frowned upon, there appears to be no one overriding authority or dogma in Fijian culture that determines attitudes towards mixed marriages. Fijians are perceived to outmarry out more than Indians into European, Indian, Chinese and Other families (see Cato 1955). Hence it would seem, at least superficially, that there is no active or vocal opposition to cross-cultural marriages. Beneath the surface however, lies a tacitly-accepted hierarchy of suitable spouses for Fijians.

It's OK for Fijians to marry a European, and a Polynesian, but it's not OK for them to marry Indians. Melanesians, mmm, are not so good either...And even if you marry a Fijian who is not a blood relative, at least it's a Fijian. There seems to be a social order: the whites at the top, then the semi-white and so forth.

Fijian informant P2

European spouses (especially husbands) are generally viewed as being good catches because they are perceived as having better access to wealth (Naidu 1979).

Arranged marriages

One significant obstacle to marriages between Fijians and Indians is the arranged marriage, for long a core aspect of social life in India and amongst the Indian community in Fiji. In arranged marriages the choice of one's marital partner is organized by one's parents. In the strict traditional sense the individuals concerned have little input into the selection of spouse. However some strictures are changing today: Lateef (1993:205) documents how the custom of arranged marriages is undergoing 'reconstruction' in Fiji, retaining old features and incorporating new influences.

If an Indian woman in contemporary Fiji has received a meager education or has no paid employment, or works in low-paying jobs, she usually has little choice but to accept this form of wedlock. This woman is economically dependent on her parents' benevolence and must rely on an arranged marriage to secure her future as a wife according to Indian custom. An NGO-sponsored survey found that most 15 year old girls still desired arranged marriages (Indian informant F1). The lower educational attainment of these young women is used to explain this particular outcome.

The arranged marriage is seen as a practical mode of spousal selection:

Arranged marriages also work out well because you know that your parents know your in-laws. Indian parents are quite willing to intervene if anything goes wrong...For instance, I know of a girl who had an unhappy marriage; as soon as her parents found out that her husband was not treating her well, they took her back home.

Indian informant C1

Having one's parents involved provides a sense of security to the child being wedded in the possible scenario of a marriage going wrong⁵.

Most respondents believe that arranged marriages are still very common in Fiji. It is also perceived that they are more predominant in the rural areas (Benson 1977), due to factors such as poverty, isolation and inferior access to education.

In the context of Fijian-Indian intermarriage, arranged marriages combined with the preference for endogamous marriages (according to religion, ethnicity, caste or race) act as a barrier. When one's parents are in the business of selecting a suitable spouse, and considerations of religion, race etc. are integral to the process, the probability of one's parents selecting a spouse from a race dissimilar to one's own is minimal.

Arranged marriages are also undergoing some transformations. It is suggested that there is some element of choice on the part of women contemplating married life today (Indian informant S2). The modern variant on the arranged marriage discussed by Lateef (1993), i.e. the "arranged love marriage", seems to emerge out of clandestine romances concealed from parents. Once the couple is found out, the parents will usually attempt to negotiate a marriage in order to uphold the daughter's and the family's honor. These transformations illustrate that this important Indian custom of arranged marriages is capable of change, carrying possible implications for the phenomenon of intermarriage.

It may not be obvious or top-of-mind to readers that traditional Fijian marriages were also arranged in the past (see Ravuvu 1983). Marriages were commonly organized between cross-cousins. Usually the boy's parents made the choice of a suitable wife for their son and consulted directly with the girl's family, and often the chosen daughter-in-law was related to the boy's mother in order to ease the adjustment process for the girl and her in-laws. In some cases, neither boy nor girl knew that marital negotiations were taking place for secrecy was often paramount.

Benson (1977:12) states that 50 years ago marriages were still being arranged by parents. By this time (circa 1927) considerable numbers of Indians were present in Fiji, and it can thus be deduced that with arranged marriages being the norm in both the Fijian and Indian communities, marital associations between members of those two groups might have been difficult to come by.

⁵ On the contrary, Lateef (1990:59) contends that where there are cases of domestic violence in the marital union, the powerful ideology that stresses the importance of the permanence of marriage means that

Love marriages

Love has no barriers.
Indian informant L1

Love knows no boundaries.
Indian informant E2

Love is everything.
Indian informant S1

Arranged marriages no longer seem to be the norm in Fijian culture, and as Lateef (1993) points out, Indian arranged marriages are in the process of some transformations. The increasing popularity of love marriages can be attributed to modern values learnt through processes of urbanisation, increasing exposure to foreign media, and through education.

In terms of Fijian marriage, Christianity has also been influential. It is as early as the 1920s when we hear of Fijians undertaking new forms of courtship and matrimony due to factors such as employment, access to cash, and resettlement in other areas (see for example, Brewster 1922). The majority of Fijians today appear to have the freedom to choose their own spouses.

According to Ravuvu (1983), previously elopement was sometimes resorted to when the parents did not agree to a match. These elopements might be viewed as variations on the “love marriage”, and as such, challenged the traditional Fijian convention of a marriage being not just a union between individuals but a reinforcement of social ties between two groups. In these situations, the eloping couple would depend upon the support of relatives whom by custom had the ability to protect them and act on their behalf. However, elopements were seen as a humiliation to the families concerned.

Love marriages also seem to be on the increase within Indian culture. Witness the importance given to love in the three statements above. The increased presence of these marriages represent a dramatic change from the ideology and values associated with traditional arranged marriages. Most love marriages are connected to the urban, educated elite of Fiji (Lateef 1993).

women’s suffering is tolerated and taken for granted.

However, Lateef indicates that while love marriages seem to be more prevalent amongst the Indian community, there are still certain restrictions to contend with. Once again, the Indian antipathy to marriage outside of religion, class or race plays a role in circumscribing one's choice of spouse.

Two of the marriages I was privy to seem to have evolved from love. In the first case, the individuals' relationship seemed to begin as a mere friendship based on talking. And despite the resistance and in some instances overt hostility displayed by the Indian parents, the Indian man still pursued the Fijian lady, eventually marrying her and producing a large brood of children. The second conjugal relationship came about when the Indian man fell in love at first sight with his Fijian best friend's sister.

The relaxation of customary Fijian marital practices implies a level of freedom in which Fijians can operate in order to secure marriage partners. We can contrast this relative freedom to the still dominant preference for arranged marriages in the Indian community.

Root (2001:6) makes the powerful argument that "love" is the primary motivation behind the interracial marriages that are occurring in the USA today. Love seems to transcend barriers of racism, fear and hatred. Love is involved in a quiet revolution that challenges long-held culturally-ingrained negative attitudes and feelings about the other. In Fiji, informants talked about love not only in terms of intermarriage, but also in terms of creating better relations between people in the wider community. To many, love appears to be a common denominator in the pursuit for improved social relations in the country.

The role of Indian women concerning marriage: purdah

As demonstrated previously, the number of Indian women-Fijian men associations is significantly less than the converse. The explanation for this trend may lie in the finely defined role expected of Indian females in society. As seen earlier, marriage is highly valued in Indian culture. Married women apparently have a higher status than unmarried women (Lateef 1990:47).

To this end, women are traditionally reared to become housewives and mothers. Regardless of the level of education attained, females are expected to get married and raise children (Shameem 1992).

The ideology of *purdah* is integral to this process. Lateef (1990:44-45) accords three essential elements to *purdah*: the segregation of the sexes, the protection of women's sexuality, and the maintenance of family honor. While men are granted unrestricted movement within the public sphere, women are confined to private, domestic spaces. In these spaces, certain behaviors are required of women. They are expected to be obedient, quiet, demure and unobtrusive. They are taught to cook, to clean and to serve their families and their husbands without complaint. In order to protect the family honor, they are not allowed to go out or to mix freely with boys. Indian parents are even reluctant to send their daughters to university (Indian informant E2). Fathers and brothers take special care to ensure that their daughters and sisters abide by these regulations. "Parents will be severe" if the daughter deviates from strict rules (Indian informant F1).

Education and socioeconomics are significantly connected to the notion of *purdah* in a woman's life. Those with limited education (and thus reduced chances of paid employment) are economically dependent on their families, thus making conformity to *purdah* a necessity. Females with greater financial independence are freer to make their own choices. A distinction is made between females in urban and rural areas:

Indian girls in urban areas are freer than rural girls. Rural girls come home early from school because their parents expect them to. In the towns, Indian girls can say that they are going to the movies and they make sure they catch the last bus (home).

Indian informant S2

Better access to education and employment opportunities in urban Fiji account for this demarcation between the rural and urban experiences of Indian girls.

Purdah is believed to still be strong in Fiji (Indian informant I1). Therefore, since women are restricted in their movements, the probability of meeting Fijian males in a social context is still at a minimum.

The role of Fijian women in marriage

Traditional Fijian culture is structured around the authority of the male and the male line. Nayacakalou (1955:47) asserts that Fijian women are considered socially inferior to men. The role of the woman is to serve her husband and his family unit (Ravuvu 1983). It would appear that this is also the case when Fijian women marry outside their race. Fijian women show themselves to be quite adaptable. In three of the intermarriage case studies the women involved went to considerable lengths to assimilate or at least incorporate elements of their husbands' culture into the family lifestyle. Some of the compromises included converting to the husband's religion, preparing Indian food, wearing Indian clothing, and conversing in Hindi. It was also suggested that when Fijian women marry Indian men, it is the women who adapt to the husband, not the other way around (Fijian informant R1). Contrast this notion of the Fijian woman's adaptability to Geraghty's (1997) observation that it is the increasing indigenization of the Indian man (i.e. his assimilation to Fijian mores) that is responsible for the increased incidence of Indian man-Fijian women ties.

One of the reasons for the more numerous instances of Fijian women marrying Indian men stems from the observation that the Fijian (woman) is friendly, and talks to boys (Indian informant S1). Unlike in Indian culture, where *purdah* effects a host of restrictions on women's contact with men, the Fijian culture does not carry the same restraints. Hence communication between Fijian women and Indian men is enabled, allowing for the possibility of marriages between them.

This anecdote reveals how the combination of Fijian women's greater freedom in social intercourse and *purdah* work together to enhance more Indian men-Fijian women marriages.

We lived in a village on the western side near a hotel surrounded by Fijians...Every Christmas and New Year there used to be celebrations. You would pay 50 cents to dance the *taralala* in those days. And of course there would be no Indian girls to dance with, so...people got involved and some got married. There was reluctance by Indian parents to let their daughters out.

Indian informant E2

The attitudes of parents, families and the community to intermarriage

Fijian informant A1 had been seeing an Indian courier driver for at least two years when his parents found out about their relationship. This knowledge galvanized the parents into a host of actions, including organizing an Indian wife for him, threatening to approach the police if he were to be found in her company again, and sending him overseas. The parents continued with their opposition even after several grandchildren were produced. The Indian husband seems to have been dependent on the goodwill of his parents since he was also involved in the family business, a situation which seems to have had a negative effect on his health. On the other hand, the continual animosity displayed by her Indian in-laws seems to have provoked the Fijian wife into proving to them that she was independent and could save, care and provide for her family. Although she attained this goal, her parents-in-law do not appear to have ever accepted her.

The reaction of parents, the extended family, and the wider community can have a negative effect on the prospect of an intercultural marriage. In some cases, it could be a powerful deterrent. Other individuals simply ignore or attempt to cope with the adverse situation, sometimes in the hope that the hostile parties may one day come around.

The specter of the Indian mother-in-law looms large in several respondents' stories. (The role of the father-in-law is also complicit, although the personality of the mother-in-law tends to dominate.) In an all-Indian family arrangement, the relationship between a Indian mother-in-law and her Indian daughter-in-law can be fraught with tension. This is the case particularly when the mother-in-law resides in the same house as her son. The mother-in-law exercises authority over junior women including the daughter-in-law who is new to the household (Lateef 1990). Respect, deference, and obedience in accordance with *pardah* is expected of the daughter-in-law. The new wife is expected to carry out household duties, to rear her children and to serve her husband and his family in an uncomplaining fashion.

The possibility of a non-Indian daughter-in-law not only jars with the customary dislike for any kind of intermarriage, but also raises issues of potential cultural conflict, for a non-Indian

daughter-in-law might not have been raised to cook, clean, and to be submissive, obedient and respectful in the same manner as an Indian girl. Here is one account supplied by an informant:

My mother-in-law did not want me because I'm Fijian...I don't like my mother-in-law because she's always saying bad things. She has a big mouth. We lived with her and everyday there were fights with her. Even my husband had fights with her.

Fijian informant G1

This same informant emphasized the importance of parents' attitudes towards these marriages. She made reference to incidences wherein family approval was not forthcoming: "There are many of these...maybe they hang or they swallow poison." Parental approval is considered by many to be crucial to the success of these marriages.

In another scenario, the Indian mother-in-law did not attend her son's wedding, but eventually accepted the union when a grandchild was born. The couple involved lived a fairly modern lifestyle based upon practical necessity, wherein the husband also contributed to household duties, a scenario which was gradually accepted by the mother-in-law.

There is only one story in the four where there appears to have been a good relationship between the Fijian wife and her mother-in-law. In this case study the Fijian lady lived with her in-laws for 5 years.

When posed with the question, "How would you react if your son or daughter married a Fijian?", two Indian respondents (male and female) answered in the affirmative. They would be receptive to the notion of a Fijian son- or daughter-in-law. However, compare their responses to the following anecdote:

Her mother and father were OK with me when we were just friends, but after it became known that we were an item...

Fijian informant P2 on his relationship with an Indian woman, insinuating her parents' subsequent disapproval of their romantic involvement

Indian informant L1 offered a differing opinion, stating, "It is OK in Indian families for an Indian man to marry a Fijian woman but not the other way round. This is because Fijian women really take care. For instance they are in demand for elderly care in the US." While it appears to be true that Fijian women are noted for their nurturing, caring instincts, one might also

wonder whether the Indian parents might prefer an Indian daughter-in-law who has had Indian values instilled in her since birth.

The opposition of Indian families to the idea of an Indian woman dating or marrying a Fijian man was raised by at least four respondents.

If one may be allowed to generalize, the reactions of Fijian parents and families to these unions appear to be more relaxed or at least less acutely antagonistic. Two of the Fijian women married to Indian men spoke of their families' support despite initial reluctance. One Fijian mother simply said that all she wanted was for her daughter to be happy. Perhaps this suggests that these Fijian families place more value on the welfare and happiness of their children, over and above adherence to custom or objections about the suitability of such matches. A Fijian father-in-law claimed he was pleased his daughter was marrying an Indian because obligations for Indian weddings are fewer than they are for the Fijian.

Sticky problems can occur when a Fijian son wishes to marry an Indian women. This is particularly so in the case where the Fijian man belongs to a chiefly family. Traditionally, descent is traced through the male line (Ravuvu 1983:7). One's rights and privileges are based upon membership to the father's *mataqali* (sub-clan or lineage). Rights to land are an integral and important component of this membership. Identity and heritage also perform an significant role. "It's up to Fijian men to pass the traditions down the line" (Fijian informant P1). Hence, perhaps there is more pressure placed upon Fijian men to conform to tradition, particularly those who are chiefs and who shoulder greater responsibilities in the village.

My research indicates that a considerable degree of resistance has been displayed by at least two Fijian families towards the prospect of gaining an Indian daughter-in-law. One possible objection concerns the concept of the children born from these marriages. The idea of the children being registered as Fijian and gaining titles, even though they are part-Indian, is anathema to some Fijians families of chiefly ranking, for the families want to keep the title pure (Fijian informant P2). In one of the cases, the Fijian family seems to be slowly coming around. As Indian

informant I1 remarked, “The Fijians are less resistant, not like the Indians. You give a Fijian an inch and he will...”

One of the bittersweet stories told involves an Fijian man-Indian woman alliance. Despite the happiness of the marriage along with the begetting of two offspring, the Fijian family’s disapproval was so strong that a divorce had to be arranged. Yet despite this, “...the love was still strong. They still see each other quietly. That’s how strong it is” (Indian informant S1).

As indicated in Chapter 3, Fijian women outmarry more than Fijian men. Due to the greater importance of the male line, and because women traditionally marry out of their own clan, marriages to men of other races are probably not perceived as significant losses. “If a Fijian woman married an Indian man, they lose the woman anyway” (Fijian informant P2).

Undeniably, one could argue that parents in general are more conservative and more traditional in their attitudes and values. The generational jump from parents to children often reflects a loosening of attitudes and values, probably due to the greater access to education and to modern ideas held by the children. Hence, the reaction of siblings to Fijian-Indian marriages appears to be more positive and favorable, and sometimes directly contradictory to their parents’, according to the stories of a few respondents. The brothers of one Indian man actively sought reconciliation between their parents and their sister-in-law, but when the parents’ acceptance was not forthcoming, sought instead to concentrate on their relationship with her. Sympathetic siblings can also be useful in helping to break the knowledge of partnerships to parents.

Mamak (1978) makes the case that there is some expressed opposition to an anticipated mixed marriage before marriage from family and friends, but that after marriage there is general acceptance. Furthermore, he suggests that generally there is no social stigma surrounding such marriages.

Dating and sexuality

The difference between dating and getting married is crucial. Dating implies curiosity, experimentation, and temporary alliances (Root 2001:17). Marriage entails permanence and the extended family and all that it involves. A study of dating practices is important in the light of intermarriage because, as is sometimes the case, dating leads to marriage. Furthermore, much can be revealed when discernible dating patterns or casual sexual relationships are matched or compared with spousal selection patterns.

A repeating theme throughout the research process reveals that sexual liaisons are not uncommon between single Indian men and Fijian women. Naidu's (1979:212) study on the island of Taveuni confidently asserts that most men there have their first sexual experience with Fijian girls. Since Indian girls are mostly restricted to the home, especially at night, Indian men walking around the towns at night only come across Fijian women (Indian informant S2). Added to this is the (Indian) perception that Fijian women are "easy" (Indian informant J1).

In some cases, casual sexual liaisons evolve into meaningful relationships eventuating in marriage. The overriding reality though is that Indian men tend to conform to customary endogamy (marrying within race and religion, for example). Such is the strength of Indian marital culture and ideology.

Indian boys want to explore and they can do it with (anyone)...But in the end they marry Indian girls.

Indian informant F1

According to the strictures of *purdah*, Indian girls are not extended the freedom to go out on their own. Similarly, premarital sex is forbidden in the broader Indian culture (Indian informant B1). Girls who engage in premarital sex are stigmatized (Singh 1998). Although it is apparent that Indian girls do experiment sexually in contemporary Fiji, it is most likely to be conducted discreetly without the parents' knowledge. It is also most likely that they do not engage with Fijian men in these activities.

The Fijian man is credited with some degree of love-making competence, or at least his efforts at courtship are likely to impress:

If I were a Fijian, I would go to all lengths to impress you. I would take you out to dinner, to the best restaurant, just to impress you. Now I (the Indian male), I would take you out to a nice place, maybe \$20 a head, so that would be \$40 a meal, but it would have to be within my means. But a Fijian will bankrupt himself for you.

Indian informant B1

This is associated with a later discussion on money-keeping practices. However, one Indian female informant (I1) indicated that the Fijian man's behavior would certainly turn her head.

Parental attitudes towards mere friendships between Fijian and Indian children might be tolerated. In one scenario, the parents of an Indian woman readily accepted her friendship with a Fijian man, but their behavior towards the man changed when it became known that the friendship had developed into a fully-fledged relationship.

Domestic violence

There is a strong and prevailing perception that Fijian men are aggressive towards their wives. "Fijians are tall and strong, maybe Indian women are frightened," Indian informant H1 said in a joking manner. He continues, "Fijian men are not good. They always hit their wives. They go out and drink, have grog and then beer, then come home and hit their wives. Fijian men are not good." Sahlins (1962) iterates this belief in his study of Moala. Even Fijian wives are known to disapprove of their husbands' excessive drinking of kava and/or alcohol and socializing with other males⁶. Fijian informant F2 contends that Fijian values mean that the man is obligated to socialize frequently with his mates, drinking grog etc. This perception in itself would not endear Fijian men as sons-in-law to Indian parents.

However, domestic violence towards women and wives is not the preserve of Fijian men only. Lateef (1990) reports on the Indian ideology that defends the use of violence against women

⁶ Kava drunk on its own is not known to incite aggressive behaviour. However, drinking it in combination with alcohol can be dangerous.

in order to keep women under control. Furthermore, the conviction that marriage is the ultimate goal for all Indian women places pressure upon them to remain in their marriages despite adverse treatment from husbands. In the course of research, only one interviewee makes a passing reference to physical abuse from Indian husbands:

When a married woman has an affair, an English husband will just ask for a divorce. A Fijian man will...(she makes boxing gestures), and an Indian man will...(she makes a neck-cutting gesture). That's why they don't want Indian daughters to marry a Fijian.
Indian informant L1

Contrast the belief that Fijian men are violent towards their spouses with the following anecdote:

I knew one couple, an Indian woman and a Fijian man. The Fijian man had a reputation for abusing women, but he never hit her. So I asked her, "What does this guy have?" She replied, "He makes love. He makes me feel special. The Indian – nothing." And you look at this guy, he is gentle, really gentle. You wouldn't think he would touch a soul.
Indian informant J1

Ravuvu (1983:109) argues that Fijians are generally gentle and humble. The values instilled in the Fijian during upbringing include respect, deference, compliance and humility. Indeed, according to a few people's perceptions, Fijian men are in fact quite mild mannered.

Stereotypes regarding money: men as providers

No. I don't want to be penniless. I don't want to be beaten up.
part-Indian informant O1, on being asked if she would marry a Fijian

Providing for one's family is important to Indians. The value placed on frugality stems from the indentured years of sacrifice and hard work. Indians needed to be thrifty and economical to survive and to achieve security in life. The inability of Indians to own (native, inalienable) lands coveted for agriculture compelled them to be frugal (Chappell, personal communication). The short-term land lease system and the recent non-renewal of some leases exacerbate the Indian condition. Nor do they have recompense to a cultural system (in the same way of the Fijians, who can return to the villages or to related kin in times of need) for reliable financial or economic support.

Since childhood many Indians have been brought up to believe that Fijians cannot save their money. Not only will a Fijian husband spend most of his wages on booze, but his relatives will take it off you (in accordance with *kerekere*). Such negative beliefs about Fijian men and their ability to provide adequately for the family discourage thoughts of intermarriage. Hence, an Indian girl will prefer an Indian husband anyway:

One thing you can say about Indian girls...They need a husband who can provide them with security. Security is very important to them. They need a husband who will always be there.

Indian informant F1

The Fijian female informant O2 who is married to an Indian had the following comment:

Fijian women married to Fijian men would have to go out and get the food, unlike Indian men who always provide it. It is good to be married to an Indian. My husband likes to make sure we have enough in stock.

Yet an interesting dynamic appears to have emerged in marriages between Fijian men and Indian women, according to two informants. Both attributed the success of marriages they had observed to the stabilizing influence of the Indian woman.

The (Indian) emphasis on good housekeeping

Indians girls are brought up to become good housewives and mothers. Hence, they receive constant training throughout girlhood in the arts of cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. A particularly high standard of skill and level of cleanliness in housekeeping is also a ideal to which each female must aspire. I recall my (non-Indian) grandmother making the occasional reference to the cleanliness of Indian kitchens, for example. These skills appear to enhance a woman's desirability for partnership in marriage.

An Indian husband is socialized to expect the maintenance of these standards in his household. Consequently, the Fijian woman who has not been educated along similar lines might fall short of the high demands placed upon her upon marriage to an Indian. This is forwarded as one minor disadvantage precluding the possibility of an Indian man-Fijian woman union.

A Fijian wife just has to cook, just do a bit here and there. For an Indian, never mind Muslim or Hindu, they are the same culture, they have to clean constantly. Here, there. It's all in your hands, it's all in your hands.

Fijian informant G1

As we have noted earlier, the Fijian woman is credited for her ability to adapt. Hence, one could speculate that the concern that her different housekeeping standards and values are detrimental to intermarriage might not hold. In most of the case studies, the Fijian woman has learnt to cook Indian food (well), for example. The fact that Indian men seem to outmarry with Fijian women more might also suggest that the emphasis on good housekeeping is not a predominant factor in the choice to marry a Fijian woman.

Other cultural issues

The future of the Fijian race

One major disadvantage was proposed regarding intermarriage. Several informants viewed the phenomenon as potentially harmful to the continuation of the Fijian people and their culture.

Did you know that the Fijian race is an endangered species? Well there are only 458,000 Fijians in the entire world. Ask the Pakistanis there are a million of them. Call the Chinese embassy there are a billion of them. And then look at the Fijians! They're becoming extinct!

Indian informant C1

There is a cost with Fijian-Indian marriages. Fijian culture compared to the rest of the world is small. Indians can always intermarry because they say that they have their culture, but the Fijian culture is so small.

Indian informant L1

There are others, though, who stress that cultures always undergo change; hence these people advocate intermarriage. For example:

I disagree with those who are afraid that the Fijian culture is dying. Culture is always evolving, always changing. Those who say that are playing on people's fears.

Fijian informant T2

Purity of race and heritage

Concerns about maintaining the purity of one's (racial) heritage, genealogy, or title also weigh as factors deterring intermarriage for both Fijians and Indians. In the case of an Indian woman marrying a Fijian, the registration of the children as Fijian (because the father is Fijian) might raise problems for the family especially in the case of a titled lineage. "They won't even want a part-Indian to get the title. It's like they want to keep it pure" (Fijian informant P2).

Certainly issues of purity of race can be highly debated. Fijian informant P2 asserts that the notion of purity even within the Fijian race is ridiculous, for "Lauans have mixed with Tongans. That is impure. And yet Ratu Mara is considered Fijian." (Ratu Mara comes from Lau.) As mentioned in Chapter 1, Fijians are a heterogeneous people, as are the Indians. All Fijians share a common national identity, but when broken down their identities differ depending on province of birth, place of residence, *mataqali* etc. In the context of intermarriage, however, loyalty to and pride in the Fijian race or culture might prevent people from considering wedlock to a non-Fijian.

The issue of language

Language appears to be key to understanding culture. It is implied that if one can master the language of another culture, then this would surely break down barriers leading to improved social relations and increased rates of intermarriage. "An Indian who can understand Fijian has more of an insight into Fijian culture. It might not make him more tolerant, but he has more of an understanding" (Indian informant G2).

Several of the Fijian women interviewed could converse fluently in Hindi. Some had grown up in Indian-dominated neighborhoods and attended Indian schools. Some also learnt Hindi after marriage. Two women who had attended Muslim high schools also learnt Urdu. While the ability to speak the language of the spouse does not seem to directly contribute to increased chances of marriage, it appears to at least ease the inmarrying partner into the new cultural

circumstances placed before him or her. In one case, the ability to speak Hindi seemed to be a key factor in impressing the prospective mother-in-law.

There are some reservations raised about language being used as a tool for bettering social relations between Fijians and Indians. The degree of fluency appears to be one critical issue.

Language is an issue. You see, I can converse with a Fijian, yes, but I can't carry on a deep discussion with him. I know just enough of the basics. That is not good enough.

Indian informant S1

Here's a thoughtful comment which reveals the sensitivity underlying the language issue:

Language is one thing...I can't speak Fijian. Fijians don't speak Hindi...Some of course can speak, but if you really speak the language well, you can have an intimacy...If I speak to a Fijian, we will use English. If you can speak the other's language, you can express yourself fully, you will know when you have caused offence. But when you don't know the language, your conversation is more controlled.

Indian informant B1

Language appears to be an avenue that carries the potential to open or restrict quality relationships between Fijians and Indians. Many Fijians and Indians do possess the capacity to speak or comprehend the other's language, although perhaps not at the deep level alluded to above. Compulsory cross-language learning in the schools is promoted as the preferred way in which to address this issue.

Food compatibility

Culture, religion, education and money-spending habits are among the most popular themes raised as positive or negative influences on intermarriage. The food theme follows closely behind.

Food is fundamental for human survival. Many people's lives revolve around the anticipation of, the preparation of, and the eating of food. Different cultures naturally prepare different kinds of foods, and the Fijian and Indian cultures are no exception. Within the Indian community, there is further differentiation according to religious customs.

Meat is by far the most common food reason given as a barrier to intermarriage. Islanders “love to eat meat” (Indian informant U2). Muslims do not eat pork. Yet while islanders have a fondness for pork, it is argued that the pork is not usually prepared in the home, that it is cooked only on special occasions especially in the earth oven, the *lovo*. There are probably more Muslim-Fijian marriages because they both (are allowed to) eat beef. Hindus, on the other hand, cannot eat beef, yet from the statistics provided in Chapter 3, more Hindus appear to marry Fijians than do Muslims. Some Indians are strictly vegetarian, which makes the meat-compatibility topic more of an issue.

Taro and cassava, important staples in the Fijian diet, have become incorporated into the Indian kitchen. Similarly, Indian curry is a favorite amongst Fijians. For Fijian men married to Indian women, this is put forward as a crucial contributor to the success of their relationships. “There are fringe benefits to having an Indian girlfriend (or wife), she can make (good) curries” (Fijian informant P2).

Stories are also told about the difficulty in adapting to the unfamiliar cuisine of the spouse. It took one Fijian woman years to become accustomed to *dhal*, for instance, or an Indian husband to stomach boiled food. And informants also admitted that some husbands or wives defied convention and ate the food of the spouse despite the prohibitions of their religion.

Personal appearance

Certainly, physical attraction is an important component in one’s choice of a spouse. Interestingly, during research people only referred to the physical qualities of the Fijian; none was forthcoming concerning the Indian. Some of the commentary presented here may be construed as negative or offensive; however, it is not my intention to offend anyone. The following statements do represent the opinions of some informants. If they are perceived as being offensive, it is hoped that they are viewed in the light of the considerations of this chapter, that is, that they are possible positive or inhibiting factors contributing to the phenomenon of intermarriage.

The hair of the Fijian female is the focus of a good deal of attention. Some emphasis is placed on the changes (young) Fijian women are making to their hair, straightening and tying it back. In fact, one sees more Fijian women in the salons today than Indians, according to Indian informant E2. It is also coincidental that these hairstyle changes approximate the straight Indian hairstyle.

On the whole, the Fijian woman today is presented as a desired object of beauty. Indian respondents pronounced Fijian females as “fine”, “presentable”, and “neat”. Fijian receptionists at the tourist hotels are singled out for being particularly fine. Only one informant considered the larger build of the Fijian female unattractive. Passing references were made to matters of personal hygiene and scent.

The Fijian male, on the other hand, is noted for being tall and hefty, and by inference, strong, tough and rough. This feature, combined with the ingrained stereotypes of Fijian men as wife beaters, is seen as a barrier to their desirability to the smaller-framed Indian woman. Indian women are therefore “frightened”.

The literature provides some clues as to Fijian attitudes towards the Indian physique. Cato (1955:20) reports that “Fijian girls laugh at the skinny Indians.” Similarly, Spate (1990:117) comments on the Fijians being “mightily afraid of Indian slimness.” However, the Indian female is sometimes viewed as an object of desire, as is the case of Manoa’s (1979) personal observations growing up in a Fijian village: one fair young married woman was the focus of considerable attention from Fijian men who remarked on her beauty.

Recreational contact

A study conducted in a New England industrial community determined that recreation was one of the most frequent ways to meet one’s future marriage partner (Barron 1946). By recreation we mean leisure activities such as partying, nightclub dancing, attending festive occasions, sport, vacationing, etc. The same cannot be said to be true for Fiji society, for people

are still perceived to interact within their own ethnic group (see also Naidu 1979) although traditions are slowly transforming through processes of modernization, urbanization and education.

One informant considered it important to specify sport as a factor in enhancing intermarriages. The sugar town of Ba hosts a large number of Indian residents in Fiji.

Sport is big in Ba, soccer is big. That is where you have lots of interaction. The Indian boys play. Fijians are friendly people. Fijian girls are more outgoing, freer, they talk to boys. They see one there, they look here. You have soccer, netball and then you have couples...Before you know it some get married.

Indian informant S1

Soccer in Fiji is traditionally dominated by Indians, although the game is becoming increasingly popular among Fijians. Netball is played mostly by Fijian females. It is also not unusual to have netball courts nearby a soccer field, especially in a school compound or at civic sporting grounds. Soccer and netball players are likely to train or play alongside one another after school and during weekend competitions. Furthermore, Indian females are restricted in their social movements and behavior. Indian culture also does not seem to encourage female participation in sport (Geraghty 1997). Added to this is the greater social and spatial freedom accorded to Fijian females. The conditions are therefore ripe for increased contact between Indian men and Fijian women.

Socializing in a nightclub, at parties or attending religious or festive occasions are other leisurely activities that abet improved interaction between Fijians and Indians. Through contacts made in the workplace, the marketplace, amongst neighbors etc., one's social circle is likely to be widened and the propensity for meeting persons of another race is greater. Through personal observation at some of Suva's nightclubs it became apparent that more and more Indian females frequent those venues.

Religion

The Christian faith is the most dominant creed in Fiji, accounting for 58% of Fiji's total population⁷. Hinduism is the next major religion at 34%, and Islam follows at 7%⁸. Therefore, Christians represent over half of the population of Fiji. Within this major component of Fiji's religious life is its dominant core of Fijian adherents. Indians and Others comprise only 13% of the total Christian population. Naturally, Hinduism and Islam are almost exclusively observed by Indians.

It is not difficult to recognize that religion in Fiji is split along racial categories. Fijians tend to be Christians, and Indians Hindu, although the strong political profile of the Muslim faith, despite its lower numbers, requires that we also include Islam as an important religion amongst Indians.

Religious difference is presented as one of the greatest barriers to intermarriage.

Given that the practice of and belief in religion touches at the spiritual centre of many human cultures, the issue of religion is meaningful in the context of intermarriage. Different religions preach and embody variant approaches to marriage and the family. Certain values and principles inform matrimonial religious attitudes. And within each religion are varying degrees of strictness or laxity when it comes to rules, conventions and rituals. Sects or divisions within each major religion also add to the complexity.

Religion is also a big factor. Hinduism and Islam are so totally different from Christians (Christianity).

Indian informant F1

⁷ The figures supplied here are derived from the 1996 census, courtesy of the Bureau of Statistics (in Ratuva 2002:15).

⁸ For easier representation, the separate Christian denominations have been grouped together under the banner of Christianity. A closer denominational analysis reveals that Methodism (36%) is the most popular religion, followed by that of Hinduism (34%), other Christian religions (13%), Catholicism (9%) and Islam (7%).

The three predominant religions in Fiji are distinct in dogma and practice. If we add to this the racially-defined character of these religions, the impact of religion on intermarriage promises to be an interesting study.

Christianity

An interesting notion emerged during the discourse on religious factors. Informants (Fijian and Indian) seemed to assume universal prior knowledge of the tenets and practices of Christianity, exemplified in the absence of any explanation of Christian values. Rather, they took pains to underscore the impact of Hindu and Muslim effects on the process of intermarriage. Why is this so? I am uncertain as to whether they presumed I was Christian. Or perhaps it is the case that all residents of Fiji have a basic understanding of Christianity because it is the dominant faith. Or perhaps their emphasis on Hindu and Muslim ways stems from a desire to defend or understand religious practices that are very different from those of the dominant religion and perhaps also more maligned.

The major Christian religions in Fiji are the Methodist, the Catholic, Presbyterian, Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovahs Witness and Latter Day Saints. The analysis in Chapter 3, "Religious Patterns in Intermarriage", indicates that the majority of marriages between Fijians and Indians occurs when the head of household (which is presumed to be male) is Christian. Specifically, it predominates when the Indian male is a Christian, and since most Fijians are Christians, the simple conclusion is made that the greater number of intermarriages occur when both of the individuals concerned are Christian. One might also presume that in most cases the individuals also belong to the same denomination. A similarity in religious convictions and perhaps also contact through regular attendance at church services work as factors encouraging greater marriage opportunities. One must conclude that, contrary to the strong assertion made above, in this case Christianity does not act as a barrier to intermarriage.

Some informants raised the issue of hypocrisy evident in the practice of some Christians:

Fijians are hypocrites. 70% are Methodists. In the church you learn that you should love one another. Except, it seems, for the Indians.

Fijian informant P2

As a religious person, it's one thing to espouse something and another to practice it.

Fijian informant T2

Some elements of the Methodist faith in Fiji align themselves with the conservative, tradition-bound nationalism that has recently been seen to embrace anti-Indian sentiments. Consequently, internal contradictions seem to exist within these brands of Methodism. No doubt, marriages with Indians may not be fully accepted within these circles.

It might also be important to note that Christianity (along with Western contact) has had a major effect in changing Fijian culture. Previous cross-cousin marriages and polygamy for chiefs have largely disappeared and have been replaced with Christian/Western-style marriages today. The introduction of Christianity, therefore, has had a major influence in bolstering Fijian-Indian marriages, as exemplified in the statistics made available.

Islam

Islam is perceived to be the more strict of the three major religions with regard to marriage. Conversion is required for an inmarrying spouse. Muslim women are discouraged from marrying non-Muslims for fear that they might have to change their religion (Benson 1977). The children produced in this marriage must also be raised as Muslims.

In two scenarios involving the union of a Fijian woman into a Muslim family, conversion was not forced upon the women. This anecdote from a Fijian lady whose eventual conversion to Islam reveals her complete assimilation into her husband's religious culture.

My husband was a Muslim. The children were also brought up Muslim, but I didn't convert straight away. I was a Christian, I was a strong Christian, but I started reading about Islam. I couldn't really learn from the other Muslim women because I didn't speak Indian, or Urdu, and sometimes they also knew Arabic...I came to Islam on my own..My husband did not force me to convert. I did my reading, and I realized this was what I wanted to do. I hope to do the *hajj* in the future.

Indian informant A1

In another case, the Fijian woman was required to convert before marriage. Although the woman seems to accept that this is her duty as the wife of a Muslim, the daily reality of being a Muslim is still a difficult process to endure, involving such things as prayers five times a day and having to comply with certain dress codes and hairstyles.

Although the statistics in Chapter 3 reveal more Hindu-Fijian marriages than Muslim-Fijian marriages, a number of informants had the perception that there were more of the latter. Some based their explanations on the idea that Muslims do not seem to consider race as an issue.

Muslims are blind to the race, they see the religion. A marriage with a Fijian means a gain for the religion. But it's also a question of identity. A Muslim will say he is Muslim, but a Hindu will say he's an Indian. For the Muslims, their religion becomes their race.

Indian informant N1

Another set of explanations emphasizes the similarity between Christianity and Islam:

It is the closeness of the Muslim and Christian religions. The Christians believe in the prophet Christ (Muslims regard Christ as a prophet), but call him God.

Indian informant H1 (my parentheses)

Muslims (Islam) and Christianity have the same origin.

Indian informant S1

Hence the religious gap between Islam and Christianity narrows; the Muslim-Christian couple shares a commonality in the concept of Christ, which possibly also eases the conversion to Islam.

Benson (1977:20) notes that interracial marriages are not common among Muslims but are permitted.

As is also widely known (and sensationalized) about Islamic culture, men have the right to marry more than one woman. Research shows that one such a polygamous arrangement exists: the Muslim man's second and third wives happen to be Fijian (Indian informant E2).

Hinduism

There do not appear to be any Hindu philosophies or teachings that speak against general intermarriage, according to Indian informant B1. However, he ascertains that although such anti-

intermarriage sentiments are nowhere to be found in the scriptures, culturally it has evolved that way.

The Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharm are the two main Hindu sects in Fiji. The Arya Samaj movement can be loosely defined as “reformist”, while the Sanatan Dharm, which claims the majority of followers, can be generalized as “orthodox” Hindu. Mamak (1978) asserts that mixed marriages are encouraged by the Arya Samaj, contrary to that of the Sanatan Dharm which appears to deter them. A glance at the statistics shows quite the opposite, that there were 104 Sanatan Dharm intermarriages in 1996 (understandable given the proportionally higher number of Sanatan Dharm devotees) but only 9 Arya Samaj intermarriages.

Conversion does not appear to be as important a priority as it is in the Muslim faith. Fijian informant O1 did not have to convert from her Methodist religion upon marriage. A Muslim respondent (J1) confidently asserted that conversion is not possible in Hinduism, for “the Hindu religion is just a series of rituals, you just sit down and go through the rituals.”

General comment on inter-religious intermarriage

In marriages contracted between Christian Fijians and Indians, race may not be an issue at all. The important factor might instead lie in the couple’s shared spiritual beliefs. In marriages between Christian Fijians and non-Christian Indians, however, race could be seen as an impeding factor. Race becomes significant because race has everything to do with the religion of the Indians and the religion of the Fijians. However, one alternative perspective might confer that ultimately, the issue of race here is coincidental. The most important difference to the prospective spouses is the religious one. It is understandable, however, that given the current state of political affairs in Fiji, people might attach greater significance to racial, rather than religious, difference.

When conversion is not a necessity in marriages between persons of different religious persuasions, dialogue and compromise are suggested as necessary. This might take the form of each spouse maintaining personal religious beliefs and at the same time having respect for the

other spouse's religion. It may also involve casual participation in the religious rituals of the other spouse. Matters of the religious upbringing of offspring are potentially serious and sensitive issues, requiring careful negotiation before the wedding ceremony.

Politics

As raised in the Introduction, Fiji's politics is attention-grabbing, especially when a coup occurs. It is also on the political playing field where the polarization between Fijians and Indians is most apparent. In this section the effects of the coups and land issues on Fijian-Indian marriages are examined.

The coups

Fiji's first two coups occurred in 1987, and the third in 2000. In one correspondent's opinion, the 1987 coups have been instrumental in inciting change – amongst the Indian community.

Changes have been apparent since the 1987 coups. Indians woke up after the coups, they realized that they couldn't hold onto tradition. That is why they have been trying more to become part of the community.

Fijian informant P1

This point is associated with the earlier suggestion that a strong cultural attachment can constrict opportunities for intermarriage.

Since the coups Indians have been urged in some quarters to consider making a greater commitment to integration with the Fijian people (Jalal 2001). Running counter to this proposition is the other point of view which asks why Indians should engage with Fijians, especially since Indians have been treated poorly during and after the coups⁹ (Indian informant II). These are some of the reasons Indians offer for not integrating more fully with Fijians. If

⁹ Stories of violence against Indian men and women, and theft of and damage to Indian property made news headlines during the 2000 coup. Furthermore, affirmative action policies enacted by Fijian-dominated

Indians consciously refrain from mixing meaningfully with Fijians on a social level, this might also then have a consequential effect on Indian individual, parental and community attitudes towards marriage with Fijians.

Earlier, the restricted position of Indians girl was raised as a factor in limiting the chances of marriages with Fijians. It has become apparent to Lateef (in Shameem 1992) that Indian parents have been stricter after coups: “Previous to the coups, the Indian woman had won some concessions to greater personal freedom.”

It was also reported that the Australian government had received petitions from a few Fijian-Indian couples requesting refugee status (Informant V2). In another story, a couple moved to Malaysia after the Indian wife had been physically harassed by Fijians opposed to the union (Informant W2).

Are Fijian-Indian marriages politically motivated? In 99% of the stories disclosed to me, the answer would be no. None of these marriages were contracted with a specifically political purpose in mind. As reported widely in the Fiji press recently, however, a wedding took place between a high profile Indian lawyer-activist and a high-ranking Fijian bureaucrat (Daily Post May 3, 2003). Although this marriage appears to be genuinely entered into on the basis of “love”, it is probable that outside analysts regard the match as a political one.

Land

Since the early 1900s the protection of native land has been a priority for the governors and governments of Fiji. Today at least 83% of Fiji’s lands is inalienable and *mataqali*-owned. This means that Indians can only resort to the leasing of this land. This does not enable long-term security; the expiration and non-renewal of several leases in recent years has also added to a situation of instability for cane farmers (Robertson and Sutherland 2001). Land is important to the

governments post-coups have been seen by Indians to further marginalize their social and economic positions within Fiji.

Fijian for spiritual and material reasons, while for Indians it becomes the means by which they can ensure their livelihood.

Intermarriage has been posited as a way in which the land issue can be resolved. Marriage to a Fijian might realize greater security for an Indian, especially since the coups. Although it may not mean that the wedded Indian will be able to purchase lands, it might afford improved access. One informant (J1) advised that “Fijians won’t want their son to marry an Indian because she might take all their land.” Furthermore, that the mixed-race offspring of an Fijian man-Indian woman marriage could inherit land also arouses fears amongst some Fijians.

Education

Along with culture and religion, education is advanced as a primary agent in the phenomenon of intermarriage.

Education has long been a contentious issue in Fiji’s history. Racially-segregated schools were promoted as early as the 1910s. Fijians and Indians were even barred from attending each other’s schools although they lived as neighbors (Lal 1992). This period of separate schooling for the races is viewed as one of the impediments contributing to the lack of intermarriage.

Cross-cultural education is championed as a means for promoting a tolerance for multiracialism among the races, and by logical extension, creating opportunities for future increased Fijian-Indian marriages. More multiracial schools began being formed in the 1960s and 1970s. Fijians also started attending Indian schools (several Fijian informants had done so), and Indians attended multiracial schools. However Geraghty (1997:4) questions the concept of multiracial schools as a mode for enhancing racial harmony, arguing that it doesn’t necessarily mean “much intimate understanding or appreciation of each other’s culture.” Nonetheless most respondents feel that mixed schooling is an advantage, especially when the process begins at the

kindergarten level. Here, the mixed race school becomes a space in which Fijians and Indians can mix regularly¹⁰.

However, monocultural schools still command great support and funding. For example, the Muslim colleges and Sangam (South Indian) schools receive considerable funds from their communities (Indian informant S1). This same informant believes that more state funding will encourage the establishment of further interracial schools. Furthermore, the character of the students who attend these monocultural schools is questioned.

Monocultural schools are still prominent in Fiji. The Indians send their children, look at QVS¹¹ etc. That's where those notions of cultural superiority are ingrained, look at the politicians who push the racial lines, they've come from those schools.

Indian informant I1

Two informants who are educators commented on the notable change in Fijian attitudes to education. They report that previous to independence, education was singled out for the privilege of the chiefs. Since the 1980s however, many more Fijians started becoming serious about education, and are in fact "beating the Indians and the Chinese" at the learning game (Indian informant A2). This commentary suggests that because many more Fijians (rather than just the chiefs) are being exposed to education and modern ideas, old traditions are breaking down and Fijians are contemplating more than cross-cousin, and indeed, intra-Fijian marriages.

Curriculum also plays an important part in exposing students to liberal ideas and broad perspectives. Language instruction is also fiercely promoted as an avenue to achieving greater cross-cultural understanding.

A similar level of educational attainment is also espoused as desirable in a spouse, for some people at least. Hence, because Indian parents are reluctant to send their daughters to university (perhaps owing to *purdah*), and because more Fijians are going to university nowadays, Fijian girls are the ones the Indian men marry (Indian informant E2). While some

¹⁰ On Taveuni, however, Naidu (1979) observes that while there is more interaction in the multiracial schools, there is also the tendency for cliques to remain ethnically-oriented.

¹¹ Queen Victoria School, a Fijian boys school, was originally opened for the sons of chiefs (Lal 1992).

research indicates that those who marry out tend to be highly educated (see Khatib-Chahidi, Hill & Paton 1998), in my case studies this appears to not be the case.

Modernization and urbanization

Modernization has been credited throughout this chapter as a positive agent for intermarriage. The term (as intended by informants) refers to a process which is informed by a breaking away from or a transforming of traditional ideas and practices, and a changing of values to those that approximate the modern-day Western world, including increased consumerism, exposure to international media, technology, education and individualism. Urbanization involves the movement of people from rural areas to larger towns and cities – the sites in which modernization is most likely to be concentrated.

In the Fiji context, the process of modernization began with trade and missionization, but intensified with formal colonization under the British (Chappell, personal communication), through gradual and prolonged contact with European ideas, practices and technology. As delineated so far in this chapter, modernization and urbanization have affected many facets of Fijian life, including religion, social organization, residential concentration, and marital norms. The Indian culture, which has been described as being the more rigid of the two cultures, is also slowly bending to modern ways. The custom of arranged marriages is being transformed, and love marriages have also become more common. Education is also a significant component in the processes of modernization.

Modern ideas promote the values of universal love and racial tolerance. Increasingly, marriages between widely diverse races have become more common and acceptable in countries around the world, as people move around in search of employment and as racial prejudices and ignorance weaken. Modernization in Fiji functions almost as a neutral third space in which Fijians and Indians can find some commonality. Differences are at least leveled and mediated between the communities. Away from traditional constraints, modernization creates sites for new

expressions in love and marriage, as people become more accessible to one another, and as modern ideas flow throughout society.

One nicely illustrated example of modernization is seen in this commentary on pop music:

Things are changing with the youth of today. Pop music is one place where they meet. It is a thread that brings them together. That is one way for them to integrate, through another culture. Fashion too, and films, movies...

Indian informant F1

Economics

The modern day market economy is also strongly connected to processes of modernization and urbanization. Today's global capitalism requires geographic mobility and is increasingly bringing women out of the domestic arena into the workplace. Lateef (1993) reports that Indian women's participation in the labor market is minimal, although the common perception is that they are engaging more and more in work-related activities outside the home (Indian informant J1), such as in the garment industry, as shop assistants, and as school teachers. In the 1996 census, the participation of Fijian women is recorded as higher for the subsistence sector, although participation in the money economy is almost as strong (Bureau of Statistics 1998). Despite comparable female working population sizes, Indian women still register considerably smaller numbers in the labor force. Nonetheless, the workplace is still credited as one of the most opportune venues for enhancing intermarriage in Fiji.

There are several consequences for intermarriage that are associated with increasing female employment. Women who work tend to be more financially independent, and have stronger control over their lives away from parental influences (see Shibata 1998). Hence they have more freedom in which to choose marriage partners.

Although not substantiated in the statistics, certain professions seemed to engage more often in Fijian-Indian marriages. Quite a few respondents repeated the observation that Indian taxi

drivers and Indian nurses (who have to complete their practical training in a Fijian village for one year) appear to intermarry more.

Other general theories of intermarriage

Residential proximity

Treatises on general intermarriage often highlight the importance of residential proximity in encouraging interaction first, and then marriage. The same can be said to be true for Fiji.

Prior to the end of indenture, residential proximity did not exist. Indians had to stay in the plantations and were barred from living near Fijian villages. Fijians were encouraged to remain in the villages. One can therefore understand why intermarriage was almost impossible.

The majority of respondents agreed that most intermarriages take place in the “west”, that is, the west of Viti Levu and comprising the major urban centers of Ba, Lautoka, Nadi and surrounding areas. Historically this is due to the concentration of sugar plantations in those areas. After indenture Indians began to move to isolated settlements, some of which were close to Fijian villages. Another popular opinion contends that intermarriages were greater in the west because Indians and Fijians worked together, especially on the farms where Fijians learnt farming techniques from the Indians. Similarly, more intermarriages are said to come from around the cane plantations of Labasa in Vanua Levu.

One westerner (Indian informant H1) said, “In the west they have lived amongst each other. There’s one Fijian family here, next to them Indian, another Fijian one across, another Indian there. They mix and then they fall in love.”

Suva is the next site that is credited as being a hotspot for intermarriage. This perception is understandable given that Suva is the capital of Fiji in which peoples of all races reside and work alongside each other.

There is some disagreement on the numbers of intermarriages in rural areas. Some informants said there were more marriages in rural areas, while others disagreed. Some

correspondents believe that communities in the rural areas are very close (see also Mastapha 1981), and other respondents argue that not only are there no Indian settlements near Fijian villages, but where there are, there is little meaningful communication between them.

The sex ratio theory and the numerical size of groups

The sex ratio theory maintains that where the ratio of males to females is unequal within a homogeneous community, opportunities for mixed marriage should arise.

This theory is an intriguing one in the context of indenture. Colonial authorities specified that for every 100 males there had to be 40 females embarking for Fiji. Despite the apparent imbalance of males to females, Indian males still did not outmarry with Fijians. Several explanations have been offered to resolve this puzzle. One, due to legislation and the limiting conditions of plantation life, Fijians and Indians physically could not intermingle on a large scale. Two, Indian values privileging religious and racial endogamy prevented such marriages.

The numerical size of groups is often also importantly considered in theories of general intermarriage. The theory proposes that small groups tend to outmarry more. Barron (1946) refutes this concept outright, stating that inmarriage seems to persist more, despite expectations to the contrary. The Indian example is a case-in-point, for although Indians continued to represent the smaller group size during indenture, endogamy was still resorted to for the various reasons pointed out above.

Structural and dyadic power theory: one explanation for the more common incidence of Indian male-Fijian female marriages

The way in which power is structured in a given society may yield clues as to why certain marriage patterns occur more than others. According to this theory, the similarity in status between two people and between groups in a community can inform whom might marry whom more, and which (gender) couplings are more likely to commit to wedlock (Root 2001:11).

A cursory glance at the social power structures in Fiji might show that the Fijian male occupies the highest position in Fiji's social and political hierarchy, due to the current political structure and also to the Fijian male's ranking within the family and village organization. A Fijian woman traditionally occupies a less important role (Ravuvu 1983). The structural power held by the Indian male can be considered secondary to the Fijian, for Fiji politics privileges the status of the Fijian male. Hence, the Indian male might also be positioned in the second tier of the power hierarchy. Structurally, the distance between the Fijian woman and the Indian male might be closer and thus allow for greater marital prospects between them. Last, the Indian female holds substantially less authority compared to her male counterpart according to custom, and hence the distance between herself and the Fijian male is much greater, leading to fewer of these marriages.

Intermarriage is merely marriage

At the end of the day, intermarriages are just...marriages. Sometimes race, culture and religion have little impact on the getting together of two prospective marriage partners. The simple concept of personal qualities sometimes plays a greater part.

A tragic story of an intermarriage gone wrong became known to me during research. It involved an Indian female nurse and a Fijian man in Tailevu; the man died by hanging.

There's a difference between being in love and being married, and the man probably found it hard to be married...The adjustment was probably too hard to take.

Fijian informant F2.

Here is a parting thought:

Marriage doesn't come on a platter. And race might not have anything to do with a marriage. If there are mixed marriages they come to it with an openness.

Fijian informant T2

Conclusion

The structural legacy of colonialism has had a huge impact on the phenomenon of intermarriage. Since the outset of indenture colonial legislation and policy instigated against

meaningful interaction – and for that matter, any kind of interaction – between the two races. The policy of protectionism of the Fijian culture and the confinement of Indian laborers to the plantations meant that the two cultures not only did not mix on a regular basis, nor were encouraged to, but also that the assortment of values, goals, and directions of the two developed and evolved according to different criteria in relation to the colony of Fiji as a whole. With those separatist structures firmly in place upon the conclusion of Great Britain's administration of Fiji, Fijians and Indians appeared to have continued upon the paths of divergent political, social and religious norms. In terms of intermarriage, the separation is viewed particularly through cultural and religious differences. Education, modernization and urbanization seem to have had the opposite effect by enhancing the possibilities for intermarriage. Increased opportunities for social interaction through these processes, such as in the workplace, in the schools, in shopping areas, enable more Fijian-Indian marriages.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Their marriage is a sign that there is a silver lining in that grey cloud hanging over Fiji. One that indicates anything is possible to bring the country's two major races together.

Since May 19, the inevitable has happened once again: Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians have aired their grievances against each other.

But for Lautoka couple William Ratucava and Angeline Jeet, racial tension was far from their minds when they pledged their "till death do us part" vows...

"I fell in love at the right time and our marriage will surely bridge the gap between the two races" William said.

"I am also trying to bring the two races together and show the world that we are capable of living together..."

His mother-in-law, Mira Rao, said she was very happy for the newly-weds.

"I strongly believe this should have been done when our ancestors first came to Fiji from India."

"If people put aside their differences and participate in the road to recovery, there would have been no crisis and ethnic tension in Fiji and no one would have had to suffer."

Sanjay Goundar, "Love Conquers All", *Fiji's Daily Post*, August 21, 2000.

This story appeared on the front page of one of Fiji's major newspapers three months after Fiji's third coup in May 2000. Anecdotal evidence reveals that Fijian-Indian intermarriage was quite a hot topic at the time. The local and foreign media publicized intermarriage at some length: a British television crew sought assistance from one government agency, a radio interview was conducted with one of my own interviewees, and several newspapers covered the issue over a period of time. In one government office intermarriage was discussed openly and in some depth on several occasions. Today, some still recall media reports of similar marriages and curiously even remember the kinds of wedding rituals the couples opted for (for example, whether customary Fijian or Hindu/Muslim, or both).

A Fijian. An Indian. William and Angeline fell in love and got married, as people tend to do in the modern age of love marriages. Essentially, this is a marriage just like any other: it represents the union of a male and female in an age-old, universal, fundamental social practice. What makes their story unique are their racial backgrounds. William is Fijian and Angeline Indian, a rare pairing in Fiji marital history. Fijians and Indians traditionally do not marry one another. Their two communities, moreover, represent the two racial streams in Fiji commonly

portrayed as being different, polarized and separate. Since their marriage joins the list of unusual matches in Fiji, its occurrence attracts considerable press and social attention, and in the process takes on a politically-charged nature. The Fijian-Indian marriage then comes to symbolize what cannot be achieved in Fiji's politics: the bringing together of the two races.

The factors influencing intermarriage

Colonialism has played a crucial role in Fiji's history. More importantly, the structural segregation set in place through colonial policy has ultimately affected prospects for intermarriage. Fijian and Indian men and women were never really given the opportunity to integrate and mix effectively; instead they were accorded their own separate social and cultural spheres. This allowed for the development of cultural forms independent of one another, characterized by pointed differences and a rigid attachment to those cultural differences. Distinct social structures and marriage customs and values played a vital role in conspiring against intermarriage. The Indian culture is singled out as being particularly strict, especially concerning the role of the woman and the ideology of *purdah*. Fijian culture is viewed as less rigid, and yet the position of the Fijian man and his perceived reluctance to outmarry is a subject that requires further exploration.

Religious differences are also a major contributor. Fijians are, after all, mostly Christian, while Indians tend to be Hindu or Muslim, and since religion in Fiji is distinctively split along racial lines, it is not uneasy to perceive that this would be considered a prime barrier to intermarriage. While commonality in the Christian faith appears to favor more of the marriages witnessed today, the Muslim faith is considered to be more strict and therefore a deterrent, requiring the conversion of an inmarrying spouse.

On the other hand, education, modernization and urbanization appear to be crucial to increasing incidences of intermarriage. These three ingredients all suggest increased contact

between the races in Fiji. In particular, the changing role of women in Fiji society seems to promote these marriages.

Statistical outcomes

The statistical analysis was able to support the historical view and people's perceptions that the phenomenon of Fijian-Indian intermarriage is rare. Figures obtained from the 1996 census of Fiji indicate that the estimated rate of marriage rests at 0.93%. When the numbers of these marriages are also proportionally measured against the sizes of Fiji's ethnic populations, Fijian-Indian marriages likewise are shown to be rare.

No firm evidence is as yet forthcoming to back up the notion that intermarriage is on the increase, although the analysis in Chapter 3 based on age figures demonstrates a simple attempt to prove this assumption. The table establishes that incidences of intermarriage appear to be more frequent amongst the younger ages and that numbers of these marriages are lower in the older age brackets, suggesting an increase over time.

Patterns of intermarriage

In Fiji, intermarriage displays certain patterns corroborated by the intermarriage data and respondents' general perceptions. Indian male-Fijian female unions are the more common form due to reasons such as the greater relative freedom of the Indian male. Fewer spatial restrictions are placed on the Fijian woman, thus increasing her potential sphere of socialization (including amongst Indian men). Furthermore, because the onus is on the Fijian man to retain and pass down Fijian custom, and because traditionally the Fijian woman's value is tied to her husband's family (not to her own *mataqali*), Fijian women have found marrying into other races an easier process.

Fijian male-Indian female marriages are far fewer due to factors such as the restricted movement of Indian women according to the ideology of *purdah* and the greater responsibility of the Fijian man to preserve his Fijian heritage, his chiefly ranking and any rights to land. Since

Indian families also appear to place tremendous importance on the merits of security and safety especially with regard to females, certain negative stereotypes of the Fijian male held by Indians further hinder the likelihood of these marriages.

In the religious context, the greater number of intermarriages seem to occur between men and women who are both Christians, particularly those who belong to the Methodist and Catholic faiths. One can make the assumption that since the intermarriage data is ordered according to head of household, the males in the Christian figures will most likely be Indian. And in keeping with the above-mentioned common pattern of Indian male-Fijian female marriages and the prevalence of orthodox Hinduism amongst Indians in Fiji, marriages between the followers of the Sanatan Dharm sector and Fijian females follow third.

As expected, Ba Province seems to be the prime site for Fijian-Indian marriages due to the long history of cane farming there. The greater Suva areas of Naitasiri and Rewa record second and third positions on the provincial scale. An analysis based on the size of the provincial population reveals that Namosi holds the most number of marriages per every 1000 people in its territory, followed by Serua and Rewa, with Ba registering a mere fourth. No convenient explanation is available to account for this outcome at present.

Social relations vis-à-vis intermarriage

The institution of intermarriage is just one facet of the whole scale of social relations in Fiji. Given the low rate of intermarriage and the historically ambivalent perspectives on social relations, one might wonder about the quality and the degree to which ordinary individuals from both communities interact with one another on a daily basis. Does the low rate mean that social relations are poor? In this following quotation, one informant makes his opinion clear that socializing and marriage involve two different realities:

Fijians and Indians do socialize, but marriage is another question. Marriage is a question.
Indian informant S2

The leap from mere socializing (chatting over the neighborhood fence, casual office interaction) to marriage can appear to be too formidable for some. Social interaction is safe, but marriage involves a whole other sphere of ties and responsibilities. Marriage involves a long-term commitment not only between two individuals but also between their families. And cross-cultural marriages can be fraught with tensions over issues such as child-rearing and religious adherence. Individual family members may even struggle with their own ethnocentrism, prejudices and instilled preferences for inmarriage.

Root (2001:3) declares that “interracial marriages are natural consequences of increased social interaction between races. Familiarity leads people to challenge and eventually break down stereotypes.” Previous discussions on education, modernization, urbanization and economics, for example, demonstrate that Fijians and Indians are increasingly in contact with one another. Often though, this intermingling is characterized as “superficial” and “tolerant”. Is it good enough to say that Fijians and Indians are tolerant towards each other without there being any meaningful bonding between them?

They live together side by side, they don't live together.
Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, in Emberson-Bain (1998)

What intermarriage means

Some respondents volunteered comments about what intermarriage means to them. In general, it is viewed as a viable option for improving Fiji's race relations.

If there was more intermarriage, there would be more tolerance and understanding in Fiji.
Indian informant S2

Fijian-Indian intermarriage...has a place in the future reconciliation of Fiji.
Fijian informant T2

...how else do you get the two races to live together. Do you want Fiji to be just for the Fijians, should we have people mixing together, for a better Fiji?
Indian informant F1

In terms of social relations in Fiji, intermarriage should not be the only solution. Certainly it is one of the ways in which to forge racial harmony, but it is not the only way.

Indian informant S1

The three Fiji coups have obviously had a tremendous impact on the psyche of the Fiji population. Although the crises have been detrimental and damaging to Fiji in many ways (the economy, social relations, Fiji's global reputation), in my personal opinion they have forced ordinary people to confront the critical issues that contributed to the coups in the first place. Issues of economic disparity, indigenous rights, increasing divisions between chiefs and commoners, provincial rivalries, land ownership, the place of the Indian, good governance, etc. have been brought to the forefront of political rhetoric and discussed in the private spheres of people's homes. The relationship between Indians and Fijians is at the core of the discourse, for after all, the political shenanigans have been depicted as Fijian versus Indian conflicts. It is no wonder the talk of the streets centers on the political divisions and social relations between Fijians and Indians.

Fijian-Indian intermarriage therefore becomes meaningful in the context of the current state of affairs. Intermarriage is viewed as a possible cure for the social ills highlighted during the coups. It would signify the profound union of couples representing the two traditionally-opposed communities, indicating their concerted commitments to tolerance and understanding. It would suggest that the individuals involved have transcended the cultural and religious differences that mark and have previously divided and hindered meaningful relationships between Fijians and Indians. It would provide further opportunities for their extended families and the immediate community to interact on more substantial levels, given their own commitments to the individual couples involved.

This scenario is of course an idealistic one. Intermarriage in and of itself does not necessarily imply the shedding of differences. It does suggest, however, the gradual breaking down of barriers between groups of people.

There are other means by which the cultural and social gaps can be bridged in Fiji. Programs such as cross-cultural and cross-language instruction, the sharing of songs and dance, attendance at each other's religious ceremonies, and greater participation in pan-Fiji events (celebrating Fiji's rugby sevens victories, independence day festivities, the various town festivals, etc.) are cited by respondents as also important to better relations in Fiji.

The future of intermarriage

If you could project into future, maybe one hundred years, even a million years, you would see something different. We will have integrated more then. Maybe you won't have Fijians, maybe you won't have Indians, no more of the originals, you would have a new people, carrying out their lives. I know you and I won't be here to see it, but it's important to look ahead, to see into the future.

Indian informant S1

What of the future regarding intermarriage? Will it increase over time? Will there be a dissolving of barriers between groups, a transcending of long-held prohibitive cultural prescriptions that heretofore have inhibited the incidence of more of these marriages? Will another dramatic event such as a coup maintain the status quo or provoke a downturn? A few respondents predicted that "in 5 years (there will be) plenty more", and "I predict there will be more intermingling, interacting in the future—just like Hawaii." One wonders and looks forward to the disclosure of the 2006 census results.

Conclusion

Fijian-Indian intermarriage records a low rate of occurrence according to the Fiji 1996 census. Certain significant factors such as acute cultural and religious differences and colonial structures of segregation have been instrumental in limiting opportunities for these marriages. On the other hand, the notions of a growing cultural homogenization through education, modernization and urbanization, the changing role of women in society, and the growing value of "love", appear to be responsible for the perceived increase of these marriages in the recent past.

It is difficult and probably inappropriate to attempt to establish a direct link between intermarriage and social relations in the Fiji context. As has been seen, intermarriage is rare in Fiji. This does not signify, however, that social relations are therefore poor. Relationships between Fijians and Indians are described as both good and bad, at best. Furthermore, one respondent has argued that social relations and marriage comprise two different things. The apparent increase of these marriages does point, however, to a breaking down of barriers between small groups of Fijians and Indians. Perhaps this is where intermarriage reflects one minute aspect of social relations.

Recently in Fiji the media publicized a high profile Fijian-Indian wedding (Daily Post 2003). The wedding took place between a leading government official, Ratu Sakiusa Tuisolia, and a prominent lawyer and activist, Imrana Jalal. This union would have attracted attention not only because of their high visibility in Fiji's politics, but also because people might naturally have attributed the marriage to an act of politicking. Indeed, the marriage is touted as "the reconciliation of the year", and the couple is viewed as an example for people in Fiji to learn from. However, the bridegroom himself intimates that it is love and the sharing of family values that bring him to this point of his life. This marriage exemplifies the changing nature of marital relations in Fiji, for it joins the ever-growing club of uncommon Fijian-Indian marriages, and a Fijian male-Indian woman combination to boot. Being in the public eye, it also allows people to challenge pre-existing preconceptions of race and race relations, perhaps creating a space for them to consider its connections to the political turmoil Fiji is in today.

APPENDIX A - TABLES

TABLE A.1 POPULATION BY ETHNIC ORIGIN AND SEX AT SUCCESSIVE CENSUSES: 1881 - 1996

Ethnic Origin	C E N S U S													
	1881 4-Apr	1891 5-Apr	1901 31-Mar	1911 2-Apr	1921 24-Apr	1936 26-Apr	1946 2-Oct	1956 26-Sep	1966 12-Sep	1976 13-Sep	1986 31-Aug	1996 25-Aug		
Chinese*	Male	+	+	276	845	1,476	2,105	2,624	2,910	2,503	2,546	2,573		
	Female	+	+	29	65	275	769	1,531	2,239	2,149	2,238	2,366		
	Total	+	+	305	910	1,751	2,874	4,155	5,149	4,652	4,784	4,939		
European	Male	1,879	1,273	1,531	2,403	2,297	2,467	3,374	3,427	2,605	2,240	1,713		
	Female	792	763	928	1,304	1,561	2,127	3,028	3,163	2,324	1,956	1,390		
	Total	2,671	2,036	2,459	3,707	3,858	4,594	6,402	6,590	4,929	4,196	3,103		
Fijian	Male	60,899	56,445	50,357	46,110	44,022	49,869	59,862	74,989	131,413	167,256	199,895		
	Female	53,849	49,355	44,040	40,986	40,453	47,782	58,208	73,145	99,697	128,519	162,049		
	Total	114,748	105,800	94,397	87,096	84,475	97,651	118,070	133,014	174,686	260,000	361,944		
Indian	Male	388	4,998	11,353	26,073	37,015	48,246	64,988	88,359	122,632	147,194	171,796		
	Female	200	2,470	5,752	14,213	23,619	36,756	55,426	81,044	118,328	145,702	167,022		
	Total	588	7,468	17,105	40,286	60,634	85,002	120,414	169,403	240,960	292,896	338,818		
Part-European	Male	387	529	759	1,217	1,454	2,325	3,195	4,008	4,951	5,356	6,052		
	Female	364	547	757	1,184	1,327	2,249	2,947	3,802	4,736	4,901	5,633		
	Total	751	1,076	1,516	2,401	2,781	4,574	6,142	7,810	9,687	10,257	11,685		
Rotuman	Male	1,126	1,056	1,036	1,043	1,129	1,413	1,696	2,232	2,939	3,666	4,387		
	Female	1,326	1,163	1,194	1,133	1,106	1,403	1,617	2,190	2,858	3,625	4,265		
	Total	2,452	2,219	2,230	2,176	2,235	2,816	3,313	4,822	5,797	7,291	8,652		
Other Pac Islanders	Male	5,629	1,923	1,584	2,429	1,271	1,470	2,145	2,839	3,207	3,474	4,499		
	Female	471	344	366	329	293	883	1,572	2,481	2,888	3,348	4,128		
	Total	6,100	2,267	1,950	2,758	1,564	2,353	3,717	5,320	6,095	6,822	8,627		
All Other	Male	93	143	254	457	431	132	273	202	737	415	1,480		
	Female	63	171	213	355	358	72	241	71	533	395	1,287		
	Total	156	314	467	812	789	204	514	273	1,270	810	2,767		
Total	Male	70,401	66,367	66,874	80,008	88,464	107,194	136,731	178,475	242,747	296,950	362,568		
	Female	57,085	54,813	53,250	59,533	68,802	91,185	122,907	167,262	233,980	291,118	352,807		
	Total	127,486	121,180	120,124	139,541	157,266	198,379	259,638	345,737	476,727	588,068	715,375		

* Includes Part-Chinese in 1946, 1956, 1966, 1976 and 1986
+ Includes with 'All others'

Source: 1996 Census of Fiji, Bureau of Statistics

INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN HEADS AND CHILDREN OF HOUSEHOLDS AND SPOUSES
BY PROVINCE

Table A.2 Total Number Of Mixed Marriages By Province

Province	F-I*	I-F Total	F-E	E-F Total	F-C	C-F Total	F-O	O-F Total	I-E	E-I Total	I-C	C-I Total	I-O	O-I Total								
Ba	86	226	312	89	154	243	16	38	54	61	83	144	39	35	74	22	10	32	65	23	88	
Bua	4	10	14	16	34	50	2	1	3	9	18	27	0	4	4	0	1	1	1	1	2	3
Cakaudrove	21	39	60	52	135	187	1	8	9	68	58	126	8	4	12	1	0	1	11	10	21	
Kadavu	0	2	2	2	6	8	0	1	1	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lau	1	4	5	4	1	5	0	0	0	3	4	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lomaviti	5	14	19	13	36	49	3	2	5	33	36	69	4	1	5	1	1	2	4	1	5	
Macuata	19	72	91	35	44	79	6	13	19	13	15	28	13	8	21	10	7	17	15	8	23	
Nadroga	14	42	56	10	19	29	4	2	6	9	15	24	4	10	14	3	0	3	12	3	15	
Naitasiri	40	110	150	76	104	180	12	33	45	96	140	236	23	8	31	7	6	13	34	9	43	
Namosi	7	20	27	17	11	28	0	4	4	19	25	44	5	3	8	2	1	3	10	0	10	
Ra	12	12	24	3	8	11	0	2	2	5	7	12	0	2	2	0	0	0	3	2	5	
Rewa	39	114	153	121	186	307	19	57	76	119	172	291	42	39	81	26	11	37	37	24	61	
Serua	7	26	33	33	44	77	5	7	12	31	57	88	9	4	13	3	1	4	8	1	9	
Tailevu	14	36	50	19	20	39	4	7	11	23	28	51	1	2	3	2	1	3	4	0	4	
Rotuma	3	9	12	2	4	6	0	1	1	11	11	22	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	
**										0	3	3							1	0	1	
Total	272	736	1008	492	806	1298	72	176	248	502	673	1175	149	121	270	77	39	116	207	83	290	

Source: Bureau of Statistics (1996 National Census Figures). Key: F–Fijian, I–Indian, E–European, C–Chinese, O–Other

* In this table, "F-I" follows the format whereby "F" signifies "Fijian Head & Child" (assumed to be male) married to "I", an Indian (female).

** Discrepancy unaccounted for in data set.

FIJIAN-INDIAN INTERMARRIAGE AND FIJIAN-FIJIAN, INDIAN-INDIAN MARRIAGES BETWEEN HEADS AND CHILDREN OF
HOUSEHOLDS AND SPOUSES
BY DIVISION

Table A.3 Total Number Of Fijian-Indian Marriages By Division

Division	F-I*	I-F	Total
Western	114	283	397
Central	108	312	420
Northern	44	121	165
Eastern	6	20	26
Total	272	736	1008

Table A.4 Total Number Of Fijian-Fijian And Indian-Indian Marriages By Division

Division	F-F*	I-I	Total
Western	15268	28461	43729
Central	20615	15849	36464
Northern	7581	10883	18464
Eastern	5063	73	5136
Total	48527	55266	103793

Source: Bureau of Statistics (1996 National Census Figures). Key: F-Fijian, I-Indian

* In these tables, "F-I" (etc.) follows the format whereby "F" signifies "Fijian Head & Child" (assumed to be male) married to "I", an Indian (female).

FIJIAN-FIJIAN, INDIAN-INDIAN MARRIAGES AND FIJIAN INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN HEADS AND CHILDREN OF
HOUSEHOLDS AND SPOUSES
BY RELIGION

Table A.5 Total Number of Fijian-Fijian, Indian-Indian Marriages and Mixed Marriages by Religion

Religion	F-F	I-I	Total	F-I*	I-F	Total	F-E	E-F	Total	F-C	C-F	Total	F-O	O-F	Total
Anglican	278	193	471	4	5	9	18	18	36	0	5	5	41	93	134
Apostolic	313	31	344	1	6	7	2	5	7	0	1	1	2	5	7
Assembly of God	3232	743	3975	14	65	79	29	55	84	5	14	19	36	53	89
Baptist	92	52	144	1	1	2	4	4	8	0	0	0	1	1	2
Catholic	5989	411	6400	42	104	146	132	220	352	28	63	91	110	148	258
Christian Mission Fellowship	651	34	685	2	9	11	3	12	15	3	3	6	5	6	11
Gospel	71	83	154	1	5	6	3	6	9	0	3	3	2	5	7
Jehovahs Witness	667	57	724	3	28	31	20	31	51	2	5	7	9	17	26
Latter Day Saints	257	87	344	4	15	19	4	7	11	2	3	5	10	14	24
Methodist	32378	715	33093	93	229	322	204	357	561	26	56	82	225	249	474
Presbyterian	11	16	27	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Salvation Army	65	34	99	0	1	1	2	3	5	0	0	0	4	5	9
Seventh Day Adventist	2672	79	2751	12	32	44	28	43	71	1	10	11	29	47	76
Other Christian	1615	373	1988	9	44	53	31	35	66	5	9	14	21	22	43
Arya Samaj (Hindu)	4	1600	1604	2	7	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kabir Panthi (Hindu)	0	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sanatan Dharm (Hindu)	35	31968	32003	35	69	104	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	2
Satya Sai Baba	0	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Hindu	9	9402	9411	21	29	50	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sikh	0	492	492	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ahmaddiya (Muslim)	0	310	310	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunni (Muslim)	9	5150	5159	11	55	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Muslim	5	3206	3211	12	22	34	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bahai	38	5	43	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
Confucian	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	7	47	54	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Religion	128	150	278	2	6	8	8	7	15	0	3	3	3	7	10
Total	48527	55266	103793	272	736	1008	492	806	1298	72	176	248	502	673	1175

FIJIAN-FIJIAN, INDIAN-INDIAN MARRIAGES AND FIJIAN INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN HEADS AND CHILDREN OF
HOUSEHOLDS AND SPOUSES
BY RELIGION (cont.)

Source: Bureau of Statistics (1996 National Census Figures). Key: *F-Fijian, I-Indian, E-European, C-Chinese, O-Other*
* In this table, "F-I" follows the format whereby "F" signifies "Fijian Head & Child" (assumed to be male) married to "I", an Indian (female).

**FIJIAN-FIJIAN, INDIAN-INDIAN MARRIAGES AND INDIAN INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN HEADS AND CHILDREN OF
HOUSEHOLDS AND SPOUSES
BY RELIGION**

Table A.5 Total Number of Fijian-Fijian, Indian-Indian Marriages and Mixed Marriages by Religion (cont.)

Religion	F-F	I-I	Total	F-I*	I-F	Total	I-E	E-I	Total	I-C	C-I	Total	I-O	O-I	Total
Anglican	278	193	471	4	5	9	4	6	10	2	2	4	6	4	10
Apostolic	313	31	344	1	6	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assembly of God	3232	743	3975	14	65	79	7	3	10	1	3	4	9	3	12
Baptist	92	52	144	1	1	2	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1
Catholic	5989	411	6400	42	104	146	51	25	76	21	6	27	44	15	59
Christian Mission Fellowship	651	34	685	2	9	11	2	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
Gospel	71	83	154	1	5	6	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
Jehovahs Witness	667	57	724	3	28	31	5	3	8	0	2	2	9	1	10
Latter Day Saints	257	87	344	4	15	19	3	2	5	0	0	0	4	1	5
Methodist	32378	715	33093	93	229	322	22	19	41	3	3	6	38	13	51
Presbyterian	11	16	27	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salvation Army	65	34	99	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
Seventh Day Adventist	2672	79	2751	12	32	44	1	2	3	1	0	1	9	3	12
Other Christian	1615	373	1988	9	44	53	11	5	16	4	1	5	10	3	13
Arya Samaj (Hindu)	4	1600	1604	2	7	9	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	1
Kabir Panthi (Hindu)	0	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sanatan Dharm (Hindu)	35	31968	32003	35	69	104	9	15	24	15	9	24	28	21	49
Satya Sai Baba	0	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Hindu	9	9402	9411	21	29	50	5	11	16	7	2	9	16	8	24
Sikh	0	492	492	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
Ahmaddiya (Muslim)	0	310	310	1	3	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sunni (Muslim)	9	5150	5159	11	55	66	5	7	12	8	0	8	10	4	14
Other Muslim	5	3206	3211	12	22	34	10	8	18	8	3	11	13	3	16
Bahai	38	5	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Confucian	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Other	7	47	54	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	4	0	0	0
No Religion	128	150	278	2	6	8	10	5	15	3	5	8	4	1	5
Total	48527	55266	103793	272	736	1008	149	121	270	77	39	116	207	83	290

FIJIAN-FIJIAN, INDIAN-INDIAN MARRIAGES AND INDIAN INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN HEADS AND CHILDREN OF
HOUSEHOLDS AND SPOUSES
BY RELIGION (cont.)

Source: Bureau of Statistics (1996 National Census Figures). Key: *F-Fijian, I-Indian, E-European, C-Chinese, O-Other*
* In this table, "F-I" follows the format whereby "F" signifies "Fijian Head & Child" (assumed to be male) married to "I", an Indian (female).

PROPORTIONS (%) OF INTERMARRIAGES BETWEEN FIJIANS AND INDIANS BY AGE OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Table A.6 Proportions (%) Of Intermarriages Between Fijians And Indians By Age Of Heads Of Households

Age Group	No. of inter-marriages*		Population **		Proportions *** (%) married		No. of persons married		Proportions *** (%) married		No. of persons married		I-F
	F-I****	F-I****	Fijian Male	Indian Male	Fijian Male	Indian Male	Fijian Male	Indian Male	Fijian Male	Indian Male	Fijian Male	Indian Male	
15-19	2	8	20725	19968	0.016	0.018	332	359	0.6	0.6	332	359	2.2
20-24	18	61	17002	15356	0.187	0.265	3179	4069	0.6	0.6	3179	4069	1.5
25-29	38	100	15510	13958	0.56	0.73	8686	10189	0.4	0.4	8686	10189	1.0
30-34	38	122	14840	14248	0.777	0.901	11531	12837	0.3	0.3	11531	12837	1.0
35-39	42	110	13106	13779	0.847	0.936	11101	12897	0.4	0.4	11101	12897	0.9
40-44	35	82	10118	10902	0.883	0.954	8934	10401	0.4	0.4	8934	10401	0.8
45-49	28	63	8639	8712	0.886	0.951	7654	8285	0.4	0.4	7654	8285	0.8
50-54	19	39	6728	6685	0.884	0.939	5948	6277	0.3	0.3	5948	6277	0.6
55-59	7	23	5617	4538	0.853	0.921	4791	4179	0.1	0.1	4791	4179	0.6
60-64	4	14	4148	2941	0.827	0.879	3430	2585	0.1	0.1	3430	2585	0.5
65-69	2	4	2863	1911	0.763	0.825	2184	1577	0.1	0.1	2184	1577	0.3
70-74	1	1	1759	1078	0.625	0.662	1099	714	0.1	0.1	1099	714	0.1
75+	0	4	1747	1189	0.53	0.583	926	693	0.0	0.0	926	693	0.6
Total	234	631	122802	115265			69795	75064			69795	75064	

* Source: Bureau of Statistics (1996 National Census Figures)

** Source: 1996 Fiji Census of Population and Housing, General Tables – Population

*** Source: 1996 Fiji Census of Population and Housing, Analytical Report – Table IV.5

**** In this table, "F-I" follows the format whereby "F" signifies "Fijian Head" (assumed to be male) married to "I", an Indian (female).

APPENDIX B
METHODOLOGY FOR TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF EXPECTED AND OBSERVED MARRIAGES

NB: This information was tabulated for Heads of Households only. This should not represent a major bias.

Calculations for M/Fe expected %:

Table B.1 Population by gender and ethnic group

	F	I	E	C	O	Total
M	199895	171796	7765	2573	11902	393931
Fe	193680	167022	7023	2366	11055	381146

Table B.2 % by gender and ethnic group

	F	I	E	C	O	Total
M	0.507	0.436	0.020	0.007	0.030	1.000
Fe	0.508	0.438	0.018	0.006	0.029	1.000

Table B.3 Expected numbers of intermarriages by gender and ethnic group

	F-I	F-E	F-C	F-O	I-E	I-C	I-O
M expected % *	22.2	0.9	0.3	1.5	0.8	0.3	1.3
Fe expected %	22.2	1.0	0.3	1.5	0.9	0.3	1.3

* e.g. F-I M expected % = % F M (0.507) x % I Fe (0.438) x 100 = 22.2

METHODOLOGY FOR TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF EXPECTED AND OBSERVED MARRIAGES (cont.)

Calculations for observed %:

Table B.4 Observed Marriages (%)

	F-I	I-F	F-E	E-F	F-C	C-F	F-O	O-F	F-F Total F	I-E	E-I	I-C	C-I	I-O	O-I	I-I Total I
Total	234	631	432	729	61	160	436	576	48527	132	113	65	35	173	78	55266
observed % *	0.5	1.2	0.9	1.4	0.1	0.3	0.9	1.1		0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	

* e.g. = Total F-I/Total F

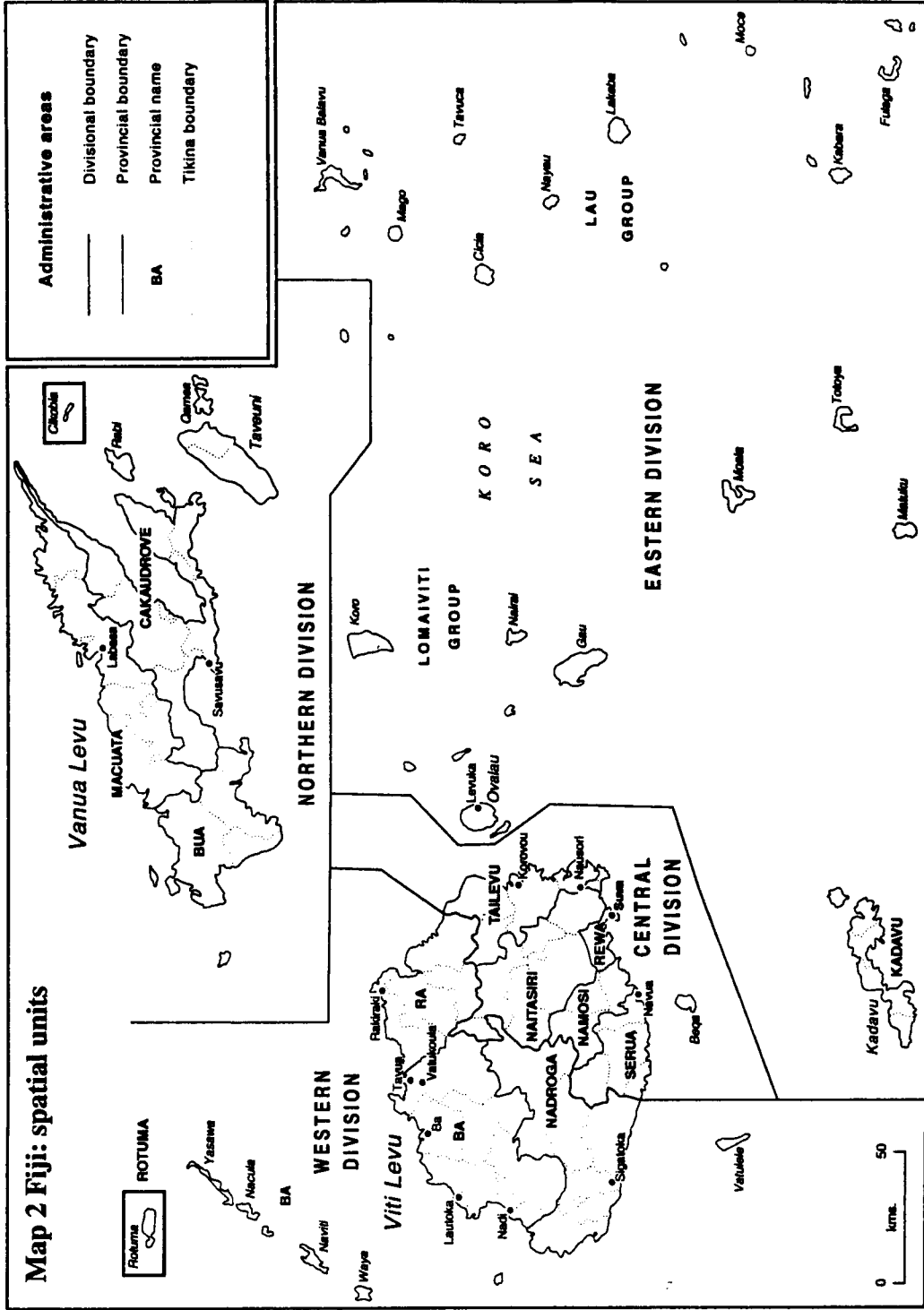
Calculations for Ratio expected/observed:

Table B.5 Ratio of Expected Marriages to Observed

	F-I	F-E	F-C	F-O	I-E	I-C	I-O
M expected %	22.2	0.9	0.3	1.5	0.8	0.3	1.3
observed %	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.3
ratio expected/observed **	47.2	1.1	2.6	1.7	3.4	2.3	4.1
Fe expected %	22.2	1.0	0.3	1.5	0.9	0.3	1.3
observed %	1.2	1.4	0.3	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
ratio expected/observed **	17.8	0.7	1.1	1.3	4.3	4.6	9.5

** = M expected % /observed %

APPENDIX C
 MAP OF FIJI BY DIVISION AND PROVINCE



Source: Chandra & Mason (1998)

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