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Bipolar realignment under the alternative vote system: an analysis of the 2006 electoral data

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Fiji's third election under the alternative vote (AV) system showed some startling developments, including a shift towards robust, single, rival political parties representing, on the one hand, the indigenous Fijians and, on the other, the Indians.

This trend needs to be viewed over the longer term. At the first election after the introduction of the AV system, held in May 1999, two multi-ethnic coalitions emerged, and entered into deals with each other over the exchange of preference votes. The resulting government, led by the country's first Indian prime minister, was overthrown in a coup a year later. At the second AV-using election, held in August 2001, a Moderates Forum emerged, bringing together several centrist parties, but this was badly defeated at the 2001 poll. Moderate Forum preferences went mostly to one or other of the more radical, mainly ethnically based, political parties. At the 2006 election, there was no sign of 1999's cross-ethnic alliances, nor was there any repeat of 2001's Moderates Forum. Instead, anticipating that the contest would be a two-horse race between the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) and Laisenia Qarase's Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL), moderate parties prior to the poll sought to make deals with the more ethnically based parties.

This strategic realignment towards a two-party system over the three elections merits some investigation. The AV system was originally introduced as part of the 1997 constitution, and had been aimed at encouraging the formation of

multi-ethnic governments. By requiring voters to rank candidates, it was hoped that moderate parties would fare well. It was also thought that political parties might moderate policies to appeal to floating voters across the ethnic divide. Party arrangements over the exchange of preference votes would, it was hoped, generate strong inter-ethnic coalitions.¹ In practice, however, the major strategic advantages accrued to the big parties, whether or not they were moderate. Many votes were transferred between Fijian-based and Indian-based parties, but such preference transfers tended to undermine, rather than reinforce, the centrist coalitions that emerged in 1999 and 2001. The shift back to a two-party system in 2006 undermined the claims that had been made for preferential voting as a tool for promoting multi-ethnic government. It had been assumed that the system would generate multiparty constellations, and necessarily so. Only with multiple parties would outcomes be decided on preferences, allowing the AV system to work in the way it was supposed to.² Even with multiple parties, in 1999 and 2001, those claims had proved inaccurate; and with only two large parties in 2006, even the basic premise was absent.

Seats and votes

Figure 21.1 examines party shares of votes secured and seats won at the 2006 election. Together, the two largest parties received 84 per cent of all votes, and 94.4 per cent of seats. In other words, both major parties secured a modest seat bonus; their shares in seats were above their shares in the vote. The SDL took out all 23 Fijian communal seats, while the FLP obtained all 19 Indian communal seats. And the SDL secured 13 of the 25 open seats, while the FLP won the other 12.

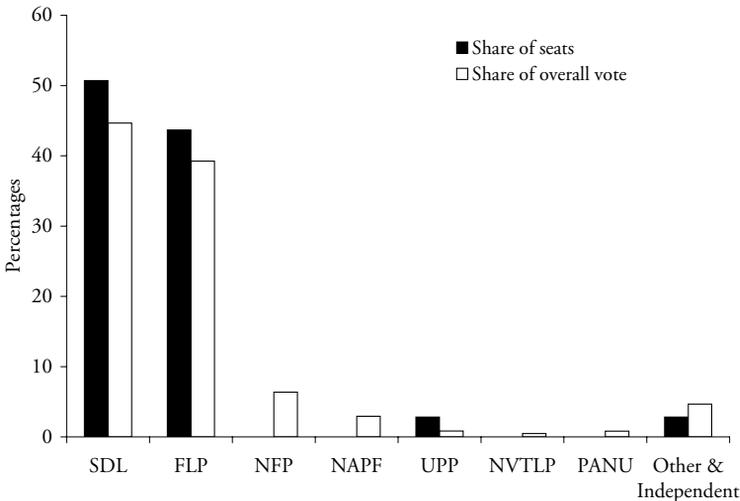
This bipolarization of Fiji's politics was, at least to some degree, a response to the electoral experience in 1999 and 2001. In 1999, the Fijians had been split, enabling the mainly Indian-backed FLP to secure a landslide victory. In 2001, the long-standing split in the Indian vote between the FLP and National Federation Party (NFP), and centrist parties ranking the FLP in last position, were sufficient to hand the predominantly indigenous Fijian-backed SDL the largest number of seats.

In 2006, the Indian parties settled their differences and exchanged preferences with each other, while the ethnic Fijian parties formed a 'Grand Coalition'

spearheaded by former Constitutional Review Commissioner Tomasi Vakatora.³ The middle ground in Fiji’s politics had so diminished that centrist preferences decided fewer outcomes in 2006 than they did in 1999 or 2001, although some contests were so close that even these small shares of votes delivered the margin of victory.

Of the registered voters, 53 per cent were ethnic Fijian and 43 per cent were Indian, reflecting an ongoing shift in the demographic balance towards the indigenous community.⁴ The 2006 Indian turnout (88.7 per cent) was slightly above that of the indigenous Fijian community (87 per cent), but the share of invalid ballots was slightly higher among Indians (9.4 per cent) than among indigenous Fijians (8.7 per cent). In the General communal constituencies, both turnout and invalid voting were lower than average (83.9 and 6.8 per cent respectively). Turnout was notably lower than average in the Fijian urban communal constituencies, and in many of the urban open constituencies. Nevertheless, at 87.7 per cent, the overall average turnout was well up on 2001 levels (79.1 per cent).

Figure 21.1 Seats and votes won by parties, 2006



A total of 1,778,900 ballot papers, including 120,000 for postal votes, were produced, although there were only 479,693 registered voters. Each eligible voter has two votes and thus needs two ballot papers, bringing the required total ballot papers to 959,386. Additional ballot papers were required because, under the new compulsory voting system, voters may cast their ballots in any polling station within their communal constituency, so where they may choose to vote is uncertain. Even bearing in mind that need for additional ballot papers, however, that nearly twice as many ballot papers were in circulation as were required generated problems of administration.⁵ Since fines for failing to vote were not implemented in 1999, 2001 or 2006, the heavy administrative cost of shifting away from designated polling stations may, for the future, not be worth paying.

All three elections under the AV system have produced a high degree of invalid voting – 9 per cent in 1999, 12 per cent in 2001 and 9 per cent again in 2006, despite the widespread introduction in 2006 of ‘ushers’, who shepherded citizens into the polling booths and assisted even able, literate voters.

A collision of landslides

In 2006, in the Indian communal constituencies, the FLP repeated its previous achievement of securing a clean sweep of all 19 seats. In 1999 and 2001, the FLP had secured, respectively, 66 and 75 per cent of the Indian communal vote. In 2006, the party obtained an average share of 81 per cent of Indian votes, again with little variation across the country (see Figure 21.2). Claims of a likely Muslim rebellion or North/South Indian schisms denting the FLP vote proved false, as they had in 1999 and 2001. So, too, did the notion, repeating the 1970’s illusions of Ratu Mara’s Alliance Party, that the ruling SDL might make substantial advances in the Indian communal constituencies, or even gain three Indian seats. Imraz Iqbal, former Fiji TV personality and SDL deputy campaign manager, who featured prominently in SDL TV propaganda, obtained only 222 votes in Nasinu, a seat easily taken by veteran FLP frontbencher Krishna Datt. Overall, the SDL obtained only 2 per cent of the Indian vote, indicating a negligible level of Indian support for the governing party.

The National Federation Party (NFP), under the leadership of Jai Ram Reddy, had been the largest of the Indian parties in the 1990s. But it slumped

to 32 per cent of the Indian communal vote in 1999, and on down to 22 per cent in 2001. The NFP's Sugar Cane Growers' Association had long been fighting a losing battle with Mahendra Chaudhry's National Farmers' Union for the hearts and minds of the cane farmers. In the 1990s, the NFP's strength had been in some of the urban areas, but out-migration by middle class professionals led to an erosion of the party's support base. Continuing changes in the party leadership, and association with prominent Gujarati businessmen, lost the party support amongst the descendents of indentured labourers.⁶ The NFP also suffered from being left without seats in 1999 and 2001, and thus lacked candidates with extensive parliamentary experience. It had increasingly to make appeals to past glories. In 2006, the party gained only 14.6 per cent of the Indian vote, despite having strategically given strong preferences to the FLP in the hope of avoiding electoral annihilation. As in 1999 and 2001, the NFP was left with no seats in parliament. As a result, the FLP consolidated its claim to be the majority Indian party, leaving the NFP reliant on its base in the municipal councils and among older unionised cane farmers if leaders opt for some kind of nocturnal survival.

The ruling SDL was able to mirror the FLP's performance in the Indian constituencies, taking out all 23 of the Fijian communal seats at the first count. Back in 2001, Qarase's party had faced more powerful rivals, both to the west and in the east. Then, the SDL was troubled by those provincial schisms that frequently prevent Fijian parties from sustaining homogeneous ethnic support. Localized *vanua* ties, and rivalries based on the struggle over hereditary titles, often underpin contests between indigenous candidates in a way that differs markedly from the more ideologically based differences that define Indian politics.

Yet, in 2006, the SDL secured close to 80 per cent of the Fijian vote, well up on the 50 per cent it had received in 2001 (see Figure 21.3), and, again unlike 2001, its vote share was reasonably steady across the country. Only in Rewa and Ba East Fijian Communal constituencies did SDL candidates face strong opposition. In Rewa, Ro Teimumu Kepa saw off the challenge from her nephew, Ro Filipe Tuisawau, who stood as an independent after having been unsuccessful in securing the official SDL nomination (see Saumaki, this volume). In Ba East Fijian Communal, the threatened re-emergence of a Western Viti Levu-based

Figure 21.2 Major party vote-shares in the 19 Indian constituencies, 2001 and 2006

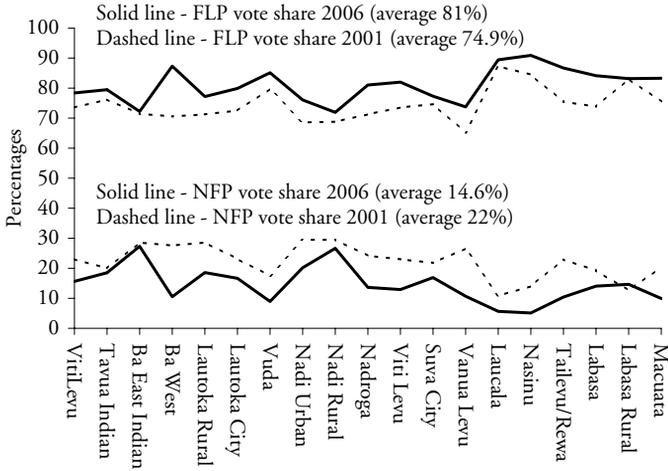
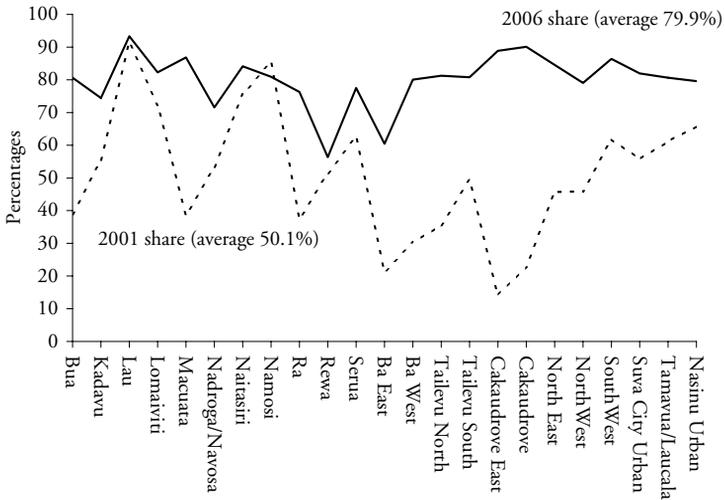


Figure 21.3 SDL vote share in the 23 Fijian communal constituencies, 2001 and 2006



Fijian party was thwarted, despite the vanishing act by the 2001 SDL front party in the west, the Bai Kei Viti (see Bose and Fraenkel, this volume). On Kadavu, Jim Ah Koy, the sitting member during the Rabuka years and a major financier of development projects on the island, stood as an independent, but failed to stop the SDL's Konisi Yabaki retaining the seat with 74.4 per cent of the vote. Even relative newcomers to politics, as long as they stood on an SDL ticket, were able to defeat sitting members or veteran politicians.

The Fijian Nationalist Party performed poorly at the 2006 election. It had commanded 25 per cent of the indigenous vote at the polls in April 1977, and remained a small, but significant, force through the 1990s. Under the leadership of Sakeasi Butadroka, the party had been the standard-bearer of the Fijian extremist cause, even at one point calling for the expulsion of the country's Indian population. The renamed Nationalist Vanua Lavo Tako Party (NVTLP) managed 9.1 per cent of the vote in 1999, but thereafter it faded. After the 2000 coup, the emergence of the Conservative Alliance–Matanitu Vanua (CAMV) party, led by Cakaudrove chief Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu and counting imprisoned failed coup leader George Speight as one of its MPs, resulted in an eclipse of the NVTLP. It obtained only 1.4 per cent of the vote in 2001. The liquidation of the CAMV shortly before the 2006 poll, and the movement of most of its MPs into the SDL, might have left space for the older Fijian Nationalist Party to re-emerge. Yet, the NVTLP obtained only 1.1 per cent of the indigenous Fijian vote in 2006. Party leader Iliesa Duvuloco mustered 15 per cent of the vote in Tailevu North Fiji Provincial Communal, well below what was required to dislodge SDL sitting member Samisoni Tikoinasau, brother of the still imprisoned George Speight. NVTLP president Viliame Savu, recently released from prison for his part in the May 2000 coup, secured only 57 votes in Lami Open. The key characteristic influence over policy-formulation under the SDL's first administration – looking over its shoulder at the threat from Fijian extremists – will not necessarily characterize its second administration.

There was no sign of the military's 'truth and justice' campaign having a major impact on the indigenous Fijian vote. In the weeks leading up to the election, army commander Frank Bainimarama made increasingly vociferous denunciations of the SDL government. The natural beneficiary of that campaign

would have been the newly formed (or reformed) National Alliance Party of Fiji (NAPF), led by former military commander Ratu Epeli Ganilau. Like the New Labour Unity Party back in 2001, the NAPF was the focus of greatly exaggerated expectations before the poll. Yet, Ratu Epeli's party secured only 2.2 per cent of the Fijian communal vote, and a similar share of the Indian communal vote. Ratu Epeli himself obtained only 14.6 per cent of the vote in the Suva City Open constituency, and the party's other major leader, Filipe Bole, a former minister in the Rabuka-led governments of the 1990s, managed only 7.2 per cent in Samabula/Tamavua Open. The failure of newly emerging moderate and multi-ethnic parties to make an impact at the 2006 poll was, at least in part, a product of a longer-run polarization. But it also reflects the fact that more centrist approaches, when they do emerge in Fiji politics, tend to come from within the mainstream ethnically based parties, rather than springing up afresh on un-nurtured ground.

The FLP's vote share in the Fijian communal constituencies was 6.3 per cent, above its totals in 1999 (1.9 per cent) and in 2001 (2.3 per cent). This was partly because the increasingly well-oiled FLP party machine was able to stand a larger number of candidates in the Fijian communal constituencies. Only four FLP candidates stood in the Fijian communal constituencies in 1999; this rose to six in 2001, and to 15 in 2006. On average, they obtained 10.2 per cent of Fijian votes in 1999, 7.3 per cent in the fraught post-coup circumstances of the 2001 elections and 8.6 per cent in 2006. At the 2006 election, unlike those in 1999 and 2001, even the NFP stood candidates in the Fijian communal constituencies, hoping that some Fijian communal voters would simultaneously mark ballots in favour of the NFP in the more winnable open constituencies.

The strength of party affiliations in determining vote shares was evident even in the general communal constituencies – where those other than the ethnic Fijians, Indians and Rotumans vote. Sitting member in the Suva City General seat, Kenneth Zinck – who crossed the floor to join the Qarase government after the 2001 poll, but who rejected the offer of an SDL ticket for the 2006 poll – obtained only third position behind the SDL's Aca Lord. The major political parties fought more fiercely for the General Voter and Rotuman constituencies than at previous elections. Nevertheless, it was only in these

that independents or smaller parties stood any chance. The Suva City General seat was taken by Bernadette Rounds Ganilau, a popular former radio show host and member of the United Peoples Party (UPP). Mick Beddoes, the UPP leader, narrowly won in the Western/Central General Communal constituency, and the third and final General communal seat was taken by an independent, Robin Irwin, whose anti-Labour economic philosophy led him to align himself with the SDL. The UPP had entered a pre-election coalition with Mahendra Chaudhry's FLP, signalling a major turnaround for the historically Fijian-allied General voter parties.

The battle for the open seats

Because all the Fijian and Indian communal seats were divided between the two major parties, the ultimate election outcome was inevitably decided in the 25 open constituencies, as had been the case in 1999 and 2001. Yet, this time around, the fracturing of the Fijian vote witnessed in 1999 was no longer in evidence, rendering impossible a repetition of one of the critical elements in the FLP success at that previous election. On the Indian side, the long-standing two-party FLP/NFP divide no longer had the same potential influence as in 2001, when NFP's across-the-board ranking of the FLP as last preference gave the SDL several crucial marginal open constituencies. In the run up to the 2006 poll, the NFP entered negotiations with the SDL and was offered seats in the Senate as the price for favouring the governing party. Yet, shortly before the deadline for party preferences to be lodged with the Elections Office, the party mended its fraught relationship with FLP leader Mahendra Chaudhry. The two parties signed a memorandum of understanding in which the NFP promised the FLP superior preferences to the SDL in seven of the ten potentially marginal open constituencies.⁷ SDL leaders and newspaper editorials fumed at the NFP betrayal, calling the party '*liu muri*' (figuratively translating to 'lowly and untrustworthy'⁸), but the governing party nevertheless gained two seats thanks to NFP preferences. The NFP strategy had been to avoid giving 'blanket preferences' to either of the major parties, in the hope that, in that way, with one or two seats, it might hold the balance of power.

The outcomes of the 2006 poll in the all-important open constituencies were strongly determined by ethnically based voting patterns. In Figure 21.4,

constituencies are ordered from right to left in accordance with the ratio of Indians to ethnic Fijians in electorates. The black columns show the ethnic Fijian share of registered voters in the 25 open constituencies, and the grey columns show the Indian shares. Constituencies towards the right are those in the densely Indian populated sugar cane districts of western Viti Levu and northern Vanua Levu. Constituencies towards the left are mostly those outer island constituencies where ethnic Fijians form the overwhelming majority of the population. Those towards the centre of the chart are mainly in the urban and peri-urban areas around the capital, Suva, where Indians and ethnic Fijians each form close to 50 per cent of the electorates, although recent demographic changes have ensured that some of the western Viti Levu constituencies are now also much closer to having equal numbers of ethnic Fijians and Indians.

The dashed horizontal line in Figure 21.4, at the 50 per cent mark, shows the share of the vote required to secure victory under Fiji's AV system. The grey sloping line shows a projected FLP 80 per cent of the Indian vote, and indicates the seats that the FLP could be expected to take at the first count (from Vuda rightwards to Ba – those electorates where the grey 80 per cent line is above the horizontal 50 per cent threshold). The black sloping line shows a projected SDL 80 per cent of the Fijian vote, and those seats which the SDL could be expected to take at the first count (Bua/Macuata leftwards to Tailevu North/Ovalau). In the middle of the chart are the marginal open seats, where most results were always likely to depend on transfers of preference votes (Yasawa/Nawaka through to Suva City).

As Figure 21.5 indicates, results corresponded fairly closely with the model shown in Figure 21.4. Figure 21.5 shows the 25 open constituencies, again ordered from right to left in accordance with the ratio of Indians to Fijians among registered voters. The block at the base of each column shows the ultimate victor's first preference votes, and additional blocks above the base block show transferred preference votes that were required to take the victor over the 50 per cent threshold (shown by the horizontal line). Owing to ethnically based voting, all the seats to the right of the chart were taken by the FLP at the first count, and all those to the left of the chart were taken by the SDL. The only constituency towards the left of the chart that went beyond the first count was Serua/Navosa Open, a large, highly dispersed and mountainous constituency

Figure 21.4 Ethnic composition of open constituencies

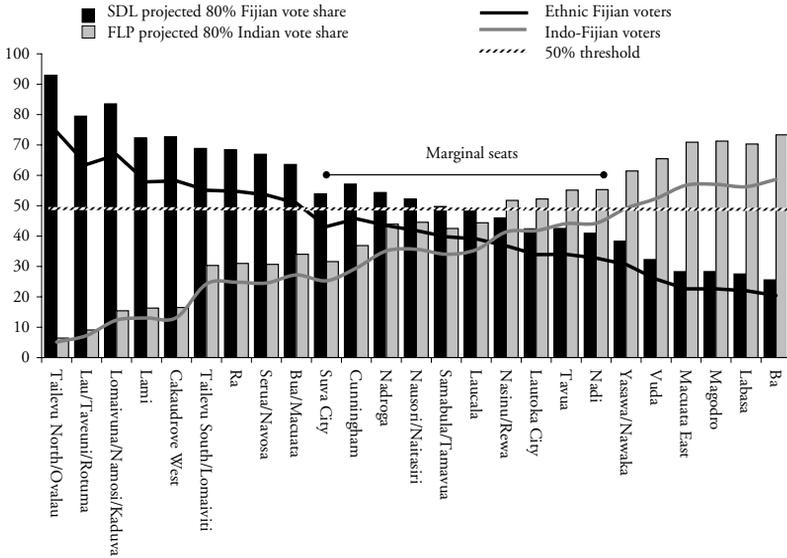
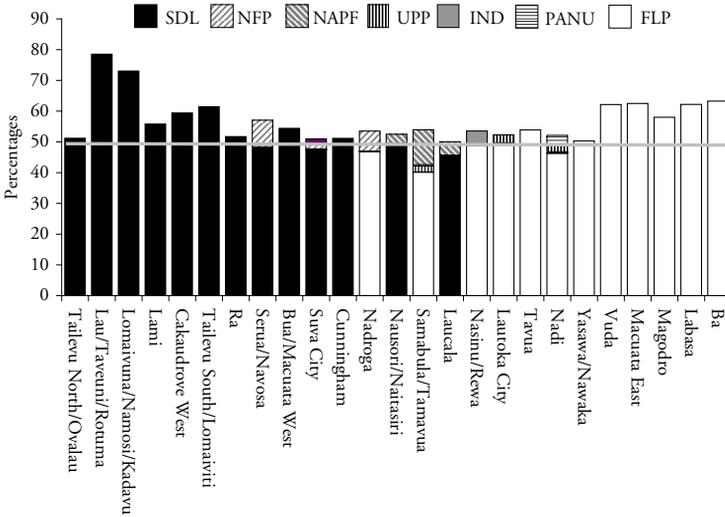


Figure 21.5 Winners' majorities in the 25 open constituencies, 2006



on the southwestern side of Viti Levu. This was a contest complicated by the fact that the sitting member, Pio Wong, had been de-selected by the SDL in favour of newcomer Jone Navakamocea, a civil servant previously employed in the Prime Minister's office. Navakamocea eventually won, at the 7th count, and only then because the NFP ranked the SDL (6th) above the FLP (7th) in its preferences. Negative ranking, and victory for the penultimate placed party, featured in 2006 – as it had done in 1999 and 2001, even though the number of seats decided on preferences was considerably lower than at those previous elections.

In both 1999 and 2001, 18 open constituencies were decided by transfer of preference votes. This time around, only nine were decided in this way. The middle ground of Fiji's politics was much smaller than it had been in 1999 and 2001, due to the decline in the NFP's Indian vote and the weak performance of Ratu Epeli Ganilau's NAPF. It was in those constituencies shown towards the centre of Figure 21.4, where Fijians and Indians approach parity in electorates, that results were so close that minor party preferences decided outcomes. These close-to-parity open constituencies are mostly located in the Suva-Nausori corridor, where urban drift by evicted Indian tenant farmers had spawned SDL fears that the FLP might do well.⁹ Yet, Fijians as well as Indians had moved towards the towns, and continued overseas migration countered the Indian influx. Outcomes thus remained highly uncertain in these parts of southeast Viti Levu. The SDL tactic of fielding FLP renegades Tupeni Baba and John Ali in marginal urban open constituencies like Samabula/Tamavua Open and Nasinu/Rewa Open backfired. More effective was standing women candidates in the marginals, a tactic that gave victory to the SDL's Losena Salabula in Laucala Open and the FLP's Monica Raghwan in Samabula/Tamavua Open. Fielding popular Indian former Naitasiri rugby team manager Rajesh Singh in Cunningham also proved effective, and gave the SDL at the first count what might otherwise have been a marginal seat.

Ethnically based voting in Fiji has for long meant backing political parties because their policies are deemed to favour one or other ethnic group, not backing particular candidates because they are indigenous Fijian or Indian. Ethnic Fijians had no qualms voting for Indian candidates like George Shui Raj in Ra or Rajesh Singh in Cunningham, because they were members of the

pro-indigenous SDL party. Indians were unperturbed about voting for ethnic Fijians like Poseci Bune in the Labasa Open constituency or for Sivia Qoro in Yasawa/Nawaka Open, because they stood for the solidly Indian-backed FLP. Racial politics in Fiji has long been much more sophisticated than the mere exercise of voter prejudice based on skin colour, culture, religion or language.

Overlaying the strongly ethnic dimension to Fiji's politics was a regional divide. FLP candidates performed more strongly in western Viti Levu, taking out marginal open seats like Nadi Open, Tavua Open and Lautoka City Open, while Nadroga Open in the west, a seat secured by the SDL in 2001, this time fell to the FLP.

Remarkable was that, for the first time, below-the-line voting made a major difference in highly marginal open constituencies. Across the country as a whole, the vast majority of voters – as in 1999 and 2001 – ticked their ballot papers above-the-line. In so doing, they endorsed their first choice party's list of preferences that had earlier been lodged with the Elections Office. Yet, in all three elections, around 5–8 per cent of voters chose to rank candidates 'below-the-line'. In most elections, the big blocks of above-the-line votes commanded by the parties make the overwhelming difference – a feature strongly condemned by even some of the greatest enthusiasts for Fiji's AV system. But in this election, results were so close in the 10 marginal open constituencies that in some cases, below-the-line votes decided outcomes. This was not the result of voters marking ballots below-the-line to any greater extent than previously. For example, in Laucala Open, where marking the ballot paper in this way decided the outcome in favour of the SDL's Losena Salabula, who won by only 11 votes, only 3.5 per cent of ballots were cast below-the-line.¹⁰

Discussion

Party strategizing under the AV system in 1999, 2001 and 2006 illustrates the danger inherent in the use of majoritarian voting systems in bipolar societies. Under Fiji's previous first-past-the-post system, monolithic ethnically based parties also emerged. Then, as with AV after 1997, communal seats tended to give each party a number of 'safe' seats and contests were decided in the common roll or 'national' open constituencies where the two ethnic groups approached parity.¹¹ In these, minor splits in the vote on either side, or slight

variations in turnout, could decide outcomes one way or the other. Parties sought to sustain homogeneous ethnic backing from their own group, while hoping for – or actively fomenting – splits amongst parties representing the other group.¹² Such splinter parties were more common among Fijians than among Indians (owing to the greater importance of provincial or hierarchical ties for Fijians), encouraging a repeated emphasis on ‘Fijian unity’ in the run up to general elections.

The new AV system potentially lessened the danger of party splintering, in the sense that it allowed like-minded parties to field separate candidates but exchange second preferences. This, after all, had been the rationale behind the original introduction of the system in Australia in 1918.¹³ In Fiji, however, the split format (above-the-line and below-the-line) ballot paper, and the fact that around 95 per cent of voters tended to tick above-the-line, gave political parties extraordinary control over preference votes. Parties tend to strategize more than voters.¹⁴ Where they are battling for the support of specific sections of the electorate, they will often do everything possible to destroy close rivals. The FLP, for example, put the NFP as last preference in 1999 because they were fighting for pre-eminence in the Indian electorates, and the NFP reciprocated in 2001. Fijian splinter parties put Rabuka’s SVT as last preference in 1999. In 2001, the two western Viti Levu parties (the Bai Kei Viti and Party of National Unity) each put the other as last preference, ensuring their mutual destruction and the victory of the SDL in the west.

As a result of this tactical usage of preferences, the type of party strategizing witnessed under the 1970 constitution applied also under the new electoral system, but with increased potency. Fomenting splits in the *other* camp no longer simply made possible plurality victories. It also created the potential for actually acquiring the splinter votes of breakaway parties. The pressures for ‘ethnic unity’ were thus just as acute, if not more so, under the new system.

In ethnically bipolar circumstances, all single-member district-based systems tend to encourage the types of strategic dynamics witnessed in Fiji in 1970–87 and 1999–2006. In contrast, multi-member district-based proportional systems diminish the electoral incentive for ‘ethnic unity’. Party shares of the vote determine party shares of seats, although there are various different ways of accomplishing this.¹⁵ There may still be some pressure to avoid the emergence of

small splinter parties if, as is commonly the case, there is a threshold below which small parties do not acquire seats. Otherwise, there are fewer disincentives to the emergence of multiple parties. If ethnicity remains the crucial issue, nothing stops different political parties aligning along racial lines within parliament. No electoral system can abolish ethnically based voting. Guyana, for example, uses list proportional representation, but has two robust ethnic parties representing the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. What proportional systems *can do* is take the electoral system-driven heat out of contests, and allow politics to shift in new and unexpected directions.

Notes

- ¹ For some debate over these issues, relating to Fiji's 1999 and 2001 elections, see Fraenkel, J. & Grofman, B. 2006. 'Does the alternative vote foster moderation in ethnically divided societies? The case of Fiji', *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(5):623–52; and the response by Donald Horowitz in the same journal ('Strategy takes a holiday', pp.652–62) and the rejoinder by Fraenkel & Grofman ('The failure of the alternative vote as a tool for ethnic moderation in Fiji' (pp.663–66).
- ² Horowitz, D.L. 1991. *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p.191; Horowitz, D.L. 1997. 'Encouraging electoral accommodation in divided societies', in BV. Lal & P. Larmour (eds) *Electoral Systems in Divided Societies: The Fiji Constitutional Review*, ANU, Canberra; but see Lijphart, A., 1991. 'The alternative vote: A realistic alternative for South Africa?', *Politkon*, 18(2):95.
- ³ Appeals for 'Fijian unity' are common at general elections, while explicit calls for 'Indian unity' are less frequent. Yet, at the 2006 polls, these were much more frequent and explicit than in either 1999 or 2001 (see, for example, the reports of an FLP rally at the Gujarati Grounds in Ba in the *Fiji Sun*, 12 February 2006).
- ⁴ In 2001, 51 per cent of registered voters were indigenous Fijian, and 44.6 per cent were Indo-Fijian. Population projections using the 1986 and 1996 Censuses of Population and more recent migration data would suggest a still wider discrepancy (56 per cent as compared with 39.1 per cent respectively for 2006), but these changes affect primarily the younger population (below the voting age of 21 years), and only with a lag will they come to influence the voter registration data.
- ⁵ European Union Election Observation Mission, Fiji 2006, 'Final report', September 2006, section 5.5, p.9.
- ⁶ Gujarati migrants mostly arrived in Fiji as 'free' settlers, and many established profitable businesses which monopolise the retail sector in particular. Indian political parties seeking a mass appeal therefore steer clear of too close an association with Gujarati leaders. Part of the difficulty the NFP had in finding a strong party leader in 2006, for example, was the reluctance of senior party members to accept a Gujarati in the position.

- ⁷ The open constituencies of Nadroga, Nausori/Naitasiri, Samabula/Tamavua, Tavua, Nadi, Lautoka, and Suva City. In return, the FLP agreed 'to rank the NFP above the SDL in its list of preferences for all Indian Communal, Fijian Communal and Open constituencies contested by the NFP' ('Agreement between the National Federation Party and the Fiji Labour Party', 18 April 2006, copy obtained from NFP offices).
- ⁸ *The Fiji Times*, 22 April 2006.
- ⁹ Results in municipal council elections, for example in Nasinu, had encouraged such fears (see 'Fiji Labour Party secures municipal majority', Fijilive.com, 23 October 2005). However, turnout in municipal council elections tends to be so low that they offer little reliable evidence on which to predict general election results.
- ¹⁰ Data obtained from the O-39 completed by the Count Team Leader at the Suva Grammar School.
- ¹¹ The difference was that, under the 1970 constitution, communal seats were combined with 'cross-voting' or 'national' seats, where the ethnicity of the candidate was specified, but all eligible citizens voted together. Citizens had four votes, one in a communal constituency, where they were separated by race, and another three in common roll constituencies where they were required to vote for 'Fijian', 'Indian' and 'general' candidates. That system was often confusingly interpreted in its own narrowly racial terms, but is better appreciated if viewed in terms of party outcomes. In practice, seats where Fijians formed a majority tended to fall to the Alliance Party and those where Indians formed a majority tended to fall to the National Federation Party (or, in 1987, the NFP/FLP coalition).
- ¹² For example, in April 1977, the NFP went so far as to pay the deposits for candidates contesting for the extremist Fijian Nationalist Party in the hope of thereby splitting the Fijian vote.
- ¹³ Graham, B.D. 1962. 'The choice of voting methods in federal politics, 1902–1918', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 8:164–82.
- ¹⁴ Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge.
- ¹⁵ There are three types of PR system that merit consideration for Fiji.
1. List system proportional representation, as used in New Caledonia, South Africa or Guyana, either treats the entire country as a single constituency or divides up the country into several constituencies. Within each constituency, the party share of votes is used to allocate seats.
 2. The single transferable vote system, as used in Ireland and Malta, is an elaborate preferential voting system used in multi-member constituencies. It resembles AV, but in addition to redistributing the votes of eliminated candidates at successive stages in the count, it also involves the redistribution of surplus votes from victorious candidates who cross the threshold.
 3. Mixed member systems, as in New Zealand and Germany, usually combine single-member districts that elect a part of the parliament with 'list' members who 'top up' party seat shares to arrive at something close to overall votes/seats proportionality (for further details, see International IDEA, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, International IDEA, 2005).