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End of coups?: Fiji's changing security environment

Power does not corrupt men; fools, however, if they get into a position of power, corrupt power.

George Bernard Shaw

Fiji was chosen as a case study because of some unique features that make it different from other PICs. These include the nature of contestation for political power between a diaspora group and the indigenous community (referred to as Taukei, a term used throughout the chapter) and how this interplays with socioeconomic factors and land and identity issues. In addition, Fiji is the only PIC that has undergone regime change through military coups; hence the role of the military and the associated culture of politico-masculinity has been a major factor in shaping the country's security context. In a broad and exploratory way, this chapter examines the interplay between some of the factors that have shaped Fiji's security environment over the years and their impact on the country's evolution.

When the chief of staff of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) declared on 16 July 2017 that the military had 'moved out of the coup culture and was no longer a threat to the country' and was going to accept the 2018 election results (Swami, 2017), the national mood was one of both jubilation and anxiety. Jubilation because of the feeling of comforting reassurance this announcement provided and anxiety because similar guarantees had been heard before. The future will tell whether Fiji is now entering the 'no coup' phase of its history or whether history is,

given the right circumstances, likely to repeat itself (Fraenkel, Firth and Lal, 2009). This very much depends on a number of interrelated security dynamics, which this chapter will examine.

For a country that has had six coups,[1] the security situation has to be understood in the context of a number of cross-cutting issues relating to, first, what Stewart (2008) refers to as 'horizontal inequality' or ethnocultural disparities or perception of them; second, ethnopolitical contestation for power between the two major ethnic groups (Taukei and Indo-Fijian); third, politicisation of identity, religion and culture; and finally, socioeconomic inequality and competition over resources. While some of these issues might be more prominent than others in different historical or contextual spaces, they all contribute in their own ways to shaping the security configuration in the country.

However, contrary to conventional stereotyping of Fiji in predominantly ethnic terms, the situation is much more complex and syncretic. For instance, while there is ethnic tension, there is also trans-ethnic mutual engagement and convergence of ethnic interests, and while there are distinct cultures, there is also space for transcultural interaction and integration.

By using selected aspects of the postcolonial, securitisation and human security approaches, this chapter explores in an overarching way the dynamic interplay between various political, economic and social forces that have shaped Fiji's security climate in phases of historical change from the precolonial and colonial to the postcolonial era. It starts by looking at the notion of warrior chiefs and their role in providing security for the community. The chapter then looks at the imposition of colonial security designs and the way these transformed Taukei society. This invoked resistance to colonial hegemony, as we will see next. The resistance movement led to a more intensive and brutal pacification drive by the British to keep the Taukei within the ambit of their security boundary.

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1   The generally accepted view is that Fiji has had four coups (two in 1987, one in 2000 and one in 2006). I have argued that, technically, Fiji has had six coups (two in 1987, two in 2000, one in 2006 and one in 2009). The first coup in 2000 occurred when George Speight and his group stormed Parliament on 19 May 2000 and took members of the government hostage, and the second coup (or countercoup) occurred when the military dismissed the president, abrogated the constitution and declared martial law on 29 May. The first coup by Speight was against the government and the second coup by the military was against the state, although it was carried out under the pretext of saving Fiji from the rampaging ethnonationalist group that had overthrown the government and caused havoc in other parts of Fiji. See Ratuva (2011a).

The chapter then focuses on the institutional, coercive and hegemonic strategies of the colonial state to maintain its security agenda. Divide and rule system of governance (i.e. native policies that locked the Taukei into a regressive semi-subsistence way of life) and legal mechanisms were deployed as means of control. Following this, we will examine the process of securitisation after independence and how political, constitutional and legal means were used to maintain security. We will also discuss the issue of economic security and how this fed into the changing political dynamics.

The chapter then examines the role of state security institutions such as the military and police in the bigger security framework before looking at the issues of perceptions and ethnic framing as security factors. Finally, the chapter explores the importance of community peace-building and conflict resolution in addressing long-term security issues in Fiji.

Warrior chiefs, power and security in precolonial Fiji

To fully grasp the genesis of some of the factors that have shaped Fiji's current security environment, we need to retrace the evolution of some salient cultural strands back to the precolonial era when politics, culture, resource distribution and identity formed an integrated system in a communal subsistence habitat and where contestation for power between chiefdoms defined the security terrain of the land. How these were framed by early missionaries were far from positive and some descriptions were reminiscent of the social Darwinian European mindset of the time, as we examined in Chapter 2. This mindset is reflected in the words of the Revd Thomas Williams:

> But the savagism of the Fijian has a more terrible badge, and one whereby he is principally distinguished by all the world; his cruelty is relentless and bloody. That innate depravity which he shares in common with other men, has in this case been fostered into peculiar brutality by the character of his religion, and all his early training and associations. Shedding of blood to him is no crime, but a glory. Whoever maybe the victim—whether noble or vulgar, old or young, man, woman or child—whether slain in war or butchered by treachery, to be somehow an acknowledged murderer is the object of the Fijian's restless ambition. (Williams, 1858: 112)

The imagery of the 'savage' and 'cannibal' Fijian survived over the ages and found its way into folklore and orientalised racial stereotypes. Today, these racial perceptions still pervade in latent forms. These orientalised narratives obscure the dynamic sociopolitical realities in Fiji, which need to be discussed as a starting point to frame our analysis of security. A more sober analysis of this power struggle is provided by Joseph Waterhouse, an Australian-English missionary who was in Fiji in the mid-1800s:

> The occasions of war are very numerous. The possessions of land and women, and the commission of murder, are the principal causes. To these may be added personal affronts to chiefs; the refusal to give up a particular club, bird or shell; the unlawful eating of the turtle, the lust of conquest; the wish to murder, amidst the din of battle, a chief of their own, who is suspected of ambition, a violation of the tabu, love-affairs, and last, not least, a determination, on the part of the country at large, to check despotism. (Waterhouse, 1866: 315–16)

Causes of war varied according to the situation. Over the years, as Mary Wallis, wife of an American bêche-de-mer trader noted, competition over access to European trading goods became a major cause of war between the dominant powers such as Bau, Macuata, Bua, Lakeba and Cakaudrove as the desire for wealth took root (Routledge, 1985). As missionary Joseph Waterhouse noted, Cakobau, a powerful chief from the island of Bau whose power and influence covered a significant portion of Fiji, accumulated both traditional goods through serfdom of his vassals in conquered territories and European goods through the use of forced labour to provide bêche-de-mer for European traders (Waterhouse, 1997).

In times of disputes, clans and communities were often at risk of being attacked by hostile neighbours, so they had to be at the ready with men, women and children engaged in a well-rehearsed division of labour in a siege situation. While men would be directly responsible for front-line fighting, women and children would play roles such as lookouts, messengers and providers of food through planting, harvesting and fishing (Clunie, 1977). Villages were located strategically, on the basis of a number of factors including the availability of water and food, and defensibility. Many villages were on fortified hills or circular mounds, surrounded by ditches as a form of defence (Field, 1998; Best, 1993).

Chiefs formed alliances through intermarriage and reciprocal friendship agreements as a way of maintaining good relations and stability. This was the case with the major polities of Lakeba, Bau, Somosomo and Rewa where the chiefs were closely related by blood. Sometimes, intermarriage also led to conflict because of the divergent loyalties of children of the chief's competing spouses (Waterhouse, 1997). In times of war, intertribal alliances were activated as chiefs requested the help of neighbouring chiefs to fight a common enemy. Often *tabua* (whale's tooth), a highly valued cultural artefact, was used by A to request B to fight C, and C would try to reverse the process by presenting a *tabua* to B to help defeat A. Strategic alliances were fluid and volatile, and *liumuri* (back-stabbing) was a clever tactical manoeuvre to outwit the enemy. The complex cycle of treachery helped to maintain a sense of political equilibrium because it ensured that chiefs kept a close check on each other's power. Being alert to both internal and external threat was a major social asset to ensure security. Some chiefs, such as Tui Lakeba, Tui Cakau and Vunivalu of Bau, even sought assistance from the Tongans, who had a long association with Fiji (Reid, 1990). For some time, Fiji had been a 'refugee' centre for exiled or runaway Tongan chiefs, as we shall see in Chapter 5.

Power struggles between sons of chiefs, who were often children of different mothers, were common, and in some cases brothers would kill each other as they competed for the right of succession. A central plank of this power struggle was competition over who would be the undisputed *qaqa* (warrior). The most successful contender had to prove his prowess in war and leadership skills at an early age. Clunie (1977) makes the point that socialisation into warriorhood started quite early in life through exposure to cannibalism, war role-play and warlike sports.

The construction of the warrior personality permeated almost every aspect of social life, including community security, sports, division of labour, religion, cannibalism and even sexuality. The warrior personified protection, power, authority and wisdom. Chiefs had to be the strongest warriors in the community, and a warrior's status was legitimised by the use of coercion, treachery and tactical wisdom (Calvert, 2003). Successful warriors were defined in terms of the number of people they killed in war, accorded high status in society, hero-worshipped and given special names; their clubs were provided with sacred names, reified and mythologised (Clunie, 1977). Warriors could take any woman of their choice and, after death, they became part of the eternal cosmology as protective ancestral

spirits. As protectors, warriors provided the major security system, which kept social disruption in check, ensured social cohesion and provided continuity and survival of the group. This reified imagery of the warrior continues to be part of a Fijian boy's socialisation process through the inculcation of notions of *yalo qaqa* (bravery), *tagane* (manliness) and *dau vala* (fighter) among others. These personality traits helped to nurture a natural fit into the *yalo ni mataivalu* (military spirit), which was glorified through *meke* (traditional dances), *vucu* (chants), *sere* (songs) and *tukuni* (mythology). A corollary of this is the entrenched self-perception that indigenous Fijians are individually natural soldiers and collectively a martial race (Ravuvu, 1991b; Nawadra, 1995). We shall return to this point when we discuss the role of the military in contemporary Fijian politics.

Large areas of Fiji came under the authority and protection of powerful chiefs who extracted tribute from their subjects (Routledge, 1985). In fact, protection by conquering chiefs was predicated upon payment of tribute, provision of slave labour and subservient loyalty. The relationship between chiefs and commoners played out in the context of the internal hegemonic rule and influence of chiefs at different levels of social relationships. The security of chiefs was seen as the security of the rest of society. It was common for chiefs to collect tribute from people within their own communities as well as from conquered tribes under their control as a way of consolidating their power (Roth, 1953).

Threats to the warrior chief's position were both internal—from competing brothers or cousins—and external, often in the form of chiefs from other tribes, some of whom were their own relatives. War captives were classified as *bokola* (human flesh to be eaten) and were ceremonially consumed in feasts that symbolised internalisation of the enemy's power as well as psychological and spiritual dominance over enemies (Williams, 1982). At a time when polygamy was a marital norm, chiefs were at liberty to appropriate commoner wives from their own communities or neighbouring tribes. The chief's main wife was usually another chief's daughter, and intermarriage between tribes was a way of maintaining peace and forging long-term alliances, although this did not work all the time, as evidenced in the wars between the two powerful polities of Rewa and Bau, where the chiefs were close cousins (Routledge, 1985). One of the fundamental roles of the social structure and its division of labour was to provide social, economic and political security for chiefs, rather

than for ordinary members of the community. Glorification of chiefly status and *mana* was central to the language of diplomacy and ceremonial discourse (Hocart, 1913).

Social transformation as a result of external influence started with the early beachcombers. Shipwrecked sailors, runaway convicts from Australia, whalers and adventurous sailors settled among the locals, became Fijianised and introduced guns and diseases (Maude, 1964). The missionaries were probably most influential in terms of transforming belief systems, cultures and the way security was redefined and articulated in everyday life. Instead of relying on the fearsome warrior and traditional gods for protection, the new security paradigm was based on protection by the Christian God, European technology and muskets (Waterhouse, 1866). To some extent this new paradigm undermined the legitimacy of the warrior personality, and altered the relationship between chiefs and the ordinary people.

The new sense of security introduced by missionaries was predicated on belief in European superiority and the denigration of everything 'heathen' (Ryle, 2010). Even before turning Christian, Cakobau was an avid collector of European goods, including a schooner and countless treasure boxes of European goods, which he saw as enhancing his wealth, prestige and power (Waterhouse, 1997). By the mid-1850s, competing chiefs possessed European firearms and cannons, which were used in wars. European artefacts and clothes were seen as symbolic of a new and higher culture, a belief planted and nurtured by early Europeans, including missionaries (Campbell, 1980). Missionaries saw themselves not only as saviours of souls but also as agents of Western civilisation and progress. To them, the future spiritual, social and political security of Fijians lay in Christianity, and the easiest way to achieve this was to convert chiefs and transform the warrior personalities (Williams, 1982; Calvert, 2003). It was expected that the rest of the community would automatically follow their chief's conversion. The conversion process became part of the political competition between chiefdoms and even led to wars in Bua, Tailevu, Lau and other parts of Fiji between chiefs and *vanua* that had accepted *lotu* (Christianity) and those opposed to it (Routledge, 1985). Opposition to *lotu* was based on the fear that the new religion would take away their identity, *mana*, power and authority and terminate the highly cherished continuity with the ancestral world, which had been cast as 'evil' and 'demonic' by the new religion (Thornley, 2002; Ryle, 2010).

Much of the early to mid-1800s saw the clash between two security systems: the Fijian and the European. By the 1850s, most chiefs in the eastern part of Fiji, through Tongan and missionary influence, had succumbed to the new religion (Scarr, 1984). Ma'afu, a Tongan chief who was leader of the Tongans in Fiji, extended his influence and became a threat to Cakobau, who set up his own government with the support of some Europeans (Spurway, 2015). These new governments provided a new form of security framework, which integrated both the Taukei and European systems. European-type laws were enacted that overruled local norms, and taxes were imposed in a similar manner as the old tributary system. On the island of Vanuabalavu, given to Ma'afu by Tui Cakau (paramount chief of Somosomo), Ma'afu set up a land tenure system whereby young men were given lots on which they farmed in order to pay their tribute to the Ma'afu government (Spurway, 2015). The same system found resonance in Tonga and is still in use now. Cakobau basically converted his conquered territories into a new 'modern' state using new European symbolism such as a flag (with a peace dove on it), an army reinvented from his *bati* (warrior clan), European advisers, taxes and new laws. Security was now imposed not through the whims of warrior chiefs and threats of war clubs but through European-styled laws endorsed by a council of chiefs and European advisers (Scarr, 1984).

Anti-colonial resistance and the security contours

By 10 October 1874, when Fiji was ceded to Britain by the local chiefs, security in Fiji was influenced by a number of perceived threats, including growing fear of the all-powerful Ma'afu, the prevalent lawlessness of European settlers and the continuing alienation of land by Europeans, some of whom were assisted by some chiefs (Maude, 1964; France, 1969). This deed of cession marked a significant turning point in Fiji's history as a new centralised state system was brought to bear in a country that hitherto consisted of competing chiefdoms (France, 1969). The deed of cession, which was signed by 12 Taukei chiefs together with British representatives, saw the establishment of a politically powerful and legally coercive system, which subjected the indigenous Fijians to British law, political institutions and norms (Newbury, 2011). Supported by various acts, it redefined the security discourse by shifting the emphasis away from the chiefs and community to the state and Crown.

The real intent among the indigenous Fijians of the deed of cession has been the subject of debate over the years. As Newbury observes:

> Time changes the perspectives. Later interpretations of the sovereign basis for concessions in the dialogue resulting in the transfer of political power between two cultures express the tension implicit in the use of historical documents lifted out of their historical context by a later generation of protagonists to serve very different political agendas. (Newbury, 2011: 28)

Some believe that the deed of cession was based on a contract between Queen Victoria and the Taukei chiefs, and therefore the instrument of independence should have been returned to the Taukei community and not to Fiji as a state (Baledrokadroka, 2003). This has thrown into question the legitimacy of Fiji as a state, which might be a laughable proposition but at the same time a serious one by some ethnonationalist lawyers and political activists in recent years.

Meanwhile, the establishment of the British colonial state was far from being a peaceful affair. In fact it was to be the beginning of a long, bitter and complex struggle, which saw interconnected moments of resistance by many indigenous Fijians, particularly those from the western side of Fiji, who saw British colonial rule together with their comprador Fijian chiefs, who were largely from the eastern side of Fiji, as posing a direct threat to their sovereignty and well-being (Durutalo, 1986). A series of resistance movements emerged that took different forms, from the direct use of force to more subtle modes of mobilisation and rebellion using religion and the withdrawal of labour and support for the colonial regime (Ravuvu, 1991a).

One of the very first and also possibly one of the most violent acts of dissent was a major rebellion in western and central Viti Levu in 1876, which came to be known as the Colo Wars, a mere two years after Fiji became a British colony (Nicole, 2006; Routledge, 1985). The term *colo* (pronounced *tholo*), which literally means inland or interior, was a derogatory label (which connotes being uncivilised, savage and wild) used by those along the coast and by colonial officials to refer to those in the interior of Viti Levu who had not embraced Christianity and were opposed to British colonial rule. The *Kai Colo* (people of Colo) were independent-minded and sought to protect their culture, land and social autonomy from encroaching external domination in the form of Christianity, colonialism and the hegemonic power of Bau, a chiefdom that was in alliance with the colonial state (Nicole, 2006).

Bau had been a powerful kingdom in precolonial times and had extended its empire through conquest to various parts of Fiji, except on the western side and in the interior of Viti Levu, which were not readily accessible and were well defended by local chiefs and their warriors. The anti-Bau, anti-Christian, anti-European planter and anti-colonial resistance spanned miles of territory linking villages across the borders of Nadroga, Serua, Namosi, Naitasiri and Ba provinces in a broad resistance alliance (Nicole, 2010; Thornley, 2002). The local grievances included tension with missionaries who had embarked on an aggressive program of conversion using local missionaries; European planters alienating arable land, often using dubious means; and the role of eastern chiefs in expanding their influence and power using the colonial state. The rebellion by the *Kai Colo* was brutally suppressed by the colonial state using the Armed Native Constabulary (ANC), which consisted largely of Taukei young men, recruited from 'friendly' villages, under the command of European officers (Brown, 1998).

The same grievances that provoked the Colo Wars also motivated the Tuka Movement of 1879–91, a broad-based rebellion opposed to the exploitative and oppressive attitudes and practices of Bauans, settlers, labour recruiters, missionaries and the colonial state and its institutions. Led by a charismatic leader, Navosavakadua ('he who speaks only once'), from the province of Ra, the Tuka Movement assumed a religious–cultural approach, a strategy that had a deep influence in mobilising the powerless and subaltern communities around Fiji (Kaplan, 1995). Ra had been subjugated by Bau for years. Many of its young men had been recruited for work as labourers, and some of its best land had been alienated through deceitful means. In the interior of the province lie the sacred Nakauvadra Ranges, believed to be the home of Fiji's supreme deity, Degei, the snake god (France, 1966). This sense of spirituality gave the Tuka movement a cosmological character that connected well with the religious-minded locals. The response by the colonial state was harsh, leading to the obliteration of some villages and the exiling of Navosavakadua to Rotuma, an isolated island in the north of Fiji.

In Vanua Levu, the second largest island in Fiji, there was also rebellion by the Seaqaqa people against the decision to bring the district of Sasa, which had close ties with the southern district of Wailevu, under the direct rule of Naduri, the seat of power of the high chief of Macuata, Tui Macuata. This resistance attracted the wrath of the ANC, which crushed the rebellion and whose leaders were either hanged or banished (Ali, 2008).

Opposition to the heavy-handed and oppressive style of colonial leadership through selected chiefs, who were designated high positions within the colonial regime, was rife, and many saw that the solution lay with forming a federation with New Zealand, a movement that was at its height from 1901 to 1903. In the first three decades of the 20th century, a charismatic leader, Apolosi Ranawai, was a major centre of attention because of his alternative socioeconomic scheme for indigenous Fijians. He set up the Viti Kabani (Fijian Company) for the purpose of empowering Taukei growers and businesses by undercutting European intermediaries who controlled the banana and copra market (Sutherland, 1992). This was tantamount to a revolt against the colonial capitalist economy, colonial state and chiefly order and therefore called for drastic response. Again, the reaction of the colonial state was to supress the movement by exiling Ranawai to Rotuma and later to New Zealand (Nicole, 2006).

Continued resistance to colonial rule also employed more subtle means in the form of semi-religious and political groups such as the Luveniwai Movement. This resistance was in response to taxation (*vakacavacava*), continued alienation of land by some chiefs, paternalistic colonial rule and exploitation of labour. Although there were strict rules under the native policy for movement of people, Fijians devised means of absenteeism from villages to avoid burdensome state-sponsored responsibilities such as taxation and the practice of *lala* or provision of goods and services to chiefs upon demand (Chappelle, 1970).

These forms of resistance were in direct response to the excesses of colonial rule, which threatened to undermine and usurp the autonomy and power of tribes as well as transform them into subservient entities of the Crown through the imposition of the Christian ethos, taxation, the reorganisation of land tenure systems and governance structures to reflect the interests of colonial capital in alliance with comprador chiefs (Nicole, 2010; Sutherland, 1992).

Crafting colonial security: Coercion, hegemony and divide and rule

The British response to colonial resistance took various forms, including the direct use of military force using the ANC, imprisonment, execution, village relocation, banishment from villages and exile of leaders (Ravuvu, 1991a; Nicole, 2006). More subtle means, such as surveillance, use of

chiefly authority through the native administration and 'traditional' appeal, use of church influence and even the use of sports such as cricket, were deployed, sometimes cautiously and sometimes more enthusiastically, to keep indigenous Fijians under the tutelage of colonial hegemony.

Perhaps the most potent force for colonial pacification was the ANC, a paramilitary force that acted as police and army at the same time, set up through the *Royal Gazette* of 10 October 1874. The founding commander was Lieutenant Henry Olive of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, and senior officers were mostly Europeans. As in other colonial armies, the ordinary rank and file were local indigenous people, who were often pitted against other indigenous Fijians in the name of law and order. The ANC evolved from Cakobau's Royal Army, which was set up in 1871 and was used extensively to subdue tribes in central Viti Levu and Lovoni on Ovalua Island. At first, Europeans saw Cakobau's army as a threat to their security, but they changed their mind as the threats from the *Kai Colo* increased and Cakobau's army was the only available means of providing security (Brown, 1998).

The ANC brutally put down anti-government and anti-Christian insurrection against the *Kai Colo* around the Nadroga–Navosa area in what came to be known as the Little Wars (Brewster, 1922). The British used chiefs who were coopted into the colonial bureaucracy at the district level (*buli*) and provincial level (*roko*) to recruit villagers by leveraging traditional and kin-based loyalty. This was to be the pattern of recruitment into the Fijian armed forces for much of the 20th century (during World War I, World War II and the Malayan Emergency of the 1950s). In the service of the Crown, chiefs used their *mana* to invoke the masculine values of *yalo qaqa* (warrior spirit and bravery) and *dau vakarorogo* (loyalty and obedience) as a way of extricating young men from their daily communal responsibilities to become coercive agents of the colonisers. This created a situation of colonial paradox whereby the colonised were used as instruments of oppression against other colonised. The native soldiers were institutionalised, imbued with a new identity and ideological outlook and let loose among their own relatives, described thus:

> The ANC had performed well. Reports on the affair [Little Wars] stress that the indigenous troops of the government did not hesitate to kill men of the same race when ordered to do so by their officers. Nor did they hesitate to punish their own men. (Brown, 1998: ii)

Gordon's idea was that wrongdoers were not to go through the mainstream British justice system all the time and were also to be judged by district commissioners with advice from Fijian assessors. The idea was to make use of the Fijian Administration mechanism as a way of maintaining and sustaining colonial hegemony without having to resort to force (all the time) to ensure submission. Despite this, the use of direct force continued unabated. The ANC was deployed to quell the rebellion in Seaqaqa in 1894, mentioned earlier. The governor declared a state of emergency, and 39 *sotia* (soldiers), commanded by Epeli Nailatikau, son of Seru Cakobau, were deployed on this operation. The rebellion was broken, and some survivors were arrested and sentenced to death, but this sentence was later commuted to imprisonment (Nicole, 2010; Brown, 1998).

The very first laws to set up Fiji's security forces were Ordinance No. XXX of 19 December 1876, which provided regulation of the police force, and Ordinance No. XXXI of 29 December, which provided regulation of the ANC (Colony of Fiji, 1876). There were four different classes in the disciplined forces: the ANC, whose members were called *sotia* (soldiers); the regular police (*ovisa*) in Suva and Levuka, at that time the only two urban centres; the rural police (*ovisa ni yasana*), who reported to the district commissioners; and the village police (*ovida ni koro*), who reported to the village headman (*turagani koro*).

Despite the existence of the ANC, local Europeans, consisting of merchants and plantation owners who modelled themselves along the lines of European landed gentry, were still uncertain of the capacity of Taukei soldiers to protect them. They persuaded Governor George O'Brien to enact an ordinance to establish a volunteer force in 1897. One of the primary reasons for this measure was to quell local disturbances against plantation owners. Another reason was to respond to rumours about a possible New Zealand invasion. This ordinance was repealed in March 1906 and was replaced by the Fiji Rifle Association Ordinance, which allowed the mobilisation of rifle clubs in case of a New Zealand 'invasion' (Colony of Fiji, 1906). These clubs formed a private army of sorts, which operated outside the ambit of state control. The real intention of the 1906 Ordinance was not so much defence against possible invasion as protection of European economic and political interests in Fiji at a time when the colonial policies on land, under Gordon's orthodoxy, were seen by many Europeans as being too pro-native (Brown, 1998).

The security dynamics in the colony gained an extra ethnic dimension after 1879 with the arrival of Indian labourers in that year to work on the sugar plantations (Lal, 2004). European–Taukei relations, based on vertical political patronage and paternalism, gave way to a more horizontal intercultural relationship predicated on suspicion and hostility. The influx of Indians meant the indigenous Fijians were no longer seen as the only subaltern group that posed a major threat to Europeans but were viewed instead as a convenient strategic leverage against the Indians, who were seen as troublesome and in need of coercive control.

Fiji's new ethnically demarcated society was characterised by ethnicised division of economic, social and political spaces, which provided the security environment conducive to the protection of European capital and political interests at the cost of the other two subaltern groups: the Taukei, who lived a subsistence village life under the tutelage of chiefs, and Indo-Fijians, who lived a regimented and oppressive plantation life within the cane belt (Sutherland, 1992). The security apparatus of the colonial state ensured that the social lines which demarcated ethnic spaces were clear. A manifest consequence of this was the way in which the subaltern groups (in this case the indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians) were pitted against one another through separate representation in the legislature, ethnic economic division of labour and separate political governance system for indigenous Fijians (Fijian Administration). This institutionalised system of demarcated governance provided the security pillar for what was known as the 'divide and rule' policy (Macnaught, 2016).

The use of hegemony, in the Gramscian sense, as a security strategy was evident and worked very well for British colonial control, in fact more effectively than the deployment of coercion through the ANC. Hegemony was articulated through a complex system of administration, political representation and cultural control and reproduction. These included a syncretic mixture of British state bureaucracy to legally frame the process of decision-making (Macnaught, 2016) as well as the use of Taukei chiefs to preside over the various levels of Taukei administration at the national, provincial, district and village levels, and rigid rules under the Native Act to keep indigenous Fijians within the social rubric of communalism, a form of social organisation that the British deliberately imposed to keep ordinary Taukei subservient to chiefs who acted as compradors for the colonial state (Ratuva, 2013; Sutherland, 1992).

A separate Fijian Administration (*Tabacakacaka ni Taukei*) structure was created in 1876, with the Great Council of Chiefs (*Bose Levu Vakaturaga*) as the apex deliberative body. This system defined the boundaries of cultural identity and political rights of the indigenous Fijians in a paternalistic way, often by arbitrarily imposing decisions and declaring them sacrosanct and beyond questioning. Submission to the officially sanctioned Taukei code of cultural dispositions and behaviour was legitimised through appeal to the belief in an immemorial and divinely ordained chiefly culture (*i tovo vaka-turaga*) and the indispensability of kinship ties (*veiwekani*). The native policy defined the ethno-administrative boundaries of Taukei identity as well as the 'security' parameters that demarcated the Taukei from other ethnic groups, principally the Indo-Fijians, who were made out to be a threat to Taukei land, culture, rights and political interests (Nayacakalou, 1975). This system of social insulation acted as a political security buffer as well as a system of control by the colonial state, whose policies not only reinforced the separation of the different ethnic groups but also pitted one against the other.

The changing global security climate in the British Empire and the world generally had some influence on security at home. Soldiers from Fiji (most of European origin) participated in the Boer War in the late 1800s and early 1900s as well as World War I (1914–18), as both were expressions of loyalty to the empire. Indigenous Fijians, like other coloured colonised people under the British Crown, were not allowed to bear arms and fight at the front during World War I and instead were confined to membership of the labour corps. This changed during World War II when a Fijian battalion was sent to fight in Solomon Islands against Japanese forces under New Zealand and US officers. The wars were opportunities by the British to tighten their security grip on the colonies using emergency powers and enlistment of able-bodied men to fight their wars (Nawadra, 1995; Ravuvu, 1991b).

Meanwhile, rebellion in the plantations by Indo-Fijian labourers was common in the late 1800s and early 1900s and in the 1920s. In some cases policemen were sent to quell the disturbances (Gillion, 1962). Intervention in sugar plantation tension served three major purposes. First, it was a way of keeping industrial peace, which served the interest of colonial capital; second, it helped to keep Indian workers and their grievances isolated from Taukei Fijian workers, who also expressed opposition to exploitation; and third, it presented an opportunity

for the colonial state to affirm its authority and legitimacy in the new colony (Sutherland, 1992). This had resonance with the broader security framework of the 'divide and rule' policy to maintain ethnic separation as a way to ensure that aggrieved Indo-Fijian and Taukei workers did not join forces and pose a direct threat to colonial capital.

Chiefs were readily deployed to isolate Taukei workers and persuade them to refrain from participation in industrial strikes and other forms of dispute because they undermined the Taukei sense of community and cultural respect. An example of this occurred during the oil workers' strike of 1959, when workers of different ethnic groups took part in an oil workers' strike, which spread to other industries and culminated in a major anti-colonial riot in central Suva. Chiefs used their traditional authority to call indigenous Fijian workers together and ask them to refrain from any activity that would bring disrepute to the chiefly system and Taukei culture (Sutherland, 1992). The appeal to tradition and loyalty to chiefs was a powerful psychological tool to deter anti-state resistance among indigenous Fijians. This was a technique used throughout the colonial period to break up trans-ethnic proletariat solidarity and reinforce the power of the chieftocracy, a close ally of the colonial state (Durutalo, 1986).

Responses to the use of security strategies such as direct coercion, institutional control, ideological and cultural domination and political manipulation were diverse. While such strategies ensured submission to the whims of colonial hegemony, they also generated multiple responses in the form of cynicism, evasive tactics and direct opposition. The multiple nodes and expressions of power (in the Foucauldian sense) attempted to institutionalise control at one level, but at another level it was not easy to contain, control and transform the multiple and diffused manifestations of power in the community. Security in the colonial contest therefore became highly contested in a way that saw the hegemonic and subaltern discourses engaging in both mutual and contradictory ways. Upon independence in 1970, the security environment changed, although some of the underlying ethnic, economic, cultural and political factors remained and continued to influence postcolonial relations.

Postcolonial transformation: The politics of securitisation

Some of the more salient features of security in the postcolonial era were, in the main, defined in ethnopolitical terms, articulated in three ways. The first was the sense of self-preservation and parochialism about a group's own security and how this was contained within a well-defined cultural boundary (Norton, 1977). The second was how this boundary would impinge on and even intersect with other cultural boundaries. The third was how the area of convergence of these boundaries could be negotiated to create a balance and an overriding national identity. In other words, how was communal identity to be reconciled with national identity in a way that ensured political equilibrium and stability (Ratuva, 2005)?

This was a classic case of communal nationalism versus civic nationalism, as articulated by Stavenhagen (1996), where the desire to protect and promote group interest often collides with the collective interest, represented by the state. However, Stavenhagen tends to dichotomise the relationship between the two forms of nationalism and fails to take into consideration the syncretic relationship between them, which often involves the simultaneous coexistence and interaction between contestation, accommodation and synthesis (Ratuva, 2004). Rather than assuming a stereotyped binary configuration, ethnic relations in Fiji articulated themselves in multiple forms: while there was tension, there was also accommodation; while there was racialisation, there was also multicultural engagement; while there was communalism, there were also individual rights; while there was authoritarian rule through coups, there was also popular democracy (Ratuva, 2004). This complex syncretic configuration shaped the trajectory and character of Fijian political and social discourse and security in the postcolonial period.

The perception of security in Fiji needs to be understood in the broad context of this complex syncretic interplay of diverse forces, rather than the narrow emphasis on ethnicity. The racialised discourse should not be seen in isolation but must be linked to issues such as group rights and identity, resources including land, power, inequality and socioeconomic status. The simplistic ethnic lens has the potential to construct premeditated threats in the form of the other, and this manifested itself in a Taukei sense of anxiety whipped up during the colonial days regarding a possible

takeover of their land by Indo-Fijians, and the Indo-Fijian fear of loss of citizenship and rights. Communal anxieties fed into each other, creating a vortex of distrust, which was exacerbated in times of crisis.

Racialised constitutional engineering and insecuritisation

Since independence in 1970, Fiji has had four constitutions (1970, 1990, 1997 and 2013), and all have either been victims of or results of coups, political conflict and anxiety about group security, and rights. Constitutional engineering was often seen as a mechanism for conflict resolution through provision of ethnic representation, but in the 2013 constitution, the emphasis on ethnic representation was curtailed in favour of common trans-ethnic representation through a single national constituency under a proportional representation system.

The 1970 constitution, the first after independence, provided for a whole series of mechanisms to respond to perceptions of group insecurity by both Taukei and Indo-Fijians. The first of these was political representation. Of the 52 parliamentary seats allocated, 22 were reserved for indigenous Fijians, 22 for Indo-Fijians and 8 for other minorities (European, part-Europeans, Chinese, Pacific Islanders and so on) usually categorised as 'general electors'. The 22 seats for each of the two major ethnic groups were further divided into 12 communal (elected by members of the same community) and 10 national roll seats to be elected cross-ethnically. For general electors, the division was three communal and five national roll seats (Fiji Government, 1970). This communal system of seat reservation was meant to provide a sense of balance and national confidence to respond to fears by indigenous Fijians of possible domination by the numerically superior Indo-Fijians, who over the years have been persistent not only about independence but also about exerting their political rights through a one-person one-vote system of election. In 1966, four years before independence, Indo-Fijians comprised 51 per cent of the population, as opposed to 42 per cent for the indigenous Fijians, a demographic balance that indigenous Fijians feared would give Indo-Fijians electoral advantage. Fear of loss of political rights through elections and loss of land rights through foreign and Indo-Fijian speculation and entrepreneurship were powerful factors in the minds of many indigenous Fijians (Ali, 1972).

During the 1969 constitutional talks in London, the agreement between the leaders of the Alliance Party, representing Taukei and minority interests, and the National Federation Party, representing Indo-Fijian interests, revolved around a discursive process of ethnic bargaining. The result was a constitution that represented two competing interests synthesised into a common national trajectory. This consensus of sorts was re-elected in the post-independence 'multiracialism' philosophy of the ruling Alliance Party, which won the pre-independence election in 1966 and the first post-independence election in 1972 (Ali, 1972). The multiracial experiment consisted of two competing discursive philosophies: coexistence and distinctiveness. The former referred to different ethnocultural and religious groups living side by side, observing each other's holidays (such as Christmas and Easter for Christians, Diwali for Hindus and Mohammed's birthday for Muslims), sharing common national symbols such as flag and anthem, sharing daily cultural artefacts, food, music and values and promoting ideological consciousness about a unified national identity. The second aspect, paradoxically, appeared to be a counteracting ideological force and referred to the idea of ethnocultural distinctiveness, whereby individual communities maintained and expressed their distinctive identities and interests. This formula was predicated on the assumption that multiculturalism was workable only in a situation where diversity and distinctiveness existed side by side and was articulated simultaneously as part of a unifying national identity (Ratuva, 2004).

In the broader security schema, this was probably a workable arrangement then, given the prevailing circumstances, because the opposing forces converged in a middle space where they negotiated and appeased each other, at least at the level of parliamentary politics and everyday ethnic relations, although this did not fully address the deeper schisms that were to manifest themselves later in times of crisis (Robertson & Sutherland, 2002). The interaction between coexistence and distinctiveness was part of a syncretic dynamics—meaning that there was a simultaneous occurrence of cultural accommodation as well as contradiction, which maintained a certain degree of harmony in the first 13 years after independence. It was not an overwhelmingly tense and racialised situation, but a situation where relationships oscillated between tension and consensus in a dynamic way within the broader rubric of the Alliance Party's multiracial philosophy. However, the paradox was that this synergy also helped to deepen and consolidate the Alliance Party's hegemonic strategy to maintain political and ideological dominance of a trans-ethnic alliance between chiefly and business elites. Multiculturalism was a Trojan Horse of sorts to maintain

this alliance. The chiefly elites had strong political leverage over the Taukei Fijian population, and multiracialism was seen as workable only if the interests of these elites were left unchallenged (Robertson & Sutherland, 2002). The communal distribution of seats and ethnopolitical culture, or what has been termed 'communal democracy' (Ratuva, 2005), reinforced this sociopolitical arrangement and at the same time rendered it fragile.

Sociologically, this situation created a syncretic condition that pitted communal and civic nationalism against each other, as Stavenhagen (1996) talked about, where tension and accommodation between the exertion of ethnocommunal difference and reconciliation of diversity for national unity take place simultaneously, with one overcoming the other in particular instances. The contestation between the two modes of nationalism becomes acute in times of crisis, particularly when ethnonationalism becomes an unrestrained force that seeks to transform and overtake civic nationalism as the dominant political and ideological force (Horowitz, 1985). The situation often becomes critical when contestation over state power, threat to cultural group rights, protection of identity, competition over resources and perception of exploitation and marginalisation become part of the political equation and are exploited by ethnic entrepreneurs for political advantage (Jenkins, 2008). The use of aggressive institutional leveraging and ultimately force by the dominant ethnocultural group can result from this contested synergy and thus create a situation of insecurity for the state and other ethnic groups, and can undermine civic nationalism as the unifying force for the state.

That is exactly what happened in 1987 when the cloak of civic nationalism, buttressed by the multiracialist ideology, was overcome by the power of Taukei ethnonationalism. The crisis was provoked by the defeat of the Alliance Party, which had total control of the state apparatus, including the military and other powerful neocolonial indigenous institutions, such as the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), the Fijian Affairs Board, the Native Land Trust Board and Provincial Councils, with the backing of the European and Indo-Fijian business community and most of members of the indigenous population. As mentioned earlier, despite its multiracial philosophy, the Alliance Party's real power was anchored on the power and privilege of the Taukei chieftocracy, which provided the primordial *mana* and cultural legitimacy for ethnonationalist agitation after the Alliance's electoral loss during the April 1987 general elections (Robertson & Tamanisau, 1988).

The victorious coalition, consisting of the newly formed Fiji Labour Party (FLP) and the Indo-Fijian–dominated National Federation Party (NFP), posed a direct threat to the Alliance's political hegemony as well as to the Taukei institutions that were part of its broader alliance. The national destabilisation activities of the Taukei Movement, an extremist ethnonationalist vigilante group consisting of Alliance supporters, were targeted at the Indo-Fijian political 'take-over', which was perceived as posing a threat to Taukei political rights, land security, economic interests and religious beliefs. The harmonious balance between communal and civic nationalism was broken as a result of the shift in political gravity away from Taukei political control. The underlying contradictions between the notions of coexistence and distinctiveness, which encapsulated the philosophy of multiracialism, were thrust to the surface, with the latter overshadowing the former as it asserted itself in an aggressive and violent way (Prasad, 1989).

The military, which was closely aligned with the chieftocratic system— culturally, politically and historically—intervened on behalf of the Alliance historical bloc, despite its constitutional role as the 'neutral' vanguard of national security. The role of the military, as we will later consider in detail, was largely shaped by a rather uncomfortable mixture of institutional praetorian norms learnt in military colleges and Taukei sociocultural values of warrior masculinity, inculcated through close association with the chieftocracy and indigenous cultural ethos (Sanday, 1991).

To the Taukei ethnonationalists, the capture of state power by the military provided considerable relief. Many felt that, with the help of the military, Taukei communal rights and political ascendancy were now secure, and this was constitutionalised in 1990 (Reeves, Vakatora & Lal , 1996). A pertinent aspect of the 1990 constitution was the way it conceptually connected national security and Taukei security as being symbiotic; that is, national security was possible only through protection of Taukei security:

> The events of 1987 were occasioned by a widespread belief that the 1970 constitution was inadequate to give protection to the interests of the indigenous Fijian people, their values, traditions, customs, way of life and economic well-being … the indigenous people of Fiji are endowed with their lands and other resources and the right to govern themselves for their advancement and welfare. (Fiji Government, 1990: 12)

Taukei political ascendancy was further bolstered by the communal representation system, which provided 37 seats for Taukei, 27 for Indo-Fijians, one for Rotumans and five for other ethnic minorities in a 70-member parliament (Fiji Government, 1990: 49). To secure Taukei political control further, the 1990 constitution ensured Taukei dominance in the 34-member senate, in which 24 seats were allocated through nomination by the Taukei-dominated Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), one seat was for the Rotuman community and nine for Indo-Fijians and others. The GCC was constitutionally required to appoint the president, and this effectively meant that the position of head of state was to remain perpetually in Taukei hands (Lal, 1998).

The process of state capture and the attempt at political ascendancy by the Taukei to entrench their group security merely institutionalised and increased the political insecurity of Indo-Fijians. This security zero-sum game was to be the dominant pattern of ethnopolitics for a number of years even after the 1997 constitution, which provided for 25 open seats and 46 communal seats, was promulgated (Fiji Government, 1997). Despite the attempt in the 1997 constitution to provide a sense of shared security for all citizens through the new Alternative Vote (AV) electoral system, a Bill of Rights and social justice provision, the perception of insecurity among the more marginal members of the Taukei community persisted, and ethnic entrepreneurs took advantage of this to whip up ethnonationalist fervour. Thus, when Mahendra Chaudhry was elected as the first Indo-Fijian prime minister in 1999, ethnonationalism reared its ugly head again and agitation increased in tempo, culminating in yet another coup in May 2000 (Robertson & Sutherland, 2002).

This time the role of the military was more ambivalent than in the two coups in 1987. The reason for this was that there was confusion due to the number of players with different motives involved. For instance, the elite Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit (CRW) of the military was involved, together with ethnonationalist politicians and activists, and senior military officers were divided as to whether the military should support the coup. The military eventually decided to 'officially' oppose the coup; it imposed emergency powers, removed the president and the constitution (in another coup), arrested the coup-makers and set the country on a path towards re-democratisation. This series of events raised fundamental questions about the dramatically oscillating security dynamics in Fiji, especially the changing position of the military in relation to framing

security, the unreliability of constitutional engineering in protecting group security and, as we saw in 1987, the power of ethnonationalism to spawn dramatic political change in the name of Taukei security.

The 2000 coup was paradigm shifting in the sense that it marked the reconfiguration of the military's relationship with Taukei chieftocracy and ethnonationalism. Instead of being seen as allies, as in the 1987 coups, these powerful political forces were now seen as sources of insecurity. Although the military had appointed Laisenia Qarase, a fervent ethnonationalist, interim prime minister in 2000, he was later vilified by the military, even after he won the 2001 and 2006 elections, as posing a threat to national security because of his political beliefs. The continuing differences between Qarase's party, the Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewe ni Vanua (SDL) and the military, led by Commodore Frank Bainimarama, created a national security crisis that was soon to plunge Fiji into another period of turmoil (Ratuva, 2011a).

Central to this security crisis was the way the military, the most powerful security institution of the state, was at loggerheads with the elected government on a number of issues, including the dispute over the extension of the commander's contract and differences over two controversial Bills that the SDL had planned to put through Parliament. The first was the Reconciliation, Truth and Unity Bill, which called for the release of George Speight, leader of the 2000 coup, and his fellow coup-makers as a condition for national reconciliation, among other things. The second was the Qoliqoli Bill (Fishing Rights Bill), which was aimed at transferring ownership of the foreshore area from the state to Taukei landowners. Opposition to these Bills by the military was framed around their potential to inflame inter-ethnic tension and heighten insecurity. Threats by Bainimarama against the overthrow of the Qarase government attracted charges of treason, which the police had started investigating (Fraenkel & Firth, 2007).

The tension escalated, resulting in the overthrow of the Qarase government by the military in December 2006. Later, in March 2009, the Supreme Court ruled that the coup was illegal. Less than 24 hours later, the president abrogated the constitution and reappointed Bainimarama as prime minister in what was technically another coup. The abrogation of the constitution was significant, because it meant that all constitutionally prescribed state institutions, positions and power were completely annulled and state control shifted entirely to the military.

The military regime accelerated the pace of social, economic and political transformation in line with the People's Charter, a document put together earlier in 2007–08 as a blueprint for post-coup reform (Fiji Government, 2008). Among the changes were the abolition of the GCC, which the military regarded as a threat to national security, reform of the Taukei neocolonial institutions, deployment of military officers in key government positions, prosecution of perpetrators of corruption by the newly formed Fiji Commission Against Corruption, aggressive national development strategies and the use of the term 'Fijian' for all Fiji citizens of different ethnic groups (Ratuva, 2013).

The abolition of the GCC in particular was controversial, and people reacted to it differently. For more conservative Taukei, the abolition of the GCC and reform of the neocolonial institutions posed a threat to their sense of cultural security. The more progressive Taukei saw the GCC as an archaic institution whose role in sustaining chiefly privilege had to end. From the viewpoint of some Indo-Fijians, the abolition of the GCC provided a sense of relief that a major legitimising tool of ethnonationalism, which had in the past posed a threat to their political security, was now history. However, some Indo-Fijians had close links with some chiefs who were members of the GCC and who acted as a restraining force on extreme ethnonationalism. There were those who feared that the abolition of the GCC would resurrect and regalvanise ethnonationalism in an ugly manner. The prediction by some that FijiFirst, the coup supporters' party, would lose the 2014 election under the new 2013 constitution because of the abolition of the GCC did not eventuate. In fact, FijiFirst won a landslide victory and also secured more than 50 per cent of Taukei votes (Ratuva & Lawson, 2016).

The coups, as we have seen briefly above, have shown that even constitutional safeguards were not sufficient to avoid ethnopolitical conflict and state capture. While constitutional engineering helped to reconfigure state structure, provided norms for representation and legitimised the operation of the state, it failed to contain ethnonationalism and ethnic contestation. The successive constitutions dealt only with structural and normative issues and did not address the deeper ideological and cultural issues. The constitutionally prescribed communal representation system in the 1970, 1990 and 1997 constitutions helped to institutionally entrench and socially legitimise ethnopolitical contestation and antagonism, although in different degrees. Despite its attempts at providing ethnic balance and multiracial security, the 1970 constitution merely created conditions for

the potential unravelling of multiracialism in crisis situations. The 1990 constitution mainstreamed ethnonationalism, provided security for the Taukei and reigned in insecurity for Indo-Fijians and other ethnic minorities. The thawing of ethnic relations and the establishment of the 1997 constitution, considered to be one of the most progressive in the world, failed to curb the excesses of ethnonationalism leading up to the 2000 coup and the tension that precipitated the 2006 coup.

The promulgation of the 2013 constitution is based on the assumption that the 2006 coups and the subsequent transformation of Fijian society has removed once and for all the scourge of ethnonationalism, and has replaced it with a multiracial society predicated on trans-ethnic equality and supported by the open proportional representation system. Its promulgation and legitimacy have been widely criticised and questioned because of the politics associated with the constitutional process. The draft constitution put together by the Constitution Commission led by Professor Yash Ghai was rejected, and the government created its own version by cannibalising aspects of the Ghai draft. The 2013 constitution attempts to guarantee security in different ways such as the removal of ethnic representation, strengthening the role of the military as a security 'watchdog' and, ironically, giving more power to the executive in appointments as well as giving amnesty to perpetrators of past coups, among others.

The cumulative effect, as we see today, is the greater centralisation of power in the hands of the attorney general and prime pinister, unwanted intervention in parliamentary political debate by the military and use of fear as a means of manufacturing consent among the civil service and population. It is fair to say that the 2013 constitution was founded on the premise of security to facilitate the interests of a range of players, including coup perpetrators, executive, ruling party and a state system that has a much deeper and authoritarian control over the civil service and population. Any action that militates against the dominant order, such as strike action by unions or attempts at political extremism and dissention, is often met with efficient response through the use of a range of legalistic mechanisms meant to inhibit rather than encourage democracy. The election in 2014, won through a 60 per cent majority by the military-backed FijiFirst, was the first under the 2013 constitution, and in a way it institutionalised the security narratives mentioned above.

However, the result of the November 2018 election saw the ruling FijiFirst winning by only 50.02 per cent of the total vote. While this majority is sufficient to sustain a stable government in the next four years, the real question is, if this trend continues, what might happen if the Taukei-based Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) wins the next election in 2022? Will the military maintain its constitutional role as an independent security institution, or will it maintain its loyalty to the FijiFirst and intervene extralegally on its behalf as it has done in the past?

Politics of economic security

Perhaps one of the most salient security factors closely associated with ethnic politics over the years has been perceived and experienced inequality. Associated with this was mutual self-victimhood whereby both Taukei and Indo-Fijians saw the other as privileged while considering themselves to be marginalised and exploited. The Taukei saw Indo-Fijian dominance in the retail, commercial and professional sector as 'evidence' of economic domination, self-enhancement and even exploitative tendencies. On the reverse side of the coin, Indo-Fijians saw ownership of about 90 per cent of the land by Taukei landowning groups as symptomatic of unequal rights and wastage of resources.

The Taukei sense of economic disadvantage had deeper roots in the colonial epoch when a series of laws and policies under the native administration locked Taukei into a rigid communal life revolving around the village subsistence sector under the tutelage of chieftocrats, who also acted as comprador functionaries for the colonial state (Fisk, 1978). This system drew inspiration from the protectionist ideology of the first British Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, whose social Darwinian belief was that the best way for the Taukei to survive the vagaries of Western influence was through preservation of their culture and the inalienability of their land:

> To have preserved the actual institutions of native society might have stemmed the rapid decrease in the Fijian population; to have encouraged the adoption of European institutions might have enabled the survivors to adjust themselves to the changing world introduced by the white man. (France, 1969: 31)

The policy cocooned the Taukei in a communal system characterised by feudalistic subservience and greater institutional control over their lives, and this had a profound and long-lasting effect on the socioeconomic situation and political psyche of the Taukei.

While the Taukei were locked into the communal subsistence village life, other ethnic groups had a head start in education and commerce, thus creating and solidifying inequality, which saw the Taukei at the bottom of the commercial, educational and professional ladder. This intersection between ethnicity and class shaped perception and attitudes between communities and, for the Taukei, it was a latent source of their grievances. When the native policies were relaxed towards the mid-1960s as Fiji moved towards independence, these grievances were articulated more readily and became a source of ethnonationalist sentiment (Nayacakalou, 1975).

Socioeconomic grievances and envy were readily translated into political grievances against Indo-Fijians because of their preponderance in retail and commerce. The relationship between economic insecurity and political grievance is noteworthy here because in the colonial and even postcolonial economy the two were closely related. Part of the Taukei sense of resentment emanated from their awe of the capitalist economy and all its technological aspects and commercial institutions that they had been made to believe were superior to, and more progressive than, the subsistence economy under which they lived. The Taukei came to see themselves as 'inferior' to the Europeans and Indo-Fijians who controlled the capitalist economy. This sense of marginalisation and disempowerment became a psychological breeding ground that nurtured ethnonationalism in later years.

Attempts to address the economic security of the Taukei through piecemeal introduction of the cash economy in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s failed to make any substantive transformation (Spate, 1959; Belshaw, 1964; Ratuva, 2013; Bain, 1986). Among numerous reasons was the control of these development projects by chieftocrats selected by the colonial state, whose interests were largely focused on accumulation of wealth and power for themselves. This was a case of 'inherent obstacles to economic advance imposed by the traditional system' (Spate, 1959: 55). By the time of independence, the Alliance government, aware of the growing disparity, integrated the notion of Taukei special development into a series of five-year development plans. This, too, failed to have any significant impact on the socioeconomic situation of the Taukei because it was treated almost like a mere footnote to the development plans (Ratuva, 2013).

Underneath the euphoria of independence and hope of a new national identity and destiny was the problem of socioeconomic inequality (Fisk, 1970). The private sector was controlled largely by European and Indo-Fijian capital, while the professional and educated Taukei were mostly concentrated in the civil service, which also had a preponderance of Indo-Fijians. These economic grievances were used as agenda for political mobilisation in 1975 when the Fijian Nationalist Party was formed by a group of urban Taukei entrepreneurs who found their business endeavours constantly thwarted as they competed against the monopoly of the Indo-Fijian commercial class, which controlled retail, real estate and other commercial enterprises. When the Taukei-supported Alliance Party lost the election to the Indo Fijian dominated National Federation Party – Labour coalition in April 1987, there was a major shift in the balance of power away from the Taukei. As a consequence, the grievances came to the surface and precipitated ethnic tension and created a major schism. In the ensuing riots, Indo-Fijian shops and properties were indiscriminately targeted.

The affirmative action policies put in place by the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei party, led by coup leader Sitiveni Rabuka after the 1987 coup were predicated on the belief that the best way to avoid future coups was to bridge the economic gap between the Taukei and Indo- Fijians. One of the aims of this affirmative action program was to create a Taukei business class to balance the Indo-Fijian commercial dominance. Concerted energy to create equality through the shortest possible time was seen as an imperative to achieve economic parity, social justice and intercommunal harmony. The state, now under Taukei control, provided preferential policies in the form of special Taukei loans, scholarships, business licences, taxi licences, fishing licences and other forms of grants. Unfortunately, the patronage system within the Taukei political and commercial hierarchy got in the way of what was theoretically a socially progressive program. This led to widespread corruption, whereby some leading Taukei bureaucrats were able to manipulate their links and power within the state system to divert state funds to their investments. Perhaps the worst consequence of the patronage system and corruption was the collapse of the National Bank of Fiji, which dished out a flood of cash to elite Taukei under the justification of economic empowerment. As a result the bank became insolvent and had to close after losing more than FJ$300 million (Ratuva, 2013).

After the 2000 coup, a more systematic affirmative action framework, called the 20-Year Development Plan (2001–20) for the Enhancement of Participation of Indigenous Fijians and Rotumans in the Socioeconomic Development of Fiji, was put in place by the SDL, under Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. The document made the optimistic assertion that:

> In conflict resolution, affirmative action helps address the grievances of particular groups who have been historically disadvantaged, and have used extremist political means to articulate these grievances. In this way, affirmative action directly targets the grievances by removing the existing inequalities, and thus assists in minimising political tension and conflict. (Fiji Government, 2002: 24)

Unfortunately, these noble goals were not achieved because of the corruption and scandals associated with the program, which led to the prosecution and imprisonment of a number of civil servants and a prominent businessman.

After the 2006 coup, the strategy for addressing Taukei economic security changed from affirmative action, which was abolished, to an integrated development strategy for national development. The military regime, which in September 2014 returned to power through a landslide victory under the banner of the FijiFirst party, also introduced social protection polices in the form of free education, free buses for students and elderly citizens, and an increase in social welfare allocations, among other things.

Although economic affirmative action as a measure to address security did not work as well as hoped, the consolation was that educational affirmative action was perhaps the most successful initiative because it helped many Taukei achieve higher levels of education and at the same time contributed to the expansion of a sizeable Taukei middle class. Although affirmative action was a state-driven program to uplift the economic security of the Taukei, it was seen by other ethnic groups, especially the Indo-Fijians, as a form of discrimination against them.

The military and security

The Fiji military has come under serious scrutiny in recent years because its behaviour since 1987 in relation to staging coups, and its responsibility for human rights abuses, has raised questions about its reliability as the last bastion of security. Despite changes in the justifications for coups

(in 1987 it was in support of Taukei ethnonationalism, and in 2006 it was purportedly to thwart ethnonationalism) and institutional transformation from 1987 to the present, its interventionist tendencies continue and have been further strengthened by the 2013 constitution, which prescribed a more proactive security watchdog role for the military. Studies of the Fiji military have largely revolved around its praetorian character and contemporary interventionist role in politics, staging coups and imposing authoritarian rule (Sanday, 1991). Sometimes we overlook some of the deeper cultural dynamics associated with the notion of warrior psychology, as we discussed earlier, and its role in providing cultural framing of both Taukei masculinity and Fiji military. A better understanding of the military could be gleaned from analysing it at two levels: the sociocultural and the institutional.

Sociocultural norms and psychology of the military

It is interesting to note that one of the legacies of the precolonial era is the notion of warrior culture psychology. The warriors in precolonial days were not part of a specialised institution but were individuals bound by sociocultural norms and expectations to *taqomaka* (protect) the community from other tribes (Waterhouse, 1866). During times of conflict, warriors were drawn from the ranks of ordinary young men in the community or friendly tribes; otherwise the role of protecting the chief was the responsibility of the warrior class or *bati*.

The warrior psychology was premised on two interrelated discourses. The first was the notion of *tagane* (masculinity) and how this was stratified in relation to one's level of *qaqa* (physical prowess) and *yalo kaukauwa* (bravery). The second was the bestowing of honour through community praise and the construction of a mythology to differentiate the hero-warrior from ordinary men. The elevation of the warrior to the level of cosmological stardom brought honour, respect and glory to the entire community. In the early days, successful warriors were given special names to signify their social status. While Taukei society has changed dramatically over the years, the cultural reification of masculinity and warrior psychology continued to be passed down through the ages via gender socialisation. As young boys grow up, they are initiated into martial ways to become a *tagane* (tough man), which in many ways prepares them for

a future soldering life. Many Taukei young men see themselves as 'natural' soldiers. The community-wide impact of this belief is pervasive. Almost every Taukei has a close relative in the military (Baledrokadroka, 2016).

The idealised construction of the past remains a potent social force that influences male identity and sense of being. Failing to live up to honourable warrior virtues is considered demeaning and unworthy of a Fijian warrior. This collective martial consciousness found expression on active duty during international military operations. In peacetime, it is embodied in situations requiring the articulation of masculinity, such as rugby and street-fighting; other manifestations include patriarchal hegemony and the domestic abuse of wives.

The notion of warrior psychology becomes a security threat when framed and articulated in an ethnicised way. Often Indo-Fijians are considered *lamulamu* (cowards) and *malumalumu* (physically weak) and therefore have no place in the military, considered the natural enclave for Taukei (Durutalo, 1986). The overt military expression of masculinity became prominent during the series of coups since 1987, in which the military's coercive might was used to usurp constitutional and state authority. The interplay between the traditional notion of the warrior and the modern notion of the professional soldier defines the identity of a Taukei soldier, and in some ways the military frames the Fiji security environment. However, despite this, the military can still play a syncretic role: first, as leverage for ethnonationalism, authoritarianism or for human rights abuse; second, to promote stability, security and peace. The Fiji military and the deeply embedded warrior ideology have played a major role in shaping the security discourse and climate in Fiji, and they will continue to do so in the future.

Institutional role of the military

Views about the Fiji military, a 3,000-strong institution, have been framed in two opposing ways. First, it is seen as a coup-making institution whose very existence poses a threat to the security of democracy (Baledrokadroka, 2016). The second view is that the role of the military (as defined by Chapter 81 of the Army Act) is for 'defence and state security of Fiji in the maintenance of Law and Order in land and sea' (Fiji Government, 1955). The reality is much more complex and involves a syncretic mixture of both of these positions. The image of the military

is constructed from various political and ideological viewpoints that attempt to frame security in different ways. Whether the military is seen as a security threat or as a provider of security depends very much on the historical and sociopolitical context and the ideological lenses used to frame the manifest and more latent behaviour and activities of the military.

Even the official role of the military has been redefined over the years to reflect changing security circumstances. For instance, Section 3 of the RFMF Act 1961 (revised 1985) states that:

> The Forces shall be charged with the defence of Fiji, with the maintenance of order and with such other duties as may from time to time be defined by the Minister. (Fiji Government, 1961: 1)

This provision recognised the salience of both 'defence' of Fiji from undefined external forces and internal threats, as suggested by reference to the 'maintenance of order'. Although there was no identifiable external threat, the military's role in internal control, especially in supressing anti-colonial rebellion and quelling activities deemed subversive, were common features of the colonial legacy.

Upon independence, the RFMF Act provided the functional and operational framework for the military, and its role was not even mentioned in the 1970 constitution, which was the main blueprint for Fiji's post-independence political development. Only the position and appointment of the commissioner of police were mentioned (in Sections 84 and 107, respectively), and it was probably assumed that the military, whose role was seen either to be ceremonial or to fight external wars, was considered relatively autonomous of the mainstream state governance system and therefore did not require constitutional mention. After 96 years of British rule, it was assumed that the military would continue to express the same commitment to patriotism and respect for state authority. This assumption evaporated in May 1987 after the first coup.

After state capture in 1987 by the military in support of ethnonationalist concerns, the country awoke to the idea of the military as an institution capable of sudden political intervention and transformation. This reshaped the perception of the military in mainstream national consciousness from being a subservient tool of state security to an institution capable of usurping state authority and power. This shift in the military's political role shaped its own self-perception as well as the broader dynamics of civil–military relations in Fiji, as it now sees itself as the ultimate arbiter

and protector of security. This was reflected in Section 94 of the 1990 constitution, which redefined the role of the Fiji military thus: 'It shall be the overall responsibility of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces to ensure at all times the security, defence and well-being of Fiji and its people' (Fiji Government, 1990: 106). In addition, the constitution officially changed the name from Royal Fiji Military Forces to Republic of Fiji Military Forces, in line with the declaration of the country as a republic.

The term 'overall responsibility' represents a sense of overarching control as undisputed overlord of national security, which overshadows any other form of collective participation by non-military sectors of the community. The emphasis on 'well-being' shows the expansion of the boundaries of responsibility away from simply defence to people's everyday life. On experiencing the sumptuousness of civilian political power and its associated trappings after taking over the government through coups, the military-backed regime decided to constitutionalise the role of the military not only in the context of its defence role but also as a political and social watchdog of people's well-being. This raises fundamental questions about the line of demarcation between the military sphere of operations and the civil sphere of engagement. In a latent way, this watchdog role provides justificatory leverage for the military to intervene in civilian politics and affairs under the guise of protecting the nation's well-being. Ironically, it could provide a licence for future coups.

The 1997 constitution (Section 112 [1]) simply endorsed the 1990 provision by reiterating that 'the military force called the Republic of Fiji Military Forces established by the Constitution of 1990 continues in existence'. In addition, the appointment process of the commander as stipulated in the two constitutions were similar; that is, the president, acting on the advice of the minister, must appoint a commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces to exercise military executive command of the forces, subject to the control of the minister (Fiji Government, 1997).

Perhaps the most far-reaching proposals in redefining the role of the military were provided in the 2012 constitutional draft by the Constitution Commission led by Professor Yash Ghai. The draft, which was eventually rejected by the government, expanded and elaborated the role of the military and proposed that it: first, be 'responsible for the defence and protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic'; second, 'assist and cooperate with other authorities in situations of emergency or disaster when so directed in writing by the National

Security Council'; third, 'be deployed to restore peace in any part of Fiji affected by unrest or instability, only if requested in writing by, and under the control of, the Commissioner of Police, and with the prior approval of the Minister responsible for defence'; and, fourth, 'may be deployed outside Fiji' only with the prior approval of Parliament or Cabinet (Fiji Constitution Commission, 2012: 142). The draft constitution also recommended a National Security Council to which the military would be accountable.

In some ways, these provisions made the military more accountable to civilian authorities. Clearly, with the lessons of the six coups in mind, the commission saw the need to bring the military under civilian oversight for the long-term civilianisation and democratic reform of security institutions. This did not go down well with the military hierarchy, which had enjoyed its stint in power and who were determined to steer the country towards a particular path of political and economic development. Hence the rejection of the 2012 constitutional draft by the military-backed government did not come as a surprise, especially when, in its submission to the Constitution Commission, the military stated in no uncertain terms that it was the 'last bastion' of law and order in Fiji and would continue to provide guidance for the governance of the country, ensuring that peace, prosperity and good governance was practised and adhered to (RFMF, 2012). This statement was seen to 'indicate that the RFMF sees itself as supervising the civilian government, rather than responsible to it' (CCF, 2013: 36–7).

The role of the military under the 2013 constitution, which was put together by the government itself, ironically reverted to the 1990 provision for the role of the military, stating that: 'It shall be the overall responsibility of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces to ensure at all times the security, defence and well-being of Fiji and all Fijians' (Fiji Government, 2013: 83). The image that the military had been trying to propagate after the 2006 coup had been that of an ideologically inclusive and multiculturalist stance, in opposition to divisive ethnonationalism. Replicating the role prescription from the 1990 ethnonationalist constitution seems paradoxical indeed.

Although the military sees this constitutional provision as a safeguard against forces of instability such as unregulated ethnonationalism, others see it as a constitutional licence to intervene in national politics at any time under the excuse of ensuring security, defence or well-being.

The legal security institutions

The roles of the police, the courts and prisons are important in maintaining a certain degree of social order in a society scarred by ethnopolitical conflict. The capacity of these institutions to carry out their constitutional role ultimately depends on a number of factors, including their responsive capacity, operational philosophy and available resources as well as the nature of the conflict. The series of coups had the direct effect of relegating these institutions to roles that saw them as subservient to the military, which saw itself as the last bastion of security (RFMF, 2013). In a political environment where coups have blurred the line and redefined the relationship between constitutional state authority and extralegal military coercion, the powers and roles of the police, courts and prisons are often subsumed into the extraconstitutional demands of the coup-makers.

During the first coup in 1987, the police force was directly under the control of the military. The police commissioner and his deputy were removed by force, military-appointed 'loyal' police officers were given top positions, including a military colonel as commissioner, and police stations were literally taken over by soldiers (Robertson & Tamanisau, 1988). Many policemen became collaborators with the military by helping in the arrest and imprisonment of anti-coup activists. The professionalism and political independence of the police was compromised, and the institution lost its credibility as it came under the political and ideological control and manipulation of the post-coup regime.

The police force also went through the post-coup 'Fijianisation' program in the civil service, as part of the broader pro-Taukei affirmative action program (Ratuva, 2013). The 2000 coup put further pressure on the police, this time not as coup collaborators (as in 1987) but as a largely ineffective security buffer between the coup perpetrators and the public. The real test for the police was during the riots, burning and looting in Suva's central business district following the overthrow of the government by some ethnonationalist politicians with the support of the CRW. The commissioner, Isikia Savua, an army colonel who was alleged to have been a coup conspirator himself, did not issue any definite order; nor was any security plan in place against possible violence by ethnonationalist marchers on the fateful Friday, 17 May. The marchers, protesting against what they saw as Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry's meddling in

Taukei issues such as land, ended up running amok in Suva City after they heard of the takeover in Parliament (Robertson & Sutherland, 2002). A TV shot of the commissioner inspecting the result of the mayhem a day later with a golf club in hand was not only a pitiful sight but also symbolic of the utter failure of the police to prevent or respond to the civilian riot.

Many in the police rank and file questioned the suitability and credibility of the commissioner of police. These grievances were vindicated in the few days after the coup when armed civilian supporters of the coup roamed at will around Suva and other places around Fiji, intimidating citizens, looting cattle and crops to feed the coup supporters camping at the parliamentary complex, and forcefully taking over control of some towns. In the process, police stations were taken over and policemen were forced to 'surrender'.

The balance of force was rather unequal because the police were not armed while the coup supporters were, and, around the city of Suva, policemen on duty were sworn at and humiliated by coup enthusiasts. This led to considerable loss of morale, and many police personnel experienced depression and had to seek counselling (Fiji Police counsellor, personal communication, 2009). For days, fear and anxiety gripped the population of Suva as waves of rumours of civil unrest, instigated by the rebels, spread like wildfire around the capital, causing unprecedented panic, which forced people to go home early or leave the capital altogether. The thought that the police were utterly powerless in the face of armed thugs roaming the city with impunity worsened mass hysteria and caused near-chaos.

The fluid security situation after the 2000 coup caught people by surprise. After the arrest of members of the government, the president used his constitutional prerogative to declare a state of emergency and, in the process, 'sacked' the government, now in captivity, on the grounds that it was 'unable to act'. This left a serious power vacuum and, without the support of the military, President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara could not exercise authority as effectively as he would have wanted. The military stepped in, asked the president to *vakatikitiki* (move aside) and took over executive authority on 29 May, technically staging another coup.

The takeover by the military shifted the balance of power away from the coup-makers (although they still possessed guns acquired from the military). To the relief of the people of Suva, the military took control and

peace of mind returned for many. The new security environment enabled the police to operate more confidently, and they were able to rearticulate their security role, although under the protective shield of armed soldiers.

The 2000 coup provided a critical lesson for the police in terms of its role in the broader national security paradigm. The instability wrought by the 1987 and 2000 coups rendered the police ineffective as a security institution with a national mandate for maintenance of law and order. There had to be serious thinking about its fundamental strategies. The task of reforming police structure, rebuilding police morale and reprofessionalising its operations was given to Andrew Hughes, a senior Australian police officer.

The relationship between Hughes and the military commander, Bainimarama, was cordial at first, but deteriorated as a result of the police's investigation into a possible charge of treason against Bainimarama. This followed Bainimarama's threat to remove Qarase's government by force over the renewal of the commander's contract. Qarase's attempt to pass the Reconciliation, Truth and Unity Bill, mentioned earlier in the chapter, inflamed the situation. To complicate matters, the police set up its own special unit and tried to import new automatic rifles for its armoury as a way of responding to any future coup attempts. The military felt threatened by this and intercepted the weapons at the Suva wharf and also raided the headquarters of the special police unit in Nasinu, outside Suva.

The final straw was when Hughes and two other senior police officers went to New Zealand to arrest Bainimarama, who was having talks with Qarase through an invitation by the New Zealand Government. When this failed, Hughes, fearing for his life, did not return to Fiji (Hunter & Lal, 2018). The two senior police officers who accompanied him lost their jobs. The significant point here is that Fiji was facing a situation in which the two main institutions of national security were pitted against each other as they contested for legitimacy and control while the country was going through a crisis spawned by the 2000 coup and that, in turn, spawned the 2006 coup. The contestation was not based on any noble agenda such as how best they could strategise about national security, but rather on a complex hodgepodge of divergent personal interests between the heads of the two institutions, competing versions of their functions and legitimacy, and irreconcilable framings of security. To legitimise its stance, the police relied on the 1997 constitution (Part 4, Section 111),

which established the position of commissioner of police. The police force was also guided by the Police Act of 1966, which formalised the role of the police as such:

> The Force shall be employed in and throughout Fiji for the maintenance of law and order, the preservation of the peace, the protection of life and property, the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of all laws and regulations with which it is directly charged; and shall be entitled for the performance of any such duties to carry arms. (Fiji Government, 1966, Part 2, No. 5)

On the other hand, the military's claim to legitimacy was based on two instruments—one legal, the other coercive. The legal mandate was based on the 1997 and 1990 constitutional provisions about the 'overall responsibility' of the military 'to ensure at all times the security, defence and well-being of Fiji and its people', as we have already discussed. This legal discourse was the fulcrum on which the more aggressive and threatening behaviour of the military was launched. The military also gained self-bestowed political and moral authority as a result of taking over state power after the 2000 coup and after determining the future political trajectory of the country by appointing an interim prime minister.

The collision between the two security institutions paradoxically became a security threat in itself because each one was trying to nullify the other's legitimacy. In the end, the power of coercion won the day, as the military, with its greater firepower and training for combat, overshadowed the largely unarmed and less pugnacious police. There were a couple of incidents when a shootout between the two forces almost happened; if it had, it would have been disastrous, as it would have threatened the safety and security of citizens.

After the military took over political control following the 2006 coup, the police force literally became a part of the military command system. Esala Teleni, a senior naval officer, was appointed commissioner, although officially and operationally the police remained 'autonomous'. Teleni's term as police commissioner was full of controversy as a result of a combination of factors, including the abruptness of his military-style leadership, which contradicted routine policing norms; his constant suspicion that police officers were secretly pursuing an anti-coup investigation against him and were attempting to sabotage his leadership; and the role of the

commissioner's brother, a Pentecostal preacher who tried to use the police force to gain leverage for spreading his religious message and gaining converts to his New Methodist group, which had broken away from the mainstream Methodist Church.

The increasingly acute crisis within the police led to the appointment of Major General Ioane Naivalurua, another senior military officer and former commissioner of prisons, as commissioner of police. His task was to reform the governance structure and strategic direction of the institution and to arrest and resuscitate the plummeting morale of the police officers. Naivalu's reform of the prison system as commissioner of prisons won him accolades as a dynamic and imaginative visionary. Those reforms introduced innovative initiatives such as the Singaporean-styled Yellow Ribbon project aimed at rehabilitation and community involvement, as well as commercial projects and skills development for prisoners. Naivalu was later posted to a diplomatic position and was replaced by a South African, Major General Ben Groenewald, who was tasked by Nelson Mandela to reform the South African police in the post-apartheid era. Groenewald resigned and left Fiji in November 2015 and was replaced by yet another military officer in the form of Brigadier Sitiveni Qiliho.

The militarisation of the police was not total but nevertheless provoked various levels and pockets of resistance among senior police officers who felt threatened professionally by the intrusion of military officers into their domain, and by the coercive and often illegal tactics of the military officers when dealing with public 'threat'. This created a cycle of resistance and counter-resistance within the police force, which threatened its sense of institutional cohesion and operational effectiveness.

The challenge for the police in the future will be how it redefines its role in the bigger security picture, especially how it draws the boundaries of its operation and modes of engagement in ways that are distinguishable from those of the military. The demilitarisation and reprofessionalisation of the police must work hand in hand to transform the institution for a sustainable and stable police force. More importantly, the reform must create citizens' trust in an organisation that has in the past engaged in arbitrary acts of violence on captured prisoners and other members of the public. A number of initiatives, like Neighbourhood Watch and community policing, have been deployed in the past to integrate the police into the community and nurture cooperation with civilians in

the battle against crime. Although these might have been successful in solving some incidents of crime, they have not really addressed the deeper causes of insecurity.

Perceptions, ethnic framing and threats

Human behaviour, especially its predisposition towards violence, is shaped by an array of cultural, psychological, ideological, economic, religious and political forces acting in either direct or subtle ways (Jenkins, 2008). Our behaviour is intrinsically linked to our perceptions and attitudes, and often threats are constructed in response to what might be perceived to be hostile behaviour by the other.

In multi-ethnic societies such as Fiji, the construction of others, definition of social group boundaries and creation of common spaces for interaction take place in symbolic and dynamic ways. Contrary to mainstream perception about a dichotomous tense relationship between ethnic groups, principally Taukei and Indo-Fijians, the relationships are much more complex and involve both tension and accommodation taking place at the same time. Intergroup perception expressed in the form of prejudiced imagery and stereotypes or affirmative perception could range from being superficial and temporal to being extreme and deep-seated, and there is often a dynamic oscillation of perception between the two poles, depending on the circumstances. While there have been cases of expressions of extreme ethnonationalism by Taukei in the past, these largely took place in the context of political crisis fuelled by the active role of ethnic entrepreneurs who take advantage of the situation to instil fear and agitate for ethnic and religious hatred, thereby making it easier to mobilise and control people to serve their political interests and ideological agenda.

Mobilisation and politicisation of ethnically based framing has the potential to inflame group passion and communal tension. Fiji's postcolonial history shows how this phenomenon can shape political culture and the political landscape significantly in dynamic ways. In Fiji, ethnically based framing of others has been nurtured by a number of manifest and latent factors with roots in the colonial epoch, as we have seen.

The demarcated social worlds in which Taukei and Indo-Fijians lived during the colonial days were reinforced by the British policy of divide and rule (Narayan, 1984). Separate political representation and the socioeconomic division of labour, which saw Indo-Fijians concentrated in the cane belts as workers and farmers while the Taukei were largely locked into village subsistence life controlled by rigid communal laws under the tutelage of chiefs, ensured that the separate and rarely linked spaces inhabited by the two communities shaped antagonistic consciousness of each other. The construction of otherness was a response to the demarcated and contested political space. This was institutionalised in the constitutions, which prescribed ethnic representation, separate schools, separate trade unions and separation in general social life such as sports and residential areas.

The stereotypes and negative perceptions emanating from these conditions can pose security threats on their own. This is because feeling and attitudes of the people have the capacity to inspire political action, despite the security roles of the state, military and police. Indeed people do change and influence society generally. One way of changing people's ethnic consciousness at the informal level is community-based peace-building, which we look at next.

Community-based peace-building as response to security

When we talk of community-based peace-building systems, we refer to a whole range of approaches, some 'traditional', some more contemporary and some spontaneously and contextually constructed, which are often used to respond to local conflicts in the rural, urban and peri-urban areas. Often those involved are familiar with each other, either culturally, professionally or socially, and have a common understanding of the significance of resolving conflict, although their versions of the conflict may differ. Different cultural groups have different approaches to peace-building. The Taukei, for instance, tend to rely on a mixture of culturally based practices of reconciliation, Christian notions of love, forgiveness and conflict resolution, and more contemporary forms of mediation. These are used either individually to respond to specific contexts or together in a hybrid way, depending on the complexity of the conflict. Hindus and Muslims also use aspects of their religious philosophies as well as more contemporary forms of mediation practices to respond to conflict situations.

Perhaps one of the most pertinent questions is how local and culture-based means of conflict resolution can be used transculturally. This was attempted by Qarase's government in a national reconciliation ceremony in Fiji in 2005 through the use of the *veisorosorovi* (intergroup reconciliation) model earlier proposed by Ratuva (2003). While the initiative brought some of the perpetrators and the victims of the 2000 coup together in a symbolic and widely publicised solemn ceremony, the impact on the broader ethnopolitical situation in the country was minimal. In fact the whole process failed because the military and the Fiji Labour Party, two key players during the 2000 coup, refused to participate. The *veisorosorovi* model was workable only if all parties consensually agreed on a common aim and vision using the Taukei protocol.

Use and abuse of the *veisorosorovi* model in national reconciliation

The failure of the *veisorosorovi* model in the national reconciliation initiative in 2005 was not due to the weakness of the approach but to the blatantly political intent of the organisers and to the tense political conditions that prevailed in Fiji at the time.

The term *veisorosorovi* comes from the word *soro*, which refers to a number of social and behavioural values, including to submit oneself, to surrender, to humble oneself or to give in. In the Fijian cosmology, this could be framed in relation to submission to supernatural or divine authority and, in sociopolitical and cultural terms, it means humbling oneself as a means of appeasement. The term *veisorosorovi* refers to different modes of peace-building such as *bulubulu* (literally meaning to 'bury') or *matasanigasau* (literally meaning 'arrow'), both of which simultaneously refer to soliciting forgiveness and admitting guilt (Ratuva, 2003).

Sociologically, *veisorosorovi* has a number of salient aspects worth noting. First, it is reciprocal, as the repetition of the term *soro* suggests. Reciprocity is a critical element in the Taukei sense of social balance and cohesion. In peace-building terms, this provides space for reforging broken ties and allowing social synergy to flow between the two conflicting groups and to lock them together in a united mould. This unity of purpose can be temporary and can also be long-lasting, depending very much on the situation. Second, *veisorosorovi* can be restorative through reaffirmation

of kinship ties that had been temporarily fractured by an individual committing a wrong. Third, it can be transformative not only through the renewal of relationship but also by making sure that the conditions where these relationships exist change into something better and more peaceful.

In these processes kinship provides a powerful peace-building force because of its capacity to provide a sense of both socially constructed and 'primordial' connection. This is more so within the Taukei community where *veiwekani* (kinship) is valued as both an unquestioned immemorial inheritance and a constantly constructed and reconstructed phenomenon. Although it is a unifying and therefore peace-building force, it also has the capacity to generate tension as a result of competition over land, titles, resources and power.

The pertinent question here is to what extent can the *veisorosorovi* approach, which has been the cornerstone of Taukei peace-building, be used in trans-ethnic conflict? When the Qarase government decided to carry out a national reconciliation program in 2005 based on the *veisorosorovi* approach, there was clearly some uncertainty as to its efficacy in a tense and potentially volatile political situation. In October 2005 a whole week was devoted to workshops and discussions on reconciliation, culminating in a public *veisorosorovi* ceremony at Albert Park in Suva. The ceremony consisted of a multidimensional process that involved presentation of *matanigasau* by the government and Taukei chiefs to various ethnic and religious groups pleading for forgiveness for their suffering during the 2000 coup.

However, behind the veneer of public peace-making lay deeper political and religious interests. The ceremonies, while officially coordinated by the Ministry of National Reconciliation, were largely influenced by a Christian group called the Assembly of Christian Churches in Fiji (ACCF), a fundamentalist interdenominational group whose members included Prime Minister Qarase and other senior officers of the state (Newland, 2007). Also, the reconciliation was meant to be part of a deal to appease the victims of the coup, especially Indo-Fijians, as well as the military, so that agreement could be readily reached to release from prison the 2000 coup perpetrators, who had close ideological links with Qarase's ruling SDL Party.

The initiative ultimately failed because two important players, the military and Fiji Labour Party (which was the main victim of the 2000 coup), refused to participate in the *veisorosorovi*, arguing that legal and retributive justice must take precedence over reconciliation and restorative justice. In other words, the perpetrators of the coup deserved to remain in prison as a deterrent to future potential coup-makers. Nevertheless, the failure to harness consensual support for the reconciliation project was part of its downfall. It was not really a fault of the *veisorosorovi* approach as such, but rather of the way it was used, or rather abused—as leverage to serve ulterior political motives in a highly charged political atmosphere— that undermined its credibility and effectiveness. One of the inherent principles of the *veisorosorovi* approach is that it must be supported by all the parties concerned and that there should be transparency and honesty in people's intention. Using it as leverage for conspiratorial political ends has the potential to undermine its moral value and authority.

This is one of the dilemmas associated with using traditional forms of peace-building mechanisms at the national level outside the local community. Outside the scope of the kinship network, the power dynamics change as relationships become more formal and less personal and are influenced by national political ideas and processes. In such a strange atmosphere, local peace-building mechanisms such as *veisorosorovi*, which were meant for community-based conflict resolution, are bound to be confronted by challenges. Adaptation of local peace-building systems to a trans-ethnic national context is still possible, but preconditions such as consensus among those involved on both perpetrator and victim sides as to what needs to be done, and the rationale behind it, must first be met. The process can also be tailored to suit the circumstances.

Civil society peace-building and security

Apart from the culture-based systems, the role of civil society organisations in peace-building in Fiji is well established. Religious organisations, women's organisations, human rights and peace organisations have been active in urban areas for decades. In some cases these groups operate on their own within their particular constituencies, and in other cases they collaborate under a common umbrella.

The period of peace activism in the 1970s set the tone for the proliferation of peace groups in Fiji. The anti-French nuclear testing at Moruroa Atoll in French Polynesia sparked an international outcry. In Fiji a number of citizen groups, including church groups, student organisations and other civil society groups such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), joined hands to form an umbrella organisation called ATOM (Against Atomic Testing on Moruroa). A major regional peace conference in Suva in 1975 saw the establishment of a region-wide peace movement whose agenda extended from opposition to nuclear testing to other issues including decolonisation, land rights, indigenous emancipation, demilitarisation and development. This, as we noted in Chapter 3, saw the birth of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement (NFIP), whose geographical coverage included the Pacific Islands states, Australia and New Zealand, and Pacific Rim countries such as Japan, Philippines, Indonesia and the United States.

The NFIP had a significant influence on Fiji's peace movement. It influenced the setting up in 1983 of the Fiji Anti-Nuclear Group (FANG), which became the focal point for peace activism in Fiji for decades. When the Pacific Concerns Resources Centre (PCRC), the secretariat of the NFIP, was relocated to Suva from Auckland in 1993, peace activism in Fiji was given a further boost as peace groups and other civil society organisations in Fiji benefited from the organisation's resources and expertise.

In addition to the YWCA and FANG, a number of peace organisations emerged in the 1990s and 2000s. Among these were women's-based organisations such as Women's Action for Change, which used plays and other forms of dramatisation to publicise peace messages; the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, which mobilised women for political action; the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, which provided support for female victims of domestic violence; Femlink, which engaged in media outreach programs for urban and rural women; and the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development, whose fundamental responsibility is to empower poor rural women through development of local and family-based industries. Femlink was also the local focal point for Pacific People Building Peace (PPBP), the Pacific arm of the Global Project for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. Collectively, these organisations contributed to women's empowerment, peace-building and stability in different ways.

Other peace-based organisations include the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), set up after the 1987 coups to facilitate dialogue between competing political groups in Fiji. Later the CCF became a human rights advocacy group. The Fiji Dialogue emerged in response to the 2006 coup. Its role was to provide space for dialogue between the perpetrators and victims of the coup. Perhaps the very first professional peace-building organisation was the Pacific Centre for Peace-Building, which has been carrying out training, workshops and consultancies for various government departments and community groups.

The role of religious organisations has been critical in providing a spiritual dimension to peace in a country where religion takes centre stage in most cultures. The Interfaith, an initiative for multireligious engagement, brought together various religious groups such as Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Sikhs to worship and pray for the nation. The fundamentalist leaders of the Methodist Church were often reluctant to join the Interfaith movement because of its close connections to ethnonationalists and saw worshipping beside 'heathens' as sacrilegious. However, the more progressive leaders enthusiastically joined the Interfaith. The Methodists and a number of Pentecostal churches were active members of the ACCF, which was instrumental in the failed 2004 *veisorosorovi* initiative. The Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy, a research and advocacy group set up within the Catholic Church, was actively involved in peace-building programs together with other groups like the CCF.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was proactive in peace-building through its Peace, Stability and Development Analysis project, which attempted to link various institutions and organisations for a unified framework for national peace-building. Another UNDP project was the National Initiative on Civic Education, which was based on a national public education process on the issues of human rights, democracy, elections and governance. The idea was that through civic education, national consciousness about unity and peace could be attained. The Pacific Conference of Churches has also been a stalwart for peace-building in Fiji, where it is based.

Given Fiji's small size, civil society space is quite crowded and highly contested. While attempts have been made to bring some organisations under a common umbrella, such as the Fiji Human Rights Coalition, Fiji Anti-Nuclear Group, PPBP, Dialogue Fiji and Interfaith, the power

dynamics between them and the desire to maintain their distinctive identities in a highly charged political climate continue to be major defining factors in their relationships. This is further complicated by the political alignment of different organisations. At the time of the 1987 coups, the division was blatantly ethnic and ideological. Taukei-led organisations such as the Methodist Church and those with right-wing leanings such as the indigenous Fijian-based Soqosoqo Vakamarama (Women's Organisation) supported the ethnonationalist coup. Opposition to the coup came from non-Taukei and left-leaning organisations. Although the CCF was largely Taukei-dominated, it had a multi-ethnic and centre-left position and was opposed to the use of political violence for ethnic ends. FANG, which had a centre-left political position, came into direct collision with its parent organisation, the PCRC, which was supportive of indigenous rights. While FANG supported indigenous rights, it believed that they were not to be supported at the cost of other communities' rights, a position that the 1987 coups undermined.

This division was exacerbated by the political alignment of civil society leaders with political parties, government or aid donors. This in some ways shaped the power dynamics within the political party space and often created tension, suspicion and sometimes outright opposition. Some civil society organisations evolved their ideological position in relation to the political climate. The CCF leadership, which initially had sympathy for the 2006 coup because of its attack on ethnonationalism, later evolved into a strong critic of the military-supported government because of its human rights stance at a time when government security forces were involved in serious human rights abuses. The chief executive officer of CCF was later charged and convicted under the Media Industry Development Decree of 2010 for contempt of court for republishing an article that was critical of the justice system in Fiji.

Some civil society organisations drew self-gratifying inspiration from being self-styled warriors in a politically divided political space while others tried to bridge the gap by engaging with the 'enemies' such as the security forces. While some of these organisations were seen as opportunist fraternisers by others in the field, they saw it as an opportunity to soften the hyper-militaristic psychology of the security forces from within. Some of these organisations included the Women's Crisis Centre, which was involved in gender violence training, and the Pacific Centre for Peace-building, which carried out post-traumatic response training with the military.

Despite the 2014 democratic elections, the feeling of insecurity has not totally abated, and therefore the role of the civil society organisations as champions of peace and human rights will continue. As agents of conflict resolution and peace-building, the role of civil society in contributing to lessening insecurity in the community cannot be overemphasised.

Conclusion: Addressing the security dilemmas

It would be naïve to think of Fiji's security primarily in terms of coups and the role of the military as projected in popular imagery. Fiji is a complex country where ethnic, religious, cultural, gender, regional and class issues intersect in multiple ways, shaping social, economic and political security at different levels. Hence security in Fiji needs to be framed using multiple lenses; in this case the simultaneous use of postcolonial, securitisation and human security approaches.

It is true that the coups exacerbated poverty, ethnic tension, political instability, social alienation, human rights abuse and feelings of vulnerability; however, it is also true that the same forces were involved in each of the coups. A focus on the coups tends to divert our attention from mundane security issues, some of which are manifest and some latent. Hard and human security issues are closely intertwined and in many ways cannot be separated. Sometimes the line between hard and human security cannot be neatly demarcated. A classic case is the relationship between coups and socioeconomic dislocation, where one contributes in indirect ways to causing or influencing the other.

The nature of security and the response mechanisms in Fiji have evolved significantly from the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial epochs. These were shaped largely by constantly changing political dynamics, socioeconomic structures, cultural systems and shifting perceptions and behaviour patterns. The largely tribal and subsistence precolonial communities revolved around the charismatic and authoritarian power of the warrior chiefs, whose political power pervaded the entire society. Intra- and inter-tribal contestation over power was common, and often the smartest and most tactical survived, although physical strength was also important.

Colonialism transformed Fijian society in fundamental ways, including reconfiguration of the sociopolitical structure, the land tenure system and socioeconomic way of life. Resistance to colonial hegemony took the form of passive resistance and latent counterhegemonic forms, with occasional violent episodes. The British responded through the use of force, and the reciprocal response was the use of similar force. Many people died, many were executed by the British, and leading opponents of British colonialism were banished and exiled. The British contained resistance through tactical use of the Fijian administration structure and the vital role of chiefs as colonial compradors to keep the Taukei subservient and docile. This paternalistic system contributed to the retarded economic situation of the Taukei and, upon independence, the resultant inequality contributed to the ethnopolitical tension that culminated in later political instability.

Fiji's security situation after independence flowed from colonial experiences. The ethnopolitical contestation for power, economic inequality and the role of ethnic entrepreneurs in communal mobilisation were amplified by higher demands for progress, newfound freedom of expression and mobility, and globalisation and all its influences in people's views, expectations and behaviour. The coups became ruptures through which these complex vortexes of issues were vented. These transformed Fijian society in critical ways as responses and counter-responses to security became centripetal forces in the country's evolution.

The future security of the country lies in how Fiji's new democracy can be reconfigured to facilitate consensus rather than adversarial politics. While Fiji has a democratic system in place, it is still sitting on fragile political foundations. Fiji's recent political history, characterised by layers of dialectical synergies—hegemony and counterhegemony, repression and counter-repression, vengeance and countervengeance, and coups and countercoups—has not been automatically counteracted by electoral democracy. Rather, electoral democracy has simply relegated those synergies to a less visible level where they will hibernate until circumstances induce them to rear their ugly heads again. Sometimes formal democratic contestation can contribute to this possibility, as aggrieved minority political groups who feel alienated and disempowered by formal democracy might resort to extraparliamentary means to achieve their aims, or at least to satisfy their personal vendettas and vengeful urges. Creating a moderate middle-ground space where extreme positions on both sides can converge and conduct dialogue is critical to achieving sustainable stability in the long run.

As Fiji's drive towards modernisation and economic growth along the path of the Asian developmental state model intensifies, emerging issues of inequality, poverty, environmental degradation through mining and other forms of pollution, land disputes and crime will likely also intensify. These will affect Fiji's future security in unprecedented ways, and any collective reaction to the neoliberal developmental policies of the state will be met with authoritarian means, as in Singapore, whose developmental strategy Fiji is trying to religiously emulate. If this happens, the security–countersecurity cycle could continue unabated for some time yet.

Nevertheless, the people of Fiji have a great sense of resilience, as demonstrated by their capacity to adapt to dramatically changing circumstances as well as to withstand the excesses of coups and political repression. The capacity for resilience as well as the people's potential for peaceful transformation are at the heart of Fiji's future stability and security. The Fijian people have proven this time and time again.