Introduction

This book examines the modes of colonial governance adopted by the Methodist Overseas Missions of Australasia’s mission in Fiji, which included the development of categories that defined ethnic divisions and hierarchies. It looks specifically at the mission’s operations in Fiji during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Concepts of race and culture were used to position people within the mission’s structure, through economic and social stratification. Missionaries adopted this separatist, hierarchical organisational technique with the belief that it would ensure the creation of two separate churches — Fijian and Indo-Fijian — that would hold relevance for its members. Overall, this book identifies the processes of inclusion and exclusion that operated in a church within a colonial context, and elucidates some of the implications that arose. Europeans fractured their own hegemony, as did non-European modes of resistance and disaffection with this structure. The paradoxical formation of a racial hierarchy placed indigenous peoples at the bottom, and yet missionaries often believed that the mission should display indigenous ascendancy. Indo-Fijians, while deemed one of the most crucial ethnic groups in the colony, were always marginalised within the mission. This book includes stories of those that were affected and disaffected with the mission throughout its history, how Europeans entrenched structures of inclusion and exclusion based on ideas around race and culture, and ways in which non-Europeans responded to ethnic difference. Separation of the communities was never complete — there were intimate moments of encounter and exchange, and ongoing relationships built between people. Yet the ways in which difference was demarcated through the structures of institutions have had a lasting impact on Fijian society.

The Methodist mission in Fiji was organised in a way that mirrored the systems of governance used in British colonies under indirect rule. Indirect rule, as Mahmood Mamdani has shown in his deliberations over British Africa, was adopted in Fiji, and this method of governance was used to promote leadership through chiefs or an educated elite, while developing ethnicised categories of
organisation based on conceptualisations of custom. Missionaries followed suit, shaping their structures around what they identified as custom. One example of this included attempts to identify a chiefly leadership that could work in the ministry. Yet while ‘native’ Christians were not excluded from the ministry outright, there were still moments where we can identify resistance to colonial rule, or at least disaffection, to draw on terms utilised and defined so well in studies of colonial Fiji by Martha Kaplan and John Kelly. Despite the ‘politics of affection’ used to build alliances with the indigenous Fijian community, there were moments within the mission’s history where disaffection was evident. Disaffection was not necessarily felt towards the individual mission workers (although this was certainly sometimes the case) but rather at the nature of colonialism within the colony. Disaffection with the design of colonialism that was reflected in the mission’s structures fostered Fijian and Indo-Fijian engagement with politics and with nationalistic movements, and prompted efforts at the decolonisation of the mission. The story of the mission, therefore, fits within the same narratives of colonial rule and resistance that have been employed by postcolonial scholars interested in decolonisation.

The similarities between the ideas held by missionaries and colonial administrators were undoubtedly due in part to their shared exposure to the ideas flowing through the imperial networks that Alan Lester, Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton have studied in the Pacific. As a result, the same humanitarian ideals that informed the colonial administration’s implementation of indirect rule, responses to nationalist movements, and then decolonisation, were often also employed by missionaries. Throughout the nineteenth century, the British Empire acquired Pacific territories. After the acquisition of Australia in 1778, its envoys travelled increasingly via Australia’s east coast. Some of those who departed from Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane were humanitarians, intent on delivering Christianity to so-called ‘primitive’ peoples. While misfits and brutes from Europe, America and other British colonies sporadically washed up in Fiji, the first Methodist missionaries to establish a base in Fiji did so in 1835 via Tonga, and were isolated from European settlements. They preceded the cession of the Island group by nearly 40 years. By 1853, when the Australian-based Methodists

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acquired responsibility for Pacific missions, the cotton industry was changing the Fijian landscape, with crops established, and people, seeds and material resources moving with considerable speed thanks to the advent of steam ships.\(^5\) With increasing pace, humanitarian workers and their ideas circulated between Pacific wharves, spreading throughout the islands. This only increased after annexation, when sugar planters rushed to the islands to establish crops, build mills and crush cane.

Australian Methodist missionaries were intrinsic to colonialism in Fiji, and this colonialism was divisive, creating a bifurcated system that demarcated people on the basis of race, and politicised indigeneity.\(^6\) Australia’s own indigenous peoples had experienced the most atrocious process of colonialism, and many coming out of that colony were keen not to see the process of widespread annihilation by disease and genocide perpetrated elsewhere. By the time Europeans reached Fiji, there were many who looked for different ways to secure indigenous rights despite colonial rule. Indigenous leadership was harnessed, with leadership training one of the important aspects of mission, both before and after annexation. Missionaries had relied on good relationships with chiefs to negotiate access to lands and peoples. By the 1860s, Fijian ministers were being trained in the islands, before returning to their villages to preach. In this way, native authority within the mission pre-dated the official commencement of British indirect rule, but came to operate according to the same principles.

Plans for a Fijian church were disrupted with the annexation to Britain in 1874, when the first governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, and subsequent governors oversaw the migration of 60,965 indentured labourers to Fiji between 1879 and 1916.\(^7\) Gordon had adopted this system in an effort to preserve customary Fijian society, noting that indigenous engagement in plantation systems in the West Indies had been highly detrimental. He did not want to be responsible for the same degree of devastation in Fiji.\(^8\) Missionaries had to respond to this increased diversity within the colonial society, taking part in the governing project of managing difference.\(^9\) Missionaries debated the best practical responses to the presence of the Indian community, and through this we can trace their ideas about culture and race. Politicisation was achieved through political manoeuvres and economics as much as socialisation: the colonial administration,

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its industries and the mission were co-benefactors, each aiding the other to grow and develop. The issue of land was forever in the back of peoples’ minds, especially as Indo-Fijians left their contracts and took up plots of land around the colony. In 1901, the Methodist Overseas Missions of Australasia was based in Melbourne, and Methodists from across the country were investing regularly in the mission and its projects, including training indigenous peoples for yeoman-type work. Encouraging indigenous Fijians to make the land financially productive, to engage in the capitalist economy, was seen as a way to protect their lands from the encroachment of Indo-Fijian settlement. This supported indigenous paramountcy, yet the mission hired both Fijians and Indo-Fijians and had to manage the tensions that this elicited. This workplace offers a fruitful site to analyse encounters, and this book weaves together the stories of many, but not all of the mission’s workers, who were confronted by what they perceived to be a clash of cultures.

Both groups were categorised as ‘native’ and defined by their traditions. Tradition, custom and culture have been discussed at length by Pacific historians and anthropologists. Historians and anthropologists alike have discussed the ways in which custom has been deployed in Pacific politics by indigenous peoples to create greater cohesion within island societies, and this book contributes to what has been a long, continuing discussion on the topic. While writing this book I have been conscious of the post-independence era of Fiji, where culture, custom and indigeneity have been a mark for inclusion or exclusion from what constitutes Fijianness. As Jocelyn Linnekin described, cultural identities have formed the basis for political mobilisation and unity. Examining the mission’s history helps us to historicise this phenomena, through identifying missionary and ministerial engagement with ideas around land and labour.

Building on Elizabeth Elbourne’s scholarship that links the peripheries of Empire to its heart, as well as the important work of Alan Lester and Tony Ballantyne that examined the trajectories of colonial administrators and the ‘webs of empire’ respectively, I considered the connections between missionaries in Fiji and international organisations, especially the broader international mission movement. Brian Stanley suggested that the ‘three selves’ policy forced missionaries to consider their position in the colonial landscape, and it was true that in Fiji, this policy prompted missionaries to question the way in which they held and exerted authority, and answer to Fijian and Indo-Fijian ministers’

10 Ibid., p. 4.
demands for greater responsibility and ownership of Methodism. The ‘three selves’ church policy necessitated transformation, and this provoked an early effort at decolonisation. Scholars of Fiji’s decolonisation will notice similarities between the debates in the mission, those that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s within the colonial administration, and even debates that occurred elsewhere in the Pacific.\(^\text{14}\) When the church decolonised in 1964, six years before the Fijian nation came into being in 1970, it became a testing ground for developing the Fijian nation. The transition of control from Europeans to non-Europeans in the Fijian Methodist Church therefore sits within the broader story of Pacific — and indeed global — decolonisation.

Everyone who worked for the mission either loosely or directly engaged with the idea of the ‘three selves’ church. It was a model for missions that promised to establish an independent indigenous church. It required that steps be taken to ensure the church was self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating. The principles of self-support, self-governance and self-propagation form the axis for this book. The ‘three selves’ policy was developed originally by Henry Venn while he worked in Africa, and was subsequently adopted by other denominations, and refined by ecumenical groups in the twentieth century, particularly the International Missionary Council.\(^\text{15}\) Missionaries in Fiji took part in these international forums, and frequently discussed their ideas about self-support, self-governance and self-propagation in the Fiji mission field in their internal correspondence, publications such as *The Spectator* and *The Missionary Review*, books, lectures for the Laymen’s Missionary Movement, sermons, and in newspapers. The ‘three selves’ church policy was often discussed at the mission’s annual synod meetings in Fiji, and by the mission board in Sydney: at all levels. Tracing the discussions relating to the ‘three selves’ church thus offers a study of discourses around colonial governance.


Concepts of race and culture were evident in missionaries’ discussions about ‘self-support’, a term that generally referred to the financial matters of the mission. Ideally, the Methodist membership would contribute enough funds to cover the running costs of the mission and its projects. Some funds came from overseas donors, but in light of the ‘three selves’ policy objective of setting up a ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ church — remembering that the Indo-Fijian branch was also considered ‘native’ — the aim was to establish a church that would survive without overseas aid. This idea extended to rationale for the payment of indigenous workers, as well as programs designed to train an indigenous yeomanry. Missionaries hoped that the minister’s wages could be drawn solely from money provided by Fiji’s congregations, which would be made easier through Fijian engagement in an agrarian system of land use. Ideas about custom and culture, and each ethnic groups’ familiarity with finances and economic matters pervaded the discussions regarding Fijian self-support. Indo-Fijians were generally considered to be better with money, and engaged in agriculture as soon as they arrived in the colony under indenture, but the Indo-Fijian Methodist community was so small that they relied on international donations. It was not considered fair or appropriate to draw on funds raised by Fijians to build the Indo-Fijian church. There was thus an economic rationale behind the division of the mission that linked back to perceptions of culture and custom.

Missionaries were supposed to install non-European people to run the mission (this was ‘self-governance’), requiring a full transition of authority from European missionaries to ‘native’ ministers. Self-representation, missionaries believed, would enhance the mission’s legitimacy. The mission was required to train local ministers to a standard that would allow them to both administer, and minister, the Methodist community. The extent to which this training should be enacted was constantly deliberated. European missionaries rarely agreed on how much control non-European ministers should have within the mission, and both Fijian and Indo-Fijian ministers regularly contested their limited role in mission governance. This book considers the issue from both European and non-European perspectives. I have made a concerted effort in this book, where I can, to bring forward the voices of non-European ministers and laypeople.

The final of the three principles, self-propagation, referred to the acceptance of a ‘true’ form of Christianity that reflected the character of the peoples of what the missionaries referred to as the ‘native’ mission, and the subsequent ability of the ‘native’ church to evangelise and sustain a religious community: to propagate Christianity. European missionaries were often troubled by the extent to which the Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities had adopted Christianity. While the other two principles of self-support and governance were complex issues, this was perhaps the most difficult for missionaries to negotiate, as there was a lack
of consensus about what signified ‘self-propagation’. Again, this was tied to matters of custom and tradition: how much custom should be preserved, and which elements should be discarded. Missionaries constantly assessed the degree of genuine conversion to Christianity, the potential for the faith to be sustained, and for ‘native’ ministers to adequately deliver God’s word to their congregations. Even more challenging was defining a ‘Fijian’ or ‘Indo-Fijian’ version of Christianity. Methodist missionaries had translated the Bible and Wesleyan literature into Fijian and Indo-Fijian languages, for example, and were often willing to permit culture to filter into Methodism in various ways, usually in the practice of faith, but this always had limitations. Missionaries in the field had to define the fine line between a Christianity that reflected a national culture through a process of acculturation, and one that was syncretistic.16

Ideally, an autonomous church would reflect the ‘national’ character of the people it housed, and could be described as ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ to its location.17 It demanded the devolution of the mission — the transition from European to indigenous ownership and authority. Historian John Garrett pointed to both international and grassroots efforts to speed up the process of devolution;18 this book brings those local and transnational pressures into sharp relief. Looking at missionary engagement with these three concepts of self-support, self-governance and self-propagation allows us to examine missionary rationale for maintaining European control. It also allows us to identify moments when Fijian and Indian responsibility and autonomy escalated. It highlights moments where Fijian and Indo-Fijians recognised and rebelled against their exclusion in certain spheres of the mission, particularly their exclusion from leadership positions. Shining a light on those moments of protest, we get a sense of how boundaries between the three main ethnic groups in Fiji (European, Fijian and Indo-Fijian) shifted over time.


In fact, because the mission was designed as a ‘national’ church, missionaries, Fijians and Indo-Fijians were constantly involved in the nationalist project of defining the national character of the colony.19 As outsiders to these cultures, missionaries drew on their own local experiences in the mission field but also depended on anthropological concepts of ‘culture’. Today we understand that ‘culture’ is something that people learn; it is abstract, can change, and is not attached to a person’s ethnicity. This distinction was not always clearly made by missionaries at the turn of the twentieth century.20 Missionaries understood ‘culture’ in various ways over time, either adopting rudimentary or more academic perspectives. Sometimes affronted by the realisation that race did not define a person’s cultural practices, many missionaries reassessed their understandings about people’s ability, need or desire for cultural change during or after their time working in the mission field. Missionaries were often drawn to theories and debates occurring in anthropology, which helped them to better understand, or at least feel better equipped to make sense of the world around them.21 Often, though, missionary’s interpretations of anthropology and the ideas being discussed within the discipline were rather vague. As a result, while the links between the discipline and the mission field are clearly there, they are somewhat amorphous. Where possible, I have defined the correlations between them.

Missionaries struggled not only to convert the lessons from anthropology into mission practice, but also to transition the ideal of the ‘three selves’ church from a principle on paper into a lived reality. The debates about the principle in ecumenical circles, such as the International Missionary Council, assumed that there was a binary relationship between indigenous peoples and Europeans in each mission field, rather than the multicultural or multi-racial society that existed in many colonies, including Fiji.22 The term ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ church was applied in the assumption that missionaries would be working with only one cultural group. There was, therefore, little clear guidance from the international mission movement on how to establish a multi-racial mission.


22 Malaysia was another good example, where Methodist missionaries tried to accommodate several cultural groups within the one mission structure. T R Doraisamy, The March of Methodism in Singapore and Malaysia, 1885–1980, Singapore, Stanford Press, 1982, pp. 14, 61, 80.
The result in Fiji was the creation of a segregated mission that catered to two ‘national characters’, one for ‘Fijians’ and another for ‘Indo-Fijians’. There was another section again for the European community. The ‘three selves’ policy ideals were then adapted to the specific needs of each branch of this one mission. One of the difficulties encountered by missionaries was designing a mission for a community that was not indigenous to the land. Tensions developed because of the separation of the branches, exacerbated by racial and cultural hierarchies that were embedded in the mission’s framework, including rates of pay. Despite being at the bottom of the pay scale hierarchy constructed within the mission, Fijian interests were often given precedence over those of the Indo-Fijian community. These complex tensions are explored throughout the book through the examination of the ‘three selves’ church policy.

The book opens with the mission’s establishment of separate ‘Fijian’ and ‘Indo-Fijian’ branches in 1901, which formed the foundation for two separate, ethnicised Methodist identities in Fiji. It examines the reasons for the split, both practical and ideological. The justification for the separation was primarily the cultural differences between these communities. Missionaries drew on anthropological theories and their personal experiences to develop their understandings of difference. Chapter One focuses on the creation of the Indo-Fijian branch, and the subsequent social and geographical boundaries that emerged within the mission under the guidance of its chairman, the Reverend Arthur James Small, and the man who became a leader in the Indo-Fijian branch and later the mission board, the Reverend John Wear Burton. This chapter focuses on the challenges specific to the Indo-Fijian Methodist community.

Chapter Two examines the debates around the ‘three selves’ policies within the ‘Fijian’ branch from 1900 to 1920 in order to further explore the reasons for the mission’s segregation. It identifies specific challenges that existed in the ‘Fijian’ branch that inhibited the full realisation of self-support, self-governance and self-propagation. It highlights the marked differences between the two branches of the mission. Having been established for much longer than the ‘Indo-Fijian’ mission, the ‘Fijian’ branch had already adopted a system for extracting funds from its membership and paying its ‘native ministers’. Fijian ministers, known as talatala, were also already being ordained. The principles of self-support and self-governance in particular were addressed in vastly different ways to the Indo-Fijian branch, which was only just starting. While this was due to the length of time missionaries had worked in this branch, the specific cultural milieu they were adapting the ‘three selves’ model to brought a range of concerns unique to the Fijian branch to the fore.

The connection between mission and anthropology is drawn out in Chapter Three, specifically the adoption of a type of ‘functional anthropology’ which would promote what historian David Wetherell has referred to as
‘tranquil colonialism’. Anthropology was being used to respond to anti-colonial, nationalist ideas that had started to ferment in the colonies. John W Burton was made General Secretary of Methodist Overseas Missions, and was one of the main people advocating changes to missionary training, which he did while based at the Methodist headquarters in Sydney. Burton encouraged the transnational flow of ideas, acting as a conduit not only for the mission board but also the International Missionary Council to the mission field. As they attempted to respond to anti-colonial movements, missionaries tended to rely increasingly on anthropology to better comprehend social change, and what they considered to be a transition towards modernity.

Chapter Four takes us beyond the debates of the mission’s leadership to look at how the ‘three selves’ church principle was taken up at the grassroots village level during the 1920s and 1930s. This chapter focuses on the north-west of Viti Levu, and the Ra circuit, where Nailaga is situated. It was here that the Toko farmers organised throughout these decades a group that has come to be remembered for their efforts to establish a national Fijian church in the 1940s. Key figures in this chapter are Ratu Nacanieli Rawaidranu, who was the Toko farmers’ chief, and several successive European missionaries: Charles Oswald Lelean, A Wesley Amos, and Arthur Drew Lelean. The farmers worked to ensure that they could create a self-supporting and self-governing church, but self-propagation was a constant theme in this region due to rumours of occult activities occurring at the mission site. This chapter contributes to Martha Kaplan’s analysis of the Tuka cult of the nineteenth century, and studies of the notorious Fijian leader Apolosi Ranawai, by identifying signs of the presence of ‘cults’ in the Ra region. The Toko farmers’ project signified the consolidation of this ethno-nationalist movement, framing it within the mission’s larger objectives of self-support, self-governance and self-propagation. This chapter outlines the connection between the lotu (church), labour and vanua (land) in new ways, and suggests that while missionaries were encouraging a turn to modernity, this was never disconnected from efforts to ensure indigenous rights to land.

Chapter Five looks more specifically at the principle of self-governance through the experiences of two men who were classified as ‘native’ (non-European) ministers, and who both expressed some disaffection with the mission’s modes of exclusion. The first was the Reverend Aseri Robarobalevu, who was the first indigenous Fijian minister to assume the superintendency of a Methodist circuit.

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24 Ibid.
in 1930. The second was Indo-Fijian catechist Ramsey Deoki, who became deeply disaffected with colonialism and the limitations it placed upon him, and who campaigned throughout the 1930s to be ordained and to be treated as an equal. After a long struggle, he was finally ordained in 1939, which brought the Indo-Fijian branch of the mission much closer to realising the principles of the ‘three selves’ church. Both of these men pushed the existing boundaries of the mission, moving into areas that had previously been exclusively occupied by Europeans.

Chapter Six takes the reader into the 1940s. The Toko farmers featured in Chapter Four became spokespeople for autonomy, making an official request for a ‘Fijian’ church in 1941. The tensions between the mission’s chairman, the Reverend William Green, and Burton, who remained the General Secretary of Methodist Overseas Missions until 1945, highlights tensions between the mission board in Sydney and the field related to approaches to the ‘three selves’ church principles. Set at the height of the Pacific War, missionaries monitored anti-colonial and racial consciousness in the mission and amongst their congregations. The continued missionary engagement with anthropology fostered an increasing focus on race and culture, and the impacts of colonialism on indigenous peoples.

Missionaries continued to monitor racial consciousness in the broader community while also considering the racialist nature of the mission into the post-war period, which is covered in Chapter Seven. The plans were laid during the years immediately after World War II for the full transfer of authority from European to Fijian and Indo-Fijian peoples. Missionaries continued to use anthropology to consider the social changes wrought by the war, and how they might manage them through processes of ‘reconstruction’. Throughout the 1940s, the shift towards greater self-governance is evident through the increasingly vocal Fijian and Indo-Fijian leadership, especially Deoki’s growing confidence in demanding a greater wage, autonomy and authority. There were definite signs of anti-colonial feeling amongst the mission’s workers. In the years immediately after World War II, missionaries responded to anti-colonial feeling by continuing to abide by the ‘three selves’ policies, especially by supporting a growing Fijian and Indo-Fijian ministry and furthering the acculturation of Christianity.

It was not until the 1950s, however, that the mission’s workers started to question the segregation between the ‘Fijian’ and ‘Indo-Fijian’ branches. The events of this decade are described in Chapter Eight. In the wake of the Toko farmer’s request for a ‘Fijian’ church, and of course the ongoing demand that missionaries devolve the mission to become an autonomous church, the mission’s leadership, now including the Reverend Cecil Gribble as general secretary, pushed forward with plans to ensure self-support, self-government, self-propagation and integration. Chapter Eight covers the debates related to segregation, and the
impact of the shift in demographics after World War II. Indo-Fijians were now the colony’s majority, and missionaries wondered what that would mean for their Methodist institution and its Fijian membership.

The ninth and final chapter of the book looks at efforts to unite the church after 60 years of segregation. Unity was discussed but only came into serious consideration at the eleventh hour. One of the main proponents of unity, the Reverend Setareki Tuilovoni, led debates in the final years before devolution, and this chapter traces his opinions and those of other mission leaders about unity and division before the autonomous church conference was established in 1964. Ultimately, the mission’s leaders struggled to overcome the long-maintained boundaries between the Fijian and Indo-Fijian Methodist communities, leaving a divided church.

Careful explication of the role of missionaries in colonialism is necessary before I proceed. As Elizabeth Elbourne noted in the South African context, missionaries did not necessarily cause colonisation, but in many instances they facilitated it. To me, this almost amounts to the same thing. Missionaries were actively involved in the broader imperialist project, acting as intermediaries between indigenous peoples, merchants, plantation owners and colonial administrators. I endeavour to push beyond suggestions that missionaries were ambivalent individuals.26 The arguments put forward by John and Jean Comaroff regarding European hegemony in the Cape Colony has been a useful framework that allowed me to consider the dialectics of culture in Fiji. Their contention that hegemony of the dominant culture is never complete is crucial in comprehending change over time. To deny potential for shifts and fractures in the hegemony would be to argue that societies are static, and this book demonstrates quite the opposite: Fiji’s society was constantly transforming despite efforts to induce a static cultural state. There were efforts to create hegemony, which we can see through efforts amongst missionaries to preserve European control over certain spheres of the mission. The temptation may be to depict European culture as the hegemon, through the repetition of certain practices that depicted prestige and negated the position and privilege of non-European peoples. This is particularly true for this study, which focuses so closely on the commodification of ‘native’ labour through the mission. Indeed, Methodism put a price on a person’s ability to conform to repetitious performances of culture and spirituality.

However, European missionaries constructed conflicting hegemons through their efforts to build the mission’s divisions around certain cultural practices, signs and symbolisms.27 I have endeavoured to demonstrate this through elucidating the extent of indigenous agency in the colonial setting. Heavily influenced by Lammin Sanneh’s discussions about indigenising Christianity, and finding that what he has written correlates with what I found in the archives, I have tried to acknowledge the forces of colonialism and power wielded by Europeans, and indigenous peoples’ subsequent push towards transformation and transition, while conceding that within that dynamic there remained space for indigenous agency. Indigenous peoples challenged European rule and actively fractured colonial control. There were some quiet, and not so quiet, manoeuvrings occurring within the mission throughout the 60 years under review in this book, through which indigenous and Indo-Fijians negotiated changes in the mission’s structure. While it is fair to say that at times they benefited from the changing mindsets of Europeans, those changes were often the result of their modes of resistance and expressions of disaffection. Mamdani’s work on indirect rule has aided my thinking on this question of colonial authority and indigenous agency. The work of John Kelly and Martha Kaplan has also informed my discussions about agency and resistance in colonial Fiji. Their scholarship has helped to push forward discussions beyond Gramscian understandings of power to consider resistance through expressions of sentiments of affection and disaffection amongst non-Europeans who were caught within the colonial systems of categorisation.

Ideas about colonial modes of categorisation and control have underpinned the scholarship of many postcolonial historians in recent decades. This was true for Ann Laura Stoler’s work on the creation of colonial categories around race and gender in ‘Rethinking Colonial Categories’, published in 1989. While this was published nearly 30 years ago, the colonial methods for governance that Stoler described — that societies were governed through the creation of boundaries around race and gender — were so relevant and so strongly reflected in the Fijian colonial archives that I felt it necessary to draw on her concepts to arrange the material.28 Other scholars, focusing more firmly within the Pacific region, have also made similar arguments about the racialised structures of colonial rule. In ‘Land, Labour and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race’, Patrick Wolfe contributed to studies of colonial governance when he identified land and labour as the foundation of relationships between colonisers and the colonised.

in settler and slave colonial societies.\textsuperscript{29} He has suggested that the expropriation of indigenous peoples from land has been the more prominent factor in the Australian settler colonial experience, with the utility of indigenous labour being of negligible or lesser importance.\textsuperscript{30} I examined this idea in my Master’s thesis, and argued that both land and labour were central sites where colonial relationships were forged. I also took historian Lynette Russell’s comments about the rapid mobility of physical and social borders and boundaries in settler society through time into consideration.\textsuperscript{31} Though Fiji was not a settler colony, I have drawn on these theoretical discussions about colonialism and power to examine the mission as a site that drew on ‘native’ labour, I further the contention that labour has been a crucial point of contact between the colonisers and the colonised in Fiji, and that this was often linked to concerns about protecting indigenous lands and paramountcy. This simultaneously provoked and reinforced the creation of boundaries.\textsuperscript{32} Examining an institution that had operated in the Pacific for nearly 130 years allowed some greater understanding of the processes through which it reinforced colonial protocols of creating ethnicised categories, and due to the ways in which it did this — through the establishment of hierarchies and reinforcing nationalist identities — we can also examine structural inequalities in the colonial setting.

It is this examination of boundaries that sets this book apart from previous scholarship on the Methodist history in Fiji. The study of boundaries and separate nationalisms explored throughout the book offers a foreground to the development of ethno-nationalist sentiment and indigenous paramountcy that many scholars of Fiji have addressed in recent historical and anthropological scholarship. Anthropologists Matthew Tomlinson and Christina Toren have written in recent decades of the continuing place of indigenous culture in the Fijian Methodist Church.\textsuperscript{33} Yet, true to much literature on Fiji, those scholars who focused on one community have usually excluded the other. The anthropological studies of the Fijian Methodist Church have made little to no mention of the Indian community, enhancing perceptions that it is a

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item[30] Ibid., p. 867.
\item[32] Ibid., p. 5.
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Fijian institution. Jacqueline Ryle has noted this tendency and examined racial tensions in her recent work, *My God, My Land*. Through identifying tensions between the Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities, particularly where it has been most acute concerning land, this book adds historical context to the anxieties that anthropologists have recorded in the present day.

While racial and cultural constructs are examined most frequently in this text, I also elucidate, where possible, where class was defined. Class was one of the key ways in which European ministers classified the non-European ministry, and their systems of wage distribution challenged conventional customary hierarchies while constructing a class system based on education and access to commodities and enhanced mobility. This is a slight diversion from John Kelly’s argument, constructed in reference to Frantz Fanon, that race replaced class as an organising principle in Fiji. Rather, within the mission, race and class were both important, alongside cultural considerations. There were thus multiple organising principles in operation at any one time within the mission’s structure, all of which needed to be constantly checked and rechecked by those who worked within it. This was, to draw on Lorenzo Veracini’s discussion about the transformative nature of colonialism in Fiji, one of the factors that drove alterations within the Fijian social fabric.

Mission historians, the Reverend A Harold Wood and Andrew Thornley, pointed to the racial cleavage of the mission by writing separate histories for its ‘Indo-Fijian’ and ‘Fijian’ branches, but neither discussed the reason for segregation and how these debates changed or continued over time. John Garrett’s expansive work alerted us to the impact of ecumenical mission movements in the Pacific, and particularly to the importance of the International Missionary Council. It was not long before I was able to connect the dots between the Fijian Methodist Mission’s archival record and Brian Stanley’s more recent historical study of the International Missionary Council and the ‘three selves’

church principle. The ‘three selves’ concept was important to missions throughout the world, and I will leave it to scholars better acquainted with other mission fields to comment on how it was adopted and adapted elsewhere and by other denominational groups.
