

The Willow and the Palm:
an exploration of the role of cricket in Fiji

Thesis submitted by

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in October 2005

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Humanities

James Cook University

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Abstract

The starting point for this thesis is an investigation of the political role of cricket in the development of national identity among the colonies of the British Empire. The British invested the game with moral and political values and openly employed it to impose these values on their colonial populations. As the colonies established their own national identities they accepted, adopted and adapted these values for their own purposes. The game was used as a vehicle for entry into the closed society of the elite ruling class but was also utilized, both overtly and covertly, as a tool for resistance. This thesis examines this process in the Pacific state of Fiji through a study of the interaction of its political and social history with the development of cricket between 1874 and 1971.

While the role of cricket in the development of national identity in the major test playing nations has been extensively explored, very little has been done to discover whether the processes in these countries operated in those ex-colonies where the game is still played but not to test standard. There also appears to have been little consideration given to the more pragmatic question of why the game prospered in some colonies rather than others. The role of sport in the colonial experience of the people of the Pacific islands has been neglected by historians.

Utilising a broadly comparative approach, the study traces the Fijian experience with colonial sport through cricket. The importance of the sources of the game in other British colonies, the administration, missionaries and the education system, are placed in the Fijian context. The demographics of cricket in Fiji are established through a study of individual players. A contextual analysis of the game itself and the physical and geographical nature of Fiji reveal practical reasons for the game's decline after its initial enthusiastic reception.

The thesis establishes that although cricket initially flourished in Fiji, the nature of the game, Fiji's climate and geography and the competition provided by rugby union and soccer, led to its decline. The weather and terrain frustrated the most enthusiastic

attempts to promote the game. Rugby provided Fijians with a more compatible form of entertainment and excitement, dovetailing with current images of maleness and masculinity. Soccer gave Indo-Fijians a cheap leisure activity in which all could participate. Cricket remained a chiefly game and did not become popular with the general population.

Relating the role of cricket to the concept of national identity within the Fijian state posed problems. National identity is intrinsically linked to nationalism and nationalism to the nation. Fiji does not fit comfortably within accepted definitions of the nation. During the period covered by the study, indigenous Fijians acknowledged cultural differences in their own society but retained a cohesive sense of ethnic identity which consolidated their polity. Nationalism, and national identity, presupposes an 'other.' For Fijians the 'other' was the immigrant Indian community, not the British. The need to prove themselves against the coloniser, which drove other British colonies, did not motivate the Fijians. They were not establishing a 'new' national identity, only strengthening and re-working their existing identity to fit new circumstances. Hence their interaction with the game of cricket did not take on the political overtones experienced in other colonies.

Acknowledgments

The loneliness of the long distance scholar is legendary. However, it is tempered by the support, cooperation and comradeship of family, friends and colleagues. This thesis, like all others, would not have been completed without their help.

My thanks go to James Cook University for giving me the opportunity to undertake this research by awarding me an APA Scholarship. The supportive environment created by the staff and my fellow postgraduate students in the School of Humanities within the Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Sciences on the Cairns Campus ensured that my time with them was enjoyable and rewarding.

Individually, I must thank my supervisor, Dr Doug Hunt, for his academic guidance as I negotiated the difficult road through postgraduate study. His patience, encouragement and faith in my ability have kept me going when I felt unable to complete the task. Most of all, I thank him for his friendship. I would like to thank Dr Dawn May for opening up possibilities I thought had long passed me by and Dr Jan Wegner for always being there.

The opportunity to work in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University under a National Visiting Scholarship was invaluable.

Like many others, I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the staff at libraries and archives around the world. I acknowledge their help at the University of the South Pacific and the National Archives of Fiji in Suva, the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, the Public Record Office, and Lord's Cricket Ground in London, the various libraries at the Australian National University, the Noel Butlin Archives Centre and the National Library of Australia in Canberra. And, of course, the cheerful and helpful staff at James Cook University library.

Lastly my husband, Adrian, for ongoing support and encouragement, for being my first reader and helping me to understand, not only the intricacies of cricket, but the bewildering differences of the various games so lightly termed 'football'.

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Prologue

In a match today between Fiji and the West Indies touring team which was passing through Suva on the way to New Zealand in the Southern Cross, Fiji won by 28 runs. (Fiji Times and Herald, 12 January 1956)

In January 1956 the West Indies test team called at Suva in Fiji on its way to play in New Zealand. The secretary of the Fiji Cricket Association, Mr H. King, arranged for an exhibition match with a local Fijian side and called on Ratu¹ Kamisese Mara to put together a team.

12 January dawned hot, but fine, and Mara had managed to round up a team of local players including a couple of well known cricketers from Lau and Nadi. The Fijians entered the match with enthusiasm but little expectation of winning.

The Fijians won the toss and elected to bat first. They began creditably with Harry Apted running up 33 before being caught by Clairmonte de Peiza, off Collie Smith. The other Fijian batsmen did not fair as well, except for Ilikena Bula who, in his usual excellent form, made 27 before being bowled by Denis Atkinson. Mara was out for a duck, caught by Hammond Furlonge off Smith. However, the Fijians were not unhappy with their total of 91 runs when they adjourned for lunch at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

Over the generous lunch, the teams and invited guests were addressed by the secretary of the Fijian Cricket Association and by Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna. Parallels were drawn between the West Indies and Fiji and hopes expressed that Fiji would also one day reach test standard.

When play resumed after lunch, Furlonge and Aliie Binns opened the batting for the West Indies. Mara commenced the bowling for the Fijians and, as expected, the visitors began to build a respectable run rate. But then ‘in a blinding flash of insight’ Mara handed the bowling over to Jack Gosling and Asaeli Driu.² This was the turning point. The Fijians renowned fielding ability came into play and only Furlonge and Binns reached double

¹ chief

² International Cricket Council, *The I.C.C. Trophy 1982*, I.C.C., 1982, p. 39.

figures, both sixteen. Sobers was out for six, caught Swann, bowled Gosling, de Peiza four, caught Raddock, bowled Gosling and Atkinson for four, caught Apted, bowled Gosling. Driu bowled Furlonge, Goddard, Sonny Ramadhin and Alfred Valentine, the last three for ducks. The West Indies were all out for 63 runs.

It is difficult to imagine who was more surprised by the unexpected win, the Fijians or the visitors. In typical Fijian fashion, the victory was celebrated with *meke*³ performances and *yaqona*⁴ drinking. The West Indian cricketers were full of praise for the Fijian players and the *Fiji Times and Herald* commented, ‘This match has undoubtedly done a great deal to revive interest in the great game in the Colony.’⁵

The Fijians, as always, were modest in victory as can be seen from Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara’s account of the game in his memoirs:

Thursday, 12 January 1956 was a notable day in the history of Fiji cricket. The West Indies team was passing through and spending a day in Suva. They very sportingly offered to play a Fiji eleven, although they had been a fortnight at sea. I was given the honour of captaining the Fiji side, and in the event Fiji scored 91 against West Indies’ 63. Perhaps it is only fair to add that the West Indies batted after a superb Fijian lunch! However, Fiji’s bowling and fielding were just too good for the West Indies. Fortunately for us, Weekes did not play, for if a single batsman had managed to stay, I am sure they would have scored freely. As it was, an excellent over from Jack Gosling, backed up by three miraculous catches, two by Harry Apted and one by Bula, removed three world-renowned batsmen – Atkinson, de Peiza, and Smith.

*One of the batsmen, on his first tour, smacked a delivery at full force towards Harry Swann – a rather indifferent fielder who had been tucked away as far out of sight as possible. He very sensibly turned away, and the ball hit him a resounding smack on his behind. Clutching at his injured part, he found the ball in his hand and instead of a cry of pain, shouted, “How’s that!” Out it was, and that was that. The batsman was the great Sobers – later Sir Garfield Sobers.*⁶

³ Traditional Fijian dance performances.

⁴ Traditional Fijian drink, slightly narcotic, made from the powdered roots of the pepper tree.

⁵ *Fiji Times and Herald*, 13 January 1956, p. 5.

⁶ Ratu Sir K. Mara, *The Pacific Way: a memoir*, Center for Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawai’i, Pacific Islands Development Program, East-West Center, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1997, p. 48.

Introduction

In 1997 Hong Kong was handed over to the People's Republic of China and one of the few remaining bastions of the British Empire ceased to exist. The process of decolonisation which began in the early part of the twentieth century and gathered pace after World War II, was virtually complete. At its zenith the British Empire encompassed one-fifth of the world's land mass and ruled over 410 million people. The extent of its cultural and political legacy is still being assessed, but in the struggle to rediscover and re-establish their independence and identity ex-colonies have attempted to dissociate themselves from all things British. They have reclaimed language, literature and art. Institutions and architecture have been remodelled.

But, in a surprising paradox, the sports of the Empire have been retained. In a complex and complicated process of adaptation and assimilation, colonised peoples have accepted these games and utilised them for their own purposes. The games have provided a means of creating or consolidating national identity, *entrée* into the international community and a source of pleasure, excitement and fun. Sport, and the moral and political values it espoused, was intrinsic to British national identity. This was particularly so with regard to cricket. The question why so many ex-colonies embraced a phenomenon which epitomised the colonial culture and incorporated it into their emerging national identity, is the starting point for this thesis.

The question of why cricket survived and prospered in the ex-colonies of the British Empire has intrigued many researchers. As early as 1988 Richard Cashman identified some of these reasons. Links between cricket, national identity and nationalism, and by implication, nation-building, became evident. Elite groups played a significant role in introducing and supporting the game. The existing cultural base may aid or abate the acceptance of the game and this is linked to the availability of organised leisure activities within these societies. The indigenisation or domestication of the game ranged from subtle adjustments in style to a complete transformation of the game.¹

¹ Richard Cashman, 'Cricket and Colonialism: colonial hegemony and indigenous subversion?' in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914*, ed. J.A. Mangan, Frankcass, 1988, pp. 258-60.

Aims of the research

The bulk of the research to date has concentrated on the major test playing countries: Australia, the West Indies, India, Pakistan and South Africa. Very little has been done to discover whether the processes at work in these countries were also at work in other ex-colonies where the game was still played but not to test standard. The Pacific nation of Fiji is one such ex-colony. This thesis examines the interaction between Fiji's political and social history and the development of cricket in the colony between 1874 and 1971. Comparison between Fiji and the test playing nations establishes similarities and differences. The study traces the cultural interaction between coloniser and colonised and seeks to demonstrate the two-way process involved. It also looks at the more pragmatic question of why cricket prospered in some colonies rather than others.

The thesis proposes answers to the following questions:

- What were the similarities and differences in the development of cricket between the test playing nations and Fiji?
- What, if any, role did cricket play in the development of national identity in Fiji?
- What geographical and physical features influenced the development of cricket in Fiji?

Methodology

A conventional historical approach to the methodology was followed for this project. Archival material, newspapers, and published memoirs were consulted and several interviews conducted. A preliminary exploration of the National Archives of Fiji and the Pacific collection at the University of the South Pacific was conducted in late 1999. Unfortunately there was not a lot of direct documentation of cricket games available. A tropical climate is not kind to paper records and there was no plethora of score cards or old photos. However, useful contacts were made with the intention of returning in the middle of 2000 to follow up the leads established.

In early 2000 the colonial records at the Public Record Office in London were consulted and the archives of the Wesleyan Methodist Society held at the School of Oriental and

Asian Studies at the University of London were searched. Philip Snow, who was a colonial administrator in Fiji from 1939-48, was interviewed. He has been involved in cricket administration for most of his life and has written a history of cricket in Fiji. His text formed the foundation for much of this study. The library at Lords Cricket Ground was also consulted.

In May 2000 the *coup d'etat* led by George Speight threw Fiji into disarray and it was considered unsafe for a white woman to travel to the country on her own. Fortunately, much of the material needed was held on microfiche at the National Library of Australia and in collections at the Australian National University (ANU). A National Visiting Scholarship to ANU provided the opportunity to work at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at ANU under Professor Brij Lal and to consult the relevant archives. However, although there was little loss of documentary evidence, this set back did affect the thesis. A second trip to Fiji would have allowed former and current players and administrators to be interviewed strengthening the indigenous voice in the final analysis.

The material collected from these various sources was correlated and analysed using the themes identified in the literature discussed above. The history of cricket in Fiji was integrated into the country's colonial history and comparisons made between the Fijian experience and that of the test playing nations. The starting point was an exploration of the significance of cricket to the British themselves and the progress of the game throughout the Empire.

The study presented a number of theoretical and methodological difficulties. The right of foreign scholars to write Pacific, or any indigenous, history is being challenged. Whether or not an outsider has the ability, or indeed the right, to tell another's story is a sensitive issue.² Such historians must be aware of their own cultural context and position and retain their critical self-awareness throughout the research process. In this case the

² In this regard, I was heartened by Professor Brij Lal's comment, himself an Indo-Fijian, that what is important is good scholarship. I also agree with Doug Munro's argument that in the multicultural reality of our world, rigorous historical method will allow both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' to make a valid contribution to Pacific history. (See Doug Munro, 'Who "Owns" Pacific History?: reflections on the insider/outsider dichotomy', *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol.29, No.2, 1994, pp.232-37.)

historian is a white, Anglo-Celtic female, a descendant of the colonisers, one who has no first hand experience of the country but who shares the broader perspective of Pacific colonial history.

This problem is linked to the question of reconstructing the indigenous voice. There are no written records to work from. Although postmodernism, postcolonialism and subaltern studies have attempted to 'deconstruct' and 'decentre' colonial history, there is still much dispute over whether the subaltern can speak. Of necessity, the Pacific historian relies on the records of early Europeans who came in to contact with the people of the Pacific. Not only are these records usually the work of white, Anglo-Celtic males, they are often skewed by a strong religious perspective. There is an even greater need to remain aware of the writer's cultural, political and historical view than in more traditional forms of history.

The theoretical framework itself is problematic. The original expectation was to gather the research data, tell the story and interpret it in accordance with existing concepts and ideas regarding the colonial experience. The real world of historical research is not so simple. The original thinking was informed by Foucault's discourse of power, Said's concepts of orientalism and Benedict Anderson's idea of the imagined community.³ The study was envisioned as an opportunity to explore the concepts of postcolonialism and the idea of constructed national identity.

Perhaps the underlying problem is that '[c]olonial history is grounded in the Western political vision, which implies that the referent of history is a nation'.⁴ To look at the effect of sport on national identity, nation-building and nationalism presumes there is a nation. Anderson's 'imagined community' is presumed to be a nation. The difficulty has arisen because these theories have been developed to explain the historical process in Western European society. They have been adapted to Asia and Africa but very little

³ See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, New York, 1994, and *Culture & Imperialism*, Vintage, 1994, as well as Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, revised edition, Verso, London, 1991.

⁴ Jocelyn Linnekin, 'Contending Approaches', in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, eds. Donald Denoon et al, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 23.

theoretical work has been done in (or on) the Pacific. The leaders in theoretical approaches to the area are anthropologists, not historians.

However, if Fiji did not fit into the historical paradigm of the nation and these theories do not fit it provided all the more reason to examine the development of the 'nation' and its colonial experience to determine what had happened. OR therefore, I turned my attention to the Fijian colonial experience to determine where its people drew their sense of identity from and what role cricket had played.

Theories addressing the colonial and post-colonial experience, particularly cultural imperialism, did not concede the interaction evident in the situation. This does not imply that the balance of power was not unequal, but it was evident that colonised societies retained cultural power and exercised choice. In the long run, they accepted and rejected, adopted and adapted, the colonisers' culture to suit their own needs and aspirations. Their preference determined the success or failure of a particular cultural practice.

Outline of the dissertation

Chapter One discusses the literature relevant to this study. It covers three areas: sport history, Pacific history and Fijian history. The changing intellectual and philosophical perspective of the twentieth century has shifted the focus of historical enquiry from the political history of 'kings and battles' to the cultural history of the everyday lives of ordinary people. Sport, so pervasive a part of modern life, is an important element in that cultural history, particularly with regard to the colonial history of the British Empire. While this aspect of the colonial experience has been extensively studied in the test playing ex-colonies, the literature review reveals a serious gap with regard to the rest of the ex-colonies. This is particularly evident in the Pacific where sport has not been considered despite its importance as an introduction to colonial culture for the colonised.

Chapter Two provides an examination of the significance of cricket to the British themselves and an overview of the progress of the game throughout the Empire. The game epitomised British culture, incorporating the political and moral values of the

Victorians, and they openly employed it to impose those values on their colonial populations. Cricket dominated the public school system which was responsible for educating the administrators, soldiers and missionaries who governed the Empire. They introduced it to the colonies with varying levels of success.

It was in the islands of the Pacific Ocean that cricket underwent its most extensive and interesting transformation. Although the traditional game was played, often by the indigenous elite, new forms of the game developed incorporating existing power and belief systems. Fiji is singled out for further examination in this thesis.

In order to establish the groundwork for the study, *Chapter Three* integrates the political and social history of Fiji with the history of cricket in the country. Fiji ceded to Britain in 1874 after a turbulent period of early contact with a variety of Europeans. Cricket was introduced by an early administrator and quickly spread throughout the island group. The Fijian colonial experience was moulded by a benevolent, paternalistic administrative policy designed to protect and preserve the perceived existing culture and way of life. The system of indentured Indian labour was instigated as part of that policy. The subsequent isolation of Fijians from Westernised economic development and the enduring racial tension has been blamed for many of the country's current woes.

Cricket had a chequered career in Fiji. It was taken up by the chiefs and remained a chiefly game until the 1930s. Overseas tours began in 1895 and continued into the 1960s. In 1956 a Fijian XI beat the West Indies test side. By the 1960s interest in the game was waning. The imperial world was changing and Britain was urging Fiji towards independence. As the chiefs were groomed for their leadership role in an independent nation their attention and energy were diverted to politics. The more egalitarian sports of rugby union (among the Fijians) and soccer (among the Indians) became increasingly important to the ordinary people.

Chapter Four explores the pre-colonial structure of Fijian society in order to determine where Fijians drew their sense of identity from prior to European contact. This is a

difficult task for the historian as there are no indigenous written records to work from. The writings of explorers, travellers and missionaries are used critically, keeping in mind their Eurocentric perspective and the prevailing racial, religious and political outlook of the authors. The archaeological and anthropological record is also drawn on to supplement historical documents.

The Fijian islands were the cross-roads of the Pacific and by the time of first contact were inhabited by Polynesian and Melanesian groups. The Polynesians were maritime, coastal people with a communal, hierarchical society where the chief was paramount, governed by complex kinship laws and circumscribed by ritual, ceremony and custom. The Melanesians lived in the interior and the drier north west of the islands. Although still governed by a chief, their society was less structured and the individual enjoyed more autonomy while still fulfilling tribal obligations.

Fijian pre-colonial society was diverse and the individual sense of identity was defined by their place within the clan and kinship arrangements. However, shared ancient cultural roots and a common cosmology existed throughout the islands and laid the foundation for a cohesive sense of ethnic identity amongst Fijians when confronted with the advent of Europeans.

The next three chapters take a closer look at important elements in the development of cricket in all of the British colonies, and trace their influence in Fiji. The game was usually introduced to a colony either by the administration or missionaries. In the case of Fiji, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society reached the islands nearly fifty years before the colonial administration took over. Accordingly *Chapter Five* examines the background of these missionaries and establishes the type of European culture which they introduced to the Fijians.

The first sustained European contact experienced by a colonised people inevitably set the pattern for their perspective on European culture. Although British culture in a colonial situation is often viewed as homogenous, different classes and groups within that society

varied greatly in their social, political and economic backgrounds and in their cultural practice and emphasis. In contrast to their Anglican counterparts who were drawn from the British upper class and aristocracy, the Methodist missionaries were predominantly labourers and tradesmen from the lower middle class and working class. They had little or no education, and organised sporting and leisure activities held no place in their cultural base. It was their values and ideas which would mould post-colonial Fijian society.

Once cricket had been introduced to a colony, it was usually propagated and consolidated through the education system. Education is one of the most important tools in the socialisation and acculturation of a society. Its significance in the colonial process is attested to by both the colonisers and the colonised. *Chapter Six* traces the development of the education system in Fiji and establishes its aims and values. Colonial education systems were modelled on those existing in the metropolitan centre and reflected current political and social thought. In the British colonies this often meant recreating the public school system with its emphasis on sports and games.

However, by the time the colonial administration took over Fiji, the education system had been firmly grounded in the ethos of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission. British colonial education policy had also been tempered by the resistance and rebellion which had begun to erupt throughout the Empire. In consequence, the focus had shifted to vocational and agricultural training and to equipping indigenous populations to live successfully within their own culture rather than become 'black English gentlemen.'

Chapter Seven turns to the players themselves and examines the lives of those who took up the game in Fiji. Throughout the colonies individuals exerted an important influence in introducing cricket and developing enthusiasm for the game. European settlers and colonial administrators played the game for their own enjoyment and encouraged the local indigenous peoples to play to make up numbers and provide competition. The success and prosperity of the game would depend on whether those who became involved had the influence, inclination and means to promote the game.

In the rigidly hierarchical Fijian society cricket was taken up enthusiastically by a number of influential chiefs which ensured its early success. The chapter proposes that one of the reasons for the game's decline was this popularity with, and support by, the indigenous elite.

The major reasons for the wane of cricket in Fiji were pragmatic. *Chapter Eight* considers the inherent difficulties with the game itself in the Fijian setting and a number of social and physical obstacles evident in the islands. Geographical and climatic conditions were far removed from the idyllic English setting of the original game and other organised sports, particularly rugby union and soccer, provided stiff competition for the time and energy of the local population.

This thesis fills a gap in sports history, in Pacific history and in Fijian history. By examining the development of cricket in a non-test playing ex-British colony it explores a neglected area of cultural contact in the Fijian colonial experience. It adds significantly to the argument that the colonised exercised power, agency and choice in their dealings with the coloniser. While the thesis began as an attempt to use the medium of sport to explore the concepts of postcolonialism and the idea of constructed national identity in a Pacific island nation, this proved difficult in the case of Fiji. As its recent political history shows, the idea of Fiji as one single nation is problematic and this thesis demonstrates that sport was yet another area where ethnic divisions were entrenched.

Sport, life and history:
Literature review

Chapter One

To venture into the field of sport history, and particularly cricket history, is to be overwhelmed by the amount of literature already in the field. Cricket aficionados are fanatical about statistics and records. The raw materials of the historian's craft are there in abundance. But sport history had to be recognised as a legitimate field of study for the serious student of society. Once its importance was established, studies proliferated, tracing the infinite connections between participants, spectators and society in general. This recognition has led to close examination of the complex role sport has played in both expressing and reinforcing political realities, particularly in the ex-colonies of the British Empire.

The historian's craft has changed dramatically in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The far reaching effects of the French philosophical revolution which swept the intellectual and academic world in the 1960s and eventually consolidated as postmodernism, changed the way we looked at, and tried to make sense of, the world around us. History could not remain an isolated, discrete discipline. The changes which started in linguistics and philosophy and rapidly took over literary criticism, filtered through to history by way of anthropology and political science. The new concepts not only affected historical method, but redefined acceptable sources and content. The focus of historical enquiry shifted to cultural histories and the discourses underlying those cultures. For the historian interested in European colonial expansion and its after effects, the changes were particularly significant.

Michel Foucault defined the relationship between knowledge and power within a society and developed the idea of discourse to describe the way this relationship permeated all aspects of an individual's existence.¹ In his seminal work *Orientalism*, Edward Said adapted Foucault's idea of discourse to identify the network of knowledge developed by the Western world to deal with the Orient.² Said claimed that Orientalism was a systematic, all pervasive approach to the East which had developed over several centuries

¹ See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, Tavistock Publications, London, 1972, for the theory behind his work and Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Penguin Books, London, 1991, for an example of the application of Foucault's approach to history.

to explain and classify all things Eastern. He argued that Orientals had had no input into the image of themselves conveyed by Orientalism and yet it formed the basis for the colonial administration of Orientals. Orientalism, this body of uncontested knowledge, allowed Europe to achieve and sustain its position of power in the colonial world: a position, not only of political power, but cultural hegemony.

Said's work has attracted criticism, much of which he has himself answered, but its far-reaching impact cannot be denied. Although he was specifically dealing with the Islamic Arab world, his contention that Orientals had no voice in their own history has been widely accepted. His work prompted historians and other scholars to begin to redress this situation and the growth of post-colonial studies went some way to correcting the imbalance. The underlying concept which informed Said's work was that identity is constructed through an imaginative process. This process 'is bound up with the disposition of power and powerlessness in each society'³ Uncovering these power relationships by articulating the obvious and questioning assumptions became a focus for scholars.

In the aftermath of decolonisation and the break up of Western imperialism, historians became intimately involved in this process but history was often manipulated to produce narratives which suggested continuity and stability. Hobsbawm and Ranger have demonstrated how tradition was invented both in Europe and in the colonies as both colonisers and colonised attempted to define themselves.⁴ Tradition provided a 'symbolic form [for] developing types of authority and submission'.⁵ The colonisers had to justify their invasion and conquest of other lands. History was 'a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion'.⁶ Colonial administrators invented tradition by codifying and classifying indigenous custom to satisfy their need for order and control. As new nation states emerged from the aftermath of colonialism, their leaders constructed

² Said, *Orientalism*, p.3.

³ Ibid., p.332.

⁴ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

⁵ Terence Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa' in *The Invention of Tradition*, p.237.

⁶ Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in *The Invention of Tradition*, p.12.

national histories to bolster the idea of antiquity. From these were drawn the paraphernalia of nationalism: flags, songs and symbols.⁷

Revisionist historiography thus undermined the accepted certainty of history. The long held belief in a meta-narrative, a concrete national history, had to be abandoned. There was not one story of the past, but many, and they all had to be accommodated within the nation's history. In colonial studies attention moved from the centre to the periphery and the focus shifted from economics and politics to culture and power relationships. Colonial discourse theory became the accepted method of approach. The theory maintains that all knowledge is relative and subjective and therefore that in reconstructing the past the historian's primary role is to expose the sources of knowledge. The patterns of knowledge within a community will reveal the dominant discourse and the detail of how it operates.⁸ This new perspective allowed historians to broaden their field of enquiry. The trend legitimated all areas of human endeavour as potential areas of study.

One of the areas to benefit from this widening of interest is sport history. Early in the 20th century Johan Huizinga began to explore the close links between play, culture and society. In 1949 he consolidated his ideas in his influential work *Homo Ludens: a study of the play-element in culture*. Huizinga reasoned that play fulfilled basic needs of humankind and that this phenomenon had not been given due consideration. He maintained 'that civilization arises and unfolds in and as play'.⁹ He traced the elements of play – order, tension, movement, change, solemnity, rhythm, rapture¹⁰ – through religious ritual, law, war, literature, art and philosophy to demonstrate the importance of play throughout society. Society interprets life and the world through play.¹¹ Play provides satisfaction through competition, allowing individuals to excel and gain honour

⁷ Ibid., p.11.

⁸ D.A. Washbrook, 'Orientalism and Occident: colonial discourse theory and the historiography of the British Empire' in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Historiography*, Vol.5, Robin W. Winks (Ed), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p.596.

⁹ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1949, 'Introduction', npn.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.17.

¹¹ Ibid., p.46.

and glory, 'a fundamental human need'.¹² However, Huizinga doubted that modern sport still contained the play-element:

In the case of sport we have an activity nominally known as play but raised to such a pitch of technical organization and scientific thoroughness that the real play-spirit is threatened with extinction.¹³

Despite his reservations modern sport does fulfil the intangible needs articulated in this early study.

Huizinga's ideas were not given serious consideration until the 1960s when both sociologists and anthropologists began to explore the area of play and, by extension, sport. Shortened working hours, a longer life span and a fixed retirement age meant that people were spending an increasing amount of their time in leisure pursuits¹⁴ and a significant amount of this leisure time was taken up with sports, as either participants or spectators. As the popularity of sport grew, social scientists began to examine the complex and complicated relationship between sport and society. Norbert Elias pioneered the sociology of sport through his 'figurational' or 'process' approach to the study of society. In his *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* he argued that in order to understand the present state of society we needed to understand the 'historical processes' which gave rise to that society.¹⁵

Elias' work opened the way for the serious study of sport because it 'unequivocally related historical transformations in bodily appearance and self-discipline to transformations in the social structure'.¹⁶ He traced this process using the development of the concept of civilisation in Western society as an example. His careful study of manners in France, Germany and England demonstrated that the idea of civilisation was

¹² Ibid., p.62.

¹³ Ibid., p.199.

¹⁴ A. Giddens, 'Notes on the Concepts of Play and Leisure', *The Sociological Review*, New Series, March 1964, Vol.12, No.1, p.84.

¹⁵ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: the history of manners*, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1978, p.xvi.

¹⁶ Chris Rojek, 'The Field of Play in Sport and Leisure Studies' in *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: critique and counter-critique*, Eric Dunning and Chris Rojek (Eds), Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1992, p.14.

congruent with pressure to control bodily functions and violence. Acceptable behavioural patterns demarcated groups within society. Group identification became national identification and eventually spread to embrace the whole of Western society.¹⁷ The concept of civilisation therefore came to express the ‘self-consciousness of the West’, a ‘national consciousness’.¹⁸

To allow him to study this connection between personal behaviour and society as a whole Elias conceived a figurational approach. Rather than viewing society as composed of discrete individuals, Elias emphasised the interdependence of human relationships. People exist ‘only as pluralities, only in figurations’.¹⁹ He maintained that:

[T]he network of interdependencies among human beings is what binds them together. Such interdependencies are the nexus of what is here called the figuration, the structure of mutually oriented and dependent people.²⁰

People exist within these figurations which are continually in motion: coming together, moving apart, changing places. The idea of figurations provided sociologists with a conceptual tool to examine everyday activities, including sport, and their connection with, and influence on, society as a whole.

It was becoming increasingly obvious to social scientists that sport was intimately connected to overall social activity. It could be used to access all aspects of the study of society. It touched on issues of power and politics, gender and equality, colonialism and identity. It was ‘an integral part of society’ and, as such, could ‘be used as a means of *reflecting on* society’(original emphasis).²¹ If sport was so important in contemporary society then its importance in the past also had to be considered.

The groundwork had been laid for a serious examination of sport in history. This proved particularly fruitful with regard to the British Empire where sport and identity were

¹⁷ Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, p.39 & 49.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.261.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

synonymous for the coloniser and many of the colonised. The British obsession with sport can be traced to the public school system which arose in the mid-1800s. John Mangan first explored this phenomenon and its significance. Acknowledging the gap caused by the 'selective interpretation of games as a "trivial" aspect of social life in general and the social system in particular' Mangan set out to trace the development of the ideology of athleticism in the public schools of England between 1850 and 1950.²² It was during what has become known as the Victorian era that the public school consolidated as the power of the middle-class grew and they began to demand access to better education for their children. The 'savage conditions' existing in the aristocratic public schools had to be reformed, physically and morally.²³

The key to reform was the playing field.²⁴ Games were introduced as a means of social control to bring order and discipline to unruly pupils. They provided a means of supervising and filling leisure time while conveying 'manly moral ideals'.²⁵ This was the era of masculine Christianity: a healthy body reflected a healthy soul. Character and manliness were synonymous and both were intrinsically linked to Christianity.²⁶ Endurance, toughness, courage, team spirit and *esprit de corps* were inculcated on the games field. Games proved an ideal vehicle for utilising symbol and ritual to generate 'ideals, attitudes and emotions and above all, loyalty to the school'.²⁷ The cult was further reinforced by the rhetoric of school magazines, poetry, song and literature. The result was a lasting and overwhelming sense of unity, not just with the school, but with the Empire which was perpetuated through the 'old boys' network'.

Mangan next turned his attention to the evolution of the games ethic from a means of controlling unruly schoolboys to an essential tool in the propagation of Empire. Public schools were the training ground for the governing class. Run by men who believed

²¹ Jeremy MacClancy, 'Sport, identity and ethnicity' in *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity*, Jeremy MacClancy (Ed), Berg, Oxford, 1996, p.4.

²² J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: the emergence and consolidation of an educational ideology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p.142.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.33.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.45.

implicitly in the imperial cause, who preached and practised the ‘ideal of character-training through games’, they produced the missionaries, teachers, soldiers and administrators who ruled the British Empire.²⁸ To loyalty, endurance and courage were added service and sacrifice and the playing field was translated into the battlefield.²⁹ The schoolboy was transformed into a warrior-patriot driven by duty to fight and die in the interests of Empire.³⁰ The games ethic formed and defined his identity and established his place in society. Consequently he would see the potential of games for both political and moral control in the colonies.

Two issues which arise from Mangan’s work are pertinent to this study. First, Mangan himself draws attention to the fact that the story of the diffusion of the games ethic throughout the Empire is incomplete. He expressed the hope that ‘others will repair omissions, reveal fresh facts, add subtlety when required and so augment my early and exploratory efforts’.³¹ He did not deal with any of the administrators of the Pacific. Second, Mangan indicated the important role the missionaries played in introducing and reinforcing this aspect of British culture. The emphasis on the games ethic was confined to missionaries associated with the Church Missionary Society which was predominantly an Anglican mission and which drew its missionaries from the upper-class members of the public schools. These people only became involved in the work towards the end of the nineteenth century. As we shall see, this is significant in the case of Fiji.

Although the Victorians idealised sport in general it was cricket in particular which came to epitomise their values. The reasons are difficult to determine but Keith Sandiford offered an attempt in *Cricket and the Victorians*. He placed cricket in the ‘broader socio-cultural context’ so as to gain a better understanding of how the Victorians came to terms with the social and political upheaval of their time. Careful to distinguish between the mechanics of the game and the values added to it by the Victorians, he tried to explain the

²⁷ Ibid., p.151.

²⁸ J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: aspects of the diffusion of an ideal*, Viking, Harmondsworth, 1985, p.42.

²⁹ Ibid., p.51.

³⁰ Ibid., p.60.

³¹ Ibid., p.19.

dominant cultural role the game played.³² Cricket was seen as being an ancient English game ‘unsullied by oriental or European influences’.³³ The game was ‘a perfect system of ethics and morals which embodied all that was most noble in the Anglo-Saxon character’.³⁴ Sandiford’s explanation draws together the ideas already explored by Mangan and applies them specifically to cricket.

The Victorians presided over the height of the British Empire. Their imperial aspirations were driven by a profound conviction of their own racial and moral superiority and their obligation to civilise the world, as well as economic motives. Racism was ingrained in this belief and became a feature of cricket, an essential tool in this civilising process.³⁵ Sandiford traced the spread of the game throughout the Empire, again stressing the importance of the development of the public school system in the colonies. He established two important points. Firstly he identified the links between nationalism and cricket which became manifest throughout the Empire. Cricket provided a means of articulating a nascent sense of national identity, often long before a ‘nation’ was born. It furnished a common bond which was enhanced when colonial teams began to beat English teams. Secondly, Sandiford raised the baffling question why cricket, that epitome of Englishness, became so important to the colonised. This is particularly salient in the light of postcolonialism and the passionate desire to be rid of colonial culture. Sandiford did not answer the question but believed that ‘[t]his attachment to Anglo-Saxon values was the ultimate triumph of Victorian imperialism’.³⁶

This cultural dilemma engaged the attention of historians and led to a proliferation of studies. Concentrating on the major test playing countries, Australia, South Africa, the West Indies, and the Indian sub-continent, they explored the cultural implications of cricket and revealed a number of recurring patterns and themes. Writing in 1988,

³² This difference between the reality of the game and the myths it embodies has been further explored by Derek Birley in *The Willow Wand*. His critical examination of the game traces both the development of these myths and their perpetuation by the members of the Marylebone Cricket Club. (Derek Birley, *The Willow Wand: some cricket myths explored*, Queen Ann Press, London, 1979.)

³³ Keith A.P. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1994, p.1.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p.153-54.

³⁶ Ibid., p.156.

Richard Cashman summarised the main lines of thought which had emerged. Links between cricket, national identity and nationalism, and by implication, nation-building, became evident. Elite groups played a significant role in introducing and supporting the game. The existing cultural base may aid or abate the acceptance of the game and this is linked to the availability of organised leisure activities within these societies. The indigenisation or domestication of the game ranged from subtle adjustments in style to a complete transformation of the game.³⁷

Two distinct approaches to the subject have emerged. The first, which flowed easily from the work on cricket in England, emphasised the ideological power of the game and the success of the proselytisers who used it as a civilising tool throughout the Empire.³⁸ This view dovetails with hegemonic theories of cultural imperialism and tends to promote the unifying role of cricket. It foregrounds the control of the colonisers over the colonised and perpetuates concepts of indigenous powerlessness. With the growth of postcolonial studies, the perspective changed as researchers attempted to look at the game 'from below'. Rather than an example of dominant cultural hegemony, this second approach has cricket as a site of cultural contention and resistance. The game reveals and entrenches divisions within society.

As Cashman argues, both these approaches need to be integrated if we are to reconstruct the 'full story'.³⁹ Not only have the power structures inherent within the game revealed the changing power relationships between the coloniser and the colonised, but they have enabled researchers to go beyond this dichotomy to discover areas of conflict and contestation within the whole of colonial society.⁴⁰ One of the pervading difficulties in studying the impact of colonialism is the tendency to homogenise 'colonial society'. The various colonies of the British Empire present widely different cultural landscapes and they must be treated as discrete units. Their uniqueness must be preserved and respected and care taken in applying blanket theories to explain the cultural interaction which took

³⁷ Richard Cashman, 'Cricket and Colonialism' in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism*, pp.258-260.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.260.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.262.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

place during the colonising process. Complexity needs to be welcomed and accepted if the integrity of the past is to be maintained.

This complexity is demonstrated throughout the colonies and nowhere more so than in the West Indies. The group of Caribbean countries which we know as the West Indies presents something of an anomaly. The only tangible evidence of a collective identity is the cricket team and the University. The importance of cricket in developing a sense of cohesion among the disparate island nations has been extensively analysed and, from the beginning, it has been closely allied with a postcolonial approach. C.L.R. James, intellectual and political activist, played an important role in articulating the growing discontent of the colonial world with British rule. But one of the driving forces behind James' personal development was cricket. In his seminal work on West Indies cricket, *Beyond a Boundary*, he called it a 'grievous scandal' that academics and social analysts had neglected the central role that cricket had played in the interaction between coloniser and colonised.⁴¹ He lamented that the great social historians of England left sport out of their histories⁴² and made the first attempt to rectify the omission and to explore the importance of cricket to both national and personal identity in the colonies. So much more than an autobiography, *Beyond a Boundary* eloquently analysed the significance of cricket not just in the West Indies but in England. By placing his own life and the lives of other cricketers in their social and political context James provides insight into the power structures within West Indian society.

James' work laid the foundation for a substantial body of work. In 1992 the central role of cricket in West Indian culture was acknowledged when the University of the West Indies established the Centre for Cricket Research and introduced the study of cricket history. To facilitate this innovation Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddart collected a cross-section of the texts on West Indian cricket in *Liberation cricket: West Indies cricket culture*. The writers gathered here trace the historical development of cricket in the Caribbean, demonstrating the links between the elite school system and the cultural

⁴¹ C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1993, p.153.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.159.

formation of West Indian society.⁴³ Although many of the writers express uncertainty as to why cricket became so popular, they agree with Orlando Patterson that, in the Caribbean, cricket is ‘a social drama in which almost all of the basic tensions and conflicts within the society are played out symbolically’.⁴⁴

These ‘tensions and conflicts’ were considerable in a society composed of Europeans, former African slaves and their descendants, and Indian labourers with no common cultural or political base on which to build. The consequent amalgam of the prevailing dominant British culture tempered by African and Native American elements still has not produced a uniform sense of identity. Although much has been written about the unifying force of cricket, these works overwhelmingly stress the fractures within this society and how cricket has contributed to that fragmentation. C.L.R. James drew attention to the deep divisions, not only between white and black clubs, but between the socio-economic and skin colour divisions within ‘black’ cricket clubs. The game caused violent tension between the Indian and Afro-Caribbeans.⁴⁵ James emphasises cricket’s role in defining West Indian independence particularly with regard to the appointment of the first black captain, Frank Worrell, but politically cricket was more often a source of contention than harmony among the various Island nations within the area. It has exacerbated tensions between individual nation states within the Caribbean with accusations that the selection process for the ‘national’ team favours the economically and politically stronger Islands.⁴⁶

⁴³ Brian Stoddart, ‘Cricket and colonialism in the English-speaking Caribbean to 1914: towards a cultural analysis’, Hilary McD. Beckles, ‘The origins and development of West Indies cricket culture in the nineteenth century: Jamaica and Barbados’, Keith A.P. Sandiford and Brian Stoddart, ‘The elite schools and cricket in Barbados: a study in colonial continuity’, and Brian Stoddart, ‘Cricket, social formation and cultural continuity in Barbados: a preliminary ethnohistory’, in *Liberation cricket: West Indies cricket culture*, Hilary McD. Beckles and Brian Stoddart (Eds), Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995.

⁴⁴ Orlando Patterson, ‘The ritual of cricket’, in *Liberation cricket*, p.141.

⁴⁵ See for example Hubert Devonish, ‘African and Indian consciousness at play: a study in West Indies cricket and nationalism’ and Kevin A. Yelvington, ‘Ethnicity “not out”: the Indian cricket tour of the West Indies and the 1976 elections in Trinidad and Tobago’ in *Liberation cricket*.

⁴⁶ June Soomer, ‘Cricket and the politics of West Indies integration’ in *Liberation cricket*, p.262. See also Brian Stoddart, ‘Caribbean cricket: the role of sport in emerging small-nation politics’ and Frank E. Manning, ‘Celebrating cricket: the symbolic construction of Caribbean politics’ in *Liberation cricket*.

Hilary Beckles edited *A Spirit of Dominance: cricket and nationalism in the West Indies*. Composed in honour of the 21st anniversary of Viv Richards' test debut, this collection focuses more specifically on the politics of cricket. Using Richards' own political agenda as a starting point, these essays examine the role of cricket within the struggle for political and cultural freedom of colonised peoples. Keith Sandiford explores the role racism played in the awarding of first class and test status to the colonies, a decision originally controlled by the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).⁴⁷ Racism was also rife within the selection process throughout the West Indies island nations. However, although Sandiford concludes that racism did significantly influence the decision, quality of play and local conditions eventually forced recognition of merit. West Indian cricket became a tangible expression of two other overarching political movements, Pan-Africanism and apartheid.⁴⁸ Having fought to dismantle the 'outer barriers of institutionalised racism in the West Indies', black cricketers 'advanced the wider democratic discourse' particularly with regard to South Africa.⁴⁹

In his comprehensive examination of Indian cricket, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: the phenomenon of Indian cricket*, Richard Cashman integrated an institutional history of cricket on the sub-continent with a socio-political analysis of the sport's role. He traced the importance of the early British patronage of the game and the transfer of that patronage to the Indian princes. Importantly for this study, that transfer took place largely after 1920.⁵⁰ Cashman credits this princely interest and enthusiasm with the game's acceptance at a time when nationalist sentiment was growing in India. Cricket did not threaten nationalist authority or any existing Indian tradition of team sports.⁵¹ In tackling the vexed question of why cricket became popular amongst the masses despite

⁴⁷ Keith Sandiford, 'Cricket in the West Indies: the rocky road to test status' in *A Spirit of Dominance: cricket and nationalism in the West Indies*, Hilary McD. Beckles (Ed), Canoe Press, University of the West Indies, Barbados, 1998.

⁴⁸ See Tim Hector, 'Pan-Africanism, West Indies Cricket, and Viv Richards' and Hilary McD. Beckles, 'The Unkindest Cut': West Indies cricket and anti-apartheid struggles at home and abroad, 1893-1993' in *A Spirit of Dominance: cricket and nationalism in the West Indies*, Hilary McD. Beckles (Ed), Canoe Press, University of the West Indies, Barbados, 1998.

⁴⁹ Beckles, 'The Unkindest Cut', p.104.

⁵⁰ Richard Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: the phenomenon of Indian Cricket*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1980, p.24.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.22.

prevalent anti-British feeling, he concedes that fascination with the test match and the excitement of international contests has been important but maintains that it is the expansion of the media in India which is primarily responsible.⁵² Through the media the cricket hero has come to fulfil the aspirational dreams of ordinary people across the country.⁵³

Ramachandra Guha used the development of cricket in Bombay, the birthplace of cricket in India, to explore the 'three overarching themes of (modern Indian) history: those of race, caste, and religion'.⁵⁴ Cricket was organised in Bombay (and throughout India) along communal lines. It started with the Parsis in the 1830s and 40s, followed by the Hindus in the 1860s and the Muslims in the 1880s. Competitions and tournaments organised along communal lines entrenched existing divisions of race, caste and religion. Rather than solely blaming British ideas of racial superiority for this development, Guha gives equal emphasis to 'Hindu caste prejudice, ... Parsi society snobbery and ... Muslim cultural insularity' in creating these divisions.⁵⁵ The Pentangular tournament became contested ground with opponents claiming it encouraged communalism and communal conflict and supporters protesting it transcended barriers and promoted unity.⁵⁶ Guha concludes that in its usual paradoxical role, cricket did both. That it played an important part in dismantling the caste system is undeniable but as nationalist fever increased, the game, its players and spectators were infected and it became yet another site of conflict.

Placing the phenomenon of Indian cricket in a broader cultural context, Arjun Appadurai treats it as a concrete example through which theories of modernity can be demonstrated. In the process he discusses the decolonisation and indigenisation of Indian cricket. Returning to the theme of communal identity, particularly religious identity, he questions

⁵² Ibid., p.134-135.

⁵³ Ibid., p.138.

⁵⁴ Ramachandra Guha, 'Cricket and Politics in Colonial India', *Past & Present*, No.161, November 1998, p.157.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.165.

⁵⁶ In 1907 the Europeans, Parsis and Hindus organised an annual competition which was called the Triangular Tournament. This became the Quadrangular Tournament when the Muslims joined in 1912 and the Pentangular Tournament in 1937 when a fifth division came into existence to soak up all other players, The Rest. The Tournament was much criticised for its communal nature and was finally disbanded in 1946.

how ‘the idea of the Indian nation’ could emerge when these divisions penetrated so deeply ‘into Indian self-conceptions and Indian politics and cultural life’.⁵⁷ Like Cashman, Appadurai identifies the importance of the media but enlarges the analysis by explaining the significance of language in this process. Widespread radio coverage began in 1933. Initially largely in English, by the 1960s they were broadcast in Hindi, Tamil, and Bengali.⁵⁸ Through radio, mass audiences became familiar with the sport and began to associate with it. Cricket’s popularity was consolidated with the introduction of television in the late 1960s.⁵⁹ Indianisation was reinforced by a proliferation of cricket literature in vernacular languages.⁶⁰

Appadurai acknowledges that this does not fully explain why the game has caught the popular imagination but suggests that ‘it affords the experience of experimenting with what might be call the “means of modernity” to a wide variety of groups within Indian society’.⁶¹ It allows the fulfilment of intangible needs as people grapple with the processes of decolonisation and modernisation. Importantly, he also recognises the significance for the colonised in ‘having hijacked the game from its English habitus into the colonies’.⁶² This reversal of power created by appropriating the game demonstrating cultural control and asserting superiority over the coloniser is a common thread running through the history of cricket in all of the test playing nations.

A further attempt to provide a cultural explanation for the success of cricket in India was made by psychologist Ashis Nandy, but from a unique perspective. His irreverent reading of the game exposed the implications of the psychological aspects of cricket. Like Appadurai, Nandy maintained that the game aided Indians in coming to terms with modernity. He proposed that cricket be seen as a ‘projective test’ which ‘reveals more about the players, the consumers and the interpreters of the game than about the intrinsic

⁵⁷ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalisation*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996, pp. 97-98.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.100.

⁵⁹ As Appadurai points out, ‘...cricket is perfectly suited for television, with its many pauses, its spatial concentration of action, and its extended format. For audiences as well as advertisers it is the perfect television sport.’ (*Modernity at Large*, p.101.)

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.102.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.112.

nature of the game'.⁶³ Reversing the usual argument, cricket provided a benchmark for Indians to critique their rulers and find them wanting.⁶⁴

The accepted form of cricket played in India was modelled on the Victorian game and the inherent values which it enunciated. Nandy discovers parallels between these values and those guiding the lives of India's elite. He also maintains that cricket contains an ambivalent duality between skill and fate. Drawing strong parallels between cricket, film and politics, Nandy reveals how the underlying values and characteristics of the game permeate Indian society. Cricket's close correlation with these values explains its popularity. Thus, taking the reversal of power to its ultimate conclusion, '(c)ricket is an Indian game accidentally discovered by the English'.⁶⁵

Nandy's approach has been criticised by Richard Cashman as 'glib and unsubstantiated' and based on 'sweeping cultural generalisations'.⁶⁶ There may be an element of truth in cultural explanations, but Cashman maintains that political and social forces are more important.⁶⁷ One of the dangers of the cultural approach is its tendency to perpetuate and reinforce colonial myths regarding race, ethnicity and religion.⁶⁸ There is a need to escape these myths if colonial cricket is to be assessed in its own right.⁶⁹ Pakistan proves an interesting case study in this regard because it has been an extremely successful cricketing nation despite an apparently inferior cricket structure. Contrary to accepted Western ideas, Pakistan's authoritarian political culture has fostered a surprisingly stable cricket administration. This stability has been aided by the concentration of cricketing interest principally within two cities, Lahore and Karachi. Pakistan has not experienced India's difficulties in applying democratic principles to representative team selection.⁷⁰

⁶² Ibid., p.113.

⁶³ Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: on games of destiny and the destiny of games*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p.2.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.7.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.1.

⁶⁶ Richard Cashman, 'The Paradox that is Pakistani Cricket: some initial reflections', http://www.umist.ac.uk/UMIST_Sport/cashman, accessed 2 January 2000.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

These studies keep returning to the apparently contradictory role cricket has played in simultaneously uniting and dividing a society. The game's unifying role was promoted by its British adherents and the theme has been embraced by many researchers. But equally, many postcolonial writers emphasise its ability to entrench existing divisions. A continual tension between the two perspectives runs through much of the literature. For example, Michael Roberts, an anthropologist, writing in 1985 advocated cricket's extraordinary ability to overcome division in Sri Lanka. He claimed that spectators become united as 'Ceylonese' or 'Sri Lankan':

This overarching identity transcends internal divisions and encompasses Tamils, Sinhalese, Moors, Burghers, and Malays within one category.⁷¹

However, Suvendrini Perera, writing in 2000 from the perspective of a female, Sri-Lankan-Australian Tamil, chooses to read cricket as a contested text which remains a site of conflict and contention. Cricket cannot be removed or isolated from the overall context of the society of which it is an integral part.⁷² Perera argues that claims of ethnic solidarity ignore the inequality and discrimination which is the reality of Tamil existence in Sri Lanka. Neither spectators nor players subsume social divisions in the name of a unified national identity.⁷³

South Africa provides several interesting twists with regard to this theme. A number of studies have examined cricket in South Africa and they all indicate how heavily politicised the game was (and is) for all sections of South African society. The game was at first shunned or ignored by the Afrikaners, the descendants of the early Dutch settlers, but was later taken up enthusiastically when it became recognised as a means of defining white superiority.⁷⁴ Indigenous Africans understood the game's significance and utilised

⁷¹ Michael Roberts, 'Ethnicity in Riposte at a Cricket Match: the past for the present', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.27, 1985, p.411.

⁷² Suvendrini Perera, "'Cricket, with a Plot': nationalism, cricket and diasporic identities", *Journal of Australian Studies and Australian Cultural History*, Special Joint Issue, 2000, p.23.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Christopher Merrett and John Nauright, 'South Africa' in *The imperial game: cricket, culture and society*, Brian Stoddart and Keith A.P. Sandiford (Eds), Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998, p.65.

it, like the Parsees in India, to gain acceptance by the ruling British elite.⁷⁵ But once segregation was established black cricketers were forced out of national competition and during the apartheid era they had to move overseas if they wished to pursue the sport.⁷⁶

Despite this discouragement of black participation at a national level, the game was used explicitly in South Africa as a means of social control. Not only missionaries and municipal authorities but the owners of the gold mines saw sport as vitally important in controlling the burgeoning urban black population. According to Alan Cobley it served a twofold purpose, 'as a way of directing the pent up emotions and energies of the workers into harmless channels' and also as 'a way of improving their physical strength and productivity'.⁷⁷ Cricket played a particular role in this scheme. It was aimed at the 'small but vital class of black mine clerks' and thereby, was yet another means to discourage political radicalism by reinforcing the division between this elite group and their fellow workers.⁷⁸

In Australia the analysis of cricket and its relationship to society and national identity has been almost as extensively examined as it has in the West Indies, although the two countries present such different political and social landscapes. A number of overarching themes have emerged from this extensive literature. Sport has played a powerful role in forging Australian national identity. Here again, cricket has both united and divided and its designation as the national game has been seriously questioned.⁷⁹ William Mandle was the first to draw attention to the links between Australian cricket and nationalism.⁸⁰ He identified various stages in the development of Australian nationalism and the way that cricket had created and reflected the phenomenon. Perhaps most importantly for this

⁷⁵ For an analysis of this see Andre Oddendaal, 'South Africa's black Victorians: sport and society in South Africa in the nineteenth century' in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism*.

⁷⁶ Alan Cobley, 'Cricket and the Black Struggle in South Africa' in *A Spirit of Dominance*, p.133.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.129.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.129-30.

⁷⁹ Simon Caterson writing in *Quadrant* in November 2001 pointed out that the current Australian Test side 'is less representative of the population as a whole than that of any other cricket-playing nation, including South Africa. Such homogeneity may in part explain the team's on-field successes, but it will not serve to maintain its national significance.' Simon Caterson, 'Towards a Cricket History of Australia', *Quadrant*, November 2001, No.381, Vol.65, No 11, p.29.

⁸⁰ W.F. Mandle, 'Cricket and Australian Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century', *Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol.59, Part 4, December 1973.

study he emphasised the key role that defeating England, the mother country, held in the process.

Cricket has played a pivotal role in Australia's complex relationship with England. Ken Inglis explored this theme in his detailed study of test matches between Australia and England between 1877 and 1900.⁸¹ He concurs with Mandle that cricket helped the Federation cause but queries his assessment of cricket's place in anti-imperialism. He maintains that 'anti-imperialism might have disposed Australians not to play cricket at all' and interprets the Australian devotion to the game as 'a sign of how spontaneously and profoundly Australians embraced the culture of the motherland.'⁸² Inglis also notes the favourable social conditions which allowed ordinary working people the leisure and financial security to become involved in the game both as spectators and participants.

The Bodyline tour of 1932-33 further reflected the complexities of the British/Australian relationship. Briefly, controversy erupted when the English fast bowler, Harold Larwood, employed a method of bowling which intimidated the Australian batsmen by apparently aiming directly at their bodies. The tactic had been designed to curb the phenomenal ability of Donald Bradman. The ramifications went far beyond the cricket world as Ric Sissons and Brian Stoddart have demonstrated by placing the incident in its social and political context. It embroiled the Australian and British governments in conflict at a difficult time in relations between the two countries.⁸³ At the centre of the dispute was the use of the word 'unsportsmanlike' by the Australian Cricket Board to describe the play of the Englishmen.⁸⁴ The incident became 'a major imperial problem at the highest political levels'.⁸⁵ The importance that the event took on illustrates the close

⁸¹ Ken Inglis, 'Imperial Cricket: test matches between Australia and England, 1877-1900' in *Sport in History: the making of modern sporting history*, Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan (Eds), University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1979.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.170.

⁸³ Ric Sissons and Brian Stoddart, *Cricket and Empire: the 1932-33 bodyline tour of Australia*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984, chapter 3, pp.48-58.

⁸⁴ This theme runs throughout Sisson and Stoddart's book. The claim 'attacked ... the very essence of the British way of life'. *Cricket and Empire*, p.72.

⁸⁵ Sissons and Stoddart, *Cricket and Empire*, p.109. Even Derek Birley, who deliberately debunks so many of the myths surrounding the game, acknowledges that bodyline put 'the fate of the Empire' at risk. (*The Willow Wand*, p. 28.)

links between national pride and identity and the game for both the coloniser and the colonised.

In his social histories of cricket in Australia, Richard Cashman has added vital information to our understanding of the game by expanding its place within Australian society. He provided the broad picture in his contribution in *Sport in Australia: a social history*, edited by Wray Vamplew and Brian Stoddart. But it is his specialised studies of cricket crowds and women's cricket which are of particular interest. By shifting the emphasis to cricket crowds, and crowd behaviour, Cashman was able to place the game within the historical context of Australian popular culture.⁸⁶ Of particular interest was the role the media and technology had played in popularising the game and in changing its public image.⁸⁷ This is another facet of the history of the game which needs to be given attention when studying its development and impact in a society.

Cashman's study of Australian women's cricket, which he undertook with Amanda Weaver, was the first national history of any women's sport in Australia.⁸⁸ The study integrates the game into women's history in the country and portrays the struggle for recognition, acceptance and support which it has suffered. Unfortunately despite some improvement, many of the views which caused the difficulties are still current.⁸⁹ These problems have been caused or exacerbated by the public's perception of cricket, and women's sport in general, rather than the reality.⁹⁰ Once again it is the media which has been instrumental in initially hindering, and later aiding, the games progress. The experience of Australia's women cricketers highlights a number of important factors which are necessary if the game is to prosper. Their domination of the world game during the 1980s and 90s has been fostered by:

⁸⁶ Richard Cashman, *'Ave a Go, Yer Mug!: Australian cricket crowds from larrikin to ocker*, Collins, Sydney, 1984.

⁸⁷ This work was published in 1984 and it is a little disconcerting to read the speculation about the effects of future technological advances which, today, are a reality and taken for granted, as, for example, the implementation of a third umpire watching replays in the pavilion and giving a verdict for those on the field. (Cashman, *'Ave a Go, Yer Mug!*, p.131.)

⁸⁸ Richard Cashman and Amanda Weaver, *Wicket Women: cricket & women in Australia*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1991, p.vii.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.173.

...better administration, greater sponsorship, superior training and preparation, a wider network of competition and a growing and larger pool of players than most of the other women's cricketing nations.⁹¹

Australia's indigenous peoples, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, are another marginalized section of Australian society whose association with the game reveals underlying societal and institutional attitudes. Indicating the strong links between sport, society and politics, the leading academic authority on Aboriginal sport is political scientist, Colin Tatz. He has dealt with Aboriginal cricketers in a number of publications but the entry in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Cricket* on Aborigines serves as an excellent summary of his work.⁹² Despite the fact that the first Australian cricket team to tour England, in 1868, was an Aboriginal team, Australia's indigenous cricketers suffered discrimination and ostracism. Often hailed as world class players they were continually denied representative status. This lack of recognition reflected entrenched views dominated by a white Australia policy reinforced by legislation designed to keep them confined and separated. By the 1970s when a few indigenous players began to make an impact on state representative teams, other sports, particularly boxing, rugby league and Australian Rules Football, were proving more attractive in terms of 'fame, money, social acceptance and celebrity status'.⁹³

Tatz's area of interest is racism and he has used his study of Aboriginal sport as a vehicle to trace the phenomenon in Australian society. Bernard Whimpress moved beyond this somewhat simplistic analysis to engage with the complexity of the colonial encounter. In *Passport to Nowhere: Aborigines in Australian Cricket 1850-1939*, he challenges the 'monolithic view of Social Darwinism' which has dominated recent Aboriginal history.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Ibid., chapter eight, pp.174-197.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.167.

⁹² Colin Tatz, 'Aborigines', in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Cricket*, Richard Cashman et al (Eds), Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1996. See also Colin Tatz, *Obstacle Race: Aborigines in Sport*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 1995 and Colin Tatz, *Aborigines in Sport*, The Australian Society for Sports History, The ASSH Studies in Sport, No.3, The Flinders University of South Australia, Bedford Park, 1987.

⁹³ Tatz, 'Aborigines', p.5.

⁹⁴ Bernard Whimpress, *Passport to Nowhere: Aborigines in Australian Cricket 1860-1939*, Walla Walla Press, Sydney, 1999, p.17. Whimpress is applying recent scholarship which questions the role of Social

He places greater emphasis on Aboriginal agency in accepting or rejecting the game and argues that we should be discussing 'Aborigines in cricket' rather than 'Aboriginal cricket'.⁹⁵ Of particular interest is his use of theories of diffusion to explain the process whereby cricket spread throughout indigenous communities. This theoretical framework provides a means of escaping the restrictive notions of cultural imperialism and allows greater latitude in which to acknowledge the power and self-determination of the colonised. His conclusions are important for this study as they demonstrate that discontinuity had a profound effect on the success of Aboriginal participation in the game.

One of the few studies to move away from the test playing nations is Tom Melville's *The Tented Field: a history of cricket in America* which tackles the reasons for the decline of the game in the United States after its initial popularity. Melville returns to the links between sport and modernisation, in particular in relation to urbanisation. Cricket is an ideal sport to benefit from this process and the fact that its prosperity was short lived leads Melville to query the validity of relying on these types of theories to explain America's ultimate rejection of the game.⁹⁶ He goes further than simply crediting the demise of cricket with the rise of baseball and attempts to analyse the characteristics of American society which favoured the latter. Exploring the difficult and uncertain area of cultural and emotional appeal, Melville ascertains that cricket's inflexible rule structure and playing style hindered its acceptance when faced with the faster, less formal baseball.⁹⁷ In America, unlike Australia, cricket could not disassociate itself from its rigid class origins and adapt to the 'basic homogeneity of (America's) sporting culture'.⁹⁸ The work provides another interesting example of the complexity of the issues involved and the difficulty of identifying specific reasons for a particular sport's popularity and acceptance.

Darwinism in the changing attitudes of Australian authorities towards Aborigines. As he indicates, no single explanation can cover the complexity of this attitude.

⁹⁵ Whimpress, *Passport to Nowhere*, p. 8.

⁹⁶ Tom Melville, *The Tented Field: a history of cricket in America*, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, Bowling Green, 1998, pp.1-2.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, chapter 3.

Another study which deals briefly with countries other than the test playing nations is a collection of essays on the imperial game edited by Keith Sandiford and Brian Stoddart, titled, appropriately, *The imperial game: cricket, culture and society*.⁹⁹ Stoddart provides a very brief overview of cricket's world progress in his chapter simply entitled 'Other Cultures'. He examines the way cricket was adopted and adapted by the various colonies of the Empire. He notes that in most of these the game remained true to the British tradition with minimum local variation to accommodate different cultural milieu. But it is in the Pacific that the game takes on new forms.

Among many of the islands of the Pacific the only identifying feature of the English game which remained was the bat and ball. The game became integrated into local cultural practice. Perhaps the most striking feature of these games was the large numbers of people who played per side. The cricket game became the centrepiece of a festival of feasting and dancing. Everyone in the village would be involved. In several incidences legislation was introduced by the authorities to try and control the amount of time spent playing the game. Stoddart touches on Fiji, Tonga and the Trobriands but devotes most of his essay to Samoa. His work provides the basic foundation for further research and significant analysis of the cultural interaction which occurred when cricket was introduced to the societies of the Pacific.

The history of the peoples of the Pacific Islands demonstrates the same changes in perspective during the twentieth century, as other areas. It has moved from a Eurocentric colonial history, through a revisionist phase and on to indigenous post-colonial histories. Colonial history begins with the arrival of Europeans and concentrates on the doings of white men and their interaction with Islanders. That does not mean these histories are not sympathetic to Islanders. Often they are, but they are permeated with the racial theories ingrained in Western thought at the time, denying power and agency to Islanders and perpetuating concepts of powerlessness and victimisation.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.92.

⁹⁹ Stoddart and Sandiford (Eds), *The imperial game*.

¹⁰⁰ Linnekin, 'Contending Approaches' in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, p.24.

A revisionist perspective, led by James Davidson, gathered strength during the 1950s and 60s. It attempts to establish the Islanders' point of view, focusing on 'indigenous cultural values and political priorities'.¹⁰¹ While not denying the devastation caused by original contact, revisionist historians acknowledge and restore agency to the Islanders by establishing the myriad ways in which indigenous people retained and maintained their heritage. In contrast to colonial histories, revisionist histories begin with descriptions of indigenous social structures and political institutions.¹⁰² The emphasis is on the long past of the Island peoples and their power and initiative in the contact with Europeans.

By the end of the twentieth century, a few indigenous post-colonial historians were beginning to reclaim Island history. University trained, these historians attempt to integrate conventional historical methods with traditional, cultural methods to synthesise an authentic Island history. Their work further redresses the balance but whether or not it represents the 'native voice' is still being questioned. Legitimate representation in traditional societies is intimately linked to birth, rank and gender, not academic qualifications.¹⁰³ The issue is further complicated by continuing attempts to impose Western concepts of the nation and national identity on groups 'who may share little beyond the legacy of the same colonial master'.¹⁰⁴ The importance of their work lies in the restoration of agency to the Islanders.

The role of sport has barely been touched on in any of these histories. The early colonial histories do not mention it. Revisionist and indigenous historians are only just becoming aware of it. A recent work dealing extensively with the construction and reconstruction of Pacific identity acknowledges the role of sport as a 'great fashioner of identity through interaction' but concentrates on the experience of Australian Aboriginals and New Zealand Maori.¹⁰⁵ The authors briefly mention the use of cricket by various Pacific Islanders to 'express their own values and local rivalries' in comparison to the 'severely

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.25.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.26.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Donald Denoon and Philippa Mein-Smith, with Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2000, p.113.

repressed and deferential game' played in Australia and New Zealand.¹⁰⁶ However, there is no attempt to explore the subject in depth. Their discussion of sport as a facet of popular culture and in the context of globalisation, again concentrates on the Australian and New Zealand experience. Another brief mention is made by Vilsoni Hereniko in his article in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders* where he indicates the importance of the South Pacific Games in fostering the growing sense of regional identity in the area.¹⁰⁷

Yet, sport has been as important to the peoples of the Pacific as it has been to people throughout the world. It played a significant part in the colonial cultural experience and has been a means of integration into the wider international community for many Islanders. Passing reference is repeatedly made to the unique adaptations that Pacific Islanders have made to cricket. However the only in-depth study is Gary Kildea and Jerry Leach's anthropological documentary on Trobriand cricket.¹⁰⁸ Historians have not tackled a full length study of the interaction of an individual Pacific Island society with sport in the context of their colonial cultural experience. This study is an attempt to explore this issue with regard to one sport, cricket, and one society, Fiji.

Fiji has provided fruitful ground for historians. The Fijian colonial experience has been extensively examined but none of the accounts attempt to an analysis of the role of sport, let alone cricket, in that experience. One of the first comprehensive accounts of Fiji's history comes from R.A. Derrick, a school teacher who spent many years in the country.¹⁰⁹ Written around the time of World War I, his work draws on the still fresh memories of early European contact and the cession to Britain. Although displaying the unmistakable paternalist tone of the period, the work emphasises the strength of Fijian culture and its ability to survive the onslaught of colonialism. Allowing for the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.116.

¹⁰⁷ Vilsoni Hereniko, 'Pacific Cultural Identities' in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, p.436. Vilsoni Hereniko, author, playwright and academic is from the island of Rotuma and teaches Pacific literature, film and video, drama and theatre, and cultural identities at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

¹⁰⁸ Gary Kildea and Jerry Wayne Leach, *Trobriand Cricket: an ingenious response to colonialism*, videorecording, Office of Information, Papua New Guinea, 1976.

¹⁰⁹ R.A. Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, Vol.1 Government Press, Suva, 1974.

misconceptions about Fijian culture that it perpetuates, the work is still important for its chronological closeness to the events it describes and the detail it provides.

A more penetrating analysis of the Fijian experience developed under the growing influence of James Davidson and his colleagues at the Australian National University.

One of the first studies to highlight the new approach was Peter France's ground breaking study of native land policy in Fiji, *The Charter of the Land: custom and colonization in Fiji*. Published from his doctoral thesis in 1969 this work examines the 'variety of alien notions imported by Europeans on the indigenous society, together with the reverse effect of that society on European notions about it.'¹¹⁰ It used the controversial issue of the right to land to study the 'cross-fertilization' of cultures.¹¹¹ The work laid the foundation for future research in the area. It established the complexity of pre-contact Fijian culture and dispelled the concept of isolated island cultures suddenly being subjected to European culture. Rather, it identified the wide ranging and long term interaction between the peoples of Fiji and a variety of outside cultural experiences. While it demonstrated that the European administration had codified and simplified Fijian custom and culture to suit its needs, it also emphasised the power exercised by Fijians in adopting and adapting European cultural practices to suit their own needs.

Building on these ideas, John Nation examines the links between culture and politics in his *Customs of respect: the traditional basis of Fijian communal politics*. Nation took exception to the view that Fijian culture could be reduced to a dying traditional way of life and maintained that, even in the face of urbanisation, Fijian culture was 'a vital force in Fiji' at that time.¹¹² Although his work does not consider sport in any way, it is useful for this study because it offers an detailed examination of culture. His study highlights two important points: culture is flexible and adaptable and its currents run deep and

¹¹⁰ Peter France, *The Charter of the Land: custom and colonization in Fiji*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1969, p.xii.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² John Nation, *Customs of respect: the traditional basis of Fijian communal politics*, Development Studies Centre Monograph No 14, R.T. Shand (Ed), The Australian National University, Canberra, 1978, p.xix.

strong within a society.¹¹³ He also draws attention to the importance of understanding culture in order to understand the politics of a country.¹¹⁴ In this context he examines traditional power relationships and the way they remain significant within the imposed colonial bureaucratic structures. Also of interest to this study is his explanation of the difficulties those power relationships posed for administrative organisation.

Timothy Macnaught provides a careful analysis of the Fijian response to imperial ideas regarding leadership, land ownership and politics, and concludes that the Fijians exercised a degree of power and autonomy in the encounter. Despite rigorous attempts to break down communalism and introduce individualism, Fijians have retained and adapted the values embedded in their pre-colonial existence as they were integrated into the modern world. The Fijians managed to 'design (a way of life) which maintained enriching continuity with the past despite colonialist disparagement of everything they encapsuled (sic) in the words, na itovo vakaviti, the Fijian way'.¹¹⁵ The over-riding theme of Macnaught's work is that Fijians made choices and sustained their sense of group identity. Casual reference is made to sporting events, sporting prowess and sporting facilities, but no attention is given to the significance of these.

These pioneering studies, and many others, provided a wealth of analysis and information regarding the nineteenth century Fijian experience. However, examination of the twentieth century experience has been fragmented and dominated by anthropologists, rather than historians. This is surprising considering the current preoccupation of historians with nations and nation-building and with identity, migration and cultural interaction. Fiji is a fertile ground for such discussions, as the anthropologists have found. There have been a number of traditional, narrative histories regarding specific Fijian institutions, for example, Asesela Ravuvu's study of the Fijian military and Stanley

¹¹³ Ibid., p.xx.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.2.

¹¹⁵ Timothy J. Macnaught, *The Fijian Colonial Experience: a study of the neotraditional order under British colonial rule prior to World War II*, Pacific Research Monograph Number Seven, E.K. Fisk (Ed), The Australian National University, Canberra, 1982, p.162.

B. Brown's history of the Fiji police force.¹¹⁶ However, the only comprehensive overview of modern Fijian history has been provided by Brij Lal with his *Broken Waves: a history of the Fiji Islands in the twentieth century*.

Lal is an Indo-Fijian scholar who has contributed extensively to the field of Pacific history and has become the accepted authority on Fijian social and political history. In *Broken Waves* he has placed the history of his country within the context of his own life and it is as much a 'journey of self-exploration' as an historical account of a nation's journey.¹¹⁷ Lal does not claim to be either impartial or ambiguous and takes a more critical approach. A traditional chronological narrative, the work provides an analysis of Fiji's changing social and political landscape as it moved from colony to independent state. Published shortly after the 1987 *coup d'état*, the work is particularly concerned with tracing the roots of the racial conflict and tension which riddle Fijian society. It provides the social and political context for the present study.

Sport has played no part in the historical considerations in these studies. However, there have been at least three historical accounts of sport in Fiji. Philip Snow, who played a strong personal role in the development of the game in Fiji, wrote *Cricket in the Fiji Islands* and T.A. Donnelly picked up where Snow left off in *Fiji Cricket 1950-1974*.¹¹⁸ Both these accounts provide narrative histories of the game and comment on players and conditions. However, neither attempts to examine the game within the social, economic or political context of Fijian history. They provide some of the raw material for this study. The other sporting history is Mohit Prasad's *Sixty Years of Soccer in Fiji, 1938-1998*.¹¹⁹ This study provides an historical analysis of the important role soccer played in

¹¹⁶ Asesela Ravuvu, *Fijians at War*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1988.

Stanley B. Brown, *From Fiji to the Balkans: history of the Fiji police*, Fiji Police Force, 1998.

¹¹⁷ Brij V. Lal, *Broken Waves: a history of the Fiji Islands in the twentieth century*, Pacific Island Monograph Series, No 11, Centre for Pacific Islands Studies, School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1992.

¹¹⁸ Philip Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, Whitcombe & Tombs Limited, Christchurch, 1949 and T.A. Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket 1950-1974*, Fiji Times & Herald Ltd., Suva, 1974.

¹¹⁹ Mohit Prasad, *Sixty Years of Soccer in Fiji, 1938-1998: the official history of Fiji Football Association*, a specially commissioned history of Fiji Football Association on the Occasion of their Diamond Jubilee Celebration, Fiji Football Association, Suva, 1998. I am grateful to Professor Brij Lal for drawing my attention to this useful study.

the Indian community of Fiji. It identifies themes and provides comparisons and contrasts which proved extremely useful for this study. It also provides some interesting insights into the lack of interest and enthusiasm for cricket manifested within the Indo-Fijian community. Rugby, the Fijian passion, has yet to find its historian.

This study, therefore, uses cricket as the vehicle to explore the cultural interaction between the coloniser and the colonised in Fiji and fills a gap in a number of areas: sport history, Pacific history and Fijian history. Moving to the periphery of cricket history to examine the role of the game in a non-test playing nation, the thesis begins to explore the cultural significance of sport in the Pacific. This research expands Fijian history to include an important area of cultural contact. In the process it focuses on current historical concerns regarding the retention of power, agency and choice by the colonised.

Once upon a game ...
A Brief History of Cricket in
the British Empire



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Chapter Two

Recent developments in British imperial history have shifted the perspective of the study of colonial influence from 'political culture' to 'cultural politics'.¹ While in no way diminishing the importance of the political culture which was imposed on the colonies, equal status must be given to the cultural values which were imposed on these indigenous societies. In many ways this insinuation of cultural values, cultural imperialism, penetrated more deeply into the traditional framework of these societies than the superficially imposed political concepts and institutions. In several instances the post-colonial period has seen the overthrow of the political systems put in place by the coloniser. However, many of the cultural concepts and institutions have remained and been thoroughly assimilated into the new national identity.

This chapter will provide an overview of one of the cultural icons of the British Empire which demonstrates this phenomenon, cricket, the imperial game. Value-laden for the coloniser, cricket inculcated a whole code of conduct which epitomised the invading culture. This code involved a complex mixture of manners and ethics and instilled behavioural patterns and a mental and emotional outlook which encompassed the predominant social values of the British elite. Although the origins of the game are unknown, a recognisable form of the game certainly began in England. By the 18th century it was already being hailed as that 'glorious, manly British game'.² Combining the virtue of age with an evocation of the traditional image of rural England it was transformed into a national past-time.³ In the 19th century it became a part of the intricate cultural web woven by the Victorians. It was their version and interpretation of the game that became the civilising tool of the administrators, soldiers and missionaries of the expanding British Empire.

The changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution led to a dramatic increase in the amount of leisure time available in English society in the 19th century. Due to their

¹ Philip Dodd, 'Englishness and the National Culture' in *Englishness: politics and culture 1880-1920*, R. Colls and P. Dodd (Eds), Croom Helm, Beckenham, 1986, p.1. 'Political culture' dealt with the power relations associated with the political process. It was directly concerned with changes in the political control of individual's lives and the institutional arrangements developed and imposed on colonial populations to sustain that control.

² James Love, *Cricket - Book I* (1744), in *The Poetry of Cricket: an anthology*, Leslie Frewin (Ed), Macdonald, London, 1964, p. 460.

³ John Simons, 'The "Englishness" of English Cricket,' *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol.29, No.4, Spring 1996, p.41.

outlook on life, the Victorians viewed idleness as ‘a moral and social sin’.⁴ Leisure time must be filled with productive and improving activity. George Eliot aptly expressed the feeling in *Adam Bede* ‘...even idleness is eager now’.⁵ One of the consequences of this phenomenon was the development of organised sport. Both soccer and cricket began to attract large numbers of participants and spectators. The two sports appealed to different classes of society but both symbolised much more than just a game. The social mores, moral values and religious beliefs of the British were intimately linked with involvement in sporting activity.

Walter Houghton has argued that although the Victorians appeared secure in their convictions and beliefs they were actually living in an age of doubt and uncertainty.⁶ They viewed their age as one of transition in which the old values and forms of society were breaking down and the new had not yet materialised.⁷ ‘It was the age of science, new knowledge, searching criticism, followed by multiplied doubts and shaken beliefs,’ according to John Morley.⁸ Their moral values sprang from deeply held Puritan beliefs. These prescribed a conservative, serious, earnest approach to all aspects of life. Their preoccupation with physical health stemmed from the constant threat of mortal illness. Houghton identifies other driving forces as enthusiasm and hero worship. All of these attitudes were catered for by cricket. In this insecure atmosphere it proved a perfect vehicle to encase old moral values in new scientific theories regarding health and well-being.

This link between the spiritual and the physical led to the development of the creed of muscular Christianity. Keith Sandiford defines this doctrine as ‘the basic notion that there is something innately good and godly about brute strength and power, so long as that energy is directed to noble purposes’.⁹ Physical weakness was a sign of ‘moral and spiritual inadequacy’.¹⁰ The ideology of athleticism complemented this philosophy. It exalted the athlete and games often at the expense of academic and intellectual

⁴ Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1957, p.189.

⁵ George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, Collins Clear-type Press, London, n.d., p.603.

⁶ Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p.9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1.

⁸ John Morley, *Recollections, I*, cited in Houghton, p.11.

⁹ Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

pursuits.¹¹ J.A. Mangan has traced the development of this ideology and the way it came to dominate the public school curriculum. As epitomised by Thomas Hughes in *Tom Brown's School Days*, cricket provided the adherents of muscular Christianity and athleticism with a training ground and teaching tool. The game emphasised leadership and team spirit, unquestioning obedience and decisive action, loyalty, courage, self-control and self-sacrifice. It required physical strength and stamina. Purified by the Victorians through the removal of gambling and corruption the game was invested with holiness.¹² It could be utilised with eagerness and earnestness to build character and uprightness in England's youth.

Cricket articulated the moral code that Victorian life revolved around: fair play, team spirit, respect for leadership and an overwhelming sense of muscular masculinity. At a time when football was the source of much rioting and crowd violence, cricket provided a less physical environment for men to express their masculine prowess. By creating this *esprit de corps* cricket infused an exaggerated respect for authority and a view of 'power as inherited responsibility'.¹³ In turn these ideas encouraged personal restraint and endurance, 'a stiff upper lip'. The precepts imbued on the playing field were expected to permeate all aspects of a young man's life, effectively giving him a blueprint for all his relationships. The game also provided the standard by which he would judge situations and behaviour. If 'it was not cricket' it was not fair or correct. Wholeheartedly supported by the aristocracy, the church and the Crown, the game pervaded Victorian life.¹⁴

Cricket's close ties with the military, politics and religion illustrates the code's remarkable adaptability to the qualities required of soldiers, administrators and missionaries. The educators of the time saw 'cricket as the perfect medium through which could be taught a good deal about ethics, morals, justice, religion and life itself'.¹⁵ It was absorbed into the Public School system and came to dominate the curriculum. It was deliberately integrated into the system which would train those

¹¹ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, p.7.

¹² Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.2.

¹³ Simons, 'The "Englishness" of English Cricket,' p.43.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.3.

¹⁵ Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.161.

destined for imperial service.¹⁶ The passage through public school and university ensured that the principles of the cricket gospel were thoroughly inculcated and reinforced. The administrators, soldiers and missionaries who were dispersed around the globe to govern the Empire would carry the game and its moral code with them.

Thus equipped with a code of conduct to cover all occasions the British gentleman set forth to govern his corner of the Empire. Throughout the Empire the game was used not only to maintain order and morale amongst the expatriates but also to inspire a common sense of identity between the natives and the British. One of the underlying virtues of the game to the Victorians was its usefulness as a means of social control. It allowed the mixing of classes under controlled conditions. It emphasised class structure while fostering an egalitarian sense of harmony. This belief in the leveling ability of cricket was carried to the colonies. The promotion of cricket was seen as 'one of the political duties of a governor' because it promoted 'a similarity of taste in amusements' which would 'guarantee ...common sympathy in more important matters'.¹⁷

The integration of cricket into the various colonial cultures was accompanied by significant moral and political overtones. Serving both to unite and divide sectors of the native populations, it divided along existing religious, class or caste lines but also united communities, breaking down some of these barriers in pursuit of a common goal: to beat the coloniser at their own game. It served the same contradictory purpose between the native population and the British elite. The game reinforced existing strict social divisions but at the same time allowed social intercourse and developed a common code of ethics and behaviour. Cricket became an important political tool and played a powerful role in shaping the cultural and political identity of the new nation states.

It perhaps indicates the universal appeal of the game that it became popular in almost all the diverse colonies of the British Empire. Introduced by the British governing elite

¹⁶ Ibid., p.144.

¹⁷ Sir Hercules Robinson in Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914: a study of empire and expansion*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1976, p.151. Robinson was colonial governor of Hong Kong (1859), Ceylon (1865), New South Wales(1872), New Zealand (1878) and Cape Colony(1880 and 1895).

the game was accepted, adopted and adapted by the colonised for their own purposes. The game was used as a vehicle for entry into the closed society of the elite ruling class but was also utilised, both overtly and covertly, as a tool for resistance and rebellion.

The traditional game of cricket introduced to the colonies by the Victorians played a subtle but significant role in propagating British cultural values. Ostensibly, cricket is a bat and ball game played between two teams of eleven players each. One team bats while the other team fields. There are two umpires on the field, one at either end of the pitch. The aim of the game is to gain ‘runs’ by running between the wickets situated at each end of the cricket pitch. The batsman¹⁸ attempts to score runs while the fielding team attempts to get the batsman out. This seemingly simple activity is strictly controlled by a set of Laws (not Rules) which govern movement and behaviour. Players learn to operate within the framework of these Laws and in doing so absorb the cultural concepts which underpin them. The game and its Laws model acceptable behaviour and knowledge and inculcate ‘a healthy respect for the constraints which any just and civilized society must, of necessity, place on the individual impulse.’¹⁹

The game, as played by the Victorian imperialists, placed strong emphasis on the division of players into ‘gentlemen amateurs’ and ‘professionals’. As the name implies, ‘gentlemen amateurs’ played the game for pleasure and were not paid for their services. The term carries with it all the connotations of a chivalric code of conduct with its origins situated in a noble past. Amateur status was abolished in 1962. Professionals, on the other hand, were paid for their services and were originally drawn from the commoners and labourers who provided the bowlers and fielders for the gentlemen batsmen. The professionals addressed gentlemen as Sir or Mr while the professionals were addressed by their surname only.

The captain of a team was always a gentleman. Chosen as much for his breeding and place in society as for his playing ability, he was given unquestioning obedience by his players and controlled their lives on the field. The captain decided the order of batting, who would bat, for how many overs and where to place the fielders. Even today, the

¹⁸ The term ‘batsman’ has been used throughout this thesis as the game, during the period under discussion, was principally a male domain.

Laws of cricket maintain that ‘captains are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the Spirit of the Game as well as within the Laws.’²⁰ The preamble to the Laws defines the Spirit of the Game as respect for:

- your opponents
- your own captain and team
- the role of the umpire
- the game’s traditional values.²¹

The umpire holds a position of absolute power and authority on the cricket field. Players must appeal to the umpire if they feel a batsman should be out. The umpire’s decision is final. Players must not argue with the umpire, criticise their decisions or dispute their judgement. The umpire judges players’ actions and settles disputes between players. Their role introduces concepts of authority, obedience and self discipline.

Batsmen hold precedence over bowlers and fielders. They are the players scoring runs. Originally, batsmen were gentlemen players and the position has retained its prestige and status. A batsman’s performance is judged on his mastery of the bat and his ability to control the placement of the hit ball in relation to the fielders. The power and technique used to respond successfully to the bowler’s delivery and achieve runs promotes admiration and respect from fellow players and the audience alike.

The bowler delivers the ball to the batsman. He is attempting to get the batsman out by knocking the bails off the wicket. Bowlers were drawn from estate workers and labourers to enable their masters to pursue the game. The first professional players were bowlers, selling their expertise to provide challenging opposition to the gentlemen players. The position develops the ability to control and focus aggression so as to achieve the ultimate goal of getting the batsman out. The captain of the fielding team

¹⁹ Simons, ‘The “Englishness” of English Cricket’, p.43.

²⁰ ‘The Preamble, The Spirit of Cricket’, The Laws of Cricket, http://www.lords.org/cricket/lw_0000000072.asp, accessed 6 July 2003.

²¹ Ibid.

relies on his bowlers to dismiss the batting side. The bowler's skill can gain him respect and standing amongst his peers and spectators.

Fielding was given little attention. Anyone could be pressed into fielding positions. Fielders were necessary to stop and return the ball quickly to the main players, the bowler or wicket keeper. The wicket keeper, positioned behind the wicket at the batsman's end of the pitch, stopped the ball and played a significant role in getting the batsman out. Fielders, including the wicket-keeper, like bowlers, were originally drawn from estate workers and labourers. Professional players were paid to provide fielding services. Fielders would aspire to prove their worth as a bowler in order to gain recognition and respect.

Cricket exposed the colonised to underlying ideas about how society was ordered, established patterns of relationships and modelled legitimate behaviour. The game reinforced lessons in exclusion and inclusion and promoted the concept of a stratified, hierarchical society. Certain individuals exercised power due to their position and could expect unquestioning obedience.

The game also introduced the English language and concepts of numeracy. English words were essential to understand the order of play, the positions on the field and the directions being given. Scores were kept and compared, recording and ordering information. The game also demonstrated the importance attached to forms of dress and address. Special clothes were worn which identified a player and set him apart from the crowd, marking him out. The etiquette surrounding the game demonstrated ways of showing and receiving respect in society.

These cultural values were integral to the notions of civilisation inherent in the colonisers' society. The civilising process involved controlling aggression and impulsiveness so as to create a disciplined, ordered society. It created acceptable standards of behaviour by defining and establishing forms of knowledge.

Power structures are central to all societies. The cultural and political overtones embedded in the game of cricket by the British make it a useful tool in accessing these

power structures. An examination of a history of the game in a colonial society can be used to demonstrate the intricate workings of power within that society. The insights gained from such a study contribute to our understanding of the complex way in which these new nations built their national images, but also contribute to an understanding of indigenous agency. If, as Keith Sandiford has observed, 'imperial cricket is really about the colonial quest for identity in the face of the colonisers' search for authority,'²² it is also about the colonised ability to interact with the colonial culture and determine the direction of cultural exchange.

The development of the game in the different colonies was obviously influenced by many variables. The uniformity of the British political system imposed across the colonies was altered by the existing power structures which it encountered. The demography of the population, immigrant and indigenous, affected the evolution and assimilation of cultural imperialism. Compatibility with existing value systems and pastimes could hasten acceptance. Conversely, direct conflict with existing values and taboos could result in rejection, mutation or metamorphosis.

The complex relationship which exists between sport and politics has provided a vast range of patterns in the history of cricket in the colonies. Cricket has both consolidated and divided the population. In many cases it supplied a channel for early expressions of nationalism. Beating the mother country at its own game planted the first seeds of self-confidence and began to dissipate feelings of inferiority. In many of the settler colonies it had the paradoxical effect of providing proof that the Anglo-Saxon race had not deteriorated by its transplantation to different climes.²³ As the various colonies began to compete against England, these international games became known as 'Test' matches. They were seen as a 'test of strength between the two sides.'²⁴

A formal structure evolved to accommodate these international games. A controlling body, the Imperial Cricket Conference, was formed in 1909 with England, Australia and

²² Sandiford, 'Introduction' in *The imperial game*, p.1.

²³ Mandle, 'Cricket and Australian Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century', p.233.

²⁴ 'What is Test cricket?', International Cricket Council website, http://www.icc-cricket.com/test/what_is_test_cricket.html, accessed 14 June 2005. The first Test took place in 1877 between Australia and England. Other countries followed: South Africa (1889), New Zealand (1930),

South Africa as the founding members.²⁵ India, New Zealand and the West Indies joined in 1926 and Pakistan in 1952. A two-tier membership structure was instigated in 1965 to allow non-Commonwealth countries to join and the organisation became known as the International Cricket Conference (ICC).²⁶ The test playing countries were full members and other cricket playing countries were associate members. As associate members gained 'test' status they joined the ICC as full members. In 1989 the ICC became the International Cricket Council and today there are ten test playing nations: Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies and Zimbabwe.²⁷

Opening Batsmen

An examination of the history and development of cricket in the test playing nations will establish the reasons for the game's acceptance and the role it played in defining national identity. It will determine why these colonies accepted this particular aspect of British culture while rejecting so many others. By comparing and contrasting the colonial experience of the nations where cricket became important, patterns and themes which encourage and promote the game can be identified. There were pragmatic, ideological and cultural circumstances which aided the acceptance of cricket and these demonstrate the cultural interaction between the coloniser and the colonised.

Richard Cashman has noted that in Australia 'cricket addressed the central social and political issue of the day, the relationship between the motherland and colonial Australia'.²⁸ The nature of Australia's white settlement meant that the developing new nation was predominantly composed of transplanted Anglo-Saxons. The initial cultural milieu was British. It was to be expected that cricket would play a dominant role in the

West Indies (1930), India (1932), Pakistan (1954), Sri Lanka (1982), Zimbabwe (1992) and Bangladesh (2000).

²⁵ South Africa's membership lapsed in 1961 when it withdrew from the Commonwealth and it was re-admitted in 1991 after the dissolution of the policy of apartheid.

²⁶ The British Commonwealth officially came into being after 1947 as the colonies of the Empire gained independence. It was established to retain and develop economic, cultural and political ties among the ex-colonies of the British Empire. Despite early scepticism the institution has survived as a loosely knit community, providing a channel for aid and limited political action. (Dean Jaensch & Max Teichmann, *The Macmillan Dictionary of Australian Politics*, 3rd ed, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1988, pp.34-35.)

²⁷ Membership categories have been further expanded and today (2005) associate members are countries 'where cricket is firmly established and organised', affiliate members are countries where 'cricket is played in accordance with the Laws of Cricket.' (International Cricket Council website, <http://www.cricket.org>, accessed 6 June 2003.)

development of Australian identity. The first team sport to be established in the colony, cricket was played in Sydney in 1803.²⁹ Intercolonial matches began in 1851 and by the time the first English team toured Australia in 1861 there were seventy cricket clubs in Victoria alone.³⁰ The game prospered because it was seen as part of the early settlers' British heritage. Through involvement in international competition the Australian players gained experience and expertise. By the time of the English tour of 1873-4 the Australians could hold their own against the visitors. Throughout the 1870s the quality of Australian play continued to improve and they defeated the mother country on numerous occasions, both in Australia and in the United Kingdom. Their victories brought forth some of the first expressions of an infant nationalism. Many of the players were Australian born and took pride in their accomplishment as Australians. But their national feelings were ambivalent. They were 'unsure whether they were Australians or southern hemisphere Englishmen'.³¹ The first stirrings of Australian nationalism were 'a very deferential nationalism which reinforced pro-imperial links'.³²

Cricket victories were seen not only as an indication of growing national confidence but also as a vindication of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority. Mandle identifies two factors which caused 'deep-seated anxiety' in the Australian psyche.³³ One was the convict origins of much of the population and the other was whether the race would deteriorate when transplanted to a tropical climate. By demonstrating their sporting prowess in such a decisive way the Australians laid these doubts to rest. As the *Australasian* of 17 March 1877 put it when Australia defeated England in the first Test Match:

The event marks the great improvement which has taken place in Australian cricket; and shows, also, that in bone and muscle, activity, athletic vigour, and success in field sports, the Englishmen born in Australia do not fall short of the Englishmen born in Surrey or Yorkshire.³⁴

Clearly there was no evidence of physical deterioration in the Australian physique. Mandle goes so far as to suggest that 'Australian nationalism and self-confidence was

²⁸ Richard Cashman, 'Australia' in *The imperial game*, p.40.

²⁹ Ibid., p.34.

³⁰ Mandle, 'Cricket and Australian Nationalism', p.227.

³¹ Ibid., p.233.

³² Cashman, 'Australia', p.46.

³³ Mandle, 'Cricket and Australian Nationalism', p.233.

³⁴ Ibid., p.235.

first and most clearly manifested in the late 1870s because of the feats of its sportsmen and particularly of its cricketers'.³⁵

Cricket also played a part in the intercolonial rivalry which beset the Australian colonies. For many years the bitterness between the teams of the individual colonies hampered the development of Australian cricket.³⁶ However, long before Federation the Australian cricket team which toured England in 1878 was hailed on its return as 'the federal team of Australian cricketers' by the Governor of New South Wales.³⁷ By the 1890s Australian cricketers were demonstrating 'what national co-operation could achieve'.³⁸

Another feature of Australian identity fostered by cricket was a fierce belief in egalitarianism. Australians could not understand the British separation of amateurs and professionals.³⁹ Players in Australia were drawn from all social backgrounds; professional, middle-class and working class. Although cricket administrators were largely conservative and pro-imperial 'they developed a more pragmatic and more commercial view of cricket' than their British counterparts.⁴⁰ They were prepared 'to modernise the game' both in its technical aspects and its physical surroundings in order to make it accessible to all.⁴¹ In the 20th century, cricket has drawn support across the political spectrum. It has never been seen as 'an imperial agent of British influence' but rather praised for its moral and unifying effects.⁴²

Australian cricket's egalitarian ideals did not extend to the indigenous Aboriginal population. Aborigines took to the game with talent and enthusiasm.⁴³ The game was introduced by missionaries from various Christian denominations as a 'civilising' tool.⁴⁴ The game prospered and teams from clans across the country gained renown and praise

³⁵ Ibid., p.237.

³⁶ Ibid., p.239.

³⁷ Ibid., p.240.

³⁸ Ibid., p.241.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Cashman, 'Australia', p.43.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p.47.

⁴³ Tatz, 'Aborigines', *The Oxford Companion to Australian Cricket*, p.2.

⁴⁴ Richard Cashman, *Paradise of Sport: the rise of organised sport in Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p.132.

for their level of play and sportsmanship. Famously in 1868, the first cricket team to tour England from the colonies was an Aboriginal team. As in many other colonies cricket supplied a rare forum for social contact between the indigenous and European populations. It provided 'a passport to the white man's world'.⁴⁵

However, as Aboriginal players began to compete for places in white teams they encountered discrimination. Faced with growing deterioration in black-white relations and motivated in part by theories of racial Darwinism the various colonial governments began to enact 'protective' legislation. In 1897 Queensland introduced the *Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* and the other governments followed suit.⁴⁶ This paternalistic legislation restricted the freedom of Aborigines 'to move, to earn and to play'.⁴⁷ It was felt by some administrators that open, equal competition with whites in cricket matches had raised Aborigines 'above their natural station in life'.⁴⁸ Despite the limitations imposed by these various *Acts* Aborigines produced several first class cricketers - batsmen and bowlers. It was openly recognised that it was only their colour which kept them out of Australian representative teams.⁴⁹ The prejudice and lack of advancement offered by the game discouraged promising Aboriginal players and channelled their talents into athletics, boxing and football.⁵⁰

Cricket in Australia has now moved right away from the original imperial model. In the 1970s Kerry Packer could defy the International Cricketing Council and sign on the world's best players for his World Series Cricket. The subsequent upheaval in international cricket was led by the Australians. It paved the way for a more commercial approach to the game.⁵¹ Australian cricket did much to preserve the bonds of empire well into the 20th century but at the same time contributed greatly to the emergence of a separate Australian identity. It has now developed distinct features of

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.135.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.137.

⁴⁷ Tatz, 'Aborigines', p.3.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.4.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.5.

⁵¹ Cashman, 'Australia', p.50-51.

its own and continues to mirror salient features of Australia's changing perspective and identity.⁵²

In New Zealand cricket was valued because it preserved the bonds of empire. The growth of rugby union encouraged national sentiment but cricket was seen as a means to retain imperial links and identity. These dependent links with England were more important and lasted longer in New Zealand than in the other settler colonies of Australia, Canada or South Africa.⁵³ British rule was officially established in 1840 with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. It took a lot longer for a native-born European population to predominate.⁵⁴ Cricket remained more true to its British origins. The 'form' of the game was more important than winning.⁵⁵ This led to an emphasis on amateur participation and an idealisation of the play of English gentlemen.⁵⁶ The standard of play did not reach international levels for many years due to a number of factors.⁵⁷ The resulting lack of victories may have contributed to cricket's failure to inspire the national sentiment which it sparked in other colonies. A New Zealand team did not win a Test Match until 1956, against the West Indies, and did not beat Australia until 1974 or England until 1978.⁵⁸

Charles Darwin was delighted to find cricket being played by Maori boys on a mission station as early as 1835.⁵⁹ However the game was not supported by the indigenous

⁵² While the Australian climate and conditions influenced the characteristics of Australian play, Australia's equalitarian society gave less credence to the distinctions between professional and amateur. Cashman identifies some of the differences as 'barracking, bush cricket, larger and better-appointed ovals, bigger scoreboards, the eight-ball over and distinctive language such as guzunder, mully grubber and sundries, as well as different traditions in batting, bowling and fielding'. (Cashman, 'Australia', p.59.)

⁵³ Greg Ryan, 'New Zealand' in *The imperial game*, p. 103.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.104. Ryan also notes that there were no convicts transported to New Zealand and that there was not a dominant Irish presence which contributed to the 'anti-British feeling' which influenced the development of Australian attitudes to Britain.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.97.

⁵⁷ Ryan identifies 'demographic, financial and climatic obstacles' to the increasing the quality of cricket in New Zealand. The small population could not financially support the game. Government regulations meant that admission could not be charged for games played on public grounds. Therefore cricket clubs had to go into debt to procure their own grounds. Additionally, New Zealand's climate favoured winter sports. '(A) combination of temperature and rainfall contributing to damp, inferior pitches and ground quality had a dramatic impact on performance.' (Ryan, 'New Zealand', pp.104-105.)

⁵⁸ T. P. McLean, 'New Zealand', *Barclays World of Cricket: The Game from A to Z*, E.W. Swanton (Ed), Collins Publishers in association with Barclays Bank International, London, 1980, p.90.

⁵⁹ Richard Darwin Keynes (Ed), *Charles Darwin's Beagle Diary*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, p.390.

population and did not play such an important role in integration or assimilation as it did in so many of the colonies. Those few Maori players who did make an impact followed the usual path through the elite education system and into the professions.⁶⁰ The sport did not produce the fervent enthusiasm which rugby union engendered.

Australia and New Zealand's slow, stable progress towards nationhood stands in sharp contrast to South Africa's turbulent history. The political and racial turmoil which surround its emergence as a nation are reflected in the history of cricket in that country. The complicated demography of the colony provided explosive grounds for cultural and political clashes. The population comprised British settlers, Dutch and Afrikaans-speaking whites, mixed race 'coloureds', migrant Indian workers, and indigenous Africans. Cricket proved popular with Africans and was utilised to demonstrate 'respectability' and 'acceptance of Victorian values' by middle-class blacks.⁶¹ The 'ideology of respectability' was firmly believed by blacks to be essential for their acceptance and integration into white society.⁶² Until the late 19th century, cricket competitions gave blacks the opportunity to mix socially with whites. But by the 1890s segregationist policies were becoming more and more evident. Black participation in the game was curtailed by the 'political settlement' following the end of the Boer War.⁶³ Black cricket was one of the casualties when Britain relinquished control over Africans to the Afrikaners.⁶⁴ As a result of the ensuing separatist racial policies cricket developed along segregationist lines with individual clubs for 'Bantu', 'Coloured', 'Malay' and Indian players. White cricketers were the only ones given the opportunity to compete internationally.⁶⁵ Two controlling authorities were created, the South African Cricket Board of Control (SABC) for black cricket, and the South African Cricket Association (SACA) for white cricket.

Until the middle of the 20th century, cricket's role in the white community of South Africa was ambiguous. While it was seen as a British Imperial game, it was supported by the Afrikaners although they were not great participants in the game. The

⁶⁰ Ryan, 'New Zealand', p.110.

⁶¹ Christopher Merrett and John Nauright, 'South Africa' in *The imperial game*, p.55.

⁶² Ibid., p.56.

⁶³ M. Marqusee, 'Opening century', *New Statesman & Society*, Vol. 7, No. 307, 17 June 1994, p.22.

⁶⁴ P.J. Marshall, '1870-1918: The Empire under Threat', *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, P.J. Marshall (Ed), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p.69.

Afrikaners preferred rugby, also an English game, because 'its robust nature fitted better with the frontier traditions of their Boer forebears'.⁶⁶ However, fear of being overrun by the numerically superior black population led to an eager acceptance of any symbol of white solidarity and consolidation.⁶⁷ In the 1960s South African cricketers began to make their mark internationally against England and Australia. At this point Afrikaners began to take a more active interest in the sport.⁶⁸ The strong nationalist feelings which sporting victories unleash accelerated the unifying effect that can be demonstrated by cricket.

However this unifying effect remained within the bounds of white society. Enforcing the policies of apartheid, the South African government refused to allow mixed race international teams to compete in the country. South African politics dictated the terms by which other countries chose their players. 'Rebel' teams were continually enticed to break the sports boycott placed on South Africa by the international community. It was inevitable that in such an atmosphere cricket would become highly politicised. International and national pressure led to the formation of the 'multi-racial' South African Cricket Union (SACU) in 1977. The majority of black cricketers felt this organisation fell short of expectations and the non-racial South African Cricket Board (SACB) was formed. Under its auspices black cricket was encouraged and its players began to build 'a new sports culture as an integral part of the liberation movement'.⁶⁹ Bowing to the increasing power of the West Indies, India and Pakistan, the International Cricket Council placed an international ban on anyone who coached or played in South Africa from 1989 onwards.⁷⁰

With the disbanding of the apartheid regime and the African National Congress's rise to power in 1990, the healing of a deeply rift society began. Cricket has played its part in this process. In December 1990 after tense negotiations presided over by Mr Steve Tshwete, President Mandela's minister of sport, the SACB and the SACU agreed that 'having regard for the future of South Africa' it was their intent:

⁶⁵ Marqusee, 'Opening century'.

⁶⁶ 'Cricket's uitlanders', *The Economist*, Vol.332, No.7878, 27 August 1994, p.79.

⁶⁷ Merrett and Nauright, 'South Africa', p.65.

⁶⁸ 'Cricket's uitlanders'.

⁶⁹ Marqusee, 'Opening century'.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

To form one non-racial democratic controlling body under a single constitution. The vision of non-racialism in a future South Africa shall include equality irrespective of race, colour, creed, sex, religion and shall mean equality in every sphere of life. Nonracialism shall be the guiding principle in our endeavour to achieve unity, peace and harmony in cricket and our country.

And:

To contribute through cricket to the creation of a just society in South Africa where everybody democratically has a common say and a common destiny.⁷¹

In June 1991 the United Cricket Board of South Africa was formed and shortly afterwards was admitted into international cricket by the ICC. Time and money has been poured in to development programmes aimed at black townships. Officials have noted that the national cricket team is gathering growing support from black communities 'which for years cheered South Africa's opponents'.⁷² This change in sentiment indicates that cricket is contributing to the search for a new South African identity. However, the 2001-2002 South African touring team to Australia was still predominantly white.⁷³

If the history of cricket in South Africa epitomises its political history, it provides a microcosm of West Indian society. Cricket is synonymous with the West Indies. The cricket team forms the only united front for the former plantation colonies of the Caribbean islands. The population of the islands comprised European settlers and negro slaves imported from Africa. The game developed in the islands through the usual channels of missionaries, teachers, soldiers and settlers. It was played amongst the slave population from an early stage.⁷⁴ However, the first cricket clubs formed in the early 1800s were exclusively for whites. As the former slaves began to find their level in society after emancipation in 1833 they organised their own clubs.⁷⁵ These

⁷¹ The United Cricket Board of South Africa, 'The History - The United Cricket Board of South Africa', http://www-rsa3.cricknet.org/link_to_database/NATIONAL/RSA/ABOUT_THE_UCB/HISTORY, accessed 16 July 1999.

⁷² Marqusee, 'Opening century'.

⁷³ Makhaya Ntini, who had become the first black South African to play representative cricket in 1997, was included in the side. Justin Ontong, a Cape Coloured batsman, was included in controversial circumstances. The President of the South African United Cricket Board overruled the selectors and forced his inclusion even though he had not had experience at that level. In 2000 Mfuneko Ngam had joined Ntini and in 2004 -5, Ahmed Mahomed Amla became the first South African of Indian descent to join the representative side.

<http://content.cricinfo.com/southafrica/content/player/caps.html?country=3;class=1>, accessed May 2005.

⁷⁴ Brian Stoddart, 'West Indies' in *The imperial gamey*, p.80.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.81.

clubs were structured not just on colour lines but on socio-economic standing.⁷⁶ They reflected the social nuances which defined a minutely stratified society. Because of the love of the game which had developed amongst the descendants of the former slaves it became ‘the site of pleasure, resistance and ideological contestation’.⁷⁷

Brian Stoddart feels that the game provided opportunities for both ‘accommodation and resistance.’⁷⁸ He has shown that the:

... different cultures drew on their own experiences and predilections in order to react to the game and, in turn, that flowed through into governance which was as much about style and form as about the substance of playing.⁷⁹

The white elite saw cricket as part of their cultural heritage as English people. They perpetuated the traditions surrounding the game as played in England and preserved it as part of their strong imperial bond. As a minority group, lower order whites used victories on the playing field to establish and maintain an identity.⁸⁰ They were attempting to maintain a sense of white superiority in the face of not only socially superior whites but the ‘non-white elite and lower middle-class.’⁸¹

Black participation in the game gave vent to a more emotional and passionate engagement. C.L.R. James’s autobiography ably demonstrates the complex cultural dimensions of the black cricket clubs of Trinidad. He joined the Maple Club whose members were brown-skinned and middle class. He admits that this decision affected his political development as it divided him socially from the black, lower-middle classes who would share his political affiliations at a later date.⁸² Their club was Shannon, whose players ‘knew that their club represented the great mass of black people in the island’.⁸³ Maple had adopted the ‘racism, injustice, and inequality’ which

⁷⁶ C.L.R. James, West Indian cricketer, intellectual, writer and political activist describes the different club categories existing in Trinidad in his autobiography *Beyond a Boundary*. The clubs were divided along colour lines and by socio-economic standing.

⁷⁷ Grant Farred, ‘The Maple Man: how cricket made a postcolonial intellectual’ in *Rethinking C.L.R. James*, Grant Farred (Ed), Blackwell, Cambridge, 1996, p.181.

⁷⁸ Stoddart, ‘West Indies’, p.81.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.83.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² James, *Beyond a Boundary*, p.53.

⁸³ Ibid., p.61.

were implicit in the British cricket code. Shannon had rejected these elements of the code.⁸⁴ James's life exhibits the all pervading influence of this moral code of cricket. The struggle to maintain the code when confronted with gross social and political injustice eventually led James and many others to develop an independent political perspective.

James's writings trace the expression of a growing political awareness and a sense of regional identity through cricket. The first inter-colonial game was played in 1865 between Barbados and Demerara (now part of Guyana).⁸⁵ By the late 19th century regular tournaments were being played between the various islands. A representative team which toured England in 1900 was made up of black and white players from several of the colonies. Realisation that a regional West Indian team indicated maturity and progress did not automatically lead to unity.⁸⁶ The class and socio-economic divisions still existed. Representation was fiercely contested amongst the colonies. Inter-colonial rivalry was almost as big an obstacle as racial prejudice. As the individual colonies gained their independence throughout the middle of the 20th century it was only as a cricket team that they were united. The political significance of the appointment of Frank Worrell as the team's first black captain in 1960 has long been recognised. It was at that point that James felt that the West Indies had taken their place in the world community.⁸⁷ The West Indies rose to dominance in the international cricketing arena in the last quarter of the 20th century and black players dominated the team. Their success demonstrated a trend in the shift of power from the centre to the periphery within the former boundaries of the British Empire.⁸⁸

India is another colony which appropriated cricket. Although the game was played on the subcontinent from the early 18th century it was not until the mid 19th century that it was taken up by any part of the indigenous population. At that time the Parsis of Bombay began to play the game. They were a merchant class of Persian origin with an affinity for Western culture. Cricket provided another avenue to strengthen their ties

⁸⁴ Grant Farred, 'The Maple Man', p.170.

⁸⁵ C.L.R. James and P.D.B. Short, 'West Indies', *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.121.

⁸⁶ Stoddart, 'West Indies', p. 85.

⁸⁷ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, p.252.

⁸⁸ Stoddart, 'West Indies', p.85.

with the British governors.⁸⁹ They established their first cricket club in 1848. The Hindus followed in the 1860s and the Muslims in the 1880s. By the end of the nineteenth century these three groups were regularly competing against each other and the Europeans. Thus in India 'competitive cricket was organized on "communal" lines, with teams composed on the basis of caste, ethnic group, race or religion.'⁹⁰

The British administrators believed the game would encourage harmony and unity.⁹¹ Lord Harris, governor of Bombay from 1890 to 1895, speaking of the Quadrangular tournament felt it would 'do something to get over any racial antipathy, for instance, it must, I think, bring the several races together in a spirit of harmony that should be the spirit in which cricket is played.'⁹² Instead, the game served to entrench long standing divisions. It also provided a means for the colonised to assert authority over the coloniser. Beating the invader at their own game stirred the embers of national pride. When the Hindus defeated a European representative team in 1906 the news travelled all over the country and was compared with military victories.⁹³ It was also used in more subtle ways to show superiority. In 1916 a quarrel between a European cricketer and the Hindu umpire of a Hindu-European game was labelled 'unsportsmanlike' by the Hindu Gymkhana and the European player severely reprimanded.⁹⁴

However, the game did bridge gaps and break down barriers. It contributed to the erosion of India's caste system. A case in point is that of Palwankar Baloo, a Hindu and famous bowler. The Hindu clubs were organised along caste lines. Baloo was an Untouchable. He worked as a servant for the Poona Gymkhana and began his cricketing career bowling to the English cricketers. His fame spread and he was recruited by the Brahmans from the high caste Deccan Gymkhana. From there he was moved to the Hindu Gymkhana of Bombay. Although respected and admired on the field of play, he was ostracised socially. The intimacy of the game gradually eroded the social taboos although it took many years. Prejudice was strong and Baloo was never appointed captain of the team but eventually in 1923 one of his younger brothers

⁸⁹ Guha, 'Cricket and Politics in Colonial India', p.158.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.164.

⁹¹ R. Cashman, 'The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket' in *Sport in History*, p.190.

⁹² Guha, 'Cricket and Politics in Colonial India', p.185.

⁹³ Ibid., p.167.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.167-168.

led the Hindus.⁹⁵ In 1932 Baloo's public standing was so important that he was one of the three delegates who negotiated with Mahatma Gandhi during his hunger strike over separate electorates for the Untouchables.⁹⁶

As with the West Indies, India was recognised as a cricketing nation long before it gained independence in 1947. A test team toured England in 1932, fifteen years before independence.⁹⁷ In the lead up to independence and separation the validity of communal cricket came into question. It was felt by many observers and participants that the encouragement of sporting rivalry between the Muslim and Hindu communities was detrimental to the nationalist movement. Communal cricket helped to consolidate the increasingly acrimonious relationship between Muslims and Hindus and provided both with a useful tool for creating separate national identities. As the subcontinent broke up politically, cricket remained important in the culture of all four new nations: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Early cricketing victories contributed to Pakistan's fledgling national status, enhancing its prestige on the world stage.⁹⁸ The Government openly supported and promoted the game, often providing secular employment for players.⁹⁹ It has frequently exerted its authority in the selection process of the national team.¹⁰⁰ The game is surrounded by an aura of national pride and patriotism. Players have been threatened with court action for losing. This patriotic passion extends to other sports in the country such as hockey. The game's ambiguous role is demonstrated in the fraught relations between India and Pakistan. The political and religious tensions between the two countries have often been surmounted by a common love of cricket. Test matches have been held despite active border warfare and rival nuclear tests. However there were real fears of a national incident if the two countries were to clash in the 1999 World Cup.¹⁰¹

Yet cricket's ability to unite a deeply divided population is evident in Sri Lanka. The island of Sri Lanka has inherited a multiracial population composed of Tamils (from

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.173.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.169.

⁹⁷ Richard Cashman, 'The Subcontinent' in *The imperial game*, pp.128-129.

⁹⁸ R.A. Roberts & D.J. Rutnagur, 'Pakistan', *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.96.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.129.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. For a full account of such an incident see Roberts and Rutnagur 'Pakistan', p.99.

India), Sinhalese, Moors, Burghers (descendants of the Portuguese and Dutch traders), and Malays (from Java). Introduced by the British in the early 19th century, the game followed its traditional path in Sri Lanka. It filtered through the administration and the education system to an emerging indigenous middle class.¹⁰² The social status quo was maintained as non-European cricket clubs were formed from the mid 19th century. Michael Roberts argues that the game supported the ‘dialectics of political opposition’ by providing an acceptable form of competition and opposition against the British rulers.¹⁰³ By the early 20th century the indigenous clubs had established their superiority in play.¹⁰⁴ Competition against visiting international teams strengthened a burgeoning sense of national identity. However, after independence was granted in 1948 attempts to foster ‘Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism’ caused increasing friction between the individual groups.¹⁰⁵ The ensuing civil war has lasted into the twenty-first century despite ongoing international efforts to broker peace.

In this tense atmosphere it is as spectators and participants in the game of cricket that this diverse community identifies itself as ‘Ceylonese’ or ‘Sri Lankan.’¹⁰⁶ The cricket field has been labelled ‘the only place where the cease-fire holds’.¹⁰⁷ Arjuna Parakrama, professor of English at Colombo University, has observed that ‘you’ll find both Tamil and Sinhala nationalists waving the flag and cheering for Sri Lanka’ when a match is on.¹⁰⁸ Despite claims that modern communication and technology has allowed the game to become a common bond across a broad geographical and socio-economic range, it has not contributed to removing the inequalities of Tamil existence.¹⁰⁹

Political, racial and socio-economic restrictions have nevertheless affected the composition of the national team. The national selection must be approved by the Ministry of Sport for security reasons.¹¹⁰ Most of the national players have come

¹⁰¹ These fears were ungrounded. Pakistan met Australia.

¹⁰² Roberts, ‘Ethnicity in Riposte at a Cricket Match’, p.408.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.409.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.414.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.411.

¹⁰⁷ Waruna Karunatilake, ‘War and the Willow,’ *Time International*, Vol.150, No.24, 9 February 1998, p.54.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ For contrasting views on this question see Michael Roberts, ‘Ethnicity in Riposte at a Cricket Match,’ pp.410-411 and Suvendrini Perera, ‘Cricket, with a Plot’, p.23.

¹¹⁰ Malcolm Knox, ‘Clan Cricket’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August 1996, p.50.

through the private school system.¹¹¹ Selection of Tamils who make up 18 per cent of the population has been limited. When they do manage to gain selection the unifying power of the game manifests itself. Spin bowler Muttiah Muralidharan is a Tamil but was cheered by three thousand Sinhalese villagers after the country's win in the World Cup in 1996.¹¹² In 1995 Muralitharan was cited for 'chucking'¹¹³ in a test match against Australia. His Sinhalese team-mates stood behind him and maintained his innocence.¹¹⁴

As a direct result of Bangladesh's troubled birth as a nation in 1971 and the social disintegration which followed, its military regime 'determined to revive cricket'.¹¹⁵ It was seen as 'a safety valve for youthful enthusiasm'.¹¹⁶ This recognition of the game as a tool for social control echoes the original purpose of the game by the British. As with the rest of the subcontinent the game became popular and contributed to a sense of national unity and identity. Despite the country's poverty huge crowds turn out to watch the game.¹¹⁷ Cricket produces national heroes to personify representative escapist fantasies for a country overshadowed by economic and natural hardships. Bangladesh's win in the 1997 ICC Cup in Malaysia created a wild emotional response,¹¹⁸ especially as their victory qualified them for participation in the World Cup for the first time. The team's importance as representative of national identity was emphasised by a private audience with the Prime Minister, Sheikh Husina, before their departure for the World Cup in 1999.¹¹⁹

Indians have influenced the game's development throughout the Empire due to intercolonial migration policies to supply demands for labour. They were used to supply labour in South Africa, Malaysia and Fiji. It is interesting to note the effect this cross colonial culture had on the host colony. Caribbean immigrants to the United States and Canada have substantially influenced the game in those two countries. As

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid. Muralidharan was born in Kandy, a Sinhalese controlled city, which is why he came to the attention of international selectors.

¹¹³ 'Chucking' refers to bowling the ball with a bent arm. It is a serious offence in cricket terms.

¹¹⁴ Karunatilake, 'War and the Willow'.

¹¹⁵ Robin Marlar, 'Bangladesh', *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.68.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ 'Meet the minnows,' *The Economist (US)*, Vol.351, Issue8118, 8 May 1999.

¹¹⁸ Brian Stoddart, 'At the end of the day's play: reflections on cricket, culture and meaning' in *The imperial game*, p.152.

¹¹⁹ 'Meet the minnows'.

the 20th century progressed, players from many of the former colonies have returned to England and their styles of play have permeated and changed the original game at its roots.

This brief examination of the major cricketing nations has uncovered several recurring themes, including complex and often contradictory motives and perceptions. While the game was introduced as a means of social enjoyment for the coloniser it was also deliberately manipulated to socially construct the colonised society. It was used to both divide and unite. It created an atmosphere of exclusion and dominance while often providing the only means for mixed and equal social intercourse between the coloniser and colonised. It therefore provided an interface for interaction between the indigenous culture (established and developing) and the imposed British culture. Altered by local physical conditions, climate and the existing psychological persona of the indigenous population, cricket became an integral part of the self-image of the new nations.

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These themes flow through in the history of the game in the remainder of the British colonies. Wherever the British settled, cricket was played. Introduced with the same aims and purposes, the game followed different paths but often displayed common patterns. As Brian Stoddart explains it, '(t)he differences displayed in these places of smaller significance were of degree rather than of substance'.¹²⁰ Even in those colonies where the game did not become popular but remained the province of an elite few the factors which contributed to this circumstance are revealing. Dissecting the reasons for the game's rejection or mutation in these societies discloses interesting components of developing national identity. Examining the existing power relationships and observing the manner in which they were transferred to and incorporated into the game contributes to a deeper understanding of the present national character.

There are two threads to follow when examining the history of cricket in these colonies. The first occurs when the game has retained the traditional form. The second is when it has become so different that it is only recognisable as cricket because of the use of a bat

¹²⁰ Brian Stoddart, 'Other Cultures' in *The imperial game*, p.137.

and ball. In the former type of development the game was seen as a means of maintaining and retaining values from the dominant British culture which were considered important. Many of the colonised assessed these values as evidence of 'civilisation'. The latter thread provides fascinating examples of incorporation and adaptability.

Superficially Canada would appear to be a colony where cricket should have become as important as it did in Australia or South Africa. Indeed, when Canada became a nation in 1867 the first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, declared cricket the national sport.¹²¹ This situation did not last and ice hockey displaced cricket in the national psyche. The roots for this shift go back to the beginning of Canada's European history. The French had settled Canada in the early 17th century. The English followed and the resulting tense relationship was not resolved until 1763 when the French ceded Canada to the English by signing the Treaty of Paris.¹²² The French community had developed a strong independent identity based on political absolutism and French Catholic traditions. This was diametrically opposed to the Protestant English ethic with its liberal tendencies. As a consequence the cession led to 'a closing of ranks, a united front against the intrusion of alien ways, a clinging to the past as the clearest landmark of cultural identity'.¹²³ This included the natural rejection of a game which stood for all that the Protestant English ethic encompassed. A considerable proportion of the population of the colony were therefore disinclined to participate in the game.

On the other hand, the British settlers followed the game with their usual enthusiasm. This was given added impetus by the American Revolution. In their overwhelming desire to retain their links with the British crown and to prove their loyalty, the colonists vigorously embraced the game. John Mangan has called cricket 'the umbilical cord of Empire linking the mother country with her children'.¹²⁴ He quotes from a local journal, appropriately call the *Patriot*, which proclaimed in July 1836:

¹²¹ Kenneth R. Bullock, 'Canada' *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.71.

¹²² Kenneth D. McRae, 'The Structures of Canadian History' in *The Founding of New Societies: studies in the history of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada, and Australia*, Louis Hartz (Ed), Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1964, p.230.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.231.

¹²⁴ Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, p.153.

British feelings cannot flow into the breasts of our Canadian boys thro' a more delightful or untainted channel than that of British sports. A cricketer as a matter of course detests democracy and is staunch in allegiance to his king.¹²⁵

The close tie between participation in sport and political expression was openly acknowledged and accepted.

Unlike the case of South Africa, the two diverse European influences did not compromise in an eventual acceptance of cricket as the national game. This could have been due to two other external factors: the proximity of the United States of America and the weather. Canada's national identity has always suffered from the closeness of its powerful neighbour. The more practical approach to sport which characterised the American playing fields gradually infiltrated the Canadian outlook and replaced the high moral approach of the British ideal.¹²⁶ The harsh Canadian climate with its long winters encouraged the growth of winter sports and the consequent rise to dominance of ice hockey.

The various countries of the African continent were ceremonially parcelled out amongst the European powers at the Berlin conference in 1885. The European presence in Africa went back to the 15th century. Driven by commercial considerations, traders established bases around the continent. In West Africa the lucrative slave trade was expanded to supply the ever increasing demands of planters in the Caribbean and the Americas for labour. The abolition of this trade in 1807 instigated a search for viable alternative exports.¹²⁷ Britain perceived the failure of the 'indigenous political and economic systems' to cope with the consequent influx of 'irresponsible western adventurers' as legitimate reason to enforce imperial rule.¹²⁸ Other fears fuelled the decision. Inter-tribal warfare interfered with European trading.¹²⁹ Politicians saw a danger in Europeans becoming embroiled in these local, petty wars and the conflict

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.152.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.164. C.L.R. James gives a telling critique of the American attitude to sport. While living and working in the United States, he was appalled at the behaviour of spectators, managers and players alike. Their ribald comments and lack of respect for umpires and fellow players, whether in basketball or baseball, and most of all their lack of loyalty to their school, were incomprehensible to James. Politically akin to their views, a Marxist who abhorred British imperialism, he could not accept the irreverence of their sporting code. (James, *Beyond a Boundary*, pp. 43 – 46.)

¹²⁷ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914*, p.265.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.272.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.273.

boiling over into Europe.¹³⁰ There was a religious justification for the expansion: the need to contain the growing strength of Islam and protect Christian populations.¹³¹

In attempting to introduce order and control, the British utilised several different forms of rule throughout the African continent. Initial contact was usually established using a chartered company. In the course of setting up its trading venture the company would impose European administrative concepts on the local landscape. These companies were slowly replaced by formal government rule. In Eastern Africa settler colonies developed as Europeans moved out of South Africa in pursuit of more land. In Western Africa the majority of the colonies were administered by an official policy of 'Indirect Rule'. This policy advocated retaining the existing political structure within the society while putting in place 'advisers' from the British bureaucracy. It caused a minimal amount of disruption to the community but allowed British influence to infiltrate the administration.¹³² In some instances, for example in Egypt, the notion of indirect rule was a farce. The rulers were only puppets in the hands of their British masters. A hybrid form of government was employed in the settlement of Sierra Leone. The country was created to re-establish freed slaves in a community of their own. They were resettled and encouraged to take over the reins of administration for themselves.

This diverse history of British expansion on the African continent has produced a complex array of new nations in the post colonial period. There appears to be little in the way of comprehensive comparative studies on national development. Apart from South Africa, none have developed as strong cricketing nations. The game has been played in nearly all of them, but few, if any, studies of the links between the game and the political and social structure of the nations have been undertaken. Britain's arbitrary imposition of national borders forced conflicting ethnic identities into unnatural alliances. Ethnic and tribal tension was exacerbated by the importation of

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.284.

¹³² Hyam explains that '(i)t was really a conservation scheme, a means of keeping law and order rather than a constructive framework within which modernising development could take place, a means of controlling people rather than facilitating change. Its main weakness was its embodiment of a disastrous miscalculation as to with whom the future was to lie. The British backed the wrong horse by preferring the strong traditional authorities to the newly educated urban elite.' *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914*, p.290.

indentured labourers from Asia. Political power was monopolised by a minority white population. This scenario was repeated across the continent. These elements and the problematic power relationships they created are reflected in the cricketing history of these nation states. A parallel examination of African history and the history of cricket in individual nations reveals some familiar patterns.

Cricket was being played in Egypt as early as the mid 19th century. However there is no continuous history until after the ‘occupation’ of the country by Britain in 1882. Egypt was placed under ‘indirect rule’. The resulting bureaucracy and the military presence established regular matches.¹³³ The game remained the preserve of members of the British ruling elite. It did not appeal to the indigenous population.¹³⁴ This was the case even though the Egyptian administration has been compared to India in terms of scope, resources and personnel.¹³⁵ In this instance the game does not appear to have played a political or social role in the country’s development. If the game was openly rejected it may indicate a form of resistance to colonial authority.

This trend appears throughout the East African countries. Policies of urban segregation practiced in colonial towns in East and Central Africa have excluded indigenous Africans from participation in mainstream sporting activities.¹³⁶ In Zimbabwe, formerly Southern Rhodesia, the first black test cricketer did not emerge until 1995.¹³⁷ Zimbabwe’s white population of 80,000 represents only a fraction of its entire population of 11million but its ‘national team is selected from a pool of 300-400 players, nearly all of them white’.¹³⁸ In Kenya the game prospered amongst the Europeans and the Asian community. The European Kenya Kongonis Cricket Club was formed in 1927 and the Asian Sports Association three years later.¹³⁹ Significantly, the first inter-racial organisation in Kenya was the Kenya Cricket

¹³³ E.E. Snow, ‘Egypt’, *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.75.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.76.

¹³⁵ P.J. Marshall, ‘1879-1918: The Empire under Threat’, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, p.74.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹³⁷ Zimbabwe Cricket Union, ‘A Brief History of Cricket in Zimbabwe’, http://www-aus5.cricket.org/link_to-database/NATIONAL/ZIM/HISTORY/ZIM_HISTORY, accessed 7 September 1999.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Philip Snow, ‘Kenya’, *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.86.

Association formed in 1960.¹⁴⁰ However, it only brought together the Asian and European communities. It was not until the 1990s that indigenous Kenyan players became involved in the game.¹⁴¹ It is now being viewed as a passport to a better life. Maurice Odumbe, captain of Kenya in the 1996 World Cup and 1997 ICC Trophy matches, speaking of his and his brother's contribution to the game, explained:

What we have done has proven to our African brothers that cricket has a lot to offer and given them something to emulate. Thanks to cricket I have seen the world.¹⁴²

Cricket sponsorship had paid his school fees and given him access to privileges he would otherwise have been denied.¹⁴³ In both Kenya and Zimbabwe the national cricket teams are becoming regular participants in international competitions and finding a permanent role in the nation's identity. A closer examination of the process which has brought about this cross cultural representation of the nation would provide a history of race relations and power shifts within the society.

In the countries of West Africa cricket took a different path. Indigenous participation has been longer and more extensive. It was in this area of Africa that Britain's policy of 'indirect rule' was first articulated and officially put into practice by Sir Frederick Lugard.¹⁴⁴ After playing a significant role in the early administration of Nigeria Lugard was appointed High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria in 1900.¹⁴⁵ He saw British Imperialism as having a civilizing role.¹⁴⁶ While stressing the need to retain native identity and avoid 'denationalisation' he emphasised the necessity of forming character. Education was of prime importance in this process. In the ordinance and regulations he drew up in 1915 and which were implemented in 1916 the first principle was:

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Kenya Cricket Association, 'History of Cricket in Kenya', http://www-aus.cricket.org/link_to_database/NATIONAL/ICC_MEMBERS/KENYA/HISTORY, accessed 7 September 1999.

¹⁴² Tony Munro, 'News from cricket around the world - ICC associates, affiliates and others', http://www-aus.cricket.org/link_to_databa...WS/1999/APR/MUNRO_ROUND-UP_02APR1999, accessed 10 May 1999.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Lord Lugard is credited with developing the theory of 'indirect rule' although other colonial administrators were experimenting with the principles. Lugard expounded the ideas in his treatise, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* first published in 1922.

¹⁴⁵ Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Frankcass & Co. Ltd., London, 1965, p. xxxv.

¹⁴⁶ Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, p. 101.

That the primary object of all schools should be the formation of character and habits of discipline...¹⁴⁷

British field sports would play a crucial role.¹⁴⁸ The influence of this policy in the hands of a strong administrator may explain why cricket penetrated the indigenous cultures of West Africa more effectively than it did in the East. In Nigeria, the strongest cricketing country in the region, 'multi-racial organization was achieved in 1956'.¹⁴⁹ By 1959 the team was captained by an African.¹⁵⁰ In Gambia, cricket was claimed to be the national sport indicating national participation.¹⁵¹ It is at present suffering a decline due to the economic problems besetting the country.¹⁵² By the mid 1950s the game in Ghana was attracting indigenous players.¹⁵³ Sierra Leone's complex origins created a mixed population of displaced people. The intention of the early missionary administrators was to 'create a new type of 'black Englishman' who would become the cultural intermediary to 'civilize' West Africa'.¹⁵⁴ One of Africa's oldest universities was established there in 1827.¹⁵⁵ These educated elite were to move inland carrying the new ideas with them, symbolising 'the whole civilised force of Great Britain'.¹⁵⁶ Intimate links were established early between Sierra Leone and the West Indies. In this atmosphere cricket should have flourished but the continual political turmoil which the country has endured has hampered its progress.

As in Africa, imperial expansion in Asia involved compound motives often determined by considerations relating to the balance of power in Europe. Economic and strategic concerns dominated the growth of the British Empire in the region. India had to be protected as did the trade routes to China.¹⁵⁷ Nicholas Tarling argues that Britain's interest did not lie in territorial expansion but in providing 'strategic support' for its

¹⁴⁷ Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*, p.431.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp.432-33.

¹⁴⁹ Philip Snow, 'Nigeria', *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.96.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Tony Munro, 'Gambian Cricket,' http://www-aus.cricknet.org/link_to_database/NATIONAL/ICC_MEMBERS/G, accessed 7 September 1999.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Philip Snow, 'Ghana', *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.78.

¹⁵⁴ P.J. Marshall, '1783-1870: An Expanding Empire', *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, p.45.

¹⁵⁵ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914*, p.268.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Nicholas Tarling, *Imperial Britain in South-East Asia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975, p.4 – 5.

‘naval and commercial interests’.¹⁵⁸ Consistent with this theory is Britain’s desire for ‘a minimum application of force and the maximum acquisition of collaboration’.¹⁵⁹ It wanted to develop nation-states which were independent but acknowledged Britain’s supremacy and deferred to her judgement. ‘Indirect rule’ facilitated this approach. The imperial history of the area is further complicated by the presence of the other European imperial powers: the Dutch, the French and the Spanish. Many of the colonies changed hands several times with little or no regard for the indigenous inhabitants. Boundaries were created or redrawn to suit the commercial, political or strategic proclivities of the European powers. Cultural influences were fragmented by these shifts in the dominant ruling class. Britain’s policy of importing Indian and Chinese labour to compensate for local shortfalls distorted the development of national identity in the region. Perhaps these factors go some way to explain why cricket does not appear to have gained a stronger foothold in the region.

Burma’s shared border with India posed several problems for the British. The French showed interest in the country. The ruling dynasty of Burma in the 18th and 19th centuries pursued an independent expansionist policy which brought it into direct conflict with Britain. Britain conquered Burma in a series of wars fought in 1824, 1852 and 1885.¹⁶⁰ The resultant strong military presence firmly established cricket in Burma. The Burmese displayed some interest in the game but it remained ‘the preserve of British expatriates and local Indians’.¹⁶¹ The foundation of the game was not strong enough to withstand the country’s independence in 1948 and the consequent formation of a Socialist Republic in 1962. Burma’s continuing political upheaval and isolation from the international community has contributed to the decline of the game.

The British expansion into the Malay Peninsula, including Singapore, was a more gradual process entailing the imposition of ‘indirect rule’. They reached an accommodation with the Dutch in 1824 regarding the Indonesian Archipelago but for strategic and economic reasons they retained Singapore and excluded the Dutch from

¹⁵⁸ Nicholas Tarling, *The Fall of Imperial Britain in South-East Asia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, p.55.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.22.

¹⁶⁰ Marshall, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, p.384.

¹⁶¹ David Rayvern Allen, ‘Burma’, *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.70.

the Peninsula.¹⁶² Singapore was settled by Stamford Raffles in 1819 and became a base for a number of racial and ethnic groups. Cricket is first mentioned in the Colony in 1837 and the Singapore Cricket Club was formed in 1852.¹⁶³ Over the years the Ceylonese, Chinese, Eurasians and Indians participated in the game and ‘produced several distinguished cricketers’.¹⁶⁴ However, non-Europeans were not admitted to the Singapore Cricket Club until 1960 and it was not until 1963 that the Club declared open membership.¹⁶⁵ This does not appear unusual in the light of Singapore’s known policy of racial segregation.¹⁶⁶ Cricket may have furnished a useful tool for the government in promoting inter-racial harmony. In many of the colonies it provided a rare opportunity for social intercourse between the various groups within a population.

In the remainder of the Malay Peninsula the British advanced slowly, instigating an early form of ‘indirect rule’ as it became necessary to ensure ‘stability and security’.¹⁶⁷ To contain the power of the Thais in Siam, treaties were negotiated with a number of the Sultans and Rajas. Tin and rubber became important commodities and increased the economic value of the Peninsula. The desire to extend British influence peacefully resulted in an emphasis on education.¹⁶⁸ The mix of European planters, colonial administrators, teachers and military personnel gave cricket a solid foundation in the early Straits Settlement.¹⁶⁹ The mixed racial population of Cingalese, Eurasians, Indians and Chinese also took to the game.¹⁷⁰ However, there is no mention of the game’s impact on the indigenous Malays. Stoddart claims that they were actively discouraged from participating in the game.¹⁷¹ The imported Indian indentured labourers, many of them Tamils from Ceylon, brought their enthusiasm for the game with them. No detailed study of the interaction between the different racial

¹⁶² Tarling, *The Fall of Imperial Britain in South-East Asia*, p.36.

¹⁶³ Stoddart, ‘Other cultures’ in *The imperial game*, p.136.

¹⁶⁴ Cecil Cooke, ‘Singapore’, *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.102.

¹⁶⁵ Stoddart, ‘Other cultures’ in *The imperial game*, p.136.

¹⁶⁶ Geoffrey Benjamin explains the Singapore Government’s policy of ‘multiracialism’ as an ‘ideology that accords equal status to the cultures and ethnic identities of the various ‘races’ that are regarded as comprising the population of a plural society’. The groups are identified in a ‘standard trichotomy’ as Chinese-Malay-Indian-Other(CMIO). It would be beneficial to explore where cricket fits into this trichotomy. (Geoffrey Benjamin, ‘The Cultural Logic of Singapore’s Multiracialism’ in *Singapore: society in transition*, Riaz Hassan (Ed), Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1976, p.115.)

¹⁶⁷ Tarling, *The Fall of Imperial Britain in South-East Asia*, p.22.

¹⁶⁸ Tarling, *Imperial Britain in South-East Asia*, p.60-61.

¹⁶⁹ Philip Snow, ‘Malaysia’ *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.87.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Stoddart, ‘Other cultures’ in *The imperial game*, p.137.

communities in relation to the game has been undertaken. It would be informative and constructive to examine what role, if any, the game has played in the country's attempts to solve its communal difficulties since independence.

China ceded Hong Kong to the British in 1842 at the end of the Opium Wars. The new colony played an important role as a military base and trading centre. The Hong Kong Cricket Club was formed by the Armed and Civil Services in 1851.¹⁷² The game was dominated by Europeans but the Hong Kong Parsee Cricket Club was formed in 1897 indicating a growing interest amongst other groups.¹⁷³ It was not until 1911 that a Chinese club was founded.¹⁷⁴ Brian Stoddart explains that the 'Chinese were not encouraged to see cricket other than as a variation upon domestic service'.¹⁷⁵ They were employed by the British, both in Hong Kong and Shanghai, as ground bowlers.¹⁷⁶ The Chinese were traditionally interested in education.¹⁷⁷ Recognising this enthusiasm Sir Frederick Lugard, who was later to have such an influence on education in West Africa, organised the University of Hong Kong in 1912. Lugard's stress on the importance of British sport in education has already been mentioned. The game played a part in the aims of the University to train character and inculcate a high moral standard.¹⁷⁸ In 1976 the Hong Kong team which toured England comprised Europeans and one Indian.¹⁷⁹ Yet, by the 1990s all-Chinese teams were undertaking overseas tours. The Hong Kong Cricket Association maintains that cricket has 'established a strong tradition' but is concerned about the game's future now that the country has been returned to the People's Republic of China.¹⁸⁰ The nature of Hong Kong means that there is fierce competition for the use of sports grounds. The hot, humid climate forces most sports, including cricket, to compete for space during the cooler months. The

¹⁷² Philip Snow, 'Hong Kong', *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.78.

¹⁷³ Hong Kong Cricket Association, 'Hong Kong Cricket Association', http://www-aus.cricket.org/link_to_database/NATIONAL/ICC_MEMBERS/HKG/HISTORY, accessed 24 September 1999.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Stoddart, 'Other cultures' in *The imperial game*, p.136.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, p.103. E.A. Blundell, Governor of Singapore in the mid 19th century wrote to the Colonial Secretary complaining that '(t)here is a wide difference between the eagerness of the Chinese for the profitable education of their children and the utter insensibility of the Malays to any benefits arising from education. The consequence is, that our English Schools are full of Chinese boys, while scarcely a Malay boy is to be found in them.' Quoted in Tarling, *Imperial Britain in South-East Asia*, p.60.

¹⁷⁸ Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, p.105.

¹⁷⁹ Snow, 'Hong Kong', p. 79.

Association is optimistic that the game will receive indigenous support if it can accommodate the fast paced lifestyle of the ex-colony's present population.¹⁸¹

From the limited information available, the themes identified in the history of cricket in the major cricketing nations can be traced in the other colonies of the British Empire. Its obvious role in the criteria which defined the ruling elite is clear. The practice of forming separate cricket clubs and associations for different racial, religious or ethnic communities is universal. Nevertheless, it must be noted that it was often the cricket association which became the first inter-racial organisation in a colony. For many the game provided entry into the ruling discourse. It was the means, not just to understand a sport, but to grasp the intricacies of a whole social structure. The reasons for its lack of development in a colony may be as important as the reasons for its success. They could indicate rejection of the coloniser or be evidence of passive resistance. They may show unexpected strength in the indigenous culture and a parallel weakness in the invading culture.

These issues need to be explored more comprehensively. A detailed comparison of national history with the development of cricket in particular countries should reveal underlying power structures. An examination of these power structures will enable an understanding of the implications which sport, and cricket in particular, has had for national identity.

It's Not Cricket?

The islands of the Pacific Ocean, excluding Australia and New Zealand, have not produced any great cricketing nations. However, it is here that the game has undergone its most extensive and interesting transformation. In many of the new nation states of the Pacific a new form of the game developed in parallel with the traditional one. Rather than being assimilated into the colonisers' culture via the game these peoples have appropriated it for themselves, integrating it into their power and belief systems. These changes present evidence of the way in which new cultural tools are exercised by existing power bases to modify or replace accepted political processes.

¹⁸⁰ 'Hong Kong Cricket Association'.

As we have seen, Darwin reported cricket being played in New Zealand in 1835. The game spread rapidly throughout the region during the 19th century such that Robert Louis Stevenson could claim in the 1890s that English had become ‘the tongue of the Pacific’ and relate that:

(o)n one of the most out-of-the-way atolls in the Carolines, my friend Mr. Benjamin Hird was amazed to find the lads playing cricket on the beach and talking English...¹⁸²

It was noted early that the game had changed. Bats and balls were being fashioned from native materials. Hundreds of people could be involved in the two teams. The players wore special costumes and were adorned with body markings. Song and dance were an integral part of the performance. The match became a feast or festival. The internal and external power structures of the game were assimilated into the indigenous societies.

It is difficult to determine precisely why this happened in the Pacific and not in other regions of the British Empire. Many of the social and physical conditions appear similar to those prevalent in Asia and Africa. The game was introduced through traditional channels: the military, the bureaucracy, and the missions. The factors which can be identified as contributing to the mutation of the game were present in other areas and have not caused the same deviations. Outside the settler colonies, the norm was small numbers of Europeans living in isolated circumstances and relying on indigenous communities for support. Education in the Pacific was largely in the hands of missionary societies. The wet, tropical climate of many of the islands made the creation and maintenance of playing fields difficult. On the other hand the communal nature of the majority of Pacific societies encouraged participation in a team sport. These factors combined with individual characteristics of the existing indigenous cultures to produce unique forms of the game. Although not expressing national identity, these forms played an important role in asserting ethnic and cultural identity.

One of the best known examples of this transformation of the game occurred in the Trobriand Islands situated off Papua New Guinea.¹⁸³ The game was introduced to the

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas*, Penguin Books, London, 1998 (1896), p.11.

¹⁸³ See Kildea and Leach, *Trobriand Cricket*.

Troabriand Islands by Methodist missionaries. It was encouraged as ‘an alternative to inter-village fighting and the sexuality linked to harvest dances’.¹⁸⁴ The headman of the village arranges a match, enhances his political power base and receives tribute from the visiting village. Both the bat and ball are fashioned from local materials, the ball being carved from wood. Teams comprised of up to sixty men take the field, decorated with elaborate markings and costumes. The players dance onto the field performing complicated coordinated manoeuvres reminiscent of a European military drill. A batsman’s dismissal is greeted with triumphant singing and dancing. In the spirit of the traditional game, a result may take weeks to determine.¹⁸⁵

In Western Samoa the cricket pitch is central to most villages.¹⁸⁶ The game was introduced by the British Consul, William Brown Churchward, in the early 1880s and became very popular.¹⁸⁷ However, the Islanders quickly renovated the game to suit their own inclinations and today it retains a distinct character. The three-sided bat is constructed from a local hardwood and made ‘slightly longer and larger than softball bats’.¹⁸⁸ The whole community is involved with large numbers on the field and the spectators join in the dancing and singing when the batsman is out.¹⁸⁹ The game became a political tool in the community. The Samoans would stage long matches so that they were ‘unavailable for official business.’ They used the game to confront rebels and as a delaying tactic to avoid negotiations with the British.¹⁹⁰ The depth and speed of cricket’s penetration of Samoan culture is indicated by its incorporation into the local cosmology by 1890.¹⁹¹ Cricket had taken on many of the customs associated with war, as Brian Stoddart explains:

The fielding side scattered to the sounds of drums, conch shells and horns. Dismissals were greeted by the fielding side with great pageantry. Running and shouting and

¹⁸⁴ Richard Nile and Christian Clerk, *Cultural Atlas of Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific*, RD Press, Surry Hills, 1996, p.206.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Stoddart, ‘Other cultures,’ in *The imperial game*, p.139.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Glenn Jowitt, *Cricket in the Pacific*, Longman Paul, Auckland, 1990, p.7.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p.8.

¹⁹⁰ Stoddart, ‘Other cultures’ in *The imperial game*. p.141.

¹⁹¹ In 1890 Samoa was in political turmoil as the imperial powers and Samoan chiefs contested control. The trouble in the human world was interpreted as a sign of trouble in the spirit realm. ‘Bad feelings had arisen over a dance competition and a cricket match. A great battle had been fought.’ (John Charlot, ‘The War Between the Gods of Upolu and Savaii: A Samoan Story from 1890’, *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol.23, No.1, April 1988, pp.80-5.)

chanting, the whole of the fielding side formed into a war dance line-up and when, “with rhythmic clappings of hands and stampings of feet”, advanced tauntingly upon the ranks of the waiting batsmen. This was all very reminiscent of traditional battle customs, especially because of the traditional dress and markings evident.¹⁹²

In the French colony of New Caledonia the game was introduced by English missionaries in the late 19th century and is played by women on Sunday. Dressed in the colourful concealing dresses advocated by the missionaries, they play on slag fields with baseball shaped bats.¹⁹³ This recurring modification of the shape of the bat throughout the Pacific could indicate either the influence of American baseball or the utilisation of effective war club designs. The umpires and scorer must be male.¹⁹⁴ When Western Samoa was ceded to Germany in 1899 the German administration attempted to legislate against cricket.¹⁹⁵ It was argued that the game was unproductive. Despite the threat of imprisonment for participating in the sport, the Samoans continued to play. Stoddart suggests ‘that cricket had become a principal means of Samoan resistance to the imposition of Western concepts of work and time’.¹⁹⁶

The game has been embraced and moulded by the peoples of the Pacific to translate their communal values into 20th century terms. Retaining the physical aspects of the game, they have replaced the underlying moral ethos with their own. However, in several of the island nations cricket also developed along traditional lines. Both Fiji and Papua New Guinea field international teams and are Associate Members of the International Cricket Council (ICC). In Vanuatu the game’s standing allows the country to qualify for Affiliate Membership of the ICC. Cricket still has a presence in Tonga and played a role in the Solomon Islands, the Gilbert Islands (Kiribati), and the Ellice Islands (Tuvalu).

The Gilbert and Ellice Islands became a British Protectorate in 1892. They were administered by the Colonial Office and cricket was a daily ritual. Arthur Grimble who served in the Islands from 1916 to 1932 recalls that all cadets were expected to report to

¹⁹² Stoddart, ‘Other cultures’ in *The imperial game*, p.144.

¹⁹³ Philip Snow, ‘New Caledonia’, *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.89.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Stoddart, ‘Other cultures’ in *The imperial game*, p.145.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

the nets at 4.00p.m. each day ‘barring acts of God or the Resident Commissioner’.¹⁹⁷ Regular weekly matches were played between the staff of the phosphate company, British Phosphate Commissioners, and the Government personnel. The Government’s team was made up of ‘only two or three Europeans ... but half a dozen policemen - and especially the Fijian N.C.O.s’.¹⁹⁸ Grimble was instrumental in spreading the game amongst the indigenous population and it did become popular. He reports an interesting comment from an elderly clansman which demonstrates the changes that cricket had wrought on the old society:

We old men take joy in watching the kirikiti of our grandsons, because it is a fighting between factions which makes the fighters love each other.¹⁹⁹

Cricket was introduced to the Solomon Islands in the 1870s by missionaries.²⁰⁰ In 1893 Britain established a Protectorate over the Islands in response to Australian fears of French and German expansion in the Pacific.²⁰¹ The Protectorate was set up on condition that Australia and New Zealand ‘foot the bill’.²⁰² This emphasis on economic self-sufficiency led to heavy taxation and low wages which generated early resentment and resistance among the indigenous population. This did not create an atmosphere conducive to acceptance of the coloniser’s culture. The game survived among the expatriates but did not have local support and almost died out after Independence in 1978.²⁰³

Presbyterian missionaries provided the first substantial European influence in Vanuatu (New Hebrides).²⁰⁴ Arriving in the mid 19th century, their focus was solely on conversion. They were followed by New Zealand Anglicans who avoided ‘imposing

¹⁹⁷ Arthur Grimble, *A Pattern of Islands*, John Murray, London, 1956, p.48.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.49.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.52.

²⁰⁰ Philip Snow, ‘Solomon Islands’, *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.103.

²⁰¹ Stephen Boggs and David W. Gegeo, ‘Leadership and Solomon Islanders’ Resistance to Plantation-Based Political Economy: roles and circumstances’ in *Leadership and Change in the Western Pacific: Essays Presented to Sir Raymond Firth on the Occasion of His Ninetieth Birthday*, London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology No 66, Richard Feinberg & Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo (Eds), The Athlone Press, London, 1996, p.279.

²⁰² Donald Denoon, ‘New Economic Orders: Land, Labour and Dependency,’ in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, p.219.

²⁰³ Tony Munro, ‘News from cricket around the world - ICC associates, affiliates and others’, http://www.aus1.cricket.org/link_to_datab...RO_ROUND-UP_13JUN1999.html#solonomis, accessed 3 December 1999.

²⁰⁴ Jocelyn Linnekin, ‘New Political Orders’ in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, p.199.

English cultural values' on the indigenous population.²⁰⁵ The entrepreneur John Higginson attempted to forestall British annexation in the 1880s by buying up large tracts of land.²⁰⁶ His company was already established in New Caledonia under French authority and when his venture in the New Hebrides ran into difficulties the French Government intervened. Their involvement resulted in the creation of the Anglo-French Condominium to administer the territory in 1906.²⁰⁷ Considering the history of Vanuatu it is not surprising that there is no mention of cricket until 1945.²⁰⁸ However, once established the game did attract a following and by 1978, two years before independence, the game was dominated by indigenous players and a team had competed in Fiji.²⁰⁹

The indigenous cultures of the island of New Guinea were subjected to a bewildering array of imperial influences. West Papua (Irian Jaya) was originally under the control of the Dutch but was claimed by Indonesia after the Second World War and annexed in 1963. Prompted by Australian fears of German expansion the southern coast of Eastern Papua was proclaimed the Protectorate of British New Guinea in 1884.²¹⁰ Germany annexed north-eastern New Guinea ten days later.²¹¹ British New Guinea was transferred to Australia in 1906 and renamed Papua. In 1914 Australian troops occupied German New Guinea and it came under Australian administration through a League of Nations mandate in 1920.²¹² The earliest permanent 'foreign settlers' in the eastern part of the island arrived in 1871. They were mission teachers sent from the Loyalty Islands, Rarotonga and Niue by the London Missionary Society (LMS).²¹³ The Methodist Mission established a strong presence from 1891.²¹⁴

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p.200

²⁰⁶ Donald Denoon, 'Land, Labour and Independent Development' in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, p.174.

²⁰⁷ Denoon, 'New Economic Orders: Land, Labour and Dependency', p.222.

²⁰⁸ Philip Snow, 'New Hebrides', *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.89.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ L.P. Mair, *Australia in New Guinea*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1970, p.11.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid., p.13.

²¹³ David Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891-1975*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 1996, p.xxi.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p.14.

It is the missionaries who are given the credit for introducing the game to Papua in the 1890s.²¹⁵ Cricket was seen as an alternative to ‘head-hunting’²¹⁶ and ‘sexual profligacy’.²¹⁷ Charles Abel, an influential LMS missionary, attempted to completely remove his converts from their cultural roots. He wanted to assimilate them ‘into the values and virtues of Europeans’.²¹⁸ Cricket formed a core part of this policy.²¹⁹ The first competition, held in 1937 in Port Moresby, capital of Papua, was mainly for Europeans.²²⁰ A racially mixed competition was not established until 1963.²²¹ By 1977 the national team was dominated by indigenous players and captained by one.²²² Papua New Guinea was a regular participant in the ICC Trophy competition since its inauguration in 1979. Its 1979 team contained only one European and was captained and managed by PNG nationals.²²³

The Pacific country which has shown the strongest interest in traditional cricket is Fiji. Fiji was ceded to Britain in 1874. The indigenous Fijians took to the game with exuberance and enthusiasm. Twenty years on, they were included in a team which toured New Zealand.²²⁴ In 1907 the chiefs of Bau, an important centre of political power, applied for permission to tour New South Wales with an indigenous team.²²⁵ The team’s success began a tradition of overseas tours and visits which encouraged reciprocatory visits from other countries. Cricket’s popularity waxed and waned throughout Fiji’s colonial history. It provided a meeting ground for indigenous and colonial cultural values with most of Fiji’s indigenous leaders involved in the game.

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²¹⁵ Philip Snow, ‘Papua New Guinea’, *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.100.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Wetherell, *Charles Abel*, p.49.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p.53.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p.50.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Snow, ‘Papua New Guinea’, p.100.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.28.

²²⁵ Ibid., p.51.

Although the acceptance or rejection of cricket by the ex-colonies of the British Empire was influenced by a wide range of variables, a number of common factors can be ascertained. These factors include:

- the structure of the pre-colonial society and culture
- the source of introduction of the game
- the type of education system
- the standing of the individuals who accepted the game
- the geographic and climatic conditions existing in the colony.

This chapter has provided an overview of the game of cricket and examined its history and development throughout the colonies of the British Empire. Used by the British as a civilising tool, cricket was intended to introduce their cultural mores and values to the colonised. The chapter established that cricket played a significant role in defining national identity in the test playing nations, and provided an avenue for retaining the coloniser's values within some of the non-test playing countries. However, in a number of the ex-colonies the game proved a vehicle for demonstrating the strength of the existing culture as cricket was adapted to fit local requirements.

In order to explore some of the issues raised in this chapter and the literature review with regard to the role cricket played in the non-test playing nations, the remainder of this thesis will trace the history of the game in Fiji in detail. The political history of Fiji, as it emerged as arguably the strongest Pacific Island nation-state outside Australia and New Zealand, furnishes an interesting example of nation building. A parallel comparison of the country's cricketing history with its political history will unearth the role that the game has played in melding national identity and reveal reasons why the game prospered in some colonies and not in others. To establish the background for the analysis, the next chapter will integrate the political and social history of Fiji with the history of cricket in that country.

*The willow and the palm:** Fijian Political and Cricket History



Suva v Nadi, Albert Park, Suva, October 1999.

Chapter Three

*I have borrowed this phrase from Philip Snow's work *The Years of Hope: Cambridge, colonial administration in the South Seas and cricket*, The Radcliffe Press, London, 1997, p. xviii. His use of the term to describe the connection between cricket and the colonial administration of Fiji is particularly apt and suitably poetic.

Half a world away from the green playing fields of England, cricket first took root in Fiji in 1874. Situated in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, astride the 180th meridian, Fiji consists of over 300 islands of which about one third are inhabited. Its landscape conjures up Western visions of paradise: azure blue seas, palm-fringed beaches, rugged mountains covered in lush tropical vegetation, clear mountain streams and wonderful waterfalls. The Fijians were known for their magnificent physiques and a predilection for cannibalism. Their reputation, expressed in the term Cannibal Islands, kept them isolated from European influence until the 19th century.

This chapter will provide an overview of the history of the islands of Fiji from the first contact with Europeans to independence in 1970. It will trace the history of cricket within the wider colonial experience of the Fijians, focusing on the introduction and spread of the game. The aim of the chapter is to establish the background for the analysis which follows. To this end it predominantly relies on collating secondary sources through integration of the memoirs of early administrators with more recent research. Fiji's situation as the most significant independent Pacific nation outside Australia and New Zealand and its recent turbulent political history has made it the focus of much academic attention. Its history has been told from many different perspectives providing a wealth of information and laying the groundwork for this study.

Abel Tasman, the Dutch explorer, visited the islands of northeastern Fiji in 1643. It was over one hundred years before the next European expedition reported on the group. In 1774 Captain James Cook's second expedition sailed through the Lau islands, the easternmost islands of the group. Lieutenant William Bligh passed through the group in 1789 on his epic voyage in a long boat after the mutiny on the *Bounty*. He returned to the group in 1792, confirmed his findings and added significantly to the charts of the area. Captain James Wilson in the *Duff* almost completed the charts in 1797 after delivering a group of missionaries to Tahiti.¹ This increased knowledge of the Islands paved the way for the advent of European traders, adventurers, and missionaries.

The new century saw the development of the sandalwood trade with ships coming from Sydney, India and America. The lucrative sandalwood supplies petered out within the

¹ Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, pp.34 & 36.

first two decades of the 1800s and were replaced by the more sustainable *beche-de-mer* trade.² Along with their commerce Europeans introduced disease and muskets, two elements which drastically altered the existing indigenous society. The European intruders were drawn into local politics and began to affect the balance of power in the region. With the arrival of the first missionaries in 1835 all the contending components of European influence were in place.³

At the time of contact, political power was concentrated in the hands of the Fijian chiefs of three main areas: Rewa, Verata, and Bau in the south-eastern corner of Viti Levu; the eastern Lau group of islands; Cakaudrove, Macuata, and Bua on Vanua Levu.⁴ These areas displayed a strong Polynesian influence with a highly structured patrilineal society. Power struggles revolved around complicated kinship arrangements. The first half of the 19th century witnessed continuous warfare between the various factions. Adding to the confusion was the presence of a well-established Tongan community. By 1848 this group was led by the Tongan prince, Ma'afu, who would become a powerful political force in Fiji. He gained power over the Lau group and seriously challenged the hegemony of Bau and its chief, Cakobau, over the rest of the Fiji islands.⁵ The situation deteriorated into a state of near anarchy by the middle of the century.

In 1849 Cakobau was under increasing pressure. He was held responsible for the destruction of the American Consul's home, burnt down during Fourth of July celebrations. Initially the damage was estimated at US\$5000 but this sum escalated to US\$43000 'when the claims of other American citizens were added'.⁶ Unable to pay this amount, in desperation Cakobau turned to the British consul, William Pritchard. Cakobau offered to cede Fiji to Britain in return for payment of the debt and confirmation of his title as Tui Viti, King of all Fiji. The British Government correctly questioned Cakobau's power to make this offer. Pritchard returned to Fiji and persuaded the other major Fijian chiefs to join Cakobau in making a second offer of cession to Britain.⁷ However, Britain was not interested in extending its Empire in the

² Denoon, 'Land, Labour and Independent Development' in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, p.157.

³ Linnekin, 'New Political Orders' in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, pp.185 – 217.

⁴ Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, p.53.

⁵ Ibid., p.131.

⁶ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.9.

⁷ J.D. Legge, *Britain in Fiji: 1858-1880*, Macmillan & Co Ltd., London, 1958, p.29.

Pacific and rejected the offer.⁸ It preferred to encourage 'a native government aided by the counsels of respectable Europeans'.⁹

With the growth of the European settler community it became increasingly evident that some form of legitimate government structure had to be put in place to ensure peace and security. The first experiments in self-government resulted in the formation of a series of confederacies. In 1865 an attempt was made to unite the whole of Fiji by constituting a General Assembly consisting of the seven strongest chiefs. Cakobau was elected as the first President with the position to be rotated yearly. However, he retained the position the following year and in 1867 Ma'afu broke away and two new confederacies were formed. The Lau Confederation consisted of the chiefs of Lau and Vanua Levu, and was controlled by Ma'afu, and the Kingdom of Bau united the chiefs of Viti Levu and Lomaiviti under Cakobau.¹⁰ Both of these chiefs had European 'advisers' who assisted them to draw up constitutions and institute a semblance of constitutional government.

Cakobau's American debt returned to haunt him in 1868 and the Melbourne-based Polynesian Company finally rescued him. It paid the debt in exchange for the 200000 acres of land originally promised to Britain. This event had far reaching consequences. The increased publicity brought an influx of settlers and by 1870 there were around 2000 Europeans in the islands.¹¹ This created a concomitant need for government authority over the white society. Britain continued to decline to intervene and a proposal by the Australian colonies to annex the islands was dismissed. Attempts to set up a local European administrative association were thwarted by 'the threat of war in Europe' and 'the collapse of the cotton market'.¹² In this anarchic atmosphere a group of Levuka merchants approached Cakobau in 1871 and offered to install him as King of Fiji, a title he had long coveted.¹³ Acting under the Constitution of 1867, Cakobau appointed an Executive Council composed of five Europeans and two native chiefs.¹⁴

⁸ Ibid., p.34.

⁹ Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, p.158. Derrick is quoting from the report of Colonel W.J. Smythe, the commissioner appointed by the British Government to investigate the offer of cession.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.158 - 59.

¹¹ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.10.

¹² Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, pp.196 - 99.

¹³ Ibid., p.201.

¹⁴ Legge, *Britain in Fiji*, p.78.

This government had no more success than its predecessors. The settlers resented the way in which it had taken office. It was soon attacked for ‘ineptness, corruption, and extravagance’.¹⁵ By March 1872 there was open rebellion against the ‘assumed authority’ of ‘a few British subjects forming the so-called Government of Fiji’.¹⁶ The situation deteriorated to the point where civil war was feared and on at least two occasions naval vessels intervened. On 31st January 1873, Cakobau’s government again approached Britain desiring ‘to place themselves under Her Majesty’s Rule’.¹⁷ Reluctantly the British Government agreed and on the 10th October 1874, Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor of New South Wales, formally accepted Fiji into the British Empire.¹⁸ Robinson assumed responsibility for the colony and set up an interim government before returning to Sydney.¹⁹

It was not until 1st September 1875 that the first Governor appointed by Britain arrived in Fiji. Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon (later the 1st Lord Stanmore) was an experienced administrator having governed New Brunswick (1861-6), Trinidad (1866-70), and Mauritius (1870-4). His administrative philosophy was to have long-lasting consequences for Fiji. By the time of his appointment Gordon had already established a reputation as a defender of indigenous people and their culture.²⁰ Writing to Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State, in August 1877, he expressed his concern for the indigenous Fijians:

If the Fijian population is ever permitted to sink from its present condition into that of a collection of migratory bands of hired labourers, all hope, not only of the improvement, but the preservation of the race, need inevitably be abandoned. This result would be one, in my opinion, disgraceful to our rule...²¹

In accordance with this sentiment he pursued a policy of ‘indirect rule’. This concept would later be developed and formulated by Lord Lugard and Sir Donald Cameron in Africa but in the 1870s its principles had not yet been considered. The primary aim of

¹⁵ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.11.

¹⁶ From a Manifesto issued on 1st March, 1872 and quoted in Legge, *Britain in Fiji*, p.84. See also Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.11.

¹⁷ Legge, *Britain in Fiji*, p.86.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.132. Legge argues that although the period between the request and the act saw a change of Government in Britain, from Gladstone’s Liberal government to Disraeli’s conservative Tory administration, the reluctance to take on further imperial responsibilities remained. There was also concern over the Pacific labour trade and the need to stamp it out.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.152.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.154.

colonial government was to provide a safe, secure environment for the economic benefit of the settlers.²² But Gordon's view was that 'the natives...are the people whose interests we have to consider...'.²³ This led him to develop a 'policy of supporting native institutions, law, and authority'.²⁴ He wanted to avoid imposing 'the alien values and procedures of western civilization'.²⁵ He took control of native affairs himself and endeavoured to work in harmony with the chiefs, upholding native organisation, custom and law. He formalised the "Great Council of Chiefs" or *Bose vaka Turaga*, instituting annual meetings and ensuring that its deliberations and decisions could gain the strength of law.²⁶ This benevolent, paternalistic approach to the development of native legislation was designed to protect the Fijians from Western cultural influence and preserve the perceived structure of the indigenous society.

As a direct result of this concern to retain the cultural integrity of the indigenous Fijians Gordon proposed and instigated the system of indentured Indian labour in 1879. The vexed question of a reliable source of labour for the planters had dogged the colony from the beginning. The infamous Pacific labour trade developed as a result of the settlers' inability to recruit sufficient reliable local labour. Social dislocation occurred as men were moved away from their villages to work in other districts. Legislation to curb abuse of the system and ensure fair treatment failed. Gordon was worried by the deterioration in native village life and feared the eventual destruction of the Fijian race.²⁷ He saw the introduction of Indian indentured labourers as a means of preventing this outcome and hoped that if the Fijians 'can get some 25 years for their civilization to grow and root itself firmly...they will hold their own without need of further adventitious help'.²⁸ Gordon wanted to procure them a breathing space to enter the modern world.

The Colonial Office sought to retain Gordon's influence when they appointed him Governor of New Zealand 'with supervision of native affairs in Fiji'.²⁹ Gordon was

²¹ Cited in J.K. Chapman, *The Career of Arthur Hamilton Gordon First Lord Stanmore: 1829-1912*, University of Toronto Press, Canada, 1964, p.182.

²² Legge, *Britain in Fiji*, pp.164-65.

²³ Cited in Chapman, *The Career of Arthur Hamilton Gordon*, p.183.

²⁴ Chapman, *The Career of Arthur Hamilton Gordon*, p.198.

²⁵ Legge, *Britain in Fiji*, p.165.

²⁶ Chapman, *The Career of Arthur Hamilton Gordon*, pp.192-93.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.217.

²⁸ Quoted in Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.16.

²⁹ Sir G. William des Voeux, *My Colonial Service in British Guiana, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Fiji, Australia, Newfoundland, and Hong Kong with Interludes*, Vol.2, John Murray, London, 1903, p.4.

followed by Sir G. William Des Voeux as Governor in 1881. Despite some reservations regarding Des Voeux, Gordon felt he was 'as resolved as I am myself to see that you (the Fijians) suffer no wrong or harm'.³⁰ Des Voeux himself 'thoroughly approved' Gordon's attitude to native policy.³¹ However, the clumsy arrangement did not prove successful and considerable acrimony resulted between the two men, but the underlying desire to protect Fijian society from change remained.

This official policy of cultural separation discouraged the conscious fostering of cultural change. Perhaps this attitude explains why no attempt appears to have been made to introduce cricket to the indigenous Fijians until the 1880s. The game was being played but only amongst the local white population and visiting ships' crews. Des Voeux is reported to have been a keen cricketer and takes credit for the game being introduced during his regime. It was first taught to the Armed Constabulary by his private secretary, Josceline George Herbert Amherst, who had played for the Harrow XI. When Amherst was obliged to leave Fiji for health reasons he was replaced by Edward Wallington (later Sir Edward Wallington), an Oxford Blue.³²

As the administrative bureaucracy spread throughout the new colony the game spread with it. Sir Basil Home Gordon Thomson arrived in 1884 and served among the hill tribes of the interior.³³ He mentions spraining an ankle during a match at Fort Carnarvon, which had been set up to control the rebellious tribes after an insurrection early in Governor Gordon's time.³⁴ He also gives an interesting account of a match played at Lomaloma in the Lau Group. It is worth quoting at length as it serves to demonstrate the importance the game had achieved within the local culture:

The island of Lakemba had sent a cricket team to play Lomaloma. The match was about even, and there was a large body of spectators from both islands to watch the second innings. Suddenly a messenger arrived from the beach and approached the Lakemba captain, who was bowling. I was near enough to over hear the conversation. The messenger had just landed from a fast-sailing cutter to bring the news of the sudden death of the chief's brother, who was the uncle of the Lakemba captain and of many of the native ladies assembled near the scoring table. The play stopped: the captain

³⁰ Chapman, *The Career of Arthur Hamilton Gordon*, p.226. Gordon was addressing his last *Bose vaka Turaga* (Great Council of Chiefs) meeting.

³¹ des Voeux, *My Colonial Service in British Guiana...*, p.4.

³² *Ibid.*, pp.88-89.

³³ Sir Basil Thomson was part of a commission appointed in 1893 to investigate the reasons for the decline in the indigenous Fijian population. He served in the Fijian administration before returning to England where he was governor of Dartmoor prison and later chief of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard.

³⁴ Sir Basil Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, inc., New York, 1937, p.64.

walked over to the group and gravely announced the news. “Will you weep now or wait till the innings is over?” he asked. The women consulted and said, “Go on with the match. We will do our weeping afterwards.” So back we went to play as if nothing had happened. When the last wicket had fallen, and I had almost forgotten the incident, a piercing wail broke from the scoring table. All the Lakemba women took it up. They were howling with open mouths; tears were rolling down their cheeks; they tore their hair and scratched their faces and breasts, and when the orgy of ceremonial grief seemed to be dying down from exhaustion a fresh shriek would set it all going again. I looked at the faces of their menkind; they were quite unconcerned and impassive, and so were those of the Lomaloma women. I met the mourners later in the afternoon; they were laughing and talking as usual, and there was nothing about them but the unhealed scratches to remind me of their tragic concession to ancient custom.³⁵

This incident occurred within five years of the game’s introduction, suggesting that it had spread rapidly among the indigenous peoples and had been readily absorbed into their cultural existence.

Adolph Brewster Joske (later Adolph Brewster Brewster) was stationed amongst the inland hill tribes of Colo North during the mid 1880s and records that a cricket match was part of the wedding celebrations of one of the Native Constabulary at Nadarivatu. As Philip Snow points out ‘here in this isolated hill station, the highest and a very inaccessible part of Fiji, the game had early come to be given a value and place in the celebration of events’.³⁶ Brewster reports another unusual development. The game became popular among the village youths in some of his districts and he willingly supported and encouraged it. However his suspicions were aroused by the bright new uniforms sported by the different clubs and the emphasis on insignia and rank. Further investigation found that the clubs were being used as a cover for sorcery ‘guilds’. Their activities extended to sedition, and an enforced jail sentence ended the enthusiasm for cricket.³⁷

Snow quotes an unnamed early writer regarding an undated incident from the same period that occurred on Vanua Levu. It shows ‘how near the surface lie passions that in olden days led to fierce, inter-tribal wars’.³⁸ A game between two rival tribes disintegrated into open hostility when the winners ‘flung taunts and jeers at the defeated team and told the Natewa men, who lost their temper over it, to go home and put up

³⁵ Ibid., p.49.

³⁶ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.14.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p.15.

their fighting fences'.³⁹ The teams took up their positions and full-scale war broke out with bad injuries incurred by both sides even though only 'fists and feet' were used.⁴⁰

By the last decade of the 19th century both the Fijians and the administration recognised the faults inherent in what had become known as the 'Gordon-Thurston system'.⁴¹ The effort to protect and conserve the Fijian community life style had confined the indigenous people to a narrowly defined existence hedged about with rules and regulations. Sir George O'Brien, Governor in 1897, defined the system as government 'by the Chiefs for the Chiefs'.⁴² In the best British tradition, the structure of the coastal society of the eastern islands of the group had been codified and imposed on the whole group. The emphasis on communal life prevented individuals from asserting themselves in any way including working for an independent income. The original power and authority exercised by the chiefs was intensified by legislation restricting any leeway that may have been present in the original system.

This comprehensive power centred in the person of the chief, influenced the native attitude to cricket. A powerful chief was believed to protect his team from defeat even if he was not playing. In keeping with the aristocratic tradition of the game, the chiefs would often bat for as long as they liked, refusing to be dismissed, and decline to participate in bowling or fielding. Their personal herald or ambassador barracked for them from amongst the spectators ensuring a suitably flattering commentary of their game.⁴³ Snow reports that a match at Somosomo on Taveuni was abandoned due to the high chief's displeasure at being bowled out on the first ball.⁴⁴ This deference to chiefly authority and communal disposition would have encouraged the acceptance of the team spirit promoted by cricket but discouraged individual achievement as a player.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Macnaught, *The Fijian Colonial Experience*, p.12. The reference to 'Thurston' comes from John Bates Thurston who, along with Gordon, was the architect of the system. Thurston first came to Fiji in 1865 as a castaway and played a leading role in local politics during the pre-session years. He and Gordon shared a common view, doubting the right of Europeans to change indigenous society and implementing legislation to preserve Fijian society as they understood it. (See Deryck Scarr, 'John Bates Thurston: Grand Panjandrum of the Pacific' in Deryck Scarr (Ed), *More Pacific Islands Portraits*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978.

⁴² Cited in Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.19.

⁴³ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, pp.15 - 16. Indian princes on the sub-continent behaved in a similar manner, only participating as batsmen and altering the rules to suit their own pleasure. (See Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p.25.)

⁴⁴ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.227.

The chiefs were the first exponents of the game. The political and social structure of both the British and Fijian societies encouraged contact with the chiefs rather than the ordinary Fijians. The chiefs were more likely to have come into contact with the government administrators. Accustomed to taking the lead, the chiefs were more inclined to experiment with new ideas and practices. The first cricket team to tour outside the country, to New Zealand in 1895, included five Fijians, all chiefs. The difficulty of obtaining permission for these young chiefs to leave the country and travel to New Zealand strikingly demonstrates the protective, paternalistic attitude of the European administration. At first permission was denied as the Governor felt that the tour would 'unsettle a great many people'. It was finally granted on the undertaking of Allardyce, the Colonial Secretary, that 'I may mention that Mr. Urdal and I have promised to take care of these young chiefs'.⁴⁵ Some of this hesitancy was justified. When Cakobau and his two sons travelled to Sydney, New South Wales, to formalise the cession arrangements, they contracted measles. Instead of being quarantined on their return, they were allowed to move freely amongst their people and the consequent outbreak of the disease killed over 40000 Fijians.⁴⁶ Of the players who finally toured New Zealand, three were officers in the Armed Native Constabulary.⁴⁷ This force appears to have served to bring ordinary Fijians into contact with the game. It was to members of this force that Amherst and Wallington first taught the game.

Dissatisfaction with the entrenched communal system continued to grow as the century drew to a close. Sir Henry Jackson, appointed as Governor in 1902, observed:

that there is pretty widespread feeling of unrest among the natives, and the desire for greater liberty for individual action...⁴⁸

The communal system was an intricate part of the fabric of Fijian society but it had to be modified to prevent exploitation of commoners by the chiefs (and others) and allow the individual to develop an independent existence. The laws which governed the Fijian's life were designed to prevent disruption of the existing pattern of village life as it was perceived at the time of cession. Communal obligations became law and to neglect them was an offence. The causes of the most abuse were 'the custom of *lala*,

⁴⁵ Quoted in Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.25.

⁴⁶ The outbreak and 'blame game' which followed can be traced in the *Fiji Times* beginning with the issue of 13 February 1875. By 24 February there were accusations of 'criminal neglect' and the first hints that Fijians were seeing the introduction of the disease as deliberate.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.25.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.19.

restrictions on contractual obligations between Fijians and non-Fijians, limits on the engagement of Fijian labor, and problems of land tenure'.⁴⁹

The custom of *lala* was the 'keystone' of the complex reciprocity agreement between chiefs and their people. Originally the people were dependent on their chiefs for their land and security. In return they supplied the chief with his food and property, either directly or through their labour. After cession and the implementation of the colonial administration, obvious dependence on the chiefs for physical well-being was lessened but he still represented the group and bore the responsibility and expense of entertaining visitors.⁵⁰ Therefore, the Native Regulations ensured that the chief's *lala* rights were protected. The problem was that *lala* was utilised by others, including the missionaries, 'to obtain cheap labor under the guise of fulfilling customary obligation'.⁵¹ Legislation began to dismantle the custom in 1905 and in 1912 Fijians were finally given the right to disobey their chiefs regarding the practice.⁵²

The Fijian's right to trade and work was also circumscribed by legislation. Non-Fijians were heavily penalised if they entered into contracts with Fijians above a small amount. The laws were conceived in the light of the paternalistic view of the Fijian as 'impressionable, fickle, and with little or no firmness of character or forethought'.⁵³ The regulations extended to the recruitment of Fijian workers. Employers required licenses and permission had to be obtained from the *buli*, or native administrator, before a worker could be engaged. The fear was that the indiscriminate migration of men from their villages to places of work would result in neglected families and gardens.⁵⁴

The other problem that was causing more and more concern within the maturing colony was the issue of land. The original clause in the Deed of Cession reads:

That the absolute proprietorship of all lands not shown to be now alienated so as to have become bona fide the property of Europeans or other foreigners or not now in the actual

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.20.

⁵⁰ Macnaught, *The Fijian Colonial Experience*, pp.38 – 9. Macnaught quotes David Wilkinson, long time resident of Fiji and a member of Gordon's original administration, who wrote in 1875 that *lala* was 'the keystone of the Chief's government and authority over his people, the channel through which comes his "sinews of war" in times of trouble; and his "ways and means" in times of peace.'

⁵¹ Lal., p.21.

⁵² Macnaught, pp.38–48.

⁵³ Cited in Lal, p.26. Lal is citing W.L. Allardyce, Colonial Secretary, in a memo to the governor in 1901.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.27.

use or occupation of some Chief or tribe or not actually required for the probable future support and maintenance of some chief or tribe shall be and is hereby declared to be vested in Her said Majesty her heirs and successors.⁵⁵

Gordon had broadly interpreted this clause to allow the Fijians to retain ownership of all 'wasteland'. The legality of this interpretation was questioned by Governor im Thurn (1904-1908). After lengthy debate the Colonial Office conceded the point but decided that:

The course of events during the last 30 years has rendered it impossible for the Government of Fiji to adopt any position other than that the waste lands of Fiji must continue to be regarded as the property of the natives as much as the occupied land.⁵⁶

This decision brought strong condemnation from the European settlers and the growing Indian community.

Amidst this atmosphere of change and uncertainty, cricket was becoming more important to the indigenous Fijians. The tour of New Zealand had sparked interest in the game. Its potential as an avenue for international travel was recognised. The chiefs who had participated in the New Zealand tour were eager to impart their knowledge of the game and set about teaching and coaching other young men. Inter-district matches became popular. Further impetus was given to the game by the first visit of an overseas team in 1905. The Australian test side called at Suva on their way to England.⁵⁷ The team that was mustered to meet them included six Fijians, all from Bau. Bau's pre-eminence in the political arena asserted itself on the cricket pitch. It was the Bauan chiefs who proposed the ambitious idea of sending the first team of indigenous players to Australia. There was only one European in the team which toured Australia in 1907-08 and all of the Fijians could claim chiefly status.⁵⁸ The majority of the Fijians took to the field in traditional *meke*, or dance, costume. Playing in bare feet, they proved a popular, profitable attraction for the cricket clubs they visited.

This tentative exploration of the outside world by indigenous Fijians was strengthened during the second decade of the 20th century. The expansion of their experience

⁵⁵ Clause 4 of the Deed of Cession, a copy of which is appended to Derrick, *A History of Fiji*.

⁵⁶ Cited in Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.32.

⁵⁷ Snow, *Cricket in Fiji*, p.47

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.51-2. This tour caused some controversy in Australia. The Australian Board of Control argued that it would breach the White Australia Policy. The Melbourne Cricket Club intervened and said they would host the tour if the national body would not. (Richard Cashman, 'Cricket' in *Sport in Australia: a social history*, Wray Vamplew and Brian Stoddart (Eds), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, p.71.)

through education abroad and travel brought a new awareness of their impotent political position. The political polarisation between the Melanesian-derived inland and western tribes and the Polynesian coastal and eastern groups continued to widen. Discontent with British colonial rule gathered strength amongst the former while the latter tended to support the existing regime. The chiefs of the Serua and Namosi areas had supported moves for federation with New Zealand at the turn of the century.⁵⁹ Influential leaders were emerging in both areas and from the Indian community. They began to focus the unrest and organise the growing political consciousness of the diverse groups.

In Fijian society it was the debate over the breakdown of the communal lifestyle and a move towards individualism which was the major source of conflict. One of those leading the push for 'economic development and personal autarchy' was Apolosi Nawai.⁶⁰ He came from the western area around Nadi and attempted to cajole, inspire and bully his countrymen into becoming economically independent. He set up the Viti Company and attempted to compete on the open market with established colonial growers. Although appearing something of a charlatan, his sincere desire to improve the lives of Fijians is not doubted.⁶¹ His strident criticisms were aimed not only at the Government and the Indians, but at the Fijian chiefs who he proclaimed were exploiting their own people. He was eventually silenced by exile to Rotuma, New Zealand and finally the remote islands in the east.⁶²

It was during this period that the man who is credited with having the most influence on Fiji's developing national identity first came to the fore. Ratu (later Sir) Lala Sukuna pioneered the way for Fijians in the outside world. Educated in New Zealand, he was sent to Oxford in 1913, the first Fijian to be given this opportunity. Caught up in the outbreak of World War I, he was ineligible to join the British army because of his colour so proceeded to France and joined the French Foreign Legion. Awarded the *Medaille Militaire* he was repatriated in 1916 and took up a cadetship in the colonial administration. His worldly experiences only served to strengthen his belief in the entrenched 'Fijian way'. He supported the original intention of British rule to preserve

⁵⁹ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.37.

⁶⁰ Deryck Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna: soldier, statesman, man of two worlds*, Macmillan Education Limited for the Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna Biography Committee, London, 1980, p.46.

⁶¹ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.50.

⁶² Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*, p.48. It is interesting that in the angry rhetoric after George Speight's *coup d'etat* in May 2000, talk of the Western provinces ceding from the Eastern provinces of Fiji resurfaced. The

the Fijian communal existence and deplored the trends to dismantle the system. He felt that the Native Policy then current was undermining the autocracy without understanding the full implication of its destruction. It was only the autocracy who 'had been in the habit of exercising the mind' and would be able to cope with individualism.⁶³ His own case would appear to support his theory. He returned to England in 1919, completed his degree, read law at the Middle Temple and was called to the Bar in 1921.

The Indian community was finding its political voice. The last indentured labourers arrived in 1916 and all remaining indentures were cancelled on 1st January 1920. A Suva based group of Indian men contacted Mahatma Gandhi and asked him to send an English-educated lawyer to Fiji to help the Indians. Manilal Maganlal Doctor answered the call and arrived in late 1912. A left-wing Indian nationalist, he had been an activist in Mauritius. He fought for better social conditions and political representation, wrote for the bilingual English-Hindi newspaper, *The Indian Settler*, and strengthened the British Indian Association of Fiji.⁶⁴ His work laid the foundation for the future political involvement of Indians in Fijian government.

World War I, fought in the middle of the decade, hastened the disintegration of Fiji's protected society. After his repatriation in 1916, Sukuna trained and led a force of one hundred volunteers, known as the Fiji Labour Corps, to work on the docks in France.⁶⁵ Fijians joined the New Zealand forces and saw action in Europe and the Pacific. However, the support for the War further emphasised the political divide. Broadly speaking the Eastern provinces were pro-British and raised large sums of money for the war effort. The Western provinces, who had supported Apolosi Nawai and his Viti Company, rejoiced in rumours of British defeat and German victories.⁶⁶ The Indians, like the Fijians, were prevented from seeing active service.⁶⁷

Cricket continued to play a significant role in this interaction with the outside world. Members of the Australian team returning from a tour of England stopped in Suva in

political divide between east and west is deeply rooted and still exists. (See Murray Mottram, 'Same again in Fiji as day 21 unfolds', *The Age* 9 June 2000, p.11)

⁶³ Cited in Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*, p.49.

⁶⁴ K.L. Gillion, *Fiji's Indian Migrants: a history to the end of indenture in 1920*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1962, pp.158-159.

⁶⁵ Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*, p.53.

⁶⁶ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.55.

November 1912. The team that was mustered to play them was composed of Europeans, although Ratu Pope was originally selected to play. He played the following year in a game organised against the Australian team on its way to Canada. The game's popularity and progress was enhanced by the donation, in early 1914, of the Dewar Shield. It became the focus of intense competition between the provinces, being viewed as 'a shrine of the general honour of the province'.⁶⁸

As in many of the colonies, cricket was one of the few areas where the different races met socially. Indians had not begun to participate in the game at this stage, but Fijians and Europeans shared a love of the game. Social separation was insisted on by Europeans. Legislation ensured that white enclaves were maintained in municipal areas. Education was strictly segregated. Not only Fijians and Indians but part-Europeans as well were banned from the government-aided schools.⁶⁹ As the trickle of overseas-educated young men began to permeate the social fabric of Fiji they made small inroads on these barriers. They were introduced to cricket at their public schools and played in mixed teams. Members of the Native Constabulary met their superiors on equal terms on the cricket field. The Dewar Shield was won by Bau one year and taken from them by the Commercial Cricket Club (CCC) the next. The Bau players were Fijians, while the CCC players were drawn from the commercial houses of Suva.⁷⁰ Whether the teams were mixed or composed of a single race the cricket match was a source of more familiar social intercourse than allowed elsewhere in Fijian society.

The decade ended on a sombre note. The influenza epidemic that swept the world took a heavy toll in Fiji.

Eighty percent of all Fijians and Indians and 40 percent of the Europeans in the islands were infected, and 8,149 deaths were reported. Among the dead were 5,154 Fijians (5.66 percent of the Fijian population), 2,553 Indians (4.17 percent), 69 Europeans (1.4 percent), 76 part-Europeans (2.75 percent), and 293 others (6.93 percent).⁷¹

To make the situation worse, those in the prime of life, between fifteen and forty-five, were most susceptible. Politically and socially the epidemic reinforced the existing splits in society. Old hostilities and prejudices manifested themselves with help being

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.47.

⁶⁸ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, pp.89 - 92.

⁶⁹ Lal, *Broken Waves*, pp.34-5.

⁷⁰ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.93.

⁷¹ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.57.

withheld from or refused to old antagonists. With some justification, the Indian community claimed it had been neglected. The advocates for the retention of the Fijian communal system maintained that the system had prevented the death rate among Fijians from being even higher.⁷²

In spite of this devastating epidemic, the 1920s and 30s witnessed a steady growth in population in all sectors of the community, precipitating dynamic changes in Fijian society. The final abolition of the Indian indentured labour system and a major restructuring of the sugar industry hastened these changes. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) secured a monopoly on the processing of cane and divested itself of its large plantations, replacing them with a smallholding system. However, any apparent freedom that this gave the Indo-Fijian tenants was illusory as the Company still kept strict control of the growing conditions and pricing. Lal notes that this restructuring caused a demographic shift of the European settlers into 'urban centers and into civil service or commercial employment'.⁷³ Attempts to diversify the economy and relieve the dependence on the sugar industry were crushed by a combination of the worldwide depression of the late 1920s and a series of hurricanes and floods that devastated many of the islands.⁷⁴

Dissatisfaction with and disagreement over the protection and preservation of the communal Fijian way of life intensified. The communal system was breaking down as Fijians were recruited to work away from their villages. The steady increase of the Indo-Fijian population and the growing strength of part-Europeans exacerbated racial tension. Greater urbanisation increased social problems. There was concern that the Fijian was becoming an anachronism and being left behind economically.⁷⁵ Some incremental changes were made towards encouraging individualism but the conservative element within both the Great Council of Chiefs and the Administration held sway and calls for more liberal measures were ignored.

⁷² Ibid., p.58.

⁷³ Ibid., p.61.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.62.

⁷⁵ Lal cites Acting Governor T.E. Fell who, writing in 1922, speaks of the Fijian as having been 'preserved as a somewhat attractive and picturesque figure in an atmosphere of communalism, and has changed apparently little since the "conquest" of Fiji by the missionaries, and the inauguration of vernacular schools.' p.68.

The political awareness that began to manifest itself in the disparate racial communities developed tangible forms. The 'Young Fijian Society', *Viti Cauravou*, emerged in 1923. Originally set up as an 'old boys' club for former pupils of the Methodist Mission's technical school at Davuilevu by the headmaster, R.A. Derrick, membership was later expanded. By 1933 it was controlled entirely by young Fijians. According to a report to the Colonial Officer the aims of the society were:

to encourage co-operation amongst the Fijians for their common benefit; to stimulate agriculture and the better use of native lands; to provide assistance in securing better facilities for education; to promote individual effort; to refrain, as a Society, from entering into commercial undertakings; and to maintain steadfast loyalty to the Government.⁷⁶

The report noted that the society was composed of young men with little or no chiefly standing and it was seen as a healthy political development, allowing the younger generation to express some opposition to the existing power base. Meanwhile the proportion of Indians born in Fiji and thinking of themselves as Indo-Fijians was increasing. Free of many of the societal constraints of their parents, they had a more individual and independent outlook and expected greater political participation. Another element of tension was added with the arrival of free immigrants from India. These immigrants competed economically with the existing Indo-Fijian community and imported their own political divisions from the subcontinent.⁷⁷ Hindu-Muslim rivalry was inflamed.

The push to expand the franchise for both municipal and Legislative Council elections reflected these tensions. The franchise was restricted to Europeans despite the fact that non-Europeans outnumbered Europeans and 'paid a substantial proportion of municipal taxes'.⁷⁸ The efforts of the Indo-Fijians to gain voting rights were opposed by both the Europeans and the Fijians. Although elements of the Fijian community wanted to see the franchise expanded there was a general fear that a common franchise would empower the Indo-Fijians and disadvantage the Fijians. The Fijian position found unexpected support amongst the Muslim community 'whose distrust of Hindus outweighed their suspicion of Europeans'.⁷⁹ Changes were made to the composition of the Legislative Council: the Fijians and Indo-Fijians were allocated three seats each and

⁷⁶ CO83 203/19.

⁷⁷ Lal, *Broken Waves*, pp.75-7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.87.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.93.

the European representation was reduced from seven to six seats.⁸⁰ But the Colonial Office evoked the principles of the Deed of Cession and resolutely refused to consider a common franchise.

Education became another common point of discontent. Access to education for non-Europeans remained limited. The government preferred to leave the responsibility for education in the hands of the missionaries. Demands by both Fijians and Indo-Fijians for access to an English-language system of education were rebuffed. Education for both groups was still vocationally based and opportunities for higher education were almost non-existent.

New pressure was brought to bear on the question of land tenure. European settlers were calling for the release of land for sale and many of the Fijian chiefs supported this idea. The Indo-Fijians were looking for secure leases and wanted the leasing system streamlined. The Colonial Office rejected the idea of selling Fijian land but began to take steps to reform the leasing system, which was open to abuse.

The deepening racial compartmentalisation of Fijian society was reflected in its cricket teams. The concentration of population encouraged by urbanisation allowed single race competitions to flourish in larger centers such as Suva and Lautoka. In country areas the different races might mingle but not in the towns. This was evidenced when New Zealand toured Fiji in 1924. The 'Fijian' teams that met them were composed of Europeans. The only game against indigenous Fijians was a 'single-innings festival match, dominated by the hospitality rather than the cricket' played on the island of Bau.⁸¹ This segregation of players has been identified as one of the reasons for the lack of progress in developing a higher standard of play in Fiji.⁸² There was no opportunity for the best players from both races to sharpen each other's skills.

The Indian population had evinced no interest in the game up until the 1930s. As indentured labourers they would not have had the opportunity to participate in this type of social activity. Considering the game's popularity in their native land it seems unusual that they did not make some attempt to follow the local game and to become

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.91.

⁸¹ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, pp.100 - 102.

⁸² Ibid., p.103.

involved once their indentures were lifted. Several suggestions have been put forward to explain this lack of interest. Snow maintains that the Indian and Indo-Fijian community was completely 'engrossed in commercial and agricultural pursuits' with no time for the game. The original labourers were 'old, non-athletic, illiterate peasant types' who 'did not in some cases know of the existence of such a game until after some years in Fiji.'⁸³ Although this hypothesis may have some basis in fact, it demonstrates the British colonial perspective towards the Indo-Fijian population. Perhaps any Indians or Indo-Fijians contemplating cricket as a pursuit would have been alienated by the attitude held by Snow and his colleagues.

Another consideration is the timeframe for the game on the subcontinent. Cricket was an elite sport in India until the 20th century and only emerged as a national sport in the 1920s and 30s. Even then, it remained an urban rather than a rural sport and did not reach a mass audience until the advent of modern media coverage during the 1930s. It is unlikely that the Indians who came out under the indenture scheme would have had any exposure to the game in India. They were rural labourers from the lowest levels of society. Their physically demanding existence and lack of political identity and recognition appears to have contributed to their lack of participation.⁸⁴

The Dewar Shield was donated to the Suva Cricket Club by Sir Thomas R. Dewar, J.P., D.L. (later Lord Dewar) in 1914. The competition for the Shield in the 1930s demonstrates the gradual break down of the old hierarchical society. The island of Bau, dominated by the regal descendants of Cakobau, held the Shield predominantly between 1914 and 1932. In 1932 the town of Nadi won the Shield and kept it for twelve years. The Nadi players were considered 'a lowly set of commoners' with no rank.⁸⁵ A combination of gifted players and difficult playing conditions aided Nadi to retain the Shield. Their confidence grew with each passing year and the contest became 'not a cricket struggle but an issue of provincial honour'.⁸⁶ Members of this team made up the bulk of the Northern Districts Fijian team that inflicted the first defeat on a visiting New Zealand team in 1936.⁸⁷

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ This topic is discussed more fully in Chapter 7, 'A game, is a game, is a game?'

⁸⁵ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, pp.92-3 & 106.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.107.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 118.

This New Zealand team calling themselves the Maorilanders was composed of representatives drawn from New Zealand University teams and toured over the period from late 1935 to early 1936. In contrast to the earlier tour by New Zealand in 1924, this tour saw much more participation by indigenous players in the Fijian teams. Fijian players came from all over the island group and nearly all the teams which met the New Zealanders were mixed. The standard of play had improved dramatically and lent credence to advocates of interracial matches and teams. Calls for these type of matches and teams were heeded and, despite some opposition, the European and part-European Suva Cricket Club and the Fijian and Indian United Cricket Association were combined in 1939.⁸⁸ It was 'the first nationwide multiracial sporting organization in Fiji's history'⁸⁹ and cricket became 'the only game in which all the races [had] regular intercourse'.⁹⁰

The outbreak of World War II triggered a resurgence of patriotic emotions among indigenous Fijians. The bombing of Pearl Harbour by the Japanese in December 1941 precipitated the Pacific Islands into the war arena. The consequent influx of American, New Zealand and Australian servicemen brought much of Fijian society into direct contact with the modern world for the first time. The outcome was an increasingly aware and sophisticated society and a deepening and hardening of the existing racial barriers.

A number of events and situations contributed to this process. Indo-Fijians were discouraged from active service. They demanded conditions of service equal to European soldiers if they were to serve the empire overseas. The government refused to countenance the suggestion. There was a reluctance to give 'Indo-Fijians any military training' for fear of the future consequences.⁹¹ There was a general suspicion of their loyalty due to the nationalist movements on the subcontinent and there were also doubts expressed about their ability to make good soldiers. The CSR, which controlled the Fiji economy, did not want to see its workforce reduced. The initiation of a 'major strike in the sugar industry in 1943' added to the general distrust of the Indo-Fijian community's

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.110 & 124.

⁸⁹ Philip Snow, *The Years of Hope: Cambridge, colonial administration in the South Seas and cricket*, The Radcliffe Press, London, 1997, p.246.

⁹⁰ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.124.

⁹¹ Lal, *Broken Waves*, pp.120–21.

loyalties.⁹² Despite these unfavourable conditions many of the Indo-Fijians expressed a desire to help the war effort and some took the same course that Fijians had taken in World War I. They went to New Zealand and enlisted in the Maori regiments.⁹³

On the other hand the indigenous Fijians were enthusiastically encouraged by both their own leaders and the colonial government to support the war effort. They acquitted themselves well on the battlefield and, like many other colonial countries, saw their performance as proof of measuring up to the standards set by their colonisers. Warfare had played a dominant role in Fijian culture in the past and was eagerly accepted as a chance for young men to demonstrate their 'physical prowess'.⁹⁴ Urged on by their chiefs they saw it as a matter of 'honour and pride' to represent their villages and districts.⁹⁵ The effort was tinged with disappointment after the war when Fijian soldiers were demobilised and did not receive due recognition and compensation.⁹⁶ However, Fijian leaders felt that their country had benefited by the sacrifice of their young men. Sukuna attributed improved health facilities directly to the help given to the Empire in its time of need.⁹⁷

The formation of the Native Land Trust Board in 1940 appeared to settle the problem of native land. The Board was chaired by the governor and included the secretary for Fijian affairs, a Fijian nominated by the governor, and the directors of Department of Land and of Agriculture. The Board took over sole responsibility for administering all Fijian land. In 1944 the Fijian Affairs Board was formed as the executive and administrative arm of the Great Council of Chiefs. The Great Council of Chiefs was expanded later in the decade and restructured to consolidate indigenous authority at all levels of government.⁹⁸ This allowed the enforcement of the Native Regulations formulated by the Fijian Affairs Board and ensured the continuation of the communal lifestyle of the Fijian, but this lifestyle was the static interpretation of the traditional way of life of only a section of the peoples of the island group. The increased contact

⁹² Ibid., pp.122–25.

⁹³ Ibid., p.121.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.117–18.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.119.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.118.

⁹⁷ Lal cites Sukuna's address to the Great Council of Chiefs in 1945 where he said:

'All these things have come to pass because you [chiefs] provided manpower for the war effort and in memory of those who lost their lives in action', p.120.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.134 & 137.

with the outside world engendered by the war inevitably caused growing frustration with the old way among Fijians.

The opportunity to compete against top players from New Zealand stationed in Fiji with the Pacific forces greatly benefited local Fijian cricketers. In 1941 the various clubs and associations outside Suva formed the Fiji Country Cricket Association to promote the game and organise an inter-district championship.⁹⁹ This in turn encouraged the setting up of more district clubs. These efforts brought results in terms of increased participation and standard of play despite the difficulties caused by wartime rationing and restrictions. Strong indigenous players from among the rank and file began to appear especially around Nadi. Indian players began to make their mark for the first time, particularly in Lautoka. The Fijian team that met New Zealand Forces in a match at Lautoka in 1942 included Europeans, indigenous Fijians from all over Fiji, and the first Indian player to appear in a representative team.¹⁰⁰

In 1946 the Fiji Cricket Association was established with the governor as patron and Ratu Sir Sukuna as president. Its immediate purpose was to organise a tour to New Zealand in 1948. It was over forty years since a team had toured overseas. It was hoped the tour would boost the game in Fiji and provide the players with much needed experience. Sukuna's support and active campaigning ensured the success of the enterprise. The representative team that took the field in New Zealand acquitted itself well. It defeated two of New Zealand's first class teams and was compared favourably to first class teams throughout the world.

Although they played the traditional game well the indigenous Fijian players had 'customised' the game. They continued to play in *sulu* and bare feet. The ceremonial drinking of *yaqona* before each game was extremely important to them. Ever popular with the public, they entertained the large crowds who watched their matches with singing before and after the matches. Several of the players spoke little or no English and Fijian was the accepted language both on and off the field.¹⁰¹ The two-month tour provided the first contact for the majority of the Fijians with a predominantly white, industrial society with its inherent attractions and dangers.

⁹⁹ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.129.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.131-33.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp.163 & 169.

It was perhaps appropriate that the team returned to Fiji, not by boat, but by aircraft. The process of modernisation begun by World War II was gathering momentum and Fiji was being plunged into the twentieth century. Unprecedented development saw the breaking down of the barriers of distance and communication. Nadi an international airport in 1950 and an internal airline was formed in 1954. A public transport system was established and radio broadcasting reinforced the existing media influence of the newspapers. Fiji was becoming a popular tourist stopover with all the underlying ramifications regarding contact and development. Other sports followed cricket's lead and established 'colony-wide multiracial' competitions.¹⁰²

This increased pace of development only served to exacerbate the ethnic and racial tensions underlying Fijian society. During World War II the Indo-Fijian population came to outnumber the Fijian population. This triggered fear among the Fijians and contributed to an acrimonious debate in the Legislature regarding the responsibility to preserve Fiji for the Fijians. The motion put by A.A. Ragg to the Legislative Council in July 1946 stated:

The time has arrived in view of the great increase in the non-Fijian inhabitants and its consequential political development to emphasise the terms of the Deed of Cession to assure that the interests of the Fijian race are safeguarded and a guarantee be given that Fiji is to be preserved and kept as a Fijian country for all time.¹⁰³

Various far-fetched schemes to repatriate the Indo-Fijians were mooted with apparent seriousness. This transferred the fear to the Indo-Fijian community and served to further increase tensions. The other side of the debate focused attention on the inadequacy of the communal system to prepare Fijians for life in modern society. The government finally took action by setting up two commissions of inquiry: 'One to examine the problems of the colony as a whole and another to dissect the social and economic problems facing the Fijian community in particular'.¹⁰⁴

In 1952 Fijians were again called on to defend the Empire, this time fighting the communist insurgents in Malaysia. Indo-Fijians were not accepted for service. Young Fijian men were encouraged by their chiefs to serve. Again war provided sporting

¹⁰² Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.152.

¹⁰³ Quoted in Lal, p.140.

¹⁰⁴ Lal., *Broken Waves*, p.149.

opportunities with at least Fijians playing cricket for Negri Sembilan State against Perak in 1952.¹⁰⁵ They added to their established record as excellent soldiers, gaining an impressive medal haul.¹⁰⁶ However, it has been argued that these young men nevertheless missed out on opportunities to become part of the economic progress that characterised the 1950s in Fiji.¹⁰⁷

This progress within the professional and economic arenas was boosted by long overdue changes in the education system. These changes began as the result of the Stephens Report in 1944. Some of the Report's recommendations included:

the expansion and improvement of educational facilities, greater government involvement in educational administration, improved training of teachers, and their absorption into the civil service.¹⁰⁸

Access to English language education and higher education, including opportunities to study overseas, granted young Fijians from all ethnic groups opportunities to participate in the future of their country. They would become better equipped to become role models and leaders.¹⁰⁹

During this period cricket stagnated. The 1948 tour of New Zealand did not give cricket the boost it was hoped it would. Philip Snow, a driving force behind the game, left Fiji in 1951. The weather continued to prove an impediment to the advancement of the game, but the decade still contained some important milestones. The encouragement of inter-district competition was enhanced by the donation of the Crompton Cup in 1951 and the Narsey Cup in 1953. The Triangular Tournament Trophy was dropped in the 1950s because 'it was felt that matches based on racial groupings were not in the best interest of the game'.¹¹⁰ Yet according to a chronicler of Fijian cricket, the standard of play on another tour to New Zealand in 1954 revealed 'the lack of depth in Fiji cricket and the lack of younger players.'¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Philip Snow, 'A Century in the Fiji Islands', *Wisdom Cricketers' Almanack*, 1974, p.126.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.149.

¹⁰⁷ Lal points to the discrepancy between professionally qualified Indo-Fijians and Fijians by 1958: no Fijian lawyers, one dentist, one doctor; thirty-eight Indo-Fijian lawyers, twelve doctors, eight dentists. p.151.

¹⁰⁸ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.158-159.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.163.

¹¹⁰ Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket 1950-1974*, p.46.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.5.

As detailed in the Prologue, the beginning of 1956 brought one of Fijian cricket's most memorable matches. This light hearted game against an under strength West Indian test side, demonstrated the broadening exposure Fiji was experiencing. The process that began with the Second World War accelerated and the forced modernisation brought with it signs of growing political awareness among ordinary Fijians. There was also evidence of inter-racial cooperation to bring about political change. Strike action was becoming more common and, by the middle of the decade, an umbrella organisation, the Fijian Industrial Workers' Congress, was appealing for a unified racial front to fight for better conditions. A strike by the Wholesale and Retail General Workers' Union against the Shell Oil and Vacuum Oil companies in 1959 boiled over into violent riots in Suva after it was perceived that the government was supporting the Company. The union was inter-racial and its executive reflected this.

Fijian and Indo-Fijian leaders were called on to address the strikers and their sympathizers at Albert Park after a night of violence.¹¹² Fijian leaders were shocked at the apparent anti-European focus of the violence and called on Fijians to remember what they owed the Europeans. Lal cites the Fijian politician, Semesa Sikivou:

I am ashamed to see what we Fijians have done. We have a reputation in sports, in games and in war, but what has happened now has brought about a black mark which will stand forever. I am sad to see that some Fijians have fought the very ones they have given their protection to. I never dreamt that I would live to see the day on which a Fijian would stone the white men, to whom the Fijians' forefathers ceded this country. Let me make it clear to you. Those people of Britain are your best friends. They are your best neighbours. They are the ones closest to us and the ones who stand to help us. I warn you: be very, very careful. Do not accept any advice that comes to you from foreign people.¹¹³

Six months later the sugar cane farmers again resorted to strike action against the CSR. The renegotiation of the ten-year contract was at the heart of the problem, as it had been in 1949. A consequent commission of inquiry into the industry headed by Sir Malcolm Trustram Eve, QC, came down heavily on the side of the Company, generating more unrest.¹¹⁴ The seriousness of the problem brought limited cooperation between the Fijian and Indo-Fijian cane farmers' organisations. The various associations formed the Federation of Cane Growers Association in 1959 but its attempts at a united front were short-lived.

¹¹² Lal, *Broken Waves*, pp.165–66.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.168-69.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.172 & 177.

While Fijian society's growing instability was beginning to give its leaders cause for alarm, the British government was preparing to divest itself of its remaining colonies, including Fiji. Despite strident opposition from Fijian leaders, moves towards self-government and independence were instigated. Indo-Fijians welcomed these moves but British rule had entrenched the power of the eastern chiefs and the withdrawal of the colonial administration could undermine their authority. In preliminary moves to sort out Fiji's problems and find solutions the government set up two commissions of inquiry.

In 1958 Professor O.H.K. Spate of the Australian National University was appointed to determine the connections between the indigenous Fijians' lack of economic progress and commercial involvement, and their communal life style. His findings confirmed that the traditional way of life needed to be modified, and Fijians released from their 'economic, social, and political isolation' if they were to take their place in the modern world. Other academics and the government backed up his views and recommendations.¹¹⁵ The second commission, headed by Sir Alan Burns, a former governor of Nigeria, was intended to encompass a broader survey of the colony and address issues regarding 'population trends and natural resources'.¹¹⁶ The commission's recommendations regarding the continuing questions of land ownership and immigration were accepted. It reinforced Spate's recommendations regarding the need to encourage independent Fijian farmers and 'promote agricultural development in the colony'. However, there were reservations about its recommendations to modify the Fijian administrative structure.¹¹⁷

As Fiji entered the 1960s the debate over constitutional change and the path to self-government intensified. Europeans and Indo-Fijians in the Legislative Council supported the proposed changes but the Fijians 'expressed deep apprehension.' Ratu Mara, who had emerged as the strongest of the post-Sukuna leaders, justified their fear by pointing to the problems that had arisen in other ex-colonies. When the Fijian leaders accepted the inevitability of change they prepared a formal statement setting out

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp.180 & 182.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.184.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.185.

the ‘preconditions for constitutional negotiations.’¹¹⁸ They did not wish the link between themselves and the British monarch to be severed, but rather wanted this ‘special relationship between Fiji and the United Kingdom’ to be ‘clarified and codified along the lines of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man’. Anxious to maintain Fiji as a Christian state and to retain control over Fijian land and affairs, they were insistent ‘that the initiative for any constitutional change should come from them’.¹¹⁹

As a first step towards self-government the first election conducted under a universal adult franchise was called in 1963. The rash of fledgling political parties that contested the election were mostly formed along racial lines. In the new Legislative Council the governor retained overall authority but the responsibility for the administration of Fiji passed to three elected members of the Legislative Council, one from each major ethnic group.¹²⁰ After the election there were calls for the formation of a multi-racial political party to promote the concept of a unified nation moving towards independence.¹²¹ Meanwhile pressure was being brought to bear on Britain to hasten the process of decolonisation.¹²² Russia and several independent African and Asian nations raised the matter in the United Nations General Assembly. Fijian leaders resented this interference.

A Constitutional Conference was scheduled for 1965 in London. Members of the Legislative Council held some informal discussions leading up to the conference and came to some agreement on the issues to be raised. However, the general feeling of distrust and division between the Fijians and Indo-Fijians, particularly surrounding changes to voting methods, increased in the community. These fears proved to be unfounded. The outcome of the conference favoured the Fijians ensuring their

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp.187–88.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.189.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp.190–91. They were: A.D. Patel (Indian) responsible for Social Services (education, medical services, correctional services, labor, social welfare); Ratu Mara (Fijian) responsible for Natural Resources (agriculture, land, forests, fisheries, minerals, cooperatives); John Falvey (European) responsible for Communications and Works (tourism, transport, civil aviation, electricity).

¹²¹ Ibid., p.192. Lal quotes the governor, Sir Derek Jakeway, who felt that such a political party would ‘encourage political alliances which cut across barriers of race and which will provide a firm and enduring basis on which all the communities of Fiji can move forward in partnership towards the full control of their common destiny.’

¹²² Ibid., p.193.

continued political supremacy. The Fijians were jubilant and the Indo-Fijians ‘bitterly disappointed’.¹²³

The next election was called in September 1966, by which time the plethora of political parties had resolved into two major parties: the Federation Party (Indo-Fijian) and the Alliance (Fijian). The vote divided along recognised racial lines with the Alliance winning twenty-two seats and the Federation nine. Ratu Mara became the leader of Government Business and, in September 1967 when Fiji moved to a ministerial style of government, chief minister. However, the imbalance of the power to population ratio continued to rankle and flared into revolt in late 1967 when the Federation members walked out of the Legislative Council. Their boycott of the Council precipitated a by-election in August 1968.¹²⁴

This election saw a more successful attempt to form an inter-racial party. The Federation joined forces with the (Fijian) National Democratic Party led by two Western Fijians, Apisai Tora and Isikeli Nadalo, and became known as the National Federation Party (NFP). Their platform, as articulated by A.D. Patel, maintained that:

This Party’s aim is to work for immediate independence and to set up a democratic republic with a parliamentary government within the British Commonwealth. In order to maintain a link with the past a person who is ethnically a Fijian will be elected as the Head of the State by a plebiscite based on adult suffrage at five yearly intervals. To preserve connection with Great Britain, independent Fiji will seek membership of the British Commonwealth.¹²⁵

The Alliance rejected this platform claiming that the election of the Head of State by plebiscite would be discriminatory. Lal postulates that the real reason was that it laid the way open for a ‘commoner or a chief who was not from the traditionally dominant maritime provinces’ to be elected and thus upset ‘the balance of power in Fijian society.’ The Alliance’s alternative strategy was to promote Ratu Mara’s leadership abilities. The outcome of the elections left Fijian leaders bewildered. The NFP won a resounding victory and established themselves as a legitimate political force in Fijian politics. The bitter public backlash brought the colony to the brink of violent racial

¹²³ Ibid., pp.195 & 199. ‘Fijian rights remained intact; the link with the Crown was maintained, the common roll issue had been put on a very dimly lit back burner, and ... Fijians had emerged from the conference with more seats [in the Legislative Council] than either of the other two groups.’

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 200–203.

¹²⁵ Ibid. Lal is citing part of Patel’s speech to the Federation Convention at Ba, 28–29 June 1968.

conflict. Reconciliatory gestures and a softening of rhetoric by leaders of both sides served to diffuse the situation.¹²⁶

The indigenous Fijian leaders were forced to recognise the necessity for change. They could no longer hope to exercise such close control over Fijian society. Reforms within the Fijian Administration shifted responsibility for basic services away from specifically Fijian departments to general departments. Many of the regulations that had limited the freedom of Fijians were abolished. As early as 1966, Ratu Penaia Ganilau had protested that:

Fijians object to what I may refer to as “cotton wool legislation,” and want to tackle modern life by being allowed to face the hard facts of such life, free from paternalism, however well meant, and from especially protective legislation.¹²⁷

The renegotiation of cane farmers’ ten-year contracts with CSR again fell due in 1969. Both Fijian and Indo-Fijian farmers and their respective organisations agreed that the previous contract had greatly disadvantaged them. They insisted on an independent arbitrator to negotiate the new contract. To this end Lord Denning, ‘one of the most eminent jurists in the British Commonwealth’, was engaged.¹²⁸ His findings confirmed the farmers’ complaints and the new contract he recommended gave the farmers a more equitable deal. His decision angered the CSR and laid the foundation for its withdrawal from the colony in 1973.¹²⁹

Constitutional talks began again in May 1969 between the Alliance and the NFP. The NFP under A.D. Patel was still pursuing ‘immediate independence on the basis of universal adult franchise within the Commonwealth’. The Alliance led by Ratu Mara held firmly to ‘immediate and full internal self-government, without a communal roll, and with a firm and guaranteed protection of basic Fijian rights’. The death of A.D. Patel in October 1969 appeared to soften the NFP’s approach and they compromised on most issues, including their previously ‘rock-solid adherence to the common roll principle’.¹³⁰ Lord Shepherd, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs,

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp.204–5.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp.207–8. Ratu Ganilau cited in Lal, speech on the Fijian Affairs (Amendment) Bill, Legislative Council Debate on 24 May 1966.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.210.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.211

made a visit to Fiji between 26 January and 2 February 1970 and a meeting was held in London in April. The consequent constitution established a bicameral parliament with an appointed Upper House (Senate) and a fully elected Lower House (House of Representatives). The composition of the Senate ensured Fijian supremacy and the Great Council of Chiefs retained control over legislation concerning Fijians. The issue of voting methods for the House of Representatives was still unresolved. A solution would be sought by a commission of inquiry after independence.¹³¹

During this politically turbulent period Fijian cricket was continuing to contribute to Fiji's international recognition and experience. In 1960 a team toured New South Wales, the first tour to Australia since before the turn of the century. An indigenous Fijian, Nacanieli (Nat) Uluiviti captained the team.¹³² The tour was not successful financially but a Government grant of 500 pounds to offset the loss indicates an awareness of 'the value to Fiji of such tours'.¹³³ A second tour in 1962 saw Uluiviti assuming the role of Tour Manager, 'the first time this distinction had been given to a Fijian'.¹³⁴ The practice of entertaining the spectators with singing, begun on the New Zealand tour in 1948, was continued and the Fijian's reputation for their enjoyment of the game increased. In 1967-68 a team toured New Zealand. Uluiviti once again captained the team. The Team Manager was also a Fijian, Josua Rabukawaqa, later to be Fiji's High Commissioner in London. The team also included the first Indian player to participate in a touring representative side, G. Jamnadas.¹³⁵ There was a notable improvement in the attitude of the New Zealand press media to the tour. Although the Fijian teams had always been popular in New Zealand and favourably treated, Donnelly notes that 'the slight note of condescension, noticeable in the reporting of previous tours, was absent.'¹³⁶ Furthermore, 'there were fewer comments on fuzzy hair and "long skirts", and more on the genuine cricketing ability of the players'.¹³⁷

An increasing awareness that the game's survival depended on young, dedicated players promoted the formation of the Fiji Schools' Cricket Association in 1966. Despite difficulties, a schools competition was established and a school team encouraged to

¹³¹ Ibid., pp.212-13.

¹³² Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket 1950-1974*, p.9.

¹³³ Ibid., p.15.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp.19, 23 & 28.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.31.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

participate in the Crompton Cup. An attempt was made to broaden the experience of younger players by organising a tour of the Young Brothers Sports Club to New Zealand in 1968. The Crompton Cup competition was also attracting overseas teams from New Zealand and Australia. Cricket's standing within Fiji's sporting community was still relatively high. The Sportsman of the Year award, instigated by the *Fiji Times* in 1967, was won in successive years by cricketers: Harry Apted in 1967 and Nat Uluiviti in 1968.¹³⁸

However, overall the game was not thriving. Many of the once-active associations had disappeared. The game still depended on enthusiastic individuals to keep it alive. The lack of experienced local administrators and coaches, a continual deficiency of funds, difficulties caused by geographic distance, and the wet climate all contributed to the game's decline. However, when Fiji gained its independence in 1970, three of its four top political leaders were cricketers who were once graded as first-class international players: Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Ratu Sir George Cakobau (the first Fijian Governor-General) and Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau. Moreover, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, Fiji's national hero, admitted that 'his greatest unfulfilled wish ... was to have played cricket at first-class level'.¹³⁹ What role had cricket played in the moulding of these men and the nation they led?

* * * *

This chapter has integrated the history of cricket in Fiji with the political and social history of the country. It has identified that the game was introduced through the colonial administration but that, unlike earlier colonies, Fiji experienced a culturally protective policy which discouraged the imposition of British mores and values. Despite this, the Fijians initially took to the game with enthusiasm and it spread throughout the archipelago, becoming particularly popular with the Fijian elite. The introduction of Indian indentured labourers in 1879 added another dimension to the developing cultural landscape but, interestingly, the Indo-Fijians did not take to the game. The chapter has shown how, as Fiji moved towards independence, cricket's popularity waned. To explore the reasons behind the path the game took in Fiji and to determine what, if any, role it played in a developing sense of national identity in Fiji, it is necessary to determine the nature of the pre-colonial society.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp.35–6, & 50.

¹³⁹ Snow, *The Years of Hope*, p.xviii.

In the beginning ...
The pre-colonial structure of
Fijian society



Monument to Cakobau, Suva

Chapter Four

The first people to land on the shores of Fiji anchored their canoes and settled at Vuda on the west coast of Viti Levu. The name of the canoe was Kaunitoni. Their chief, Latumasobasoba, whose name is greatly revered by his descendants, is regarded as the founder of the Fijian race.

He had many sons. When they became men, they quarrelled amongst themselves, and their father became so tired of their disputes that he told them he did not ever want to see them again. So they all left their home at Vuda and scattered in different directions; some went to the interior of the island, and others to the eastern coast.¹

In order to understand the process of cultural interaction which accompanied the introduction of cricket into a colonial society, we must first establish the existing political and cultural conditions of the pre-colonial society. These may aid or hinder the game's acceptance and will determine the role it plays in the development of national identity. This chapter will provide an overview of the existing political and cultural conditions of Fijian society, prior to colonisation. Although perceived as an homogenous society by early European contacts, the peoples who inhabited the Fijian islands were a diverse group drawn from both Melanesia and Polynesia. Broadly speaking, their society was hierarchical and communal and their sense of identity was intimately linked to a complex system of reciprocal kinship arrangements which defined their place in society.

This chapter will examine pre-contact Fijian Society to determine the characteristics of that society which may have had some bearing on its predisposition to adopt or reject organised sport, particularly cricket. Those characteristics which appear relevant are the dominance of chiefly authority, the prevalence of war and violence and the communal structure of the society. Despite the diversity of peoples throughout the group of islands, there is evidence of a common cosmology and of common customs which provided a sense of collective identity. One of the cultural events which may have mitigated against the acceptance of organised group sports was the *meke* which involved everyone in an entertaining, exciting and competitive public spectacle.

¹ A.W. Reed and Inez Hames, *Myths and Legends of Fiji and Rotuma*, A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington, 1967, p.112. Some Fijian origin myths speak of a single migration, others speak of two: the first brought the ancestors of the land people, the commoners (*itaukei*), the second the ancestors of the sea people, the chiefs

Identity is not a static condition, it is an ever-changing process. In order to trace the development of the process in a given community a lens has to be chosen and a starting point established. Sport, and this instance cricket, provides such a lens. The game was not played by the indigenous Fijians until the early 1880s. At this point they had been in contact with Europeans for 80 years and the pre-colonial structure of their society had already begun to be distorted. In a complicated process of imaging and mirroring, Fijian society was influenced by contact with another culture and had begun to mould itself to the classifications imposed on it by the colonial administration. However, compared with other colonies it remained substantially intact so that cricket was not needed to provide social cohesion. To arrive at some conclusion as to where these people drew their sense of identity from at this period an attempt must be made to reconstruct pre-colonial Fijian society.

There are inherent difficulties in this undertaking for the historian. There are no indigenous written records to work with. The written records available to the historian were compiled by Europeans and therefore have to be treated circumspectly. The writings of these explorers, travellers and missionaries are embedded in their Eurocentric views and influenced by the prevailing racial, religious and political outlook in Europe. However, these sources can be profitably utilised to provide a glimpse of these societies at the time of first contact, providing they are examined critically. The contemporary historian also has access to the vast amount of archaeological and anthropological records available today. These are extremely useful although care has to be taken when extrapolating from the present into the past. We must be aware of the colonial process which fixed the 'traditions' of a fluid society in order to satisfy the British need to impose order.

The task of historical reconstruction is further complicated because the terms which have been accepted in the past to describe the diverse types of people inhabiting the Pacific islands are inadequate, outdated and invoke misleading connotations. For convenience

(*turaga*). Both indicate that the ancestors arrived on the west coast of Viti Levu and spread throughout the islands. This is congruent with modern theory which espouses a path of migration from the north-west.

early writers coined the terms Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia: Polynesia consisted of the many islands of the eastern Pacific, Melanesia referred to the islands inhabited by black peoples from New Guinea down through the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and New Caledonia, while Micronesia designated the tiny islands scattered over the north-west Pacific.² Originally devised to describe geographic location, over time they came to define cultural attributes.

As the European explorers ‘discovered’ the peoples of the Pacific the labels came to imply distinct racial features and political, social and cultural structures. The Polynesians were represented as a tall, light-skinned, attractive race, and the Melanesians as short and dark with frizzy hair. The Polynesians were considered to live in a stratified, hierarchical society centred around a chief, and the Melanesians to live in a tribal, egalitarian society which produced ‘big-men’. The biological differences were thought to support theories of evolution by demonstrating a progression from the primitive Melanesian to the more sophisticated Polynesian. As these theories were superseded the emphasis changed to social evolution and it was thought that the different societal structures showed various levels of political development.³ Although these theories have, in turn, been discarded, the perceptions and connotations which they engendered persist and colour any discussion of the Pacific in which these terms are employed.

² The French historian Charles de Brosses used the term Polynesian in his *Histoire des navigations aux terres australes* in 1756. By 1832 the three terms had taken on their present meaning and a map accompanying an article by the French navigator Dumont d’Urville published in the *Bulletin de la Societe de Geographie* set out the modern boundaries. (See Nicholas Thomas, ‘The Force of Ethnology: origins and significance of the Melanesia/Polynesia division’, *Current Anthropology*, Vol.30, No.1 February 1989, p.30.)

³ In 1963 Marshall Sahlins argued that ‘the Polynesians were to become famous for elaborate forms of rank and chieftainship, whereas most Melanesian societies broke off advance on this front at more rudimentary levels’ and that ‘(t)here is more of an upward west to east slope in political development in the southern Pacific than a step-like, quantum progression.’ In 1989 Nicholas Thomas maintained that ‘Pacific anthropology no longer appears to be heavily coloured by an evolutionary orientation, and there is in fact no longer a dominant belief that societies can be ordered on a linear scale, those lower down reflecting the earlier condition of those higher up.’ There appears to be a consensus that the terms may continue to be used but with the caveat that the meaning has changed over time and that they have different connotations for different audiences. (Marshall Sahlins, ‘Poor Man, Rich Man, Big Man, Chief: political types in Melanesia and Polynesia’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.5, 1963, p.286; Nicholas Thomas, ‘The Force of Ethnology’, p.32. See the Comments at the end of the article by Nicholas Thomas for an exchange of views amongst academics on the subject.)

The first people to inhabit Fiji were the Lapita, named for the pottery which they manufactured and which can be traced through the present day Melanesian islands and into Tonga, Samoa and the Marquesas.⁴ They were closely followed by the ancestors of the present Melanesians. The Fijian islands became the half-way house of the Pacific with a mixed population of the two groups identified as Melanesian and Polynesian. Both groups come from the common stock of Austronesian-speaking people who migrated through the 'voyaging corridor' from South East Asia into the Pacific.⁵ In the isolation of the eastern Pacific islands the group diversified and a distinctive Polynesian culture developed.⁶ These people filtered back into the eastern Fiji islands while the western islands and larger part of Viti Levu remained predominantly Melanesian. Thus the basic division of Fijian indigenous society was laid approximately 2,500 years ago. The tendency to think of the inhabitants of the Fiji islands as one people obscures the pre-colonial reality of the diversity of political, social and cultural structures which existed throughout the group.

The total land-mass of Fiji is approximately 7,055 square miles (18,272 square kilometres) which is spread over 850 kilometres of the Pacific Ocean.⁷ For ease of description the island group has been divided geographically into east and west, and coastal and interior regions. While retaining an awareness of the nebulous nature of these imposed distinctions they can be used tentatively to aid in differentiating broad types of pre-colonial society. The maritime provinces were situated along the eastern seaboard of Viti Levu and on the second largest island of Vanua Levu and included the Lau group of islands. The peoples inhabiting these areas were identified as predominantly Polynesian. The interior region, which was further divided into the east and west interior, and the Yasawa islands to the west of the group were inhabited by Melanesians. The pre-European population is

⁴ Douglas L. Oliver, *Oceania: the native cultures of Australia and the Pacific Islands*, Vol.1, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989, p.93.

⁵ Geoffrey Irwin, *The Prehistoric Exploration and Colonisation of the Pacific*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p.6. Current archaeological, linguistic and genetic evidence supports the theory that the people of the Pacific originated in South-East Asia. The South American connection with Oceania is thought to have been largely cultural. There is no evidence of a gene flow between South America and Polynesia. (See *The Colonization of the Pacific: a genetic trail*, Adrian V. S. Hill and Susan W. Serjeantson (Eds), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989.)

⁶ P.S. Bellwood, 'The Colonization of the Pacific: some current hypotheses' in *The Colonization of the Pacific*, p.1. The current emphasis is on 'diversification' at a local level rather than 'migration' of an original pure stock.

⁷ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.1, p.339.

estimated at 140,000. This population was concentrated mainly on the two large islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu with the majority of the settlements near the coast or along the larger rivers. The sparse population was accommodated in well-separated, nucleated villages.⁸

The eastern, Polynesian form of Fijian society was identified by the colonial administration as the 'traditional' Fijian society and was transposed across the rest of the group in the attempt to create uniformity. These provinces had close links with Tonga and Samoa through trade, inter-marriage and migration. This society was a communal, hierarchical one, governed by complex kinship laws and circumscribed by ritual, ceremony and custom. The chief was paramount and he disposed of lives and property as he saw fit.

Perhaps reflecting the pre-history of the peoples of Fiji, the eastern Fijian chief (*turaga*) was accepted by the people of the land (*itaukei*) as an outsider, coming from the sea.⁹ During the installation ceremony the chief suffered a 'symbolic death and consequent rebirth as a local god'.¹⁰ His person thus became sacred and everything concerning his person became *tapu*. Surrounded by an elaborate etiquette, his body and particularly his head could not be touched. The etiquette included a special vocabulary and forms of homage. The chief was distinguishable by distinctive clothes and emblems and in many areas his widows were strangled when he died.¹¹ However, the relationship established between the chief and the people was a reciprocal one of mutual responsibilities and obligations.¹² Although the chief was given power and authority the people retained ownership of the land and could, and did, depose a chief if he proved unsatisfactory.¹³

Another important aspect of chiefly power was the chief's *mana*. This spiritual attribute was gained through a combination of his descent from the gods and his personal prowess.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Martha Kaplan, 'Imagining a Nation: race, politics, and crisis in postcolonial Fiji' in *Contemporary Pacific Societies: Studies in Development and Change*, Victoria S. Lockwood, Thomas G. Harding, Ben J. Wallace (Eds), Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1993, p.38.

¹⁰ Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987, p.73.

¹¹ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.2, p.1176.

¹² Kaplan, 'Imagining a Nation', p.38.

¹³ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.2, p.1176.

By divine right he had the power to guide and protect his people. This quality indicated that 'he was supposed wiser than others, more capable of enlisting supernatural power, and his person and possessions were secured against the hands of the community on pain of magically inflicted illness'.¹⁴

The designation of the structure of the hierarchical, stratified eastern Fijian society was not finalised until 1913 by the colonial administrator G.V. Maxwell.¹⁵ The difficulty again arises of using European colonial constructs which deliberately reduce 'a plurality of identities to a grand unity' to describe pre-colonial conditions.¹⁶ The blanket terms adopted by the authorities had different meanings in different parts of the group. However, what does appear to be evident is that individuals within this society had a firm understanding of their place within it. Both the political and social structure of society followed a path through the extended family, to a local descent group, to a village, and then on to a regional confederation of villages.¹⁷ All Fijians belonged to a *yavusa*, or clan, which could be traced back to a legendary founding ancestor.¹⁸ As Brij Lal explains:

The clan consisted of several *mataqali* 'family groups', whose rank and power were carefully determined by lineal proximity to the founding ancestor. At the top of the apex were the *turaga* 'chiefs of the leading *mataqali*', claiming direct descent through the male line from the founding ancestor. They provided the ruling chiefs for the *yavusa*. Below them in rank were the *sauturaga* 'executive *mataqali*', who carried out the commands of chiefs and otherwise supported their authority. Lower still were the *matanivanua*, speakers and masters of ceremony for the *yavusa*, the *bete*, priests, and the *bati*, warriors. The smallest units of Fijian society were the *i tokatoka* 'subdivisions of the *mataqali*', which comprised the closely related households living in a defined area of a village and cooperating to perform such communal undertakings as the building and maintenance of houses and the preparation of feasts. In some parts of Fiji, the *i tokatoka* were the landholding units of the tribe, although elsewhere that function was the responsibility of the *mataqali*.¹⁹

¹⁴ Marshall Sahlins cited in Douglas, *Oceania*, Vol.2, p.1164.

¹⁵ France, *The Charter of the Land*, p.165.

¹⁶ Stephanie Lawson, 'Chiefs, Politics, and the Power of Tradition in Contemporary Fiji' in *Chiefs Today: traditional Pacific leadership and the postcolonial state*, Geoffrey M. White and Lamont Lindstrom (Eds), Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997, p.117.

¹⁷ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.2, p.1157. This generalisation is taken from Oliver's discussion of Marshall Sahlins' ethnographic report of the people of Moala Island. He reminds his readers that he has chosen this example 'not because it is more "typical" of the whole ... but because the ethnographic report on it excels any of those made elsewhere in these islands'. (p.1156)

¹⁸ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

An individual's personal and community duties, obligations, and behaviour were determined by the position which he or she held within this arrangement. Kinship ties were determined by both patrilineal and matrilineal descent.

The individual lived within an extended family arrangement which was organised along the same lines as the larger chiefdom.²⁰ In these extended family units, the eldest male member (*turangga*) directed and organised collective activity and kept law and order. He was accordingly shown due respect and treated with 'chiefly custom.' Within this family unit hierarchy was strictly observed and all family members were ranked in terms of authority and social protocol. Space and rank were closely linked. The house was divided into 'high' and 'low' areas and individuals inhabited the area corresponding to their rank. An inferior must always bow or crouch when addressing a superior. The extended family group lived in a cluster of dwelling houses, one for each of the nuclear families within the group. Each cluster shared a common cookhouse. They gardened and fished collectively and pooled their produce for processing and consumption and contributions to village tribute.²¹

Several of these extended family clusters were joined together into a village. The members of the village would co-operate for larger scale projects such as land clearing, building construction and maintenance, and to provide for the continual cycle of feasts. Building construction was a labour intensive process involving the utilisation of a variety of local skills and materials. The house was erected on an earth platform and constructed of woven panels with a thatched roof.²² Preparation for, and participation in, the elaborate ritual and ceremony which accompanied the feasting associated with all major life-cycle events provided constant occupation for all Fijians. These occasions were characterised by

²⁰ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.2, p.1158. The following description is based on Marshall Sahlin's report on the people of Moala island.

²¹ Ibid., p.1157. Villages consisted of from 20 to 500 people. The clusters of extended family sleeping houses were grouped around a common clearing, the *rara* or 'village green'.

²² The Fijian houses have been described as 'among the best-constructed in Oceania' by Douglas Oliver. They were built on a stamped-earth platform, the height of the platform denoting status. In general the cooking hearth was situated within the sleeping house rather than in a separate building although Sahlin found the Moala Islanders shared a separate cookhouse. Besides the individual family sleeping houses, a village would contain a temple, a house for visitors and 'clubhouses' for men. (Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.1, p.341.)

yaqona drinking, *meke*, or dancing, and exchange. They served to emphasise the stratification of society by their strict adherence to precedence. The *meke* preparation was a time consuming process involving the making of elaborate props and costumes. Traditional songs and dances had to be learned and new ones composed. Speeches, songs and dances moulded and reinforced identity by isolating and emphasising features which characterised tribal history and locality.

These ceremonies played a significant role in Fiji's exchange economy which was driven by reciprocity and kinship. Exchange ceremonies marked birth, marriage and death. They were involved in tributary relationships and the preparation for war, and its after-effects. They served to establish and reinforce interpersonal relationships and political power, opening up paths of indebtedness which facilitated the movement of goods and services between different areas. The goods produced in a particular area would take on cultural significance within the system. Nicholas Thomas explains that in the Fijian exchange system there was a 'systemic association between specialized local production and complex sequences of value substitutions and conversions entailing both persons and objects, which might be seen to create "value" in both.'²³ Thus the 'ceremonies across the region clearly constituted a complex movement of specialized products, in which what was locally distinctive ... had the particular cultural value of expressing affinal debt.'²⁴

Two examples of this system of indebtedness have been given much attention since the colonial era: *kerekere* and *lala*. There is some dispute as to how widely spread the practice of *kerekere* was in pre-Christian Fiji, but that some form of its practice existed seems evident. It was based on a philosophy of sharing, and allowed a kinsman to request anything which they genuinely required from a donor. Brewster, writing in the 1920s, commented that '[s]tinginess is abominable and should not be even thought of by decent Fijians'.²⁵ He describes ceremonies practiced among some of the hill tribes which were

²³ Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: exchange, material culture, and colonialism in the Pacific*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991, p.75.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.192.

²⁵ A.B. Brewster, *The Hill Tribes of Fiji: a record of forty years' intimate connection with the tribes of the mountainous interior of Fiji with a description of their habits in war & peace, methods of living*,

thought to prevent children developing this characteristic. *Kerekere* did not depend on an exchange of items but it did create a path of indebtedness or social inequality between donor and recipient.²⁶ *Lala*, on the other hand, was the prerogative of chiefs. C.F. Gordon Cumming, sister to the first Governor, explained that this entailed the right to the first fruits and also the right to command the service and property of the chief's subjects for public works projects which would benefit the whole tribe.²⁷ *Lala* was a custom which was open to much abuse and attempts to institutionalise it during the colonial period exacerbated the problem.

Although they were seen as an homogenous group by the colonial authorities the people of the interior were linguistically and culturally diverse. The interior of Viti Levu divides ecologically from north east to south west and the linguistic and cultural differences tend to follow the same divide.²⁸ The southeast is wet rainforest country exposed to the southeast trade wind whereas the northeast lies in the rain shadow of the central hills and is drier, open grassland.²⁹ The geography of the island discouraged penetration by outsiders and kept the interior tribes isolated from both Polynesian and European influence. Europeans did not cross the interior until 1865.

Broadly labelled Melanesian, their society was less structured than the coastal tribes. There is debate about the level of hierarchy evident in the interior and how much this differed from east to west but it is thought that the highest-level chief was the *yavusa* head.³⁰ This is in contrast to the maritime provinces where the *yavusa* chief was subject to a *vanua* head and he in turn might be subject to the *matanituu* or confederacy chief. In the interior, political groups were relatively autonomous and without the sense of a paramount chief.³¹ However, Brewster points out that although 'all men were free and equal, and tyranny and oppression not to be borne' the welfare of the clan was paramount and individuals would

characteristics mental & physical, from the days of cannibalism to the present time, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1922, p.51.

²⁶ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.2, p.1164.

²⁷ C.F. Gordon Cumming, *At Home in Fiji*, Vol.2, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1881, p.67-66.

²⁸ Adrian Tanner, 'Colo Navosa: local history and the construction of region in the western interior of Vitilevu, Fiji', *Oceania*, Vol.66, No.3, March 1996, p.17.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.9.

sacrifice themselves if necessary for their chief to preserve the clan.³² There was also little recognition of the 'segmentary lineage system' below the level of the *mataqali*.³³ The structure of the extended family and kinship relations was therefore different. Tribes were divided into two classes with children belonging to the class 'opposite to that of their father' which produced a leap-frog effect and allowed individuals to establish kin relationships with individuals who were socially removed.³⁴

Although all the indigenous languages of Fiji belong to the Austronesian category there are distinct linguistic differences between western Viti Levu and the Yasawa islands and the rest of Fiji.³⁵ Ceremonial style was different from the coastal provinces. In the western interior particularly, there were also physical differences manifest in the culture. In contrast to the coastal open-plan houses, those of the interior were square with conical roofs and designed around a centre pole. The bark cloth (*masi*) was produced by men, not women, and the design patterns are quite distinct.³⁶

Between 1867 and 1876 the interior people lived through what they describe even today as *na gauna ni valu*, the war time. During this period they began to define themselves in terms of opposition to Europeans and the eastern, coastal Fijians. As the Europeans began to press inward to expand their plantations, usually with the support of the coastal Fijians, hostilities increased culminating in Gordon's 'Little War' in 1876. This war was called by the interior peoples '*Na Valu ni Lotu*', 'The Church War', and was seen in terms of forced Christian conversion.³⁷ They still saw themselves as non-Christian and this was given physical manifestation in their appearance and dress. They retained the big heads of hair which had once been the hall mark of the Fijian, and they dressed only in a strip of *masi* or bark cloth eschewing the shorn locks and *sulu*, or waist cloth, of the Christian.³⁸ This war

³¹ Ibid., p.12.

³² Brewster, *The Hill Tribes of Fiji*, p.71.

³³ Tanner, 'Colo Navosa', p.9.

³⁴ Ibid., p.11.

³⁵ Ibid., p.8.

³⁶ Ibid., p.11.

³⁷ Ibid., p.3.

³⁸ Brewster. *The Hill Tribes of Fiji*, see illustrations pp.32 & 224. The Fijians grew elaborate heads of hair which they spent considerable time dressing and decorating.

left a lasting feeling of resentment against the coastal Fijians who had sided with the British and served to further divide the interior tribes from the coastal ones.³⁹

All of the tribes of the Fijian islands appear to have been ancestor-worshippers. Their pantheon contained two divisions: the *Kalou-vu* (Root-gods) and the *Kalou-yalo* (Spirit-gods).⁴⁰ The *Kalou-vu* were the ancestor immigrants from whom all the Fijians had descended. The most important was Ndengei who was known throughout Fiji, except in the distant eastern islands of the Lau group.⁴¹ When the chiefs died, they became *kalou-yalo*. Totemism was practiced throughout the group and it was forbidden for a tribe to eat the flesh of its totem.⁴² Religious belief and the *tapu* governed a Fijian's every action. As Basil Thomson explains:

[*Tapu*] prescribed what he should eat and drink, how he should address his betters, whom he should marry, and where his body should be laid. It limited his choice of the fruits of the earth and of the sea; it controlled his very bodily attitude in his own house. All his life he walked warily for fear of angering the deities that went in and out with him, ever-watchful to catch him tripping, and death but cast him naked into their midst to be the sport of their vindictive ingenuity.⁴³

After death he followed a hazardous spirit path across Viti Levu, from the east to the west, to reach the jumping off point for the Islands of the Blessed at Kuvandra, the shrine of Ndeng-ei.⁴⁴ The Islands of the Blessed, Qaloqalo, are believed to be in the north-west where their ancestors came from. A violent death was sought as natural death was deemed shameful.⁴⁵

This cosmology accommodated the reality of Fijian life which was dominated, both in the coastal provinces and in the interior, with a pre-occupation with war. Far from enjoying the peaceful, settled, idealistic existence envisaged by Europeans, the people of Fiji were constantly on the move. A.B. Brewster gathered records among the hill tribes relating to a

³⁹ Tanner, 'Colo Navosa', p.19.

⁴⁰ Basil Thomson, *The Fijians: a study of the decay of custom*, Dawsons of Pall Mall, London, 1968, p.112.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p.116.

⁴³ Ibid., p.111.

⁴⁴ Brewster, *The Hill Tribes of Fiji*, p.269.

⁴⁵ Thomson, *The Fijians*, p.132.

period of nearly three hundred years. He referred to the whole period as one of ‘almost unbroken warfare’ and comments that:

They harried and chased each other, frequently burning villages, which were speedily replaced by others. ... The impression on my mind after some study of their legends and folklore stories is that life in the hills in the olden times was like a huge game of hide-and-seek. Communities would build villages, become prosperous and arrogant, and excite the jealousy of their neighbours, who would then enter into alliances with other clans and attack the common object of their envy. After desultory fighting, sacking and burning of villages, the weaker side would flee further back into the almost inaccessible part of the hills. Both sides by that time would be tired and fatigued with the fighting, and the defeated party would get time to recuperate and reorganise. Then they would probably retaliate on their foes and turn the tables.⁴⁶

The same could be said of the maritime provinces. However, it must be remembered that this warfare, particularly amongst the interior tribes was seen less in terms ‘of political or military advantage, and more of historic inter-familial relationships, either of treachery and revenge, or reciprocal obligation.’⁴⁷

The reasons for revenge were many and varied but could involve either the loss of a life which required compensation, or an insult, perceived or real, to the individual, clan or their gods or religious symbols. Killing and involvement in war were also often considered necessary for a man to prove his prowess and manhood. It was engaged in to obtain personal glory and acceptance. There were also economic reasons for waging war: to secure land or trade goods and food. Cannibalism was practiced in Fiji and human flesh was considered a legitimate and even desirable source of meat.⁴⁸ War was viewed as a pleasure and its sportive nature cannot be overlooked. The ‘pageantry and well-regarded

⁴⁶ Brewster, *The Hill Tribes of Fiji*, p.59.

⁴⁷ Tanner, ‘*Colo Navosa*’, p.18.

⁴⁸ William Arens book *The Man-eating Myth: anthropology and anthropophagy* published in 1979 called into question the existence of cannibalism. He maintained that the evidence put forward was circumstantial and that he was unable to uncover any first-hand reports of the act. He argued that original unreliable reports were distorted with re-telling and thus the myth of cannibalism was established. He deals specifically with examples amongst the Aztecs and Caribs and in Africa and New Guinea. Academics have acknowledged that the subject deserves closer scrutiny but they contend that Arens limited his discussion to areas which support his thesis. In Fiji, in particular, its importance in society both as a method of revenge and as a source of food appears well documented. (See Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.1, pp.315-320. For some discussion of the controversy refer M. Sahlins, reply to ‘Cannibalism: an exchange’ *New York Review of Books*, 22 March 1979; E. Leach, ‘Long pig, tall story’ *New Society*, 30 August 1979; and R. Needham ‘Chewing the Cannibals’ *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 January 1980.)

heroics' involved encouraged all able-bodied men to participate.⁴⁹ As Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, leader of the United States Exploring Expedition, wrote in 1845:

The hostile feelings of the different tribes makes war the principal employment of the males throughout the group; and where there is so strong a disposition to attack their neighbours, plausible reasons for beginning hostilities are not difficult to find.⁵⁰

It was not just war *per se* which engaged the people. The whole process of war and war readiness involved considerable time and effort. The Fijians' weapons included spears, bows and arrows, slingshots and war clubs, all of which had to be manufactured. They were valuable pieces of equipment. The clubs, in particular, were highly specialised and elaborately decorated. They were used not only for war but also for hunting and for ceremonial and ritual purposes. Although sometimes crafted by individual warriors, they were often created by specialist craftsman employed by politically powerful chiefs.⁵¹ Fijians were also known for their war canoes. They built the largest and most sophisticated canoes in the Pacific and would travel long distances in them to wage war. There are early reports by Europeans of fleets comprised of 'up to 200 canoes, including some carrying 200-250 men each, and totalling some 2,700 warriors.'⁵² Considering that the construction of these canoes could take months, they were valuable in terms of material, time and labour.

Although there are no records of the formal training of warriors, their everyday activities served to train them in the use of their weapons and the bush craft which would be used during raids and wars.⁵³ The games that young men and boys engaged in honed their skills and reflexes. One of these was *veimoli* in which the antagonists pelted each other with oranges.⁵⁴ The victim had to dodge the orange which was thrown with full force from a

⁴⁹ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.1, p.435.

⁵⁰ Cited in Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.1, p.432.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.450.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.473. Fijian war canoes were recognised as the best in the Pacific. They were constructed from a hard timber tree, the *vesi*, comparable to the English oak. There was a hereditary clan of carpenters who were held in high esteem. The canoes were double hulled and furnished with a mat sail woven from pandanus palm. Wilkes reports on one being built at Lakeba which was one hundred and two feet long, seven feet wide and five feet deep. Fijian canoes were much prized by the Tongans.

⁵³ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.1, p.448. In all traditional societies (including European, up to the 17th century) hunting and war skills were inseparable.

⁵⁴ This raises the interesting question of what the Fijians used for this game before the introduction of citrus trees to the Pacific by Captain Cook's expedition.

short distance. The Fijians' ability to dodge was so extraordinary that it gave rise to a myth that 'Fijians could avoid a bullet by dodging at the flash of a gun.'⁵⁵ Reed throwing called *veitinka* was so popular that most villages had a specially constructed area on which it was played. A reed four foot long was fitted with a pointed ironwood head about four inches long. The reed was thrown over a level stretch of ground over one hundred yards long and ten yards wide. Basil Thomson describes the method the thrower employed:

[the] thrower rests the end of the reed on the ball of the middle finger of the right hand, and, with the arm extended behind him and the point of the *ulutoa* (reed) on the level of his armpit, he takes a short run and discharges the weapon with the full force of the right side of his body.⁵⁶

Thomson comments that Europeans found this a difficult skill to master. Foot racing and wrestling were also popular and *meke* was a very important form of martial training. Most of the men's dances stylised the actions used when fighting with weapons.⁵⁷ Brewster explains how well the discipline of the *meke* performance translated into military drill. Fijians learnt the drill routines quickly and efficiently and particularly excelled 'in the bayonet exercise'.⁵⁸

There were also other ways to inculcate a love of war and killing into young warriors and children. Joseph Waterhouse, an early Methodist missionary, reported:

After the war at Verata, Seru had the children of the slaughtered taken to Bau and fastened to trees that his own children might kill them with the bow and arrow, and thus learn to be warriors, it being the custom of Fiji to train their children in this way.⁵⁹

Captured adults were also 'tied or held down while the boys beat them to death with their toy clubs'.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Thomson, *The Fijians*, p.328.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.330.

⁵⁷ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.1, p.448.

⁵⁸ Brewster, *The Hill Tribes of Fiji*, p.241.

⁵⁹ Joseph Waterhouse, *The King and People of Fiji: containing a life of Thakombau; with notes of the Fijians, their manners, customs, and superstitions, previous to the great religious reformation in 1854*, Wesleyan Conference Office, London, 1866, p.86.

⁶⁰ Oliver, *Oceania*, Vol.1, p.448.

Villages had to be fortified and in some instances specially constructed to withstand warfare. In the coastal areas they were palisaded and surrounded by moats of muddy water which concealed sharp bamboo stakes and could only be crossed by means of narrow and exposed causeways.⁶¹ In the hills the people took advantage of the rugged terrain to locate their villages in inaccessible places. They would then add to the natural defences by steepening slopes, digging war ditches, constructing fighting fences and erecting earthen banks and stone walls.⁶² The approaches to villages were also obstructed with ditches, walls and fallen trees. These obstructions would often be used to ambush the enemy as they approached. All of this served to make war a constant factor in the lives of all Fijians.

A.B. Brewster commented on the 'narrow tribal feelings' still evident among the Fijians in the late 1800s and the lack of any 'national sentiment'.⁶³ As Lal has pointed out, there was 'no one single, cohesive Fijian identity and tradition' in pre-colonial Fijian society.⁶⁴ The indigenous Fijians defined their sense of identity by their place within the clan and kinship arrangements. They shared an attachment to place, cultural practice and stories about local history.⁶⁵ Their songs and dances, their exchange ceremonies and their relationship to the people around them gave them their place in their universe. They were divided ecologically, culturally and politically⁶⁶ and their awareness of other clan or tribal groups only served to emphasise the differences between them rather than produce any sense of collective identity within the group of islands. Contact with the Europeans also emphasised difference while privileging the eastern, maritime culture, particularly the Bauan model, over all other groups.

However, while recognising and acknowledging the diversity of Fijian pre-colonial society it is important to emphasise the shared ancient cultural roots and common cosmology which existed throughout the islands. Bernard Narokobi, a Melanesian intellectual, has written of

⁶¹ Ibid., p.457.

⁶² Ibid. Oliver is citing Fergus Clunie, 'Fijian Weapon and Warfare', Bulletin of the Fiji Museum 2, Suva.

⁶³ Brewster, *The Hill Tribes of Fiji*, p.243.

⁶⁴ Brij V. Lal, 'Fiji: Wandering Between Two Worlds', <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/ccp/fijiwb.html>, accessed 9 October 2000.

⁶⁵ Tanner, 'Colo Navosa', p.2.

the ‘common cultural and spiritual unity’ which exists throughout Melanesia, including Fiji, despite the diversity of cultural practice and languages.⁶⁷ Likewise, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara argued that ‘what seemed to the early Western explorers to be rather wild and haphazard groups of people, were really closely integrated and highly organised societies’.⁶⁸ Despite different cultural practices and interpretations, the peoples of the Fijian island group did share a common world view and way of life which, when confronted by the advent of the Europeans, would lay the foundation for a cohesive sense of ethnic identity.

The pre-existing cultural basis of the test playing nations provides some interesting comparisons and contrasts to the situation in Fiji.⁶⁹ Somewhat ironically, the countries of the Indian sub-continent provide the closest cultural parallel. They were well-established, stratified, hierarchical cultures in which individuals were aware of their position in society. The elite members of the society provided the contact point and filter for cultural exchange between the coloniser and the colonised. There are, however, some important differences. Pre-colonial Indian society was not as strictly communal and rural. Cricket developed in the urban areas of the Indian sub-continent where there was a lack of mass entertainment and recreational alternatives.⁷⁰ In comparison, the Fijian *meke* was a time consuming activity involving everyone in the community on a regular basis which fulfilled the inherent human need for spectacle and entertainment.

The West Indies would appear to provide a similar geographical setting to Fiji but its cultural setting is completely different. The population comprised European settlers and African slaves imported from many different African ethnic backgrounds to which were

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.18.

⁶⁷ Bernard Narokobi, *The Melanesian Way*, Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and the Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Boroko, 1983, p.7.

⁶⁸ Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, *The Pacific Way: a memoir*, Center for Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawai'i, Development Program, East-West Center, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 1997, p.246. Ratu Mara was delivering the Dillingham Lecture at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Although Ratu Mara is a powerful descendant of the dominant Bauan faction his point is still valid and has been confirmed by the historical record in Fiji.

⁶⁹ The test playing nations (and the year they gained test status) are: England (1909), Australia (1909), South Africa (1909, readmitted 1991), India (1926), West Indies (1926), New Zealand (1926), Pakistan (1953), Sri Lanka (1981), Zimbabwe (1992) and Bangladesh (2000).

⁷⁰ Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p.135.

added Indian indentured labourers. The islands within the geographical area which would become known as the West Indies consisted of isolated, disparate groups of individuals with no common cultural bonds. Links had to be forged and cultural characteristics developed. After the abolition of slavery, cricket emerged as one of the most significant of those cultural bonds, uniting this diverse group and providing a site where political values could be asserted and contested.

The hierarchical nature of the game of cricket dovetailed with the structure of pre-colonial Fijian society. Both encouraged respect for authority and unquestioning obedience. The team work required by the game was part of a communal culture which worked together in all aspects of daily life. The predominance of warfare had fostered an aggressive, competitive atmosphere which would translate easily onto the playing field. Indigenous games had developed particular skills which could be successfully deployed in a game which required agility and the ability to throw accurately. These features would promote the acceptance of cricket when it was introduced and enable Fijians to excel at it. However, that same hierarchical nature of the existing society would eventually contribute to the game's decline, and the strength of Fijian culture and identity would negate any need to pursue cricket for the reasons so evident in the test playing colonies.

* * * *

This chapter has, as far as is possible from secondary sources, reconstructed pre-colonial Fijian society in order to establish where Fijians drew their sense of identity from. It has shown that rather than being an homogenous society, the peoples who inhabited this group of islands in the middle of the Pacific ocean, were a diverse group drawing on both Polynesian and Melanesian traditions. Any reconstruction has to take into consideration the structural order imposed by the British colonial administration. However, the chapter concludes that there are a number of assumptions which can be legitimately made regarding the features and cultural values of Fijian society. There was a commonality throughout the group which would be harnessed to produce a sense of collective ethnic identity, though not necessarily national identity, as the colony moved towards independence.

The Fijians were part of a complex interchange which operated throughout the Pacific and which witnessed trade and cultural contact and exchange. When the Europeans entered this area the Fijians had a long history of meeting and absorbing or adapting cultural difference. However, their experience of Europeans would be radically different and require a reworking of their existing society to accommodate new ideas, values and mores. The haphazard contact of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries intensified until the arrival of the missionaries provided the first sustained exposure to European culture. It was this example of the many and varied facets of this new culture which would provide the blueprint for the Fijians. The missionary perspective would determine which aspects of European, and specifically British, culture they accepted or rejected. The next chapter will examine the background and beliefs of the missionary society which first established itself in the Fijian islands.

Preparing the pitch:
The Wesleyan Methodist
Missionary Society



Traditional spirit house

Chapter Five

Fiji was exposed to a long period of European contact before the advent of an official colonial administration. The itinerant European population in the Pacific, composed of traders, whalers, shipwrecked sailors and escaped convicts, began the breakdown of traditional indigenous society. They introduced new concepts and material goods and broke the taboos and escaped unharmed, but it was the missionaries of Christianity who provided the first sustained contact with European society. These men and women were the first to come and live among the indigenous people for long periods. The example they set and the ideas they introduced formed the foundation for the new societies which would emerge.

This chapter will examine the background of the missionaries who established the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in Fiji. It was their values which would influence the Fijian perspective of European culture. The aspects of British tradition which these missionaries emphasised would determine what the Fijians perceived as important from European culture. The individuals from the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) came from a strong Puritan tradition which emphasised duty, self-discipline and hard work.¹ Unlike their Anglican counterparts who were drawn from the upper class and aristocracy, the Methodist missionaries were from the lower middle class and working class. They were labourers and tradesmen with little or no education. The influence of the Methodist mission irrevocably altered the fabric of Fijian society. By establishing a written language and introducing an education system, they paved the way for a break down in tribal boundaries and laid a foundation for a sense of identity which went beyond the tribal to the national.

In examining the question of missionary influence consideration must be given to the obvious Eurocentric nature of the sources.² The writers assume the superiority of European religion, knowledge and culture. Yet, as Henderson has shown, the missionaries were the first Europeans to make sustained contact with the indigenous

¹ Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p.126.

² Robert Young defines Eurocentrism as 'the link between the structures of knowledge and the forms of oppression of the last two hundred years'. (*White Mythologies: writing history and the West*, Routledge, London, 1990, p.2.)

Fijians.³ This European narrative and the indigenous reactions reported by Europeans are still significant. Their observations were the only first hand sources of information available for this study. Fiji, like other pre-literate societies, could provide good, reliable oral histories. However, the *coup d'état* in 2000 prevented further research being carried out in Fiji which may have been able to tap these resources. While exercising a necessary caution when working with this material, the historian cannot dismiss it. Rather it needs to be carefully evaluated and utilised to reconstruct the events and impressions recorded, taking into consideration the personality and personal perspective of the individual missionaries.

The activities of the Wesleyan Missionary Society are well documented and their extensive archives are held at the School of Oriental and African Studies situated at the University of London. In addition most of the early missionaries left letters and diaries, many of which are available in manuscript or have been published. The journal of Thomas Williams is perhaps the best known of these, but works by James Calvert and Joseph Waterhouse are also readily available. A number of these personal accounts have been the focus of scholarly attention and research, which has produced useful comment and insight. G.C. Henderson has produced an annotated edition of Thomas Williams' journal as well as two supplementary volumes which elucidate the journal and its context.⁴ An early history of the Society published in 1921 has been complemented by a three-volume history of the Australian Methodist Church which took over the Fiji mission in 1855.⁵

Christianity entered the Pacific with the first European explorers. The conversion of the heathen ranked alongside commercial gain as a driving force behind the exploration of the globe. Although the Spanish first introduced priests to the Pacific it was the French who made the first sustained effort to establish the Roman Catholic faith in the islands.

³ G.C. Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians: 1835–1856*, Angus & Robertson Limited, Sydney, 1931, p.2.

⁴ G.C. Henderson, *The Journal of Thomas Williams: missionary in Fiji, 1840-1853*, Angus & Robertson Ltd, Sydney, 1931; *The Discoverers of the Fiji Islands: Tasman, Cook, Bligh, Wilson, Bellingshausen*, John Murray, London, 1937; *Fiji and the Fijians: 1835-1856*.

They did not have a great deal of success and the Protestant London Missionary Society first showed substantial progress in setting up a permanent presence. In 1797 it landed missionaries in Tahiti, Tonga and the Marquesas.

The London Missionary Society (LMS) was founded in 1795 as a result of the evangelical revival which swept England following the example set by pietism on the Continent. Composed of 'evangelical ministers and lay brethren of all denominations' it was formed by a group of Congregationalist churchmen with the intention of 'introducing the Gospel and its ordinances to heathen and other unenlightened countries.'⁶ These ministers were to be, not the learned scholars who were products of the public school system, but practical men from the lower middle classes. Dr Haweis, one of the first directors of the Society, firmly believed that:

A plain man, with a good natural understanding, well read in the Bible, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, though he comes from the forge or the shop, would, I own, in my view, as a missionary to the heathen, be infinitely preferable to all the learning of the schools; and would possess, in the skill and labour of his hands, advantages which barren science would never compensate.⁷

This view was modified over time but it opened the missionary field up to lower middle class workers and tradesmen.

When the Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed in 1817 it drew on the same socio-economic base as the London Missionary Society. The majority of the volunteers accepted to the Missionary service in the mid 19th century were tradesmen and labourers: tailors, grocers, printers, farmers.⁸ The LMS and WMS shared similar missionary aims,

⁵ G.G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, The Epworth Press, J. Alfred Sharp, London, 1921. A. Harold Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vols.1, 2 and 3, Aldersgate Press, Melbourne, 1978.

⁶ Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895*, Vol.1, Oxford University Press, London, 1899, p.15.

⁷ From a sermon preached at an early meeting to discuss the formation of the Society cited in Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895*, p.28.

⁸ A search of the candidates' papers from 1833 to 1869 reveals only a few candidates with a University education or professional background. Their educational background is occasionally non-existent and in the majority of cases is listed as elementary or 'plain English'. (Microfiche copies of candidates' papers of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.)

maintaining that their role was to preach the gospel but allow converts the freedom to establish their own type of church government.⁹ Needless to say this did not include co-operation with the Roman Catholic priests but it did promote a sense of unity among the Protestant groups working within the Pacific mission field.

Accordingly, the WMS moved into the Pacific in the 1820s. By the early 1830s the LMS and WMS had negotiated an agreement to split the central Oceania islands between them so as to avoid overlapping in their work. The WMS was to have access to the Fiji group while the LMS confined itself to Samoa.¹⁰ Thus it was the WMS which was to exert the greatest influence on Fiji. On 12th October 1835 two missionaries from the Tongan station, David Cargill and William Cross, arrived at Lakeba in the Lau group. Cross and Cargill spoke Tongan and many of the Fijians in the Lau group were familiar with that language.¹¹

The missionaries held a firm conviction that the heathen were doomed to a life of eternal torment unless they were converted to the doctrines of Christianity. In order to enlighten these poor ignorant people they were instructed that their ‘labours must be constantly directed to improve them in the knowledge of Christianity, and to enforce upon them the experience and practice of its doctrines and duties’.¹² Their charges ‘should clearly understand the principal doctrines of the Scriptures, feel their renovating influence upon their hearts, and become “holy in all manner of conversation and godliness”’.¹³ This was the focus of their work. They saw it as necessitating a complete change of the beliefs and behaviour of the heathen.

Although the processes and patterns that they would use to accomplish their aims were laid down by the Wesleyan Methodist Society, the background of the individuals

⁹ Cited as ‘the fundamental principle’ of the London Missionary Society in their minutes of May 9, 1796, in Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895*, p.49-50.

¹⁰ *Report of the Committee of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society for the year ending April 1836*, p.26.

¹¹ Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1838-1856*, p.32.

¹² *The Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for the year ending April 1835*, London: Printed for the Society by P.P. Thoms, Warwick Square, p.26.

¹³ Ibid.

influenced the way they went about the work. The Anglican missionaries in the Pacific such as Bishop George Selwyn of New Zealand and Bishop John Coleridge Patteson of the Melanesian Mission were products of the public school system and Oxbridge. In contrast, the men who established the WMS in Fiji were drawn from humbler backgrounds. For the first fifty years of the mission the total number of European missionaries in the field never exceeded twelve and was often fewer.¹⁴ These individuals exerted a tremendous personal influence on the process of change within the indigenous Fijian community.

The lives of many of these men are fairly well documented and an examination of their own writings and the WMS records reveals their background, attitudes and values. Cargill (1835-40)¹⁵ was a graduate of Aberdeen University in Scotland. John Hunt (1838-48) was an uneducated agricultural labourer from Lincolnshire. Converted at sixteen, he painstakingly pursued an education through night school and was noticed by his local minister and sent to the Wesleyan Theological Institution at Hoxton.¹⁶ James Calvert (1838-65) was from a similar, if slightly more prosperous, background. He served an apprenticeship as a printer and bookseller before he went to Hoxton.¹⁷ Robert Burdsall Lyth (1839-54) was a medical doctor from a distinguished Methodist family in York. Thomas Jagger (1838-48) was a printer by trade. He was sent out specifically to set up and care for the first printing press. Thomas Williams (1840-53) was a carpenter and joiner.¹⁸

Compared to European standards, conditions in Fiji were harsh. The climate presented life-threatening situations on a regular basis, among them hurricanes, floods and treacherous sea voyages. The missionaries were unused to handling these conditions and

¹⁴ Thomas Williams and James Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians: Missionary Labours among the Cannibals*, T. Woolmer, London, n.d., p.ix.

¹⁵ Years in bracket indicate the years of service in Fiji.

¹⁶ Findlay and Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, pp.387-88.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.390.

¹⁸ Henderson, *The Journal of Thomas Williams*, p.xiv.

found them trying. They did not take kindly to the local diet and death and ill-health dogged them and their families.¹⁹

What caused the most distress was being continually confronted with the perceived inhumane cultural practices of the Fijians. The psychological effects of witnessing cannibalism and wife strangling were enormous. John Hunt and Robert Lyth were moved to the station at Somosomo in 1839. Hunt described their situation in a letter to the Rev. Joseph Entwisle in 1841:

Both of us with our servants, property and every thing belonging to us were put into one native house, in the midst of a close town, with the burying ground behind, and the Market Place in front where all the dead bodies which are brought to be eaten are brought to be given out cut up and cooked. The principal temple is very near, and the oven where the bodies are cooked not fifty yards from our door. There we were and still are, in the midst of a theatre where the most tragical acts are actually perpetrated, without having it in our power either to prevent them or to avoid seeing them.²⁰

Further,

closing our doors and window blinds to keep out of the house the abominable smells of human bodies which had been two or three days dead was considered a great offence.²¹

Wife strangling was practiced whenever a chief died. Time and again the missionaries and their wives attempted to intervene to prevent the practice. The Europeans found it confusing that many of the women did not want to be saved. The women could not live with the reproach of not having followed their husbands to *bula*.

¹⁹ For example, in a letter to the Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Society in August 1837, Cargill writes of the 'scarcity and dreariness of food on this island' and that they were 'obliged to subsist principally on yams and salt, with cakes made of arrowroot and yam.' (Cited in John H. Darch, *William Cross, David Cargill and the establishment of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in Fiji, 1835-1843*, thesis for M.A. Degree, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (London) Archives, Special Series, Notes and Transcripts, Box No: 586, 246-249 No.391.

²⁰ Letter from John Hunt to Revd. Joseph Entwisle Senr. Wesleyan Minister Tadcastor England, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (London) Archive Special Series, Notes and Transcripts, Box No: 584, 191 p.24-36/197 No.360 Museum of Lincolnshire Life Copy of letter from John Hunt, now in Museum Collection.

²¹ Ibid.

For the missionaries, these practices only confirmed the need to ‘save’ the indigenous society through the introduction of the Christian message and way of life, including European cultural practice. The missionaries were undeterred by the conditions. They were continually busy, preaching, teaching, and creating a written language for the Fijians and translating the scriptures into it. In 1845 Lyth wrote:

We cannot command our time, being liable to continual calls from all kinds of people to meet their various wants, some reasonable, many unreasonable; so that our time for translating, etc., is very limited.²²

After Cakobau’s conversion in 1854 the Church grew at a tremendous rate but the number of European missionaries did not increase. In 1857 William Moore (1850-69) acknowledged that:

I have little time to study; go, go, go, is the order of the day. The work extends on every hand, and we want a thousand bodies to be in a thousand places at once, to do the great work of this circuit.²³

There was little inclination and no time for recreation. Commenting on the early deaths of Hazelwood and Hunt, Henderson notes that their intense workload with regard to their translation activities kept them indoors and allowed ‘far too little time for care-free recreation’.²⁴ Hunt was known to enjoy gardening but he had little time to pursue it.

The small number of European missionaries led to a very important development, the reliance on native teachers. The first missionaries were accompanied by native Tongan teachers. These were soon joined by other Tongan and Fijian native teachers. The statistics of the mission throughout the 19th century confirm that the bulk of the work of conversion and consolidation, often unheralded, was carried out by native teachers.²⁵

²² Cited in Williams and Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians*, p.21.

²³ Cited in Williams and Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians*, p.25.

²⁴ Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-1856*, p.202.

²⁵ For example, in 1856 there were: seven European missionaries, two trained British teachers, eight Fijian assistant missionaries, 107 native teachers, 624 day-school teachers, plus local preachers and class leaders. (From Gordon J. Larsen, ‘The Influence of Christian Missions on Pre-cession Fiji’, paper read to the Fiji Society on 27th April, 1965, *Transactions and Proceedings of the Fiji Society for the Years 1964 and 1965*, Vol. 10, edited and published under the authority of the Council of the Fiji Society, issued February, 1969, Suva, Fiji, p.65.) By 1875 there were 11 European missionaries, 51 native ministers, 32 catechists, 1,070 teachers, 1,729 local preachers, 3,310 class leaders, and 2,097 school teachers. (Williams and Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians*, p.xiii.)

They always preceded the European missionaries into a new area.²⁶ The island of Ono is a typical example. A succession of Tongan and Fijian converts worked amongst the people and by the time the first missionary arrived, James Calvert in 1840, many of the islanders were practicing Christians.²⁷ It was these Christian native teachers who introduced the indigenous Fijians to the concepts of Christianity and the life-style changes necessary to join the new faith. It was their example and exhortation which convinced the Fijians to convert.

The Christian message of redemption and salvation may have been outside the realm of the experience of the indigenous Fijians. Though missionaries believed they did understand God in terms of power and material benefit. The missionaries realised that they had to attract the natives into their organisation before they would be able to convert them.²⁸ The material benefits of Christianity had to be made obvious and its power over the indigenous gods and religious system demonstrated. When Tuililakila, the powerful son of the king of Somosomo, was asked by Cargill if he believed that Christianity was true he replied, 'True, everything is true that comes from the white man's country: muskets and gunpowder are true, and your religion must be true.'²⁹

In the Fijians knew the missionaries were backed by the powerful ships and guns of the British navy. To have a European missionary resident in a village provided a source of material benefits such as metal implements and cloth. But perhaps the most important influence came from European medicine. As early as 1839 Cargill acknowledged that '[m]ost of the Rewa people have imbibed the notion that the design of Christianity is to heal disease and prolong the life of the body.'³⁰ Education, too, played an important role.

²⁶ Henderson found in his extensive research on the early Methodist Mission in Fiji 'that there was not a single mission station in any part of Fiji where the way had not been prepared for the white missionary by a native teacher or local preacher.' Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-1856*, p.145.

²⁷ Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol.2, p.93.

²⁸ Writing in 1847 John Hunt indicates 'that there are generally two conversions – one from Heathenism to Christianity as a system, a second from sin to God'. (Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-56*, p.126.)

²⁹ Cited in Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-1856*, p.106.

³⁰ Cited in Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-56*, p.136. Henderson feels that it was European medicine which played the most important part in the early conversion of the indigenous Fijians.

The ability to master reading, the ability to communicate with others and with God through the written word, was a powerful attraction.³¹

If the initial attraction was for tangible, material benefits, the drastic changes to the everyday life of the individual which resulted from conversion required a deeper commitment. David Cargill had noted in the early years of the mission that '(t)he religion of Fiji is interwoven with the politics of the kingdom, and the economy of every family.'³²

The power of the new God eroded the power of the old and altered the fabric of life. Converts were forbidden to take part in certain practices. The physical abstinence from a practice caused a ripple effect which spread throughout the power structures of indigenous society. Polygamy was a case in point. Before a Fijian man could become a Christian he had to marry one wife in a Christian ceremony and abandon his other wives. The keeping of several wives had economic benefits as it provided more hands to plant and cultivate gardens and to produce items of wealth such as mats. The creation of the nuclear family threw a heavier workload onto the wife who remained, and lowered the standing of the family in the indigenous hierarchy.

Women's lives were further complicated by the discontinuance of the practice of wife-strangling. Women who were 'saved' by the missionaries from this practice were not always grateful. They viewed it as a disgrace not to have followed their husbands in death. They had to cope with their feelings of shame and also had to find a way to live within a society which did not provide for them. A more subtle change was brought about by the institution of strict Sabbath observance. There were accusations that it provided an excuse for laziness and burdened others in the society.

³¹ Jocelyn Linnekin notes 'In most Pacific cultures words have power: to cure, to curse, to provoke wars, to invoke the divine. Once uttered, their effects cannot be undone. Islanders were at first more attracted to words – the power of reading and writing – than The Word as abstraction.' (Linnekin, 'New Political Orders' in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, pp.200-201.)

³² Cited in Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-56*, p.274.

The *meke* which provided so much of the Fijians' entertainment and recreation was often condemned as lurid and promiscuous. Eventually it was adapted to express the new ideas and suit the new morality. In changing its composition however, a new set of values and a new history, and consequently a new identity, was established. By 1875 there were reports of the *meke* being performed by school children on school prize days. The subject of the performances was Bible stories and geographic knowledge as well as arithmetic.³³ The new knowledge had permeated this important tool of cultural transmission and children were imbibing the concepts and ideas of the colonisers through the use of ancient pathways.

Underlying all of these changes were the questions of chiefly authority and power. The chiefs had received their power through their descent from the gods. If these gods were displaced then the source of the chiefs' power was destroyed. As early as 1836 Calvert notes that as the common people of Lakeba

became more enlightened they refused to work on the Sabbath, and to present the accustomed offering of firstfruits to the god of the king's town, declaring that they believed him and the other deities of the island to be no gods at all.³⁴

Corresponding to the chiefly loss of power was the growing authority of the missionaries and the Church. The traditional power base was shifting within indigenous society as people began to question the authority of the chiefs and priests. One of the areas where this caused the most conflict was in regard to war. Converts were forbidden to have anything to do with warfare. Considering the important part war played in the indigenous society, this had all sorts of repercussions. For the safety of the village, all its people needed to be on a continual war footing. If a percentage of the population was not taking part in training and preparation, this left a large hole in defence. The chiefs could only see the new teaching as a threat to security and deplore the encouragement of disloyalty amongst their people

³³ *The Fiji Times*, 28 August, 1875.

³⁴ Williams and Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians*, p.237.

In 1848 the growing discontent over the Christian advance broke out into open warfare and the mission station at Bua bay on Vanua Levu was attacked. The missionaries were forced to realise that they could not maintain their pacifist stand. They pleaded for help from Cakobau but he told James Calvert bluntly:

I will not protect them, and I rejoice that you have now a fight of your own. When I ask you *lotu*³⁵ people to help me you say NO! it is not lawful for Christians to fight; and here we are breaking our backs steering our canoes, catching dysentery and sleeping abroad in the dews and the rains and being shot in great numbers, whilst the Christians sit quietly at home all the time. Now you have a fight of your own and I am glad of it.³⁶

The missionaries were forced to modify their ideas. Consequently their followers began to support their chiefs in time of war, but their attitudes had changed. They no longer took any 'delight in war' and they 'made efforts to save lives, restore peace and spread religion.'³⁷

The wars began to take on the increasingly religious aspect of Heathens versus Christians. The missionaries had placed great importance on Cakobau's conversion, expecting it to automatically lead to the mass conversion of the Fijians. On the contrary, his conversion only led to an escalation in the warfare between Bau and Rewa, between Cakobau and his rival Mara.³⁸ The war between them came down to the final conflict between the old gods and the new. Cakobau was facing apparent defeat when King George Tupou³⁹ of Tonga arrived in April 1855 to collect a war canoe from Cakobau. King George had been a driving force in Cakobau's conversion and he now set about supporting him in his war against Mara. The Tongan warriors were the deciding factor in

³⁵ The term *lotu* refers to the experience of conversion. Henderson explains it thus, '*Lotu* is a noun and a verb; its literal meaning is prayer or to pray; but it was commonly used for the Christian religion or, as a verb, to profess or embrace Christianity.' (Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-1856*, ft.3 p.101.)

³⁶ Cited in Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-56*, p.252.

³⁷ Report for the Vewa circuit before the District Meeting, June 1852, quoted in Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-56*, p.256.

³⁸ Ratu Kamisese Mara, known as Kapaiwai, was a high-ranking chief closely related to Cakobau, and with strong kinship relations to the chiefly families of Lau. He joined the rebellion against Cakobau and had the support of the Europeans on Levuka.

³⁹ King George Tupou had converted in 1831 and proceeded to unite Tonga under his rulership. He wrote to Cakobau in early 1854 urging him to convert.

the attack on Kaba which took place on 3rd April 1855. The Christian God had triumphed and the people began to *lotu* in their thousands.⁴⁰

If Cakobau took political advantage of the new religion, the tribes of the northern interior refused to be cowered into submission to the combination of European and southern-coastal Fijian forces.⁴¹ Although care has to be taken when assigning agency to indigenous peoples not to detract from the oppression caused by colonisation, the Fijians did display a strong, ongoing resistance to cultural domination. Their eventual acceptance of Christianity, particularly Methodism, was to a large extent on their own terms as they adapted it to their own needs.⁴²

Throughout the 1860s and 70s the interior peoples continued to resist conversion and in 1867 were responsible for the murder of the missionary Thomas Baker. Several explanations have been put forward regarding this event but it has been suggested that the root cause was the connection between Baker and Cakobau's religion. To *lotu* was to submit to Bau.⁴³ Resistance continued after conversion and cession. In the 1880s Navosavakadua, an oracle-priest from Drauniivi, claimed that Jehovah and Jesus were the twin sons of Degei, the original Fijian deity. He was eventually banished to Rotuma and his followers were deported to Kadavu by the colonial administration.⁴⁴ However, his influence was so strong that even today, the devout Methodist descendants of the village (returned to the area, though not to the original site) combine the new Christian beliefs with the older Fijian cosmology.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Henderson calls this battle 'the decisive turning-point in the history of Christianity' in Fiji. (Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-56*, p.264.)

⁴¹ As discussed in chapter four, the interior people of Viti Levu fought a prolonged war against both the encroaching European colonisers and the eastern, coastal Fijians. They resisted Christianity as well as political domination.

⁴² Henry Screbrnik, 'Ethnicity, Religion, and the issue of Aboriginality in a Small Island State: why does Fiji flounder?', *The Round Table*, Vol.364, No.1 (2002), pp.187-209. (For a discussion of the agency versus victim dichotomy, see David A. Chappell, 'Active Agents versus Passive Victims: decolonized historiography or problematic paradigm?', *The Contemporary Pacific*, No.2 (Fall 1995), pp.303-326.

⁴³ Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, p.165.

⁴⁴ Navosavakadua's exile further demonstrated the power of the new God and his followers. (See Martha Kaplan and John D. Kelly, 'Rethinking resistance: dialogics of "disaffection" in colonial Fiji', *American Ethnologist*, Vol.21, No.1, February 1994, p.131.)

⁴⁵ Martha Kaplan has done extensive work on this aspect of Fijian colonialism including a study of Navosavakadua. (See Martha Kaplan, 'Christianity, People of the Land, and Chiefs in Fiji', in *Christianity*

Up until Cession in 1874 the Methodist church provided the principal point of contact between European and indigenous culture. During this crucial twenty years it was the dominant influence on the development of new identities. The Church's rapid expansion and education programme ensured that its influence reached the majority of indigenous Fijians. In order to meet the demand for teachers, a training institution was set up. The curriculum was taught in Fijian and included theology, reading, writing, arithmetic, history and geography. As the students had to provide for themselves, gardening and property maintenance were an important part of their busy schedule.⁴⁶ There is no mention of recreational activities or sport forming any part of their day.

The missionaries had established village schools right from the beginning. Education was seen as a vital part of the evangelising process rather than as a civilising tool.⁴⁷ The emphasis was on teaching literacy so as to allow access to the Bible and other spiritual texts. In 1852 the first trained school teachers arrived. William Collis and John Binner set up the Glasgow School system. Collis went to Lakeba and Binner to Levuka. At the time of their arrival there were 3,000 pupils and the numbers rapidly increased.⁴⁸ They trained native teachers who then spread throughout the islands establishing schools in most villages.

The missionaries had to devise a written form of the language in order to facilitate this education system and their translation work. At first they considered translating texts into as many of the Fijian dialects as possible but this proved impractical.⁴⁹ After considerable discussion John Hunt reported in 1844:

in *Oceania: ethnographic perspectives*, John Barker (Ed), ASAO Monograph No. 12, University Press of America, Lanham, 1990, and John D. Kelly and Martha Kaplan, *Represented Communities: Fiji and world decolonization*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001.)

⁴⁶ Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol.2, p.147.

⁴⁷ Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol.1, p.xi.

⁴⁸ Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol.2, p.143.

⁴⁹ Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-1856*, p.191.

We are commencing a translation of the whole of the New Testament into the Mbau dialect that being more generally known. We cannot print in all dialects, there are too many.⁵⁰

The cost of printing translations in the sixteen or seventeen dialects current in the group was beyond the means of the missionaries. Bau was politically the most powerful of the various confederacies existing at the time and it therefore seemed expedient to use the dialect which was used there. Thus the foundation for the dominance of Bauan culture over the whole group of Islands was laid, privileging the dialect as it became the first available in printed form. Hunt, who proved the most capable of the missionaries in the translation work, was stationed at Vewa which was adjacent to Bau and the printing press was also located at Vewa.⁵¹

During these politically tumultuous years, the indigenous Fijian leaders came to rely more and more on the missionaries as their advisors. The Chiefs were attempting to come to grips with a growing European community and the disruption of their own society. They needed help in interpreting what was happening and in devising new strategies to overcome the problems. They trusted the missionaries. Contrary to the missionary's instructions from the Society they began to exercise considerable political power through their role as interpreters and advisors to the chiefs. The 'Standing Instructions of the Committee to all who are sent out as Missionaries, relative to their conduct on Foreign Stations' state:

The Committee caution you against engaging in any of the merely civil disputes or local politics of the Colony to which you may be appointed, either verbally, or by correspondence with any persons at home, or in the Colonies. ... You are not to become parties in any civil quarrel; but are to please all men for their good to edification; intent upon the solemn work of your office, and upon that eternal state in the views of which the Committee trust you will ever think and act.⁵²

However, in Fiji, as early as 1847 the missionaries had drawn up a list of 'rules for civil government' to be implemented by chiefs when they converted.⁵³ When Cakobau

⁵⁰ Cited in Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-1856*, p.193.

⁵¹ Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians 1835-56*, p.193.

⁵² *The Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for the year ending April 1835*.

⁵³ Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, p.101.

converted in 1854 Joseph Waterhouse wasted no time in recommending that he institute 'some scheme of political reform' and presented him with a nine-point plan.⁵⁴ Cakobau originally rejected the plan but the concepts of constitutional government were introduced and supported by the missionaries. In the lead up to the annexation agreement, while they attempted to remain neutral and advised the chiefs that they must make the final decision, it appears obvious that the missionaries' advice was valued by the chiefs at this crucial time.⁵⁵

At the village level the structure of society was changed irrevocably by the missionary influence. The democratic system of Church governance introduced a new hierarchy even as it undermined the old one. The power of the European missionaries flowed on to their deputies and followers. Access to education and the written word gave individuals a new way of asserting superiority and authority. Anyone, not just the chiefs, could become preachers and teachers.⁵⁶ New divisions were formed within society. There were obvious signs of difference such as the wearing of clothing by the Christians which distinguished them from the unconverted. There were more subtle differences within the congregations: the baptised from the unbaptised and the different levels of participation in the various Church activities.⁵⁷

Although the Church remained the most co-ordinated and dominant European influence on indigenous society it did not itself remain unchanged. In 1855 the direction of the work in Fiji was transferred from the British to the Australian Church. Missionary historians have noted that the outlook, and therefore the emphasis and methods, of the missionaries altered. They were 'more rigid and more negative in their teachings'.⁵⁸ The emphasis was on prohibition: of alcohol, smoking, and *yaqona* drinking. Rather than concentrating on developing spirituality among the converts, the missionaries became intent on fostering a stern moral code. This change came about largely due to the

⁵⁴ Waterhouse, *The King and People of Fiji*, p.276-77.

⁵⁵ Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol.1, p.203.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.28.

⁵⁷ See Justin Willis, 'The Nature of a Mission Community: the Universities' Mission to Central Africa in Bonde', *Past & Present*, No.140, August, 1993, pp.127-154, for a detailed study of the hierarchies which developed within a mission station and their flow on effects to the community.

perceived need to combat the deleterious effects of the growing contact with the European community.

At the time of cession the Methodist church was represented in nearly all districts and almost every village had a day school.⁵⁹ Miss Gordon-Cumming, Governor Gordon's sister, noted that '...there are 900 Wesleyan churches in Fiji, at every one of which the eloquent services are crowded by devout congregations, that the schools are well attended...'.⁶⁰

The first challenge to the Church's influence came when the formal British administration was set up in 1874. Although the new administration under Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon publicly supported the work of the missionaries, there were continual clashes between Gordon and individual missionaries. Quarrels centred on the missionary collections, government taxation and new marriage laws.⁶¹ Disputes boiled down to a clash of power: who controlled the indigenous population and who had a greater right to their loyalty. The missionaries had been in undisputed control for twenty years and now found it difficult to come to terms with their diminishing authority.

The model of European society introduced by the Methodist church was the first uniform pattern to be imposed across the group of islands. It gave individuals an opportunity to form relationships outside the traditional kinship arrangements and to develop bonds of loyalty and identity outside the tribe and village.⁶² It facilitated safe movement between island groups and districts. By introducing education and literacy and developing a common language it provided a matrix for diverse people to come together.

However, sport formed no part of that matrix. Sport held no place in the background or training of the missionaries. It was not part of the culture which they introduced to the

⁵⁸ Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol.2, p.239.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.217.

⁶⁰ Cited in Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol.2, p.240.

⁶¹ Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol.2, pp.218-23.

indigenous Fijians. Even if it had played some part in their lives their intense workload in Fiji allowed no place for recreation. However, their work had laid the foundation for the acceptance of other aspects of European culture when the colonial administrators arrived. It had broken down barriers and resistance to change and created a vacuum in society. A substitute needed to be found to fill the time spent in war preparation and training and in *meke* preparation and performance. The Methodist Church retained its influence on Fijian society both through a strong indigenous church and through the education system and the value system it had introduced. It was the Church that would determine the Fijian approach to cultural changes under the British administration.

The Fijian experience was shared with other Pacific island countries but differed from that of many other colonies. Where European culture was introduced through commercial interests or military intervention the colonised were subjected to a different cultural perspective. European culture, in this case British culture, is not homogenous. Although these different agents shared a common underlying outlook they varied greatly in their social, political and economic backgrounds and in their cultural practice and emphases. In those colonies where the first sustained contact came through traders and the military, sport, particularly cricket and horse racing, were an important part of the European culture introduced to the colonised. Despite the Puritan ethic generally pervading the British character, traders and soldiers took a less austere view of life. In Fiji the colonisation-Christianising experience had not provided a good foundation for the development of cricket. The missionaries had not prepared the pitch.

* * * *

This chapter has established the cultural background of the missionaries who provided the first sustained contact with British culture for the Fijians. It demonstrated the powerful influence exerted by the missionaries and how their teaching altered Fijian society, paving the way for the colonial administration. However, it has shown that, in contrast to the Anglican missionaries who introduced cricket to many of the colonies, the

⁶² Henry Screebrnik maintains that Methodism underpins Fijian nationalism and that the two form the 'cornerstone of Fijian cultural identity.' (Screebrnik, 'Ethnicity, Religion, and the issue of Aboriginity in a Small Island State', p. 192.)

members of the Wesleyan Missionary Society came from the lower middle class and working class. Often with little or no education, they were not products of the public school system and sport, particularly cricket, formed no part of the cultural tradition these tradesmen and labourers brought to Fiji. The lasting legacy they did provide was a uniform written language which enabled the establishment of an embryonic education system. In many colonies it was the education system which introduced and perpetuated cricket. The next chapter will explore this aspect of the Fijian colonial experience.

At the nets ...
The Education System

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Memo from the Governor of Fiji to the Secretary of State for the
Colonies 13 July 1960

Chapter Six

In Britain itself and later, in many of the colonies of the British Empire, the education system played a crucial role in introducing and nurturing cricket. This chapter will explore the origins of the education system in Fiji and establish its aims and values. It will first analyse the importance of education in the colonial enterprise and then examine the development of British colonial education policy, drawing on the examples of India, Africa and the West Indies. The Fijian experience will then be compared and contrasted with this information, drawing on colonial reports and documents as well as secondary sources.

Fiji's exposure to a long period of missionary influence before the advent of a colonial administration contrasts to the experiences of many of the British colonies, in that there does not appear to have been an emphasis on cricket in the education system. There is little or no mention of it in the reports and books on education policy in the colony. There was no transplantation of the Public School system with its focus on field sports. The Oxbridge trained masters were not present. All providers concentrated on elementary schooling; secondary schooling was not widely available. The system was conducted in the vernacular, not English, and its focus was vocational and agricultural, not academic, training. Education faced almost insurmountable problems of geographic isolation and unfavourable weather conditions and suffered from a perennial lack of finances and resources.

Never a neutral activity, education is a 'personalised, historically and politically constructed concept'.¹ The instigators of an education system have a purpose in setting up and promoting the system. Their aims will determine content and outcomes and, consequently, the system will legitimate those aims.² The education system introduces students to the world view through which they make sense of the world around them and their place in it. It defines their reality.³ In this respect education is a moral activity

¹ Kevin Harris, 'Aims! Whose aims?', in *The Aims of Education*, Roger Marples (ed), Routledge, London, 1999, p.3.

² Ibid.

³ J.A. Mangan, 'Images for confident control: Stereotypes in imperial discourse', in *The imperial curriculum: racial images and education in the British colonial experience*, J.A. Mangan (Ed), Routledge, London, 1993, p. 17.

driven and influenced by a political agenda.⁴ Anthony Smith identified the public education system as one of the ‘agencies of popular socialization’.⁵ It is essential in establishing ‘a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas, that bind the population together’.⁶

Therefore, education plays a vital role in the development of the ‘imagined community’. It is one of the most important tools in the socialisation and acculturation of children. The curriculum reflects the dominant discourse in a society and determines and articulates acceptable knowledge and behaviour. One of the most obvious sites for cultural interaction and change in a colonial society, it constitutes and disseminates a standard, uniform knowledge base creating a common platform. This shared knowledge influences public consciousness and moulds collective identity.

The spread of a Westernised education system is intimately linked to the assimilation and modernisation of colonial societies. Anderson traces its importance, not just to British imperialism, but to all other forms of Western imperialism.⁷ Education produced uniformity and conformity by instigating and perpetuating a common language and a common set of values. Indigenous societies were introduced to western life through concepts of history, science and culture.⁸ The education system was the ultimate tool in imposing ‘Western authority over all aspects of indigenous knowledges, languages and cultures’ and of asserting the West’s ‘ideological claims to having a superior civilization’.⁹

Education is extremely important within the context of knowledge and power in colonial relations. The education system articulates, defines and propagates acceptable knowledge. The curriculum, chosen and instigated by the dominant culture, identifies

⁴ Richard Pring, ‘Neglected Educational Aims: moral seriousness and social commitment’ in *The Aims of Education*, pp.164-65.

⁵ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, University of Nevada Press, Reno, 1991, p.11.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.116.

⁸ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p.269.

⁹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*, Zed Book Ltd, London, 1999, p.64.

political relationships and ‘reflects the distribution of power in society’.¹⁰ It legitimates particular forms of knowledge and establishes ways of knowing which become accepted as ‘truth’. It determines and transmits standards of acceptable behaviour, social structures and hierarchies and therefore, power structures. By perpetuating certain values and concepts it becomes self-validating.

Central to the ‘civilising’ program of colonial powers, Edward Said identifies education as one of the ‘persuasive means’ by which imperial power was imposed on the colonised.¹¹ He argues that imperialism was ‘an educational movement’ and that it consciously set out ‘to modernize, develop, instruct, and civilize’.¹² The education systems established in the colonies were modelled on those existing in the metropolitan centre and reflected current political and social thought. Therefore their focus differed between imperial powers and changed over time, but their ultimate aim was to serve the needs of the coloniser. Even when this need was defined in purely economic terms it carried cultural overtones.

In Indonesia the Dutch developed an extensive, highly organised school system to produce recruits for an ever growing bureaucracy to reap economic benefits for the metropol. Ann Stoler has shown how the Dutch education policy was influenced by changing notions of race and the need to control and mould sexual desire. She argues that Dutch administrators utilised the system to racially position individuals and inculcate socially acceptable mores.¹³ Anderson draws on the example of Indochina to demonstrate the dual purpose of the French colonial education system: to produce ‘politically reliable, grateful, and acculturated indigenous’ elites and ‘to break existing politico-cultural ties between the colonized peoples and the immediate extra-Indochinese world’.¹⁴ The area included what has become known as Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and the existing culture drew on both Thai and Chinese elements. The French replaced

¹⁰ Mangan, ‘Images for confident control’, p.16.

¹¹ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp.131-32.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.269.

¹³ Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Tense and tender ties: The politics of comparison in North American history and (post) colonial studies’, *The Journal of American History*, Vol.8, No.3, December 2001.

¹⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp.125-126.

the existing Chinese based script with a romanised phonetic script, undermining the fundamental basis of culture: language and literature.¹⁵

Similar claims have been made regarding the education policy and systems within the British Empire. The origins of the British Empire are complex: an interweaving of industrial and economic expansion with military conquest and a Christianising mission. However, there can be little doubt that a 'civilising' mission reinforced all the other objectives.¹⁶ Notions of British superiority ran deep and were buoyed in the late nineteenth century by the rise of social Darwinism and 'scientific' racism.¹⁷

In Britain, the state took control of education in 1870 and by 1880 school attendance was compulsory until 10 years of age.¹⁸ However, the government struggled to define desired outcomes for the education system. There was conflict between the old ideas of a liberal education, which focused on the classics and the humanities, and the new emphasis on scientific knowledge and technical skill which had emerged with industrialisation and the Utilitarian movement.¹⁹ The debate raged with regard to both the long established independent public schools and the fledgling state education system. There was also a shift from an ideal of 'godliness and good learning' to a 'cult of games and manliness' which became entrenched with the rise of the Empire.²⁰

The British first articulated a colonial education policy with regard to India. Thomas Macaulay, legal adviser to the Supreme Council of India in the 1830s, recommended the use of English as the medium of education. He argued that an English education would create 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' and that by a filtration system they would in turn influence the

¹⁵ Ibid., p.126.

¹⁶ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, Gordon Johnson (Ed), *The New Cambridge History of India*, Vol.3, No.4, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, p.3.

¹⁷ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914*, p.79. See also Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, pp.44-7.

¹⁸ The school leaving age was raised to 14 in 1918, 15 in 1947 and 16 in 1972.

¹⁹ Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, pp.114-124.

²⁰ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914*, p.84.

masses.²¹ Macaulay's recommendations were firmly based on a liberal view which maintained that 'human nature was intrinsically the same everywhere, and that it could be totally and completely transformed ... by ... education'.²²

This view dramatically changed with the outbreak of resistance and rebellion throughout the Empire beginning with the Indian mutiny of 1857-58. Trouble in various African colonies, the Maori wars in New Zealand and the Jamaican uprising, all served to harden racial attitudes and change colonial policy.²³ With regard to education, the response was mixed, for a number of reasons. The Indian mutiny brought into sharp focus the importance of the Indian rulers in keeping control of the masses. One of the strategies deployed to woo these rulers was the establishment of a system of public schools modelled on the British tradition for the sons of royalty.²⁴ However, more generally there was growing fear that education created political unrest by encouraging the development of a middle class that had no place in existing political hierarchies. In India the Western education system was already wide spread and had been enthusiastically taken up by the literate, higher castes. In the late nineteenth century they formed the core of the nationalist movement.²⁵

Similarly in Africa, the problems were seen as stemming from detribalisation and the creation of an educated class with no place in the existing society and limited employment opportunities. Exposure to Western education had undermined traditional authority. In his influential book on colonial governance, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Lord Lugard detailed the ideal education policy for a British colony. Rather than producing black Englishmen the aim should be to:

fit the ordinary individual to fill a useful part in his environment, with happiness to himself, and to ensure that the exceptional individual shall use his abilities for the

²¹ Cited in Dr. S.N. Mukerji, *History of Education in India (Modern Period)*, Acharya Book Depot, Baroda, 1961, p.77.

²² Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, p.29.

²³ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, pp.73-8. See also Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, pp.43-54.

²⁴ Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, pp.122-25.

²⁵ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, p.233.

advancement of the community and not to its detriment, or to the subversions of constituted authority.²⁶

To fulfil this ideal Lugard advocated a tiered system which would train a limited few with a literary education to fill clerical positions, technical training for those working in industry, and elementary schooling and agricultural and craft skills for the majority at village schools.²⁷

However, the British faced a dilemma attempting to reconcile economic necessity and humanitarian duty. Both required Africans to develop the 'higher standards' epitomised by the Empire.²⁸ Lugard still maintained that the primary objective of education was character building: by which he meant the inculcation of these ethical standards. Therefore, he strongly recommended boarding schools, staffed by English masters who would, by their example, 'form the character and ideals of the boys, and introduce the English public school code of honour'.²⁹ He noted that 'cricket, football, and "athletics" bring the staff and pupils into close touch, and have the best effect in training character'.³⁰ He also believed that 'no greater benefit' could be conferred on the African than to teach him 'English as a universal medium'.³¹ All of this would appear to contradict attempts to work within existing traditional cultural and political boundaries.

As colonial education policy was consolidated, a compromise was reached.³² Elementary schooling would be in the vernacular, and secondary schooling in English. Further, English would only be taught as a second language in the highest grades. This approach recognised the importance of early education in a mother tongue, while acknowledging

²⁶ Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p.425. Originally published in 1922, Margery Perham says in her introduction to the fifth edition that his book 'was to be found in every British African headquarters, central and provincial'. (p.xxviii/xxix).

²⁷ Ibid., p.442.

²⁸ Lugard defines these as: thrift, ambition, initiative, justice, fair-play, truthfulness, and mutual obligation. *The Dual Mandate*, p.432

²⁹ Ibid., p.434.

³⁰ Ibid., p.435.

³¹ Ibid., p.454.

³² An Advisory Committee was formed in 1924 to deal with education policy in Africa. It became responsible for all the colonies in 1929 and became the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies. (Clive Whitehead, *Colonial Educators: the British Indian and Colonial Education Service 1858-1983*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2003, pp.121 & 131.)

that ‘an educated man or woman should have at least the chief keys to the world’s culture’.³³ However, the policy met with resistance from indigenous populations who saw it as discriminatory. Rather than appreciating British attempts to maintain the status quo, they demanded access to an English language education, perceiving it as the pathway to ‘wealth, power and status’.³⁴ This issue was to also figure prominently in Fiji.

As the theoretical and moral debate raged, the principal focus of the colonial education system, building character (on British lines), remained the same into the 20th century. For many administrators, the English public school system, with its emphasis on sport, remained the ideal way of achieving this aim. Lord Curzon, viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905, maintained that young chiefs and nobles needed ‘to learn the English language, and become sufficiently familiar with English customs, literature, science, modes of thought, standards of truth and honour, and ... with manly English sports and games’.³⁵ The emphasis was on ‘character-training for leadership’ and ‘the games field was the instrument of achievement’.³⁶ Cricket played a dominant role, often occupying a large part of the students’ time.³⁷ Both Muslims and Hindus had well established education systems before the British arrived and they continued the tradition of generously supporting schools of learning.³⁸ These elite Indian schools were supported by wealthy rulers and were well equipped, including the provision of first class playing fields.

The West Indies provides ample evidence of the importance of the public school system in introducing and nurturing cricket. Throughout the islands a number of schools on the English model trained elite black political leaders as well as clerks and professionals. The connection has been thoroughly explored and emphasised by numerous writers on West Indian cricket. In Trinidad, C.L.R. James credits his devotion to English literature

³³ Ibid., p.129.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Quoted in Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, p.125.

³⁶ Ibid., p.132.

³⁷ At Mayo College, eventually the most important of these schools, cricket ‘formed half the existence of the boys and was played every day, including Sunday’. (Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, p.135.)

³⁸ Ibid., p.137.

and cricket to his immersion in the English public-school code.³⁹ Sandiford and Stoddart claim that:

The single most important social condition underlying this cricket eminence ... was the elaboration of what might be called the 'elite school' system in Barbados from the 1870s onwards, a system based quite consciously on the public and grammar school ideology of Victorian Britain.⁴⁰

These schools were staffed by generations of Oxford and Cambridge graduates who 'stressed the virtues of the great imperial game as the perfect medium for teaching invaluable lessons about morals, ethics and life itself'.⁴¹

In contrast to the pattern in the test playing countries, the Fijian education system introduced by the Methodist Missionary Society aimed to develop literacy to enable individuals to become familiar with scriptural texts. The Glasgow system introduced by William Collis and John Binner in 1852 utilised monitorial methods of teaching and the 'object teaching of Pestalozzi'.⁴² There is no indication that sport played any role in the system. After the *Fiji Times* was established in 1869, it frequently reported on school prize days but sport was never mentioned as part of the program. On the contrary, it is *meke*, suitably adapted, which is used to entertain the scholars and their supporters, not sporting events.⁴³

The teachers who spread the education system throughout Fiji were indigenous Fijians with limited training. They enabled their charges to master the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, but their primary objective was to promote the moral teaching of

³⁹ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, p.24.

⁴⁰ Sandiford and Stoddart, 'The elite schools and cricket in Barbados' in *Liberation cricket*, p.44.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.58.

⁴² Sione Latukefu, 'Pacific Islander Missionaries', in *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley (Eds), Pacific Theological College and the Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji, 1996, p.24. Pestalozzi's theory of education encouraged the education of the individual to make the most of his abilities within his particular society and emphasised learning by doing. He proposed the use of the 'object lesson' which integrated fields of knowledge by looking at an object in different ways, for example, its use, raw materials, manufacture, origin, geographical spread, literacy allusions, etc. (S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boulton, *A Short History of Educational Ideas*, University Tutorial Press Ltd., London, 1966, p.337 & 341.)

⁴³ For example, the *Fiji Times*, 28 August, 1875, reports that 'one meke was an account of the creation, another the children of Israel under Moses throwing off the yoke of Egypt', several were 'arithmetical' and one 'was on the names and lengths of the principal rivers in the world.'

Christianity.⁴⁴ They had not been exposed to any formal training which would have inculcated the cultural concepts of the British Public School system. A separate teacher training facility was set up by the Methodist Mission in 1912 and as the Government began to take more responsibility for education it set up a similar facility at Natabua, near Nadi, in 1929.⁴⁵ As the education system developed, teachers were often seconded from Australia and, after 1924, from New Zealand. Indeed, New Zealand had a significant influence on education in Fiji. In 1924 a Scheme of Co-operation was established with New Zealand and most of the teachers, particularly in the European schools, came from there.⁴⁶ New Zealanders dominated education administration and the New Zealand curriculum was used as a model for the Fijian curriculum.⁴⁷ As rugby was the established national game in New Zealand it seems likely that these teachers would have brought rugby with them, not cricket.⁴⁸

However, the overwhelming number of teachers remained indigenous Fijians. They taught in the vernacular and there was no sustained attempt to introduce English as the medium of education. The Education Commission appointed in 1909 noted approvingly that:

it is quite exceptional to find a Fijian youth of the present day who is unable to read and write his own language with a certain amount of facility – bearing testimony to the good work of the Mission schools.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Cecil W. Mann, *Education in Fiji*, Education Research Series, No.33, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1935, p.23. Cecil W. Mann, M.A., a lecturer in education at Sydney Teachers College, was commissioned by the Methodist Missionary Society in 1935 to undertake an independent study of education in Fiji.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.73. Teacher training remained a problem. In 1968 Whitehead reports that one in four teachers were untrained. (C. Whitehead, *Education in Fiji: policy, problems and progress in primary and secondary education 1939-1973*, Pacific Research Monograph Number Six, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1981, p.130.)

⁴⁶ The Colonial Office acknowledged with regard to New Zealand teachers ‘... if it were not for the scheme of co-operation with Fiji we should educationally be in the soup’. (Cited in Whitehead, *Colonial Educators*, p.91.)

⁴⁷ Whitehead, *Education in Fiji*, p.1.

⁴⁸ In 1905 the New Zealand All Blacks established their supremacy in international rugby and the game became the dominant force in the development of New Zealand national identity. (See Scott A.G.M. Crawford, ‘Rugby and the Forging of National Identity’ in *Sport, Power and Society in New Zealand: historical and contemporary perspectives*, John Nauright (Ed), Australian Society for Sports History Studies in Sports History, No.11, 1999.)

⁴⁹ Legislative Council, Fiji – Education Commission, 1909 – ‘Report of the commission appointed to inquire into the existing methods of, and facilities provided for, the Education of Europeans and Natives in

In 1930 the Governor assured the Council of Chiefs that '[t]he object of the Government is to provide the great majority of your children with a simple education in your own language in village and group schools...'⁵⁰ This was in accord with colonial educational policy which was designed to encourage individuals to accept and respect their own culture and to fit them for a place in traditional society. Macaulay's ideas on using the English language to introduce colonised peoples to English cultural concepts and knowledge had been superseded.⁵¹

There was continual criticism of the lack of usefulness of the schooling being offered to the Fijians. In both India and Africa the teaching of English was designed to provide recruits for clerical positions within the Civil Service.⁵² In the West Indies the system trained both black clerks and professionals.⁵³ The paternalistic and protectionist policies of the Colonial administration in Fiji had precluded any suggestion of training Fijians for clerical or commercial positions. The missionaries had always contended that there should be a focus on vocational and agricultural training to fit the Fijian for existence in his/her own surroundings. However, they had difficulty in implementing any type of widespread or long-term program. As the Government began to take a more active role in education, it too emphasised vocational and agricultural training, in line with existing colonial educational policy. In his address to the Council of Chiefs in 1930 the Governor explained that '[t]he teaching will be directed towards training the children to become agriculturists and to use their hands to the best advantage.'⁵⁴ As the Indian population grew and established itself in the commercial life of the colony, educators began to see the 'economic salvation' of the Fijian in agricultural training.⁵⁵

Fiji, and to advise as to the steps to be taken to bring about improvement in the same', published by authority, Suva: Edward John March, Government Printer, 1910.

⁵⁰ Report of the proceedings of the Council of Chiefs, Legislative Council Fiji, 1931, Public Record Office, London, CO83 194/3.

⁵¹ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914*, p.288.

⁵² See Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, p.442-43.

⁵³ Sandiford and Stoddart, *The elite schools and cricket in Barbados*, p.45.

⁵⁴ Report of proceedings of Council of Chiefs, Legislative Council Fiji, 1931, Public Record Office, London, CO 83 194/3.

⁵⁵ Mann, *Education in Fiji*, p.25.

However, plans to reform the education system and make it a meaningful and useful part of the life of indigenous Fijians continued to meet with disappointment and failure.⁵⁶ Education was not compulsory and those children who did come to school only remained for three or four years gaining the most elementary education.⁵⁷ Secondary educational facilities remained very few. There was no widespread development of boarding schools. Lugard stressed that boarding schools were essential 'if boys are to imbibe the traditions that give to English public schoolboys that discipline and training which have fitted them for the work of the Empire'.⁵⁸ Children needed to be isolated from their own culture if they were to be successfully immersed in the colonial culture.⁵⁹ To the contrary, in Fiji the Government wanted to '...provide education within reach of the home and to keep the children associated as closely as possible with parental and tribal control.'⁶⁰ In his report in 1935, Mann concluded that the 'improvement of the standards of elementary education should be the first objective in Fiji'.⁶¹ As late as 1950 a Colonial Office Minute recognised the need for secondary schools and indicated that higher education still had to be pursued abroad.⁶²

The closest attempt to introduce the British Public School system was Queen Victoria School at Nasinu, near Suva. It was established in 1906 at the request of the Council of Chiefs and with their generous financial support. Although it assimilated 'many of the features of a British public school' it was 'deeply rooted in all that is good in the Fijian

⁵⁶ In 1926 Governor Eyre Hutson acknowledged that '(I)n theory the educational ladder for Fijians is a complete one...' but '(I)n practice the facilities for education, especially in the village schools, are...inadequate. The number of trained teachers utterly fails to meet the needs of the community, and the equipment of these schools is sadly deficient. They are, in general, schools only in name...'. (Legislative Council, Fiji, 1926, Council Paper No 16. M.P. 2342/25.)

⁵⁷ Education was not yet compulsory in Fiji at the time of independence in 1970.

⁵⁸ Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, p.455.

⁵⁹ Charles Abel, LMS missionary in Papua New Guinea, took this philosophy to the extreme, completely removing all his converts from their villages and isolating them on an island. He came from a later breed of LMS missionary and was heavily influenced by the concept of muscular Christianity. He firmly believed that '(c)ricket and football would instil into his boys' minds the healthy precepts of self-mastery in place of sexual profligacy'. (Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891-1975*, p.49.)

⁶⁰ The Governor addressing the Council of Chiefs November 1930. (Report of proceedings of Council of Chiefs, Legislative Council Fiji, 1931, Public Record Office, London, CO83 194/3.)

⁶¹ Mann, *Education in Fiji*, p.137.

⁶² Colonial Office Minute: 85529/14/50 (CO 83 257/13).

mode of life' and the emphasis was still 'strongly agricultural and industrial'.⁶³ It offered boarding facilities but remained a higher grade primary school rather than a secondary school.⁶⁴ The school was commandeered during World War I and it took some years before it was re-established after the war. A sports ground was levelled in 1924 but by 1926 it was still not in good condition. There were washouts and subsidence and the boys had to spend half the time allotted for games cutting the grass on the thirteen acres.⁶⁵ The students also had to spend a large part of their time growing their own food supplies. This was a feature of all higher education institutions in Fiji. A preoccupation with the practical aspects of living was not conducive to creating the atmosphere of dedication to practice required to produce elite sports teams.

Some mention needs to be made of the Suva Medical School, although it does not sit within the elementary and secondary education system. It was set up in 1888 to train Native Medical Practitioners to reach remote villagers with simple medical help. In 1928 the school became the Central Medical School and gained its first permanent home thanks to the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation. It also expanded its role and began to train Native Medical Practitioners from islands throughout the Pacific. In this diverse cultural group, Fijian was not the common language, so English was instigated as the medium of instruction. The length of training was increased to four years in 1931. The students lived and worked together and shared recreational activities including sport.⁶⁶ In these conditions a strong sporting tradition did develop and both their rugby and cricket teams became formidable competitors in local competitions, but only a small number of Fijians passed through the school, relative to the population.⁶⁷

⁶³ Colonial Office Minute: 85529/14/40 (CO 83 257/13).

⁶⁴ This comment is made by Whitehead regarding Queen Victoria School in 1944, and the Colonial Office Minute of 1950 makes the same inference. (Whitehead, *Education in Fiji*, p.42.)

⁶⁵ Council Paper No 21 Education Department M.P. 1544/27 (Report for the year 1926), Legislative Council, Fiji 1927. (For those unfamiliar with the tropics, grass grows extremely fast in the hot, humid conditions.) Sandiford and Stoddart have linked the availability of spacious playing fields with good cricket performance. (Sandiford and Stoddart, 'The elite schools and cricket in Barbados', p.50.)

⁶⁶ I have taken this brief history from Margaret W. Guthrie, *Misi Utu: Dr D.W. Hoodless and the development of medical education in the South Pacific*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, in association with the South Pacific Social Science Association, Suva, Fiji, 1979.

⁶⁷ Significantly, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Fijian leader and cricketer, passed through the Suva Medical School before continuing his education in New Zealand and later at Oxford.

Education of Indians in Fiji faced even more problems than education of Fijians. Indian children lived on scattered farms, rather than in villages. Their diverse religious and linguistic backgrounds made the implementation of a formal education system difficult. The lack of Government involvement in education meant that it was left to Indian communities to elect school committees and raise the funds to build and run schools. Untrained teachers did their best to instil an elementary education hampered by the need for children to help their parents run their farms. When the Government began to take more responsibility for education, separate Indian schools were set up. Even then attendance continued to be a problem.⁶⁸ In 1926 the principal of Natabua Indian School, Lautoka, lamented:

Cricket and football have been played during the year, but not regularly, as the boys could not often stay after school hours to play these games, being required at home to help the parents in the farm work.⁶⁹

As the colony developed Indian attitudes to education changed. Denied land ownership, they saw education as the means of escape from poverty and insecurity and the vehicle for upward social mobility and wealth.⁷⁰ In contrast most, although not all, indigenous Fijians appeared content to obtain a few years of elementary education and then settle back into their communal life style.⁷¹

By the 1950's only five of the main secondary schools were playing cricket and four of those were in the Suva-Tailevu area.⁷² The Fiji Schools' Cricket Association was not formed until 1966.⁷³ However, efforts to promote the game still relied heavily on individual effort and were hampered by the perennial problems of the weather and

⁶⁸ C.W. Mann noted in his report on education compiled for the Methodist Missionary Society in 1935 that irregular attendance was still a problem because '(A)s soon as the lad is likely to be of use to his parents, his attendance becomes irregular'. (Mann, *Education in Fiji*, p.128.)

⁶⁹ Council Paper, No 21 Education Department M.P. 1544/27 (Report for the year 1926), Legislative Council, Fiji, 1927.

⁷⁰ Whitehead, *Education in Fiji*, p.37.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.73.

⁷² Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket 1950-1974*, p.50. A 1948 report on education in Fiji mentions eight Government schools and eight Mission schools providing secondary education. However, a 1955 report lists only seven Government secondary schools, making it difficult to determine exactly how many secondary schools there were in the colony by the 1950s. (See Council Paper No. 1, Department of Education, (Report for the year, 1948), Legislative Council, Fiji, 1950, CO83/154/1 and Council Paper 34, Report on Education in Fiji, 1955, CO1036/95.)

distance. In 1971 there were still very few schools in the Suva area which included cricket in their sports programme.⁷⁴ It proved difficult to inspire young players to develop the dedication and application needed to excel when competitions could not be guaranteed.⁷⁵ Lack of reliable roads and hazardous sea voyages still made inter-school competition difficult, if not impossible. A dearth of coaches and administrators also dogged organisers.⁷⁶

The problems associated with the isolation of villages and therefore schools throughout the island group were compounded by the constant want of finances and resources.⁷⁷ The problem was not unique to Fiji. Education was not a high priority with many colonial administrators who saw it as consuming valuable 'scarce financial and human resources'.⁷⁸ In the 1930s Kilmer Moe, an American educationalist, commenting on education in Fiji, noted '(t)heir buildings are often mere shacks with no equipment or they are housed in native huts quite unsuited to the task in hand.'⁷⁹ As late as 1966 there was still a chronic shortage of textbooks and essential equipment in Fijian primary schools.⁸⁰ Sporting facilities and equipment were a long way down the list of priorities.

Apart from the Methodist Mission and the Government, the other providers of education in Fiji exerted only a nominal influence. The Anglican Mission had agreed to concentrate its ministry on the European community.⁸¹ They extended their care to the Solomoni, released indentured South Sea Island labourers living in Fiji, and established a

⁷³ Ibid., p.50.

⁷⁴ *Fiji Sport*, Vol.1, No. 8, January-February, 8 January 1971. The Department of Education report for 1948 provides a long list of sports including rugby, soccer, basket-ball, tennis, athletics, swimming and life-saving, but no cricket. (Council Paper No. 1, Department of Education (Report for the year, 1948), Legislative Council, Fiji, 1950. CO83/154/1.)

⁷⁵ Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket*, p.50.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Mangan has demonstrated the importance of Victorian economic prosperity to the development of athleticism in the English public schools. (See Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, chapter 5, pp.99-121.)

⁷⁸ Whitehead, *Colonial Educators*, p.85. Whitehead maintains that even by 1935 the link between education and economic growth and social change was not appreciated by many administrators in the British colonies.

⁷⁹ Kilmer O. Moe, *Fiji and the Future*, Fiji Times & Herald Office, Suva, n.d., p.34.

⁸⁰ Whitehead, *Education in Fiji*, p.108.

⁸¹ Winston Halapua, 'John Auvuru Shaw and the Solomoni Community in Fiji' in *The Covenant Makers*, p.292.

school for them in 1925. The teachers were from an Anglican lay fraternity called the Melanesian Brothers from the Solomon Islands.⁸² The Catholic Missions established schools and offered education in the English language quite early but their cultural background was French, not British, with no emphasis on field sports. However, it is interesting that in 1966 when the Fiji Schools Cricket Association was formed a teacher from the Marist Brothers High School was one of the founders.⁸³

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company (C.S.R.) played a very important economic and therefore social role in Fiji, but its involvement in education was aimed mainly at the children of its European and Eurasian employees.⁸⁴ It assisted both the Mission schools and the Indian and Fijian communal schools financially. Some of the CSR officers were elected to the boards of the Indian community schools⁸⁵ because of their ability to keep the peace between community members.⁸⁶ They do not appear to have had any direct input into curriculum matters. The Company provided excellent sporting facilities, including cricket pitches, for their expatriate employees but there is no evidence that these were used by either the Indian or Fijian communities.

In contrast to the stated aims of education in Africa and India, the reports and policy documents on education in Fiji barely mention sport or its importance in the education system. Where it was mentioned it was only in a casual, off-hand manner. Mann listed participation in 'games' under 'Health Teaching' along with 'provision of hygienic school buildings, the development of healthy habits, the encouragement of physical occupation ... and the medical inspection of school children'.⁸⁷ There was no correlation made between sport⁸⁸ and character building or the civilising process. The focus was on

⁸² Ibid., fn. 4, p.300.

⁸³ Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket*, p.50.

⁸⁴ Cecil Mann reported that in 1934 CSR had seven schools with 292 pupils. He commented on the students' musical ability but made no reference to sport. (Mann, *Education in Fiji*, p.57.)

⁸⁵ A.G. Lowndes, 'The Sugar Industry in Fiji', in *South Pacific Enterprise: the Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited*, A.G. Lowndes (Ed), Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1956, p.87.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.73.

⁸⁷ Mann, *Education in Fiji*, p.98.

⁸⁸ Moe admitted that 'character is a vital aim in all education activities' but felt that 'religion is the best means to a sound development of character for Fijians' and so proposed that the 'first objective' of education should be 'character training through religious instruction'. (Moe, *Fiji and the Future*, p.28.)

vocational and agricultural training and the preservation of the Fijian way of life. The emphasis was also on primary or elementary education. Secondary schooling was not available to any great extent and it is at the secondary level that a prolonged exposure to British culture took place in Africa and India. Although these policies may not have lived up to their expectations, it is significant that they were not even expressed in the Fijian case.

As in Africa and India the formal education system at a secondary level only reached a small percentage of the population. However because sport, and particularly cricket, played a significant role in the education system in these colonies it spread to a large percentage of the population through those children who were reached by the system. In Fiji this was not the case. Cricket does not appear to have played a major role in schools and therefore would not have been introduced into the community through the education system.

It was only as the sons of the elite began to be educated overseas that they were introduced to the game through their schooling. They brought back a love of the game and began to pass it on to their peers in Fiji. Exposed to British education in schools in Australia and New Zealand (and later, for a select few, in England) their natural sporting prowess involved them in the game.

Thus in early colonial Fiji young players were not introduced to cricket through the education system. Rather the game's first major influence appears to have come through the Armed Native Constabulary (ANC). These forces were led and influenced by Oxbridge graduates.

The law enforcement agencies in Fiji originated from the Royal Army of Cakobau which was retained after cession and re-named the Armed Native Constabulary. It remained a military body during the early years of the colony and played a major role in subduing the rebellious hill tribes of the hinterland in Gordon's 'Little War'.⁸⁹ At the time of cession

⁸⁹ Ravuvu, *Fijians at War*, p.4.

the Governor's Aide-de-Camp became the Superintendent of Police.⁹⁰ As British notions of law and order were imposed across the colony, three other civilian police forces were formed: a town police force in Suva and Levuka, a Rural Police force reporting to the magistrates, and a village police force operating under the Fijian Administration.⁹¹ As the dissenting tribes were subdued and the threat of rebellion subsided the need to maintain a military force disappeared and in 1904 the ANC was amalgamated with these civil police bodies to become the Fiji Constabulary.⁹²

It was in this atmosphere of military discipline and masculine camaraderie that British sporting traditions could flourish. Living in close contact with their European supervisors and becoming accustomed to ideas of order and routine, the Fijians accepted with enthusiasm these controlled, competitive forms of recreation. They were introduced to cricket, and perhaps rugby, in the context of the structured military life of the Europeans. Legend has it that rugby was played between the European and Fijian soldiers of the Native Constabulary during the 'Little War' but it was not officially introduced to the Fijians until 1905 when Ratu Jone Tabaiwalu, who had studied at Wanganui in New Zealand, taught the game to his pupils at Naililili.⁹³

It was, therefore, in this framework that they accepted the idea of sport, particularly cricket, as part of the coloniser's culture. The military tradition translated easily from the warrior hierarchy of the indigenous Fijian society and those who began to gain leadership roles within the ANC were drawn from the chiefly ranks. The concepts of leadership and team play implicit in cricket mirrored the existing order. The game therefore retained its association with the elite.

As the social boundaries were drawn between the colonisers and the colonised in the new colony, intercourse between Europeans and indigenous Fijians appears to have been limited to formal, ceremonial occasions. Cricket provided an acceptable avenue of

⁹⁰ Brown, *From Fiji to the Balkans*, p.2.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.209.

⁹² Ravuvu, *Fijians at War*, p.4.

⁹³ *Fiji Sport*, Vol.1, No.4, 11 September 1970 and Vol.4, No.5, 12 October 1973.

contact where the formal was relaxed, but not lost, by an approved form of play. The ANC facilitated this exchange. In 1890 the Suva Cricket Club used the *rara* or parade ground of the Armed Native Constabulary for competitions. In the opening match of the season the Army and Navy team consisted of officers of H.M.S. *Rapid* and the ANC.⁹⁴ Throughout the 1890s ANC members of chiefly status played in the Suva competitions for a variety of teams.

In early 1895 the first Fijian cricket team to tour overseas played in New Zealand. Three of the six indigenous Fijian players were members of the Armed Native Constabulary: Ratu Penaia Kadavulevu, Ratu Epeli Vakacaracara, and Ratu Nailovolovo Radelanimate.⁹⁵ In 1908 the Bauan team which toured Australia was drawn from the chiefly clans of Bau. At least four of the players were policemen.⁹⁶ As the game's popularity spread this link between service in the law-keeping forces and playing cricket became more tenuous but it was important in the early stages of the game's introduction to the country. Police force teams provided stiff competition in both cricket and rugby as organised sport became a feature of colonial life.

Thus it was the military style police force which introduced cricket into Fiji, not the education system. This was contrary to the situation in the test playing nations. Established by the Methodist missionaries, the early education system had no emphasis on sport. It came under the colonial administration at a time when the focus of official policy had switched to vocational and agricultural rather than academic training for indigenous peoples. The public school system, such an important part of inculcating British values and sporting prowess in many colonised populations, never eventuated in Fiji. The education system, like so many other institutions, was hampered by local geographic conditions and a continuing lack of finances and resources. An important ingredient in the consolidation and dissemination of the game was missing.

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⁹⁴ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.21.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.25.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.53-4.

This chapter traced the development of the education system in Fiji to establish whether or not sport, and particularly cricket, played a significant role in the educational experience of Fijians. Colonial education systems not only introduced the game in many colonies but promoted and nurtured it. By comparing and contrasting the Fijian experience with that of other colonies the chapter established that the education system did not give sport the prominence it had in India, Africa and the West Indies. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society laid the foundations for the education system in Fiji, and as shown in the previous chapter, sport was not a priority for it. By the time the British colonial administration took reluctant control of the system, colonial policy had shifted and the aim of a colonial education system was to reinforce local cultural identity. The chapter identified a number of other factors which contributed to the failure of the game to become important within the education system.

This chapter has shown that rather than the education system, cricket was introduced and consolidated through the armed forces. The next chapter will examine the lives of individual players to further determine the processes whereby the game was spread throughout the island group. The chapter will seek to establish that in the hierarchical society of both indigenous Fijians and the colonial administration, the influence of the individual was paramount in promoting the popularity of cricket.

Anyone for cricket?: **The Players**



Monument to Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, Suva

Chapter Seven

*Cricket is pre-eminently a game of individuals although fiction glorifies the team aspect of it.*¹

Without the benefit of the institutional promotion and support supplied by the education system, the development of cricket in Fiji depended heavily on the influence of individuals. This chapter will explore the lives of those who played the game to determine how it expanded throughout the island group and suggest some reasons for cricket's initial popularity and subsequent decline. In the relatively small population of Fiji, both European and indigenous, and in the geographically isolated environment of the islands, the influence of individuals appears to have been extremely important. Colonial administrators and the indigenous elite exerted a powerful influence in the rigidly hierarchical society. The structure of cricket increased this influence and allowed individual players to exert considerable pressure on the prosperity or otherwise of the game.

The first record of cricket being played in the islands was in 1874 when the Levuka Cricket Club was formed. In January of that year a group of 'gentlemen' merchants and professionals formed the club in response to the 'absence of athletic amusement' in the town.² The occasion was hailed by the *Fiji Times* as 'an excellent institution' as '... we have so little recreation, and those who indulge in the noble game will reap benefit in a stronger and healthier frame'.³ It was formed in the same spirit as the Fiji Rifle Association, the Levuka Mutual Improvement Society or the Chess Club: as a vehicle for social exchange and fellowship for Europeans living an isolated existence far from their own kind. The game was seen as a pleasant diversion and its support was desultory and spasmodic. For example, the news that Prince George (later King George V) and Prince Albert Victor (later Duke of Clarence), midshipmen on HMS *Bacchante*, would be playing cricket when their ship called at Levuka in 1881, brought a much needed

¹ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.110.

² *Fiji Times*, 10 January 1874. Among the players were: W.O. Groom, Acting Collector of Customs, Registrar of Shipping and Shipping Master; O. Cudlip, Mayor of Levuka, Auctioneer, Ship Broker and Commission Agent; W. Cousens, trader; A.M. Brodziak, trader, general merchant and importer; W.A.H. Surplice, trader, auctioneer; F.H. Dufty, photographer; and T. Steel, manufacturer of cordial liquors and aerated waters. (These facts have been garnered from the *Fiji Times* 1874-75.)

³ *Fiji Times*, 17 January 1874.

resurgence amongst locals eager to play in this game.⁴ The game provided another avenue for social interaction with the naval ships which were calling regularly at the port. The players had no conception of mixing socially with the indigenous Fijians.

It was not until the colonial administrators arrived that a freer and more substantial intercourse developed with the indigenous Fijians. Snow notes that the areas where cricket did not develop such as Kadavu and Bua had no cricketing Europeans stationed in them.⁵ As already stated there were no cricketers among Sir Arthur Gordon's staff. It was not until the 1880s that Governor des Voeux's private secretaries formally introduced the game to the Fijians through their combined role as Commandant of the Armed Native Constabulary and Superintendent of Police. The Hon. Josceline George Herbert Amherst had played for the Harrow XI and his successor, Sir Edward William Wallington, had been an Oxford Blue and played for the Sherborne XI and Wiltshire. As supervisor of the armed forces, the governor's secretary exercised close control over the lives of the members of the ANC. Sharing their day to day activities and living side by side in a military, masculine environment, they encouraged cricket as part of the new, novel and acceptable male lifestyle.

Although not of the calibre of Amherst and Wallington, the colonial administrative officers sent to the remote regions of the Fiji Islands in the following years were enthusiastic amateurs who introduced the game to the chiefs in the various areas they governed. Men like Sir Basil Thomson and Adolph Brewster Joske organised the game at their various postings including the remote interior of Viti Levu and the distant Lau group. In 1890 John Symonds Udal was appointed Attorney General of Fiji. Hailed by Snow as 'the most distinguished and capable player to spend any period of time in the group',⁶ Udal spent nine years in the colony. His playing career in England included playing for the M.C.C. and he had been invited to play with W.G. Grace's team which toured Australia in 1873-74. He declined because of professional commitments but the

⁴ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, pp.11-12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.88-9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.19.

invitation demonstrates the standard of his game. At the time of his appointment to Fiji he was a member of the committee at Lord's.

Udal set about re-invigorating the game among his compatriots in Suva, now the capital, and was responsible for instigating the repair and upgrading of Albert Park which became, and still is, the principal playing field in Suva.⁷ Under his guidance games were played regularly and matches against other centres organised. A number of Fijian chiefs regularly appeared in the teams. Udal was a driving force behind the first overseas tour by a Fijian team: to New Zealand in 1895. He and W.L. Allardyce, Native Commissioner, had to exert considerable pressure on the Governor to obtain permission for the six Fijian chiefs included in the side to leave Fiji.⁸ It was after this tour that Udal claimed that Fiji had become 'the stronghold of cricket in the Western Pacific'.⁹ Snow notes that Udal's influence developed Fijian cricket 'to a standard which could be judged creditable in relation to any throughout the world'.¹⁰

Udal not only inspired his European contemporaries to play the game enthusiastically and well but also the indigenous Fijians he had come in contact with. There is anecdotal evidence that by the turn of the century cricket was developing along similar lines to Tonga and other Pacific island countries with large numbers of players on each side.¹¹ However, the first indigenous impetus for the game appears to have come from the six Bauan chiefs who had participated in the NZ tour, who were keen to repeat the experience, and returned to Bau to coach other young men.¹² Writing in January 1922, Ratu Sukuna emphasised the control exercised by chiefs over the individual life of

⁷ Ibid., p.20

⁸ Ibid., p.25. After the devastating effects of the 1875 measles epidemic, introduced after Cakobau's trip to Sydney, the administration was reluctant to allow Fijians to travel overseas. Udal and Allardyce had to undertake to 'take care' of the young chiefs.

⁹ Cited in Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.44.

¹⁰ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.45.

¹¹ T.R. St-Johnston, *South Sea Reminiscences*, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., London, 1922, p.37. (See also, Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.46.)

¹² Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.47.

indigenous Fijians ‘(t)hey controlled every phase of life, from planting and fishing – the ordinary occupations of the tribe – to games...’¹³

The chiefly attitude to cricket was a major factor in determining the success of the game in a particular area. This is strikingly illustrated in the case of Taveuni. At a game played there in 1908 the chief was bowled out on his first ball by the visiting Bau team. As Snow records this was ‘a diplomatic gaffe on the part of Bau’ and the chief ‘pulled up the shattered stumps and called away his followers from the ground’.¹⁴ Further, he ‘prohibited the miserable game from being played again in his domains’.¹⁵ Nor did his successors encourage the game and it never flourished in the area. Chiefly support had to be secured before cricket could make any impression on Fijian society and identity.

On Bau the reaction was different. Ratu Kadavulevu, paramount chief of Fiji, took an obsessive interest in the game. The grandson of Ratu Ebenezer Cakobau who had ceded Fiji to Britain, he was *Roko* (chief government officer) of the province of Tailevu where the district of Bau was situated and a member of the ANC.¹⁶ He was described by a traveller to Fiji in 1913 as ‘a well-educated, well-read man of the world, a member of the Legislative Assembly, a sportsman, an ideal host, and a loyal subject of the King.’¹⁷ Ratu Kadavulevu’s sport was cricket.

Kadavulevu was educated in Singleton, in New South Wales. In Australia during Stoddart’s English team tour in 1897-98 he ‘practised with the best players on the Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide grounds’.¹⁸ He had ambitions to send a team of Fijian cricketers to England¹⁹ and succeeded in bringing a Bauan team to Australia in 1907-08. At Bau he developed a first-class pitch, set up practice nets, and converted a former temple into a pavilion. When resident on the island he coached his team and played a

¹³ Ratu Lala Sukuna, *Fiji: the three-legged stool: selected writings of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna*, Deryck Scarr (Ed), Macmillan Education for the Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna Biography Committee, n.d., p.75.

¹⁴ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.87.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.52.

¹⁷ Ralph Stock, *The Confessions of a Tenderfoot*, Grant Richards Ltd., London, n.d., p.161.

¹⁸ Cited from the *Sydney Referee* in Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.53.

¹⁹ Stock, *The Confessions of a Tenderfoot*, p.167.

practice game almost every day.²⁰ It was reported that ‘all the male inhabitants of the island played cricket, or at any rate attempt to...’²¹

Yet, Kadavulevu’s obsession with the game left him open to criticism. He was accused of encouraging:

... disintegration in Tailevu by his failure to recognise, much less maintain, old connections; cricket was at least as important to him as Fijian ceremonies, and he used his position for pleasures like travel overseas.²²

Perhaps as a result of this assessment the administration replaced Kadavulevu as *Roko Tui Tailevu* in 1912 with Ratu Madraiwiwi, father of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna.²³ Significantly, if ironically, enthusiasm for cricket, with its accompanying embrace of English culture, was a double-edged sword. For the ‘loyal subject’, his passion was regarded as a symptom of excess by the colonial authorities.

Kadavulevu’s cousin, Ratu Pope Epeli Seniloli Cakobau, shared his obsession with the game. Next in line in the succession, he had been educated at Suva Public School, spoke English ‘like a Britisher’ and worked for the government in the Ministry of Native Affairs.²⁴ On the Australian tour in 1907-08 only he and Kadavulevu wore blazers and trousers, while the rest of the team played in *meke* costume.²⁵ Ratu Pope was an excellent all round player. He scored the first century by a Fijian, against Southern Tasmania on the 1907-08 tour.²⁶ Marsden described him as a ‘bowler of very high class’²⁷ and the *Brisbane Courier* proclaimed that ‘were he a Queenslander, he would be immediately selected to represent the State’.²⁸ He succeeded Kadavulevu as *Roko Tui*

²⁰ Ibid., p.168.

²¹ Cited in Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.54. The comment is from Lieutenant E.J. Marsden who was approached by the Bauan chiefs to organise a tour to Australia in 1907. Marsden was captain of the Victorian Army team. (Snow, p.53.)

²² Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*, p.45.

²³ Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*, p.8.

²⁴ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.53 & 56.

²⁵ Ibid., p.59.

²⁶ Ibid., p.73.

²⁷ Ibid., p.84.

²⁸ Ibid., p.67. This assertion has to be questioned in the light of Queensland’s treatment of its Aboriginal players. Jack Marsh (1874-1916) and Eddie Gilbert (1908-1978), both outstanding players did represent

Tailevu in 1915, but his athletic days over, alcohol abuse was his downfall: he died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1936.²⁹

Carrying on the tradition, Ratu Pope's son, Ratu George Kadavulevu Cakobau, took to the game with enthusiasm. Born in 1911, he was educated at Newington College, New South Wales and at Wanganui Technical College in New Zealand. He excelled in both cricket and rugby to the detriment of his academic studies. With a view to Ratu George's important leadership role in Fiji the Administration wished to further his education with a period at Oxford or Cambridge as this would be 'the best intellectual training which will give him broad and tolerant views and sound judgement'. However although '[h]e is very good at cricket and football... his proficiency in sports undoubtedly led to the neglect of his studies whilst he was at Newington College'.³⁰ He was a member of the Fiji Military Forces and fought in the Solomon Islands during World War II. After the War he served in the Fiji Police Force and as a Fijian magistrate.³¹ He was vice-captain, under Philip Snow, of the Fijian Cricket Team which toured New Zealand in 1948.³² He succeeded his father as paramount chief of Fiji when the latter died in 1936 and became the first Fijian Governor-General when Fiji gained its Independence.

Ratu George's cousin, Ratu Edward Tuigi Tuivanuavou Cakobau, was also a first-class player. A more sophisticated and worldly man than his cousin, he was three years older than Ratu George and descended from a granddaughter of King Cakobau and King George II of Tonga.³³ Ratu Edward spent some time at Oxford after being educated at Queen Victoria School in Fiji and at Wanganui Technical College in New Zealand.³⁴ He played for Auckland while in New Zealand and for Sir Pelham Warner's XI and Oxford

Queensland but were never selected to represent Australia. Their cricketing prowess did not protect or rescue them from the harsh reality of living in Queensland under the oppressive *Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897*. (Tatz, *Aborigines in Sport*)

²⁹ Snow, *The Years of Hope*, p.31.

³⁰ Letter from the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 26 February, 1935, CO 83 210/15 Fiji No 96.

³¹ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.151.

³² Snow, *The Years of Hope*, p.321.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.33.

³⁴ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.151.

University Authentics.³⁵ While in England his participation and strong sporting achievements gained him respect and status in British society.³⁶ He also served in the Fiji Military Forces, attaining the rank of Major and winning a Military Cross for his leadership in the Solomon Islands campaign.³⁷ Described by Brij Lal as ‘perhaps the most widely loved Fijian chief in this century’,³⁸ he filled a vital leadership role in Fijian politics and society until his death in 1973.

Ratu Edward was a teacher at Queen Victoria School and acting headmaster of several provincial schools.³⁹ His method of initiating his pupils into the game of cricket at Queen Victoria School and overcoming the shortage of equipment was innovative. He utilised their knowledge of the indigenous *meke* and arranged them in rows equipped with thin sticks. He demonstrated a stroke and then had his pupils repeatedly imitate it in unison.⁴⁰ He appears to have been the first Fijian to captain a representative team: against the Maorilanders, a visiting New Zealand team, in December 1935.⁴¹ It was through Ratu Edward that many of Fiji’s best known commoner players were introduced to the game. Ilikena Lasarusua Bula, who would become an outstanding cricketer, was coached by Ratu Edward while a pupil at Lau Provincial School.⁴² Isoa Tuinaceva Lagavatu was his pupil at Queen Victoria School.⁴³ He was a close friend of Philip Snow and served as one of the vice presidents of the Fiji Cricket Association on its formation in 1946⁴⁴ and was a member of the 1948 team which toured New Zealand.

³⁵ Sir Pelham ‘Plum’ Warner (1873-1963) was famous in cricketing circles. He was an Oxford cricket Blue who captained the English team in Australia (1903, 1911) and South Africa (1905). Secretary of the M.C.C. in 1939-45 and president in 1950, he was knighted in 1937. He edited the journal *Cricket* and wrote extensively about the game. (J.O. Thorne and T.C. Collocot (Eds), *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, Revised Edition, W & R Chambers, Edinburgh, 1990, p.1397.) Warner is best known to an Australian audience for the role he played in the infamous Bodyline series in 1932-33. He was the English team manager who elicited the famous remark from the Australian captain, Woodfull, ‘There are two teams out there, one of them is trying to play cricket.’ He is perhaps best remembered as weak and ineffective, opposing the bodyline tactic yet unable to control the English captain, Jardine, and stop it from being used.

³⁶ Interview with Philip Snow at ‘Gables’, Angmering, UK, on 11 May 2000.

³⁷ Lieutenant R.A. Howlett, *The History of the Fiji Military Forces 1939-1945*, The Crown Agents for the Colonies on behalf of the Government of Fiji, London, 1948, p.153.

³⁸ Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.205.

³⁹ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.151.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.111.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.115.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.155.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.137.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.140.

Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, Fiji's national hero, did not play cricket representatively but his enthusiastic support of the game definitely encouraged its growth and popularity. Sukuna was descended through his father, Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, from the royal houses of three confederacies: Lau, Cakaudrove and Bau.⁴⁵ Ratu Madraiwiwi was determined that his children should have access to European-style education and was prepared to send them abroad to obtain it. With this in mind, he employed an Oxford graduate, Charles Andrew, to tutor Sukuna.⁴⁶ He was then sent to a prep school in New Zealand and moved on to Wanganui Collegiate in 1903.⁴⁷ Here he played both cricket and rugby as well as becoming the school boxing champion.⁴⁸ Returning to Fiji he worked for the administration and played cricket with his fellow European Secretariat members.⁴⁹

Sukuna went on to teach at Lau Provincial School and was then appointed a visiting examiner for Queen Victoria School and Levuka Public School in 1910. However, Sukuna and his father had their sights set on his gaining a legal qualification from Oxford or Cambridge. Reluctantly, in 1913, the administration agreed to let him go and the Fijian people raised the money to support him.⁵⁰ His career at Oxford was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I. He was not allowed to join the British Army because of the colour bar so he crossed the Channel and joined the French Foreign Legion.⁵¹ He was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* and the *Medaille Militaire* before being seriously wounded and repatriated home in 1916.⁵² He did not return to England until October 1919 when he completed his degree at Oxford and moved on to London to read for the Bar.⁵³ Thus

⁴⁵ Deryck Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*, p.1.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.15.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.18.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.19.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp.21-2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.25-7.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.32. Racism was entrenched in Britain by the early 20th Century and the covert attitude with regard to recruits was made official when the colour bar was imposed by King's Regulation. (See Marika Sherwood, 'White myths, black omissions: the historical origins of racism in Britain', *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, Vol.3, No.1, <http://www.ex.ac.uk/historyresource/journal5/journalstart.htm>, accessed May 05.)

⁵² Ibid., p.37-8.

⁵³ Ibid., p.57.

prepared for the important leadership role he was to undertake, he returned to Fiji in October 1921.⁵⁴

For the next forty years Sukuna served his people throughout Fiji, becoming the first indigenous District Commissioner in the British Empire. He was, in Ratu Kamisese Mara's words, 'the translator and intercessor' between the European and Fijian cultures, moving freely and confidently between the two.⁵⁵ Sukuna had played representative cricket for Wanganui Collegiate School in New Zealand and also played at Oxford.⁵⁶ In Fiji he played for the Suva Cricket Club, for Bau and Lau. Sukuna loved the game and had an extensive knowledge of both it and those who played it, following the cricket scores in the *Times*. When a batch of these journals was delivered to him in a remote area station, he would have them laid out in date order on his breakfast table so as to be able to follow the progress of the cricket season.⁵⁷ A close friend of Philip Snow, Sukuna helped establish the Fiji Cricket Association, the first national, interracial sporting body in Fiji, becoming president when it was finally formed in 1946.⁵⁸ He actively supported and promoted the proposed 1948 cricket tour to New Zealand, going so far as to elicit contributions from every Fijian province.⁵⁹

Sukuna's writings are peppered with cricketing allusions. They come naturally and add to the feeling of a man relaxed and comfortable with his European contemporaries. There is no sense of inferiority evident in his correspondence or speeches. On the contrary, his eloquence and scholarship could be used to devastating effect to crush his opponents. His effortless use of examples from classical history to illustrate his arguments, or emphasise a point of law, must have been intimidating for many in his

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.60.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.x. Sukuna admits that the demands of conforming to the two cultures took its toll. He noted in his diary in August 1933 after a day spent moving between the ceremony of both, 'Went to bed tired out by conforming to the demands of two entirely different social systems'. (Sukuna, *Fiji: The Three-legged Stool*, p.145.)

⁵⁶ Snow, *The Years of Hope*, p.98 & 101.

⁵⁷ Interview with Philip Snow at "Gables", Angmering, UK, on 11 May 2000.

⁵⁸ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.140.

⁵⁹ Snow, *The Years of Hope*, p.268.

audience.⁶⁰ Although painfully aware of problems faced by Fijians as they struggled to adapt to the twentieth century, he himself slipped easily into the mould of an educated gentleman of the nobility. Cricket was just another part of that life, that social order, to which he belonged by birthright.

Sukuna's attitude to cricket has to be understood in the context of his political conservatism. He was ambivalent towards what he called the British 'approach to life'. On the one hand he maintained that:

[t]his approach, based on the humanities, refined by Christianity, steeled by economic and political encounters, tempered by defeats and victories; this approach, I say, has proved itself, especially in the case of the British pattern, as the only effective approach to life.⁶¹

On the other, he was adamant that democracy, the dominant feature of that 'approach to life', would not work in Fiji. While he believed that Fijians desired 'a form of Government in which British culture, sense of fair play and justice are going to preponderate,'⁶² he continually upheld the hierarchical nature of Fijian society and firmly believed that that was what Fijians wanted.⁶³ While recognising 'that democracy is a force that does not stand still'⁶⁴ he nonetheless felt strongly that it could not, and should not, be forced on a people who were not ready for it.⁶⁵

His comments have to be seen in the light of the international debate surrounding democracy at this period in history. Generally the ruling elite in the Pacific island nations were hostile to the concept. Democracy did not become entrenched in the West until after

⁶⁰ An excellent example is a memorandum written in 1922 to refute a pamphlet published by a Mr G.L. Barrow claiming that the native people were being oppressed and enslaved by both the government and the chiefs. Sukuna uses Roman law and German political philosophy to explain the Fijian political system and refute the claims. ('A Memorandum on 'Fiji for the Fijians' by Mr G.L. Barrow' in Sukuna, *Fiji: The Three-legged Stool*.)

⁶¹ Speech to the Legislative Council on the Appropriation Bill, 19 November 1947 in Sukuna, *Fiji: The Three-legged Stool*, p. 422.

⁶² Address to the Legislative Council, 28 March 1934 in Sukuna, *Fiji: The Three-legged Stool*, p.152.

⁶³ See his Report for 1950 as Secretary for Fijian Affairs where he states: 'He was governed, as he wanted to be, by heads of families or chiefs who shared his faith and lived his life ...' in Sukuna, *Fiji: The Three-legged Stool*, p.2.

⁶⁴ Address to the Legislative Council, 28 March 1934 in Sukuna, *Fiji: The Three-legged Stool*, p.152.

World War II and its definition and execution is still debated.⁶⁶ Some would argue that Britain itself was not a democracy during the colonial period.⁶⁷ However, the issue was being forced on colonial powers by discussion in the United Nations. The idea of democracy was closely linked to liberalism and individualism, principles which do not sit well with the indigenous communal tradition. The concept of common control of, and participation in, the political process ran contradictory to the existing hierarchical structure of society.⁶⁸

Cricket was not a democratic game and Sukuna saw it as a chiefly game.⁶⁹ However, he still advocated it as a means to encourage social interaction between races, particularly Europeans and Fijians. He strongly felt that it was part of the duties of administrative officers to encourage interracial sport by being actively involved in public games with Fijians. Philip Snow was one of the officers who Sukuna relied on to promote this policy. He arrived in the colony in 1938 and became the driving force behind the organisation of the game until he returned to England in 1952. Cambridge educated and a close friend of Sukuna, his lifelong passion for cricket, as both player and administrator, had a profound effect on the game in Fiji. He served throughout the islands and founded the Fiji Cricket Associate, with Sukuna's backing, in 1946.

Snow's far reaching and long lasting influence continued after his return to England. Through his offices, Fiji became the first non-test playing nation to be admitted to the ICC, opening the way for other Associate Members. Snow has been their permanent representative on the Council and organised tours to England in 1979 and 1982 to play in

⁶⁵ See his address to the Legislative Council on the Education Plan, 20 November 1946 in Sukuna, *Fiji: The Three-legged Stool*, p.402-403.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Peter Larmour, "'A Foreign Flower'? Democracy in the South Pacific', *Pacific Studies*, Vol.17, No.1, March 1994 and Stephanie Lawson, 'Cultural Traditions and Identity Politics: Some Implications for Democratic Governance in Asia and the Pacific', Discussion Paper, State Society and Governance in Melanesia, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, no 4, 1997.

⁶⁷ The quote, cited earlier, from the Canadian journal the *Patriot*, 'A cricketer as a matter of course detests democracy and is staunch in allegiance to his king', demonstrates the connection.

⁶⁸ Democracy in Fiji has never been an easy subject. Equal representation was an ongoing debate in the constitutional talks which preceded independence. It has been argued that Fiji was never a democracy, either before or after the 1987 coup. (See Stephanie Lawson, *The Failure of Democratic Politics in Fiji*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991.) The coup in 2000 has only further confused the issue.

the World Cup. He also waged a long battle with the ICC to have the 1894, 1948 and 1954 tours accorded first class status. This was finally granted in 1987.⁷⁰ His involvement with Fijian cricket at the international level may indicate that the impetus for recognition was initiated from the outside, rather than inside indigenous society. Although Snow's sincerity cannot be doubted, it appears that it was his personal enthusiasm for the game which drove its popularity during his years in Fiji, rather than any permanent wide-spread grass roots movement.

The man who was groomed to succeed Ratu Sukuna and take Fiji into independence was Ratu Kamisese Mara. Known as Sukuna's 'nephew', he was his cousin's son and related to the royal families of Bau and Lau.⁷¹ For him too, cricket was an important part of early life. He came under the influence of Ratu Edward Cakobau who 'gave very strong encouragement to cricket' when he was headmaster at Lau Provincial School.⁷² Ratu Mara moved to Queen Victoria School in 1933 and Ratu Edward was also transferred there, so his influence as a role model continued.⁷³ Determined to become a doctor Ratu Mara enrolled at the Central Medical School and was then accepted by Otago University to take a full medical degree. There, he had a distinguished athletics career and represented Otago University at both rugby and cricket.

Ratu Sukuna recognised Mara's leadership potential and called him away from his medical studies in 1946 to be trained at Oxford. While in England for the victory celebrations after World War II, Sukuna arranged for Mara to take a degree in economics at Wadham College. Reluctantly Mara relinquished his medical ambitions and embarked for the UK. When he arrived at Oxford he discovered that Sukuna had decided that a course in modern history would be more useful to him in his future leadership role than the course in economics.⁷⁴ Health problems at Oxford, exacerbated by an inadequate diet

⁶⁹ Interview with Philip Snow, Gables, Angmering, UK, 11 May 2000.

⁷⁰ The change in attitude by the ICC is attributed to the power shift within the governing body brought about by the rising influence of the West Indies, India and Pakistan. (Interview with Philip Snow, Gables, Angmering, UK, 11 May 2000.)

⁷¹ Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*, p.115.

⁷² Mara, *The Pacific Way*, p.13.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.26-7.

seriously hampered his athletics career.⁷⁵ However, he did obtain a Blue in athletics and got an 'Authentic' cap in cricket. He also played for Pembroke College, Cambridge, while doing a short course there. Before returning to Fiji Mara undertook the colonial administrative officers' course and found its concentration on Africa frustrating.⁷⁶

Mara returned to Fiji in late 1950 and commenced his long and distinguished career in Fijian administration and politics. Throughout the 1950s he continued to play cricket and to enthusiastically promote the game. On leave in Lakeba he organised the 'repair of the concrete wicket and a cricket competition involving four teams from the chiefly town of Tubou'.⁷⁷ He led a team to Lomaloma and successfully encouraged other islands in the group to participate in a competition at Lakeba. In 1954 he was a part of the Fijian team which toured New Zealand and proved popular as a guest speaker during that tour.⁷⁸ His participation in this team gave him his rating as a first-class player and it was Ratu Mara who led the Fijians to victory against the West Indies in 1956, an event he remembers fondly in his memoir, *The Pacific Way*.

Significantly by 1960, when the Fijians toured New South Wales, Ratu Mara was unable to accompany the team because of commitments at home. Mara had been introduced to golf and found much pleasure in playing the game. It became a regular part of his daily routine and he also took the opportunity to play whenever he could fit it into his busy schedule when travelling overseas.⁷⁹ He still took a keen interest in cricket but more as a spectator than a participant. However, on the political front, Mara was being called on to take on more political responsibility as the British administration began to push the Fijians towards independence. Sukuna had died in 1958 and, as Lal observes, 'by the early 1960s, he [Mara] had already emerged as the best educated and most articulate of

⁷⁵ Students at Oxford usually supplemented their college diet from their own resources. Mara was being supported by the people of Fiji and did not have the funds to eat out on a regular basis. A big man, he found the college food 'insufficient for effective sport'. He also underwent several knee operations which affected his sporting performance. (Mara, *The Pacific Way*, pp.27 & 30.)

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.33.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.45.

⁷⁸ Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket 1950-1974*, p.5.

⁷⁹ Mara, *The Pacific Way*, p.92. Mara mentions playing the game throughout his autobiography.

the post-Sukuna generation of Fijian chiefs'.⁸⁰ As Fiji moved towards self-government, his abilities were in continual demand as the spokesman for his Fijian colleagues. He led the Fijian delegation to the Constitutional Conference in London in 1965 arguing strongly for the links to the Crown to be maintained. He was appointed chief minister in 1967 when ministerial government was introduced and became Fiji's first Prime Minister at independence.⁸¹

Although committed to his people's well being and the preservation of their culture and lifestyle, Mara was, as he says himself, 'a complete modern Fijian'.⁸² He realised that the country had to adapt to westernisation and recognised the deficiencies inherent in the communal system.⁸³ He still advocated close ties with Britain and acknowledged the importance of her influence on his country's development. His views were summarised in his address after the second, and final, constitutional conference in 1970:

Today marks the end of a long journey – a journey of close on one hundred years of peace and war, of progress and development, of social and political change. Through it all, we have had the protection, help, and guidance of the United Kingdom. Many of her traditions are firmly grafted, not only on our political institutions, but on our whole national life. The rule of law, parliamentary democracy, respect for the rights of minorities, a sense of fair play, give and take, are all taken for granted in Fiji, but they are, in a very real sense, a legacy from the British. Should we ever wish to forget the British – which God forbid – it would not be possible. Your ways and your ideals are too much part and parcel of our own way.⁸⁴

He also travelled widely, studying other nations, societies and government systems. He was a member of international bodies and became quite active on the international stage. He stresses throughout his autobiography that he was convinced that the only way forward for Fiji was as a multiracial nation. He acknowledges the importance of sport to both the individual and the nation, but his personal support for cricket had necessarily been tempered by the demands of leadership and government.

⁸⁰ Lal, *Broken Waves*, pp.185-86.

⁸¹ Mara had also been installed as *Tui Lau*, *Tui Nayau*, and *Sau ni Vanua* during the 1960s: all positions of chiefly authority in eastern Fiji. In 1969 he was knighted.

⁸² Mara, *The Pacific Way*, p.13.

⁸³ See for example Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna*, p.182, 184 & 190.

⁸⁴ Mara, *The Pacific Way*, p.104.

The chiefly domination of representative cricket persisted until the 1930s. Then the focus began to shift and the *lewenivanua*, the commoners, became the major players. Interestingly this was most evident in western Fiji where, as was shown in chapter four, chiefly authority was understood in different terms to the eastern provinces and the commoners were more independent. The game was introduced to this region by the British administration and in 1924 a Lauan, Viliame Tuinaceva Logavatu, was transferred there as Native Stipendiary Magistrate.⁸⁵ He was already a keen cricketer and, encouraged and coached by A.E.S. Howard, an Irish administrative officer, was in Snow's words 'the most successful of Fijian players'.⁸⁶ For many years he held the record for the most runs ever scored by a player in Fiji.⁸⁷ He took an active role in the organisation of the game for the Northern Districts Association during his ten years in the area.⁸⁸ By the time he left the district to return to Lau in 1934, Nadi had come to dominate Fijian cricket under Logavatu's leadership. In 1932 they broke the Bauan monopoly and won the Dewar Shield which they retained for the next twelve years. As Snow observes, this 'was considered almost a Fijian impertinence for the lowly set of commoners from Nadi Province to play cricket with the lordly Bauans steeped in the deepest traditions of rank and cricket'.⁸⁹

These 'lowly set of commoners' from the small villagers surrounding Nadi excelled at the game. One village, Saunaka, consisted of a collection of about ten thatched houses but every male played cricket.⁹⁰ Semi Ravouvou, who succeeded Logavatu as captain of the Nadi team, came from Saunaka. A clerk in the Native Stipendiary Magistrates office, Nadi, he was a formidable all-round player.⁹¹ Another common villager, from Nakavu outside Nadi, who was an outstanding player at this time, was Amenayasi (Arminius) T. Turaga. An exceptional fast bowler, his 6ft 4in frame would follow the ball down the pitch at a speed which intimidated the already shaken batsman even further. He also broke records with the bat, scoring 106 in twenty-eight minutes during one match at

⁸⁵ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.104.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.154.

⁸⁷ In 1929, 214 not out, against Lautoka for Nadi at Lautoka. (Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.105.)

⁸⁸ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.104.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.106.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.118.

Nadi.⁹² Turaga was accidentally electrocuted in 1942 at only 29 years of age but his brother carried on the game and was a member of the team which toured New Zealand in 1948.⁹³

The success and enthusiasm of these players and others like them caused the spread of the game throughout the region. The impact of obtaining the Dewar Shield cannot be underestimated. Retaining it focused the players' attention and their dedication. The Shield came to symbolise something more than a sporting trophy and its retention became 'an issue of provincial honour'.⁹⁴ In this small way the western region had asserted itself over the rest of Fiji. The community at large realised the importance of the Shield and began to support the team financially. Large crowds flocked to their matches and offered moral and vocal support.

Significantly it was also in western Fiji that the Indians first came to prominence in the game. The first Indian representative cricketer, Haricharan, appeared in a match against the New Zealand Forces played at Lautoka in 1942.⁹⁵ He was a schoolteacher in Lautoka. Also playing at this time was B.M. Gyaneshwar, a Labasa lawyer and Member of Legislative Council. He had played Welsh minor county cricket for Denbeighshire and Cardiganshire.⁹⁶ The game had built up a following amongst the Indians but it had taken considerable time to do so and it was not until the 1967-68 tour of New Zealand that there was an Indian in an overseas representative side.

The indenture system was instigated in 1879 and it ran until 1916. In 1920 all remaining indentures were cancelled and Indians began to take their place as citizens in Fijian society. However, this was a long, slow process and, for many years, their energy and attention were focused on obtaining a political voice and a secure economic position within that society. The early labourers were from the poorer areas of India and did not

⁹¹ Ibid., pp.154-55.

⁹² Ibid., p.105.

⁹³ Ibid., p.134.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.107.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.131.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.133.

bring an interest in the game with them. Their life in Fiji was one of extreme poverty and endless toil. Unlike the highly organised, communal existence of the Fijians, the Indians lived an isolated, scattered existence. They were further divided by religious and linguistic differences. The British attitude towards the Indians also influenced their participation, or lack of it, in the game. Gordon had instigated the indenture system to solve the labour problem in Fiji. Whereas the Fijians were to be protected and encouraged to partake of the benefits of civilisation, the Indians were in Fiji to provide cheap labour.⁹⁷ The British attitude was covertly hostile and became more so as the independence movement in India gained momentum.

The new generation of Indians born in Fiji were better educated, healthier and with a more secure and leisurely lifestyle than their parents and grandparents, but by the time they developed the freedom to pursue leisure activities other interests and sports predominated. In the 1920s Indians were playing soccer in the Suva area and by 1929 it was becoming an organised sport. However, the Fiji Indian Football Association was not formed until 1938.⁹⁸ By this time Indians were playing cricket, as well as hockey and golf, but soccer was known as the Indians' game. Fijians played rugby.⁹⁹ There was some interest in cricket and attempts were made to promote it. Indians were playing regularly in Suva in 1938 and the Indian United Cricket Association was one of those which merged to form the Fiji Cricket Association in that year. However, there is no evidence of the numbers involved. Perhaps there was only a limited number of Indians who had reached a socio-economic bracket which allowed them the time and money to pursue the game. They did make their mark in administration despite meeting opposition from both Europeans and Fijians.

It is also unclear how much of the interest in cricket came from within the descendants of the original indentured labourers, the *girmityas*, and how much came from within the

⁹⁷ For a detailed analysis of the British attitude towards the Indians see Kaplan, 'Imagining a Nation' in *Contemporary Pacific Societies*.

⁹⁸ *Fiji Sport*, Vol.3, No.2, July-August, 14 July 1972, p.17.

⁹⁹ The division has been apparent from the 1920s and is still an accepted fact in Fiji. The comment was made to the author visiting Suva in 1999 that you could tell whether a school was Fijian or Indian by the type of goal posts on the sports field.

Gujeratis community, the more affluent late arrivals who came as free settlers. Cricket was one of the sports participated in by members of the ‘Young Brothers Sports Club’ and ‘Suva Gujarati Sports Association’ which were formed around 1950 and the Fiji Gujarati Cricket Team toured to New Zealand in 1968.¹⁰⁰ These clubs were formed to provide ‘an opportunity at least once in a year for the young and old in the Gujarati community to come together in a sporting mood’.¹⁰¹ The emphasis was on social interaction rather than any single sport.

There appears to be no evidence of women playing cricket in Fiji. Not surprisingly, the records are male orientated and dominated. Other than the mention made by Basil Thompson in the account of the game against Lomaloma where they are spectators and possibly scorers, the record is silent.¹⁰² Generally, women and women’s affairs seem to be noticeably absent from accounts of Fijian history. The area requires further investigation, particularly in the light of the situation in other island groups in the Pacific where the involvement of women in the game has frequently been commented on. For example, writing in the 1920s, Elinor Mordaunt, observed the vigour and skill with which the Trobriand Island women played the game.¹⁰³ In New Caledonia, a French colony, the women play the game and men act as umpires and scorers.¹⁰⁴

Without the institutional influence provided in many colonies by the education system, individuals in Fiji played a crucial role in promoting the development of cricket. Colonial administrators, from senior government officials to cadets, brought their personal enthusiasm for the game to bear and enlisted the help of the indigenous elite to create teams of players. Thus it was often in the structured, disciplined life of the military or police force that young Fijians first encountered cricket (and rugby). In this atmosphere it retained its association with the hierarchical nature of indigenous Fijian society and it was select members of the indigenous elite who were exposed to the game through

¹⁰⁰ ‘Young Brothers Sports Club and Suva Gujarati Sports Association 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Souvenir Issue Suva March 28th-31st 1975’, Fiji National Archives.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.49.

¹⁰² Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p.64.

¹⁰³ Elinor Mordaunt, *The Further Venture Book*, Century, New York, 1927, p.83.

¹⁰⁴ Snow, ‘New Caledonia’, *Barclays World of Cricket*, p.89.

schooling in Australia, New Zealand or England reinforcing the divide between commoners and the game.

It was only briefly, and mainly in the Western districts, that commoners appeared to embrace the game independently of the stimulus of the chiefs. Here in the less hierarchical, more egalitarian Melanesian society, the game enjoyed popularity for a time, particularly when it provided an avenue to demonstrate superiority over the dominant Eastern Bauan culture. While success promoted public interest and support, it was still only small pockets of individuals who maintained the game and once they moved on or were lost, its popularity died.

It is apparent that the first enthusiastic acceptance of the game gradually declined during the 1950s and 60s. As Macmillan's 'winds of change' finally reached the Pacific in the 1950s, Fiji's leaders became increasingly involved in politics and had little or no time for leisure activities. Traditional chiefs, the 'westernisers' of their society, had mixed freely with Europeans and had embraced the game as part of an acceptable hierarchical culture similar to their own. As they emerged as post-colonial leaders, younger players prepared to devote time and energy to the promotion of the game failed to replace them. Unlike other colonies, indigenous Fijian society had not developed an economically stable, upwardly mobile, middle class willing to ape the values and pursuits, including cricket, of their 'betters'. When this did emerge in the colony, it was composed of the descendants of Indian immigrants and, for a variety of reasons, soccer became their game of choice.

* * * *

This chapter has traced the involvement of individual players with the game of cricket in Fiji. It has shown that it was their enthusiasm for cricket which was the catalyst for its initial acceptance by the population generally. The chapter concludes that the game was dominated by elite Fijians and colonial administrators and that this contributed to its decline. Cricket did not take off in the popular imagination, rather rugby and soccer became the sports with which people began to identify. The reasons appear to lie in a

number of inherent difficulties within the game itself combined with social and physical obstacles evident in Fiji. The next chapter will examine these.

*A game, is a game, is a
game?:*
The Nature of Cricket



Albert Oval, Suva

Chapter Eight

Cricket – Open-air summer game played with ball, bats, and wickets, between two sides of 11 players each.¹

Rugby – game played with oval ball, which may be kicked or carried.²

Rugby Union – amateur Rugby football with teams of 15.³

Association football (soccer) – kind played with round ball which may not be handled during play except by goalkeeper.⁴

This chapter considers the pragmatic reasons why cricket's initial popularity in Fiji waned. This decline was caused by a combination of inherent difficulties with the game itself and a number of social and physical obstacles evident in Fiji. Cricket had to compete with the existing 'leisure' activity of *meke* and the growing interest in other organised sports, particularly rugby union and soccer. Additionally, the climate and terrain throughout the islands did not provide ideal conditions in which to play the game.

The simple description of cricket as an 'open-air summer game' is deceptive. Cricket is a demanding game of skill, governed by a complicated set of rules, which requires specific space and equipment. For the traditional game of cricket to become popular and prosper, knowledge of the game must circulate widely among potential players and spectators. Interest in the game must be developed and supported. Talented players must be discovered and their talent nurtured. A well-organised, centralised governing body is required to foster competition, both nationally and internationally, and to promote strength and skill in players.

Where the game is popular, children and young men often play cricket with makeshift equipment. However, the equipment required if the game is to be played seriously is specific and expensive. The bat is constructed of willow with a spliced cane handle. Although it may vary in weight and length it must not be more than 11 centimetres wide and its length must not exceed 97 centimetres. Balls are made of a cork core, tightly wound with string and covered in leather. The two halves of the leather are sewn together with a raised seam, an important feature utilised by bowlers. The three stumps which make up the

¹ J.B. Sykes (Ed), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English: based on the Oxford English Dictionary and its Supplements*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976, p.241.

² Ibid., p.986.

³ Ibid.

wicket are 71 centimetres high and 3.2 centimetres in circumference. The bails, which lie in grooves on top of them, are 11 centimetres long.

Even in England this equipment was expensive. Sandiford notes that a complete cricketer's outfit cost £2 10s in 1881, two weeks wages for a non-skilled worker.⁵ Throughout the colonies the equipment had to be imported making costs even more prohibitive. Commentators note that this contributed to the game's reputation as an exclusive sport and hindered participation. In India, good quality equipment required for competition play was imported until well into the 20th century.⁶ The cost of equipment in the West Indies precluded the poorly paid peasant workers from the game.⁷ When asked why he chose Australian Rules Football over cricket, Sir Doug Nicholls, a famous Australian Aboriginal sportsman and politician, replied that it was 'cheaper than cricket – no pads, or white trousers.'⁸ The situation was similar in Fiji. All of the equipment had to be imported. Ordinary Fijians were discouraged from participating in the cash economy until after the Second World War. The only ones with ready access to money and material goods were the chiefs.

Another feature of the game which was retained throughout the colonies was the wearing of traditional white garb. White flannel trousers and white, long-sleeved shirts were considered *de rigueur*. White shoes and a white woollen sweater, often trimmed with club or county colours, completed the outfit. The batsman wore white leg pads and articulated batting gloves. Although the fielders did not wear gloves the wicket keeper wore gauntlets as well as leg guards. Clothing and costume are culturally significant and convey a great deal about the accepted mores and values of a society. The cricketing costume is distinctly European and implies conformity.

⁴ Ibid., p.57.

⁵ Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.168.

⁶ Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, pp. 2-3.

⁷ L. O'Brien Thompson, 'How cricket is West Indian cricket? Class, racial, and color conflict', in *Liberation cricket*, p.169.

⁸ Cited in Tatz, 'Aborigines' in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Cricket*, p. 2.

Fijians had early recognised the significance of clothing. Christians were distinguished from non-Christians by adopting the *sulu*. Clothing provided a visual distinction and proclaimed acceptance of the new value system and all that entailed. The connection between dress, cricket and cultural values has been made with regard to Indian cricket. Framjee Patel commented that:

[c]ricket has proved a great social reformer. The Indian has changed his dress, manners, and much else besides, under its refining influence ...⁹

Conforming to the dress code was seen as indicating progress towards civilised behavioural standards. A West Indian black fast bowler, touring England in 1900, was sharply reprimanded by his white captain when he asked if he could play without shoes. ‘Certainly not, my good man, this is England and a first-class county to boot, sir.’¹⁰

In Fiji some of these restrictions were relaxed. The Fijians compromised with white shirt and *sulu* and they preferred brown leg pads. They played barefoot at least until the middle of the twentieth century. They were able to get away with this because they never played in England, where more exacting standards would have had to be met. However, they played this way in Australia and New Zealand. Although the colonial authorities in the Pacific took a softer line than in other parts of the empire, it also, perhaps, indicates that the Fijians’ play was not taken seriously. They were seen as an amusing spectacle rather than serious competition. It was not until the 1960s and 70s that the more traditional dress became the norm. By 1970 the Suva Cricket Association would insist that all teams ‘turn out properly attired – in all white’.¹¹ T.A. Donnelly indicates how the perception of the Fijian players’ ability changed as they adapted to the conventional dress code. As already noted, during the 1967-68 tour of New Zealand the ‘slight note of condescension, noticeable in the reporting of previous tours, was absent; there were fewer comments on fuzzy hair and ‘long skirts’, and more on the genuine cricketing ability of the players’.¹²

⁹ Cited in Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, p.135.

¹⁰ Sissons and Stoddart, *Cricket and Empire*, pp.35-6.

¹¹ *Fiji Sport*, Vol.1, No.6, November-December, 13 November 1970.

¹² Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket 1930 – 1974*, p.31.

The image of cricket is intimately linked to the idyllic English countryside. John Bale discusses the importance of this aspect of the game and the problems and changes which resulted when the 'cricket landscape could not be duplicated in countries to which [it] was exported'.¹³ Mention of the game evokes the peace of the village green: swaths of green lawn edged by shady trees bathed in the gentle warmth of the English sun. Ranjitsinjhi, Indian prince and Britain's prize example of the civilised colonial, captured the strength of this feeling in his *The Jubilee Book of Cricket* published in 1897:

No doubt when people play the game on a rough jungle of veldt-grass and mine-tailings in the outskirts of Johannesburg, half the pleasure they find is ... the feel of a bat and its sound against the ball bring [ing] back memories of the green turf and cool breezes of England.¹⁴

To make this 'association of ideas' players and spectators had to be able to envision the English countryside in summer.¹⁵

In sharp contrast to this tame rural setting Fiji presented a wild, tropical landmass covered in dense rainforest surrounded by swampy coastal plains. It was a difficult landscape for sportsmen to modify, let alone conquer. It is not only for aesthetic reasons that cricket requires a reasonably large, level area ideally covered in fine turf. The condition of the pitch has an intrinsic effect on the shape of the game. It determines the relationship between the batsman and the bowler. A bowled ball reacts differently, bounces differently, depending on the surface of the pitch. This influences the batsman's ability to make contact with the ball and thus obtain runs or lose the wicket. The condition and type of grass surface of the field will aid or abet the batsman by assisting or impeding a hit ball.¹⁶

In many areas, particularly the interior of Viti Levu, it was impossible to find a level piece of ground large enough to establish a cricket field.¹⁷ The grounds which were established were often too small to allow batsmen a decent striking range and the field was often full of hazards for fielders. The hot, wet conditions were not conducive to producing good cricket grounds. The thick tropical grass grows quickly and is almost impossible to control, let

¹³ John Bale, *Landscapes of Modern Sport*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1994, p.159.

¹⁴ Cited in Sissons and Stoddart, *Cricket and Empire*, p.29.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Hence the importance of such things as 'a sticky wicket'.

alone shape into the fine lawns required for a cricket oval. In western Fiji, the hot, dry conditions also made the establishment of grounds difficult. The ground was hard, dusty and uneven. Snow describes the outfield at Nadi as ‘physically dangerous’.¹⁸ As a result of these conditions, the pitch in the major cricket playing areas was covered with matting which put the Fijians at a distinct disadvantage when playing overseas on turf pitches.¹⁹

These problems were evident from the beginning of the game’s development in the islands. In describing the first ground at Vagadace, Levuka, the *Fiji Times* identifies the problems which would plague the establishment of playing fields:

The ground, as many of our readers are aware is very small, with the sea on one side, and a high hill on the other. The wicket was not of the best description one end being “lumpy,” the other a very bad one for the longstop.²⁰

The ground also contained several coconut and moli trees, mud holes and a well. Fielders fell down wells or into ditches and tripped over coconut stumps. The ball hit up the steep hill, rolled back down and deprived batsmen of runs. No wonder the paper observed that ‘[o]n such ground and under such a sun as the Fijian, the manly game of cricket has to be played under difficulties that would frighten any but ardent lovers of the game.’²¹

As this indicates, the weather exacerbated the problems of the terrain. Tropical heat can be distressing and not conducive to sustained energetic activity. Parts of Fiji receive over 5,000mm (200 inches) of rain a year.²² The cricket season originally ran from September to April, often the hottest and wettest time of the year. The start of the season was continually postponed due to the rain and individual games throughout the season suffered the same fate. Both English and Australian teams calling at Suva during the 1930s were unable to play local teams because of the weather. Donald Bradman commented in his

¹⁷ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.107.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.140.

²⁰ *Fiji Times*, 25 February 1874.

²¹ *Fiji Times*, 18 March, 1874.

²² Between 1884 and 1907 the mean rainfall in Suva was 2,692mm (106 inches). In 1907, 1908, 1913-1916, 1922 and 1926 there were over 200 wet days per year. (Statistics garnered from the Colonial Office *Fiji Blue Books* 1907-1926).

autobiography, '[a]ccording to the programme, we should have played a match at Suva, but it had been raining for months there, and the cricket ground was a quagmire.'²³ The cancellation of these games deprived the local players of the opportunity to hone their skills against top international players, another cause for concern among the game's proponents.²⁴

The problem of developing and maintaining cricket grounds was compounded by the lack of specific facilities. Grounds used for cricket were often common space and used for a variety of other activities, not only other sports events but also *meke* performances and festivals. Combined with wet conditions these activities would churn up the soil and grass and destroy smooth surfaces. In 1970, the year of independence, the opening of the season was delayed by two weeks because Albert Park had been used for the celebrations and the pitches could not be prepared.²⁵

The fact that the grounds were not enclosed purpose-built areas also deprived organisers of much needed revenue as they could not charge admittance fees and make their sport profitable. As we have seen, cricket is an expensive sport. Not only were specialised imported equipment and prescribed white clothes necessary if the game was to be pursued at competition level, but grounds had to be constructed and maintained. Cashman comments on the paradox of cricket becoming so popular in India when it required extensive capital investment 'for the preparation of wickets and ovals'.²⁶ Financial difficulties contributed to the slow development of the game in New Zealand. As noted earlier, it has been suggested that legislation preventing organisers from charging admission up until the late nineteenth century compounded the problem.²⁷ In contrast Australian

²³ Don Bradman, *My Cricketing Life*, Stanley Paul & Co., Ltd., London, n.d., p.76.

²⁴ Queensland, on the same latitude as Fiji, experienced similar problems. Although the game was played from the 1850s, Queensland's efforts to join the intercolonial competition were hampered by rain-affected games. Queensland did not enter the Sheffield Shield competition (Australia's first-class domestic competition) until 1926-27, over thirty years after it commenced. (See Reet A. Howell & Maxwell L. Howell, *The Genesis of Sport in Queensland: from the dreamtime to federation*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1992; Warwick Torrens, 'Queensland', *The Oxford Companion to Australian Cricket*, pp. 431-32.

²⁵ *Fiji Sport*, Vol.1, No.6, November-December, 13 November 1970, p.1. These problems are still current. When the author was in Suva for the first game of the season in November 1999, Albert Park had been used for the Hibiscus Festival the week before the game and was rutted and muddy.

²⁶ Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p.3.

²⁷ Ryan, 'New Zealand' in *The imperial game*, pp.104-105.

cricket grounds were enclosed and admission charged from the middle of the nineteenth century.²⁸

Sandiford draws attention to the connection between overall economic wealth and the state of the game. Caribbean cricket has suffered because of the general lack of wealth and resources in the islands. The administrative body could not financially support test teams and could not draw on the wealthy sponsors available in other test playing nations.²⁹ He makes an interesting comparison of the manpower available in the test playing nations. This is important in economic terms, but also has implications regarding the potential pool of first class players. In 1998 the West Indian population was only six million, small compared to all the other test playing nations (excepting New Zealand).³⁰ If these factors affected the game in the West Indies, they must have proved significant in Fiji with its struggling subsistence economy and a population which has only recently topped 800,000.

The physical geography of the Fiji islands presented further problems, both internally and externally. The three hundred islands of the group are scattered over 250,000 square miles of sea laced with raging currents and treacherous reefs. Up until the mid-twentieth century the only means of transport was by boat, often small native craft. The rugged landscape of the larger islands is of volcanic origin, difficult to negotiate, making both transport and communication a problem.³¹ These conditions made the formation of a central controlling body difficult. Without this centralisation of authority there can be no unification of a sport. It becomes difficult to promote a common understanding of rules of play and thereby establish legitimacy. If representative teams are to be formed to play at international level,

²⁸ Cashman, *'Ave a Go, Yer Mug! Australian cricket crowds from larrikin to ocker*, p. 3. In Barbados entrance fees were charged from 1895. (Brian Stoddart, 'Cricket and colonialism in the English-speaking Caribbean to 1914' in *Liberation cricket*, p.25.) The author sighted a photo taken of Queens Park Oval in Trinidad in 1897 during Lord Hawk's tour of the West Indies: the grounds are enclosed by a high corrugated iron fence. The photo was part of a commemorative plaque owned by an elderly gentleman who had been born in Trinidad early in the twentieth century and who had played cricket on Queens Park Oval as a young man.

²⁹ Sandiford, 'Cricket in the West Indies' in *A Spirit of Dominance*, p.36.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ The West Indies had to overcome similar problems. The representative game was dominated by the larger islands of Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica with little, or no, representative players from the smaller (and more distant), Leeward and Windward islands. This situation persisted until well into the 1960s when modern

then national competitions must be organised and supported. Competition is vital to the development of players. This all-important aspect of a national sport was thwarted by the geography of Fiji.

This difficulty flowed to the international level. Before World War II and the advent of air travel, Fiji's location in the middle of the Pacific kept it isolated from frequent, regular intercourse with high calibre international teams. The slow development of the game in New Zealand was similarly affected by its geographical isolation and lack of international visitors. This did not change until the 1950s and the improvement in New Zealand's play was evidenced by their first test victory against the West Indies in 1956.³²

Fiji's physical location also meant that it did not develop the regular direct intercourse with the imperial centre, London. The Colony's links tended to be with Australia and New Zealand and much of the Fijian's immediate image of the Empire was filtered through these two countries.³³ Unlike test playing countries, players did not make regular pilgrimages to play English county cricket or to play at Lords. The importance of this connection is continually emphasised. Stoddart claims that tours of England reinforced social education as well as improving the playing skills of West Indian cricketers.³⁴ Their identity as cricketers was formed and perpetuated by their experience of England.³⁵ Appadurai draws

communication and transport overcame the problems of geographical isolation. (Sandiford, 'Cricket in the West Indies' in *A Spirit of Dominance*.)

³² Sandiford, 'Cricket in the West Indies' in *A Spirit of Dominance*, p.20.

³³ Derek Birley in his masterful debunking of cricket myths explores the gulf between British and Australian attitudes to the game. The Australians refused to recognise the divide between amateurs and professionals, appointed their captain on playing merit and expected to be paid for their services. Little wonder that 'the Australians had never been regarded as gentlemen' by their English opponents. (Birley, *The Willow Wand*, p.80.)

³⁴ Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism and Colonial Response in the British Empire: a framework for analysis', in *Sport and imperialism: the proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference of the British Society of Sports History*, British Society of Sports History, Department of Geography and Recreation Studies, North Staffordshire Polytechnic, 1986, p. 4.

³⁵ Kenneth Surin, 'C.L.R. James' material aesthetic of cricket', in *Liberation cricket*, p.317. Surin quotes from C.L.R. James who identified the direct ties between individual West Indian islands and London as one of the causes of the failure of the West Indian Federation. 'The West Indies still had 'its centre – intellectual, financial and economic – in London, so that the lines of communication ran from Port of Spain to London, from Kingston to London, from Georgetown to London and from Bridgetown to London', whereas 'federation demanded that the lines of communication should run from island to island, not from island to the control body in Britain.'

the same conclusion for Indian cricketers.³⁶ Fijian players did not create these sporting links with British players and spectators and therefore were not subjected to the same type of cultural immersion.

The administration of the game suffered, not only from the problems caused by geographic isolation, but also from a lack of interest in the detail of organisation. Snow maintained that 'Fijians have not shown much enterprise generally in organising their sport.'³⁷ With few exceptions the organisation and administration of the game was left to Europeans. Donnelly, writing much later, still blamed the lack of local interest in the administration of the game as the principal reason why it did not prosper.³⁸ The development of an effective administration is vital if the game is to flourish.³⁹

Traditionally the administration of the game was the preserve of the elite, whether in Britain or the colonies.⁴⁰ Control of the administration afforded considerable political power and perpetuated colonial cultural dominance. The administration controlled the sport and determined who played and where they played. For example, in the West Indies, the cricket administration remained conservative and was slow in responding to the political liberalisation affecting society at large.⁴¹ The moves towards black equality and parity took some time to filter into the cricketing establishment. Unexpectedly, colonial mores and values did not automatically crumble when the colonised subject took over the administrative reins. Rather, the converted often proved more implacably traditional than their colonial masters were.⁴²

³⁶ Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, p.93.

³⁷ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p. 8.

³⁸ Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket 1950-1974*, p.47.

³⁹ In the West Indies, the development of the game was hindered by the lack of administrative structures. (Sandiford, 'Cricket in the West Indies' in *A Spirit of Dominance*, p.24.) Conversely, in the 1920s and 30s, Australian women's cricket benefited from a skilled administration which developed a national organisation despite a lack of resources and finances. (See Cashman and Weaver, *Wicket Women*, p.45.)

⁴⁰ In remote country Queensland a club composed mainly of miners was administered by a committee containing a doctor, a bank manager and a company director. (See Howell and Howell, *The Genesis of Sport in Queensland*, p.251.

⁴¹ Brian Stoddart, 'Lares and penates', in *Liberation cricket*, p.392.

⁴² Stoddart, 'Sport, cultural imperialism and colonial response in the British Empire' in *Sport and imperialism*, 1986, p.14.

A contributing factor to the lack of enthusiasm amongst Fijians for both coaching and administration was their attitude to chiefly standing.⁴³ A Fijian had to have chiefly standing to exercise authority in any walk of life. Speaking of proposed new agricultural assistants, Ratu Sukuna explained that unless the assistant 'is of rank in addition to ability, he is not likely to be taken much notice of by the people'.⁴⁴ In the early days this principle also applied to Europeans. If they were not judged to have standing and position in their secular occupation, their authority would not be accepted in the sporting sphere. Further complicating the issue was the fact that Fijians would not accept Indians in an administrative role.

Some of Fiji's most outstanding players were commoners. Ilikena Bula, described by Snow as 'the best Fijian fielder', was 'too retiring ... to coach, and too much the Fijian of no standing ... to take a hand in helping the administration of the game'.⁴⁵ For a Fijian to step outside his accepted position in society and assume leadership caused insecurity. The 'egalitarian aspect of Fijian social organisation' has been identified as a significant problem with regard to creating new concepts of leadership.⁴⁶ In a society where collectivism and communalism prevailed, individual responsibility was avoided.⁴⁷

A related problem for the organisation and administration of the game was the lack of a club structure. Clubs may have originally been established to provide social demarcation and stratification but their presence was vital to the organisation of the sport. Interclub competition, became intercolonial competition thence international competition. The English obsession with organisation has been linked to the development of sporting clubs but urbanisation and the development of a middle class within a colony was also important. Colonial efforts to protect and preserve the traditional Fijian communal life style openly

⁴³ Philip Snow first drew my attention to this problem in my interview with him at his home at Angmering, UK, in May 2000.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna: soldier, statesman, man of two worlds*, p.192.

⁴⁵ Philip Snow, 'Bula' in *Cricketing Heroes* by members of the Cricket Writers Club, ed. John Kay Cartoons, Roy Ullyett Phoenix Sports Books, London, 1959, p.82.

⁴⁶ Nation, *Customs of respect*, p.17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.71.

discouraged urbanisation in Fiji until after the middle of the twentieth century.⁴⁸ Cricket was an urban game. In Sri Lanka it was restricted to the urban areas until the 1940s.⁴⁹ So it was too in India and Pakistan.⁵⁰

In the West Indies a professional urban middle class was well established by the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵¹ Membership of a cricket club was an important expression of social standing and acceptance. Not only did these clubs provide the organisation and support structure for their members to become proficient competition players but they also provided opportunities for lower-class blacks to have their skills noticed. Following the pattern set by English clubs, they were employed to hone the bowling and batting performance of club members and gained recognition and valuable experience.⁵² Many English professionals began their career in the same way. As already noted, in India the famous Untouchable cricketer, Baloo, began his career bowling to the British members of the Poona Gymkhana, before being recruited by the high caste Hindus of the Deccan Gymkhana and then the Hindu Gymkhana of Bombay.⁵³

As a consequence of these numerous problems, the first regular competitions between the various Fijian districts did not occur until the 1940s when Philip Snow, a driving force behind the eventual setting up of the Fiji Cricket Association, organised them. Even then matches were often cancelled due to rain. The Fiji Schools' Cricket Association was not established until 1966. It established regular school competitions but these did not last. Travelling difficulties, wet weather, and a lack of organisers and coaches at local level all contributed to a lack of enthusiasm.⁵⁴ The season also clashed with the long end of year school holidays and with the examination period which preceded it. Disorganisation and cancellations prevented the game gaining the momentum needed to establish and sustain

⁴⁸ In 1966 only 23.8 percent of the Fijian population (48,205 people) lived in urban areas. In 1988 the figure had risen to 31.4 percent (107,780) and more than half of these lived in and around Suva, the capital. (See Lal, *Broken Waves*, p.217.)

⁴⁹ Roberts, 'Ethnicity in Riposte at a Cricket Match', p.425.

⁵⁰ Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p.78.

⁵¹ Beckles, "'The Unkindest Cut'" in *A Spirit of Dominance*, p.101.

⁵² Stoddart, 'Cricket and colonialism in the English-speaking Caribbean to 1914' in *Liberation cricket*, p.20.

⁵³ Guha, 'Cricket and Politics in Colonial India', p.9.

⁵⁴ Donnelly, *Fiji Cricket 1950-1974*, p.50.

the interest of players. Lack of competition, internally and externally, stifled the development of international standard players.

Another factor, which must be taken into consideration when examining why cricket failed to sustain initial interest and become nationally important for Fijians, is the importance of the *meke* in Fijian society. In most of the test playing colonies, there was no previous activity to fill the need for collective activity and entertainment, and cricket filled a niche. *Meke* was a long established traditional activity, which filled a lot of what today would be termed leisure time and involved all members of the community. It was associated with all the major rites of passage: birth, puberty, marriage, death. While filling a vitally important function as a story telling and history-recording device, it also provided a major source of entertainment, fun, excitement and competition. Essential to the exchange based society, it controlled tension by fixing parameters and rules for acceptable behaviour and the resolution of conflict.

In the test playing nations where cricket became so important, it filled an entertainment void. In the early Australian colonies there was ‘a great dearth of leisure facilities’ to provide relief from a harsh existence.⁵⁵ It has been suggested that cricket was ideally suited to relieve the tensions of urbanisation in India. The country lacked indigenous games which could make the transition to mass spectacle.⁵⁶ The displaced population of the West Indies had no common cultural bond. Orlando Patterson calls cricket a ‘collective ritual’ and observes:

that in a society remarkably devoid of social dramas ... cricket, precisely because it is the only such ritual, becomes extremely important for the expression and channelling of certain deeply rooted grievances and tensions within the society. It is, in short, the only institution (with the possible exception of lower-class religious cults) performing certain basic cleansing functions.⁵⁷

In this fragmented and divided society, cricket offers a rare unifying force, a common cultural focus which fulfils needs taken for granted in more cohesive societies.

⁵⁵ Cashman, *'Ave a Go, Yer Mug!: Australian cricket crowds from larrikin to ocker*, p.25.

⁵⁶ Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p.135-36,

⁵⁷ Patterson, ‘The ritual of cricket’ in *Liberation cricket*, p.141-42.

All of these issues were important but the overwhelming reason why cricket did not become nationally significant in Fiji was the success of rugby and soccer in capturing the popular imagination. Rugby had been introduced as early as 1884 but was popularised, like cricket, by the first Fijians educated overseas in New Zealand. Competition flourished with overseas tours during the 1920s and 1930s to Tonga and New Zealand. Many of the chiefs who played cricket also played rugby. Ratu George Cakobau captained the unbeaten team which toured New Zealand in 1939 and Ratu Edward Cakobau captained the team which toured Tonga in 1934. Ratu Edward also managed or co-managed touring overseas teams in 1948, 1958 and 1964. Regular reciprocal tours were instigated with New Zealand from 1938, and tours of Australia from 1952. In 1964 Fiji successfully toured Wales, France and Canada. The Fiji Schools Rugby Union was formed as early as 1939 and the sport proved more popular in schools than cricket. Separate European and Fijian competitions did not disappear until 1963 but this did not undermine the game's pronounced popularity.⁵⁸

Rugby and soccer obviously shared many of the same problems which plagued cricket in Fiji - yet they flourished. Comparisons between the different sports highlight some of the reasons why cricket's popularity did not endure. Football descended from English folk-games which were recognised as rough and violent 'mock battles'.⁵⁹ From about the middle of the eighteenth century localised versions of the game became popular in the public schools. These various versions were codified during the middle of the nineteenth century but attempts to unify them failed. Two distinct codes emerged from the public school rivalry: soccer at Eton and rugby at Rugby.

The division principally revolved around the question of the 'types of physical violence henceforth to be permitted in football'.⁶⁰ Rugby remained the more violent game providing a 'traditional concept of "manliness" which stressed courage and physical strength' while

⁵⁸ This summary of the history of Rugby Union in Fiji has been drawn from *Fiji Sport*, Vol.1, No.4, September- October, 11 September 1970.

⁵⁹ This argument is developed in chapter one in Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: a sociological study of the development of rugby football*, Martin Robertson, Oxford, 1979.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.101.

soccer ‘advocated “manliness” of a more restrained and “civilised” kind’.⁶¹ Rugby split further in 1895 with the controversy over amateur and professional players. Rugby Union remained the game of the upper class, amateur players and Rugby League became the game of the working class, professional players. It was Rugby Union, the game of the British elite, which became important throughout the Empire and cricket’s main competitor in the colonies. Soccer has had an even more illustrious career, spreading far beyond the Empire and becoming known as the only truly global sport.

The time frame for the development and codification of rugby and soccer is significant with regard to Fiji. Whereas cricket had been established and organised since the end of the eighteenth century, the Football Association, the governing body for soccer, was not formed until 1863. The Rugby Football Association was formed in 1871, a year after Fiji ceded to Britain, but it took some time for standardised rules to filter through to the colonies. Cricket therefore faced no real competition until the 1920s and 30s when the popularity of the football codes exploded worldwide.⁶² Fijians and Indo-Fijians both played soccer until the 1930s when the success of the Fijian rugby teams prompted greater support for the game amongst Fijians. Fiji’s growing contact with the outside world is mirrored in the growth of the football codes.

While still a game of skill, rugby union is relatively simple to play and requires no expensive equipment. The grounds do not require the same careful preparation or care which cricket pitches and fields need. The game is not deterred by wet weather in the same way that cricket is.⁶³ However, the most important feature in its popular growth in Fiji may be the nature of the game itself. Like cricket, it relies on close co-operation and teamwork but within a faster, more dynamic framework. Rugby Union has historically ‘been viewed as one of the most masculine and manly of sports’.⁶⁴ The image of manliness which rugby

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., p.235,

⁶³ Jock Phillips draws attention to this point as one of the contributing factors for rugby’s success over cricket in New Zealand. ‘The Hard Man: Rugby and the Formation of Male Identity in New Zealand’ in *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, John Nauright and Timothy J.L. Chandler (Eds), FrankCass, London, 1996, p.74.

⁶⁴ Timothy J.L. Chandler and John Nauright, ‘Introduction: Rugby, Manhood and Identity’ in *Making Men*, p.2.

promotes emphasises strength, physical toughness, and courage. The language of rugby resonates with war metaphors and condones violence, risk and danger.⁶⁵

In contrast, Ashis Nandy provides an interesting definition of the changing image of masculinity in cricket. When cricket was introduced to India:

[T]he good cricketer was masculine because he had control over his impulsive self and symbolized the superiority of form over substance, mind over body, culture over nature. Above all, cricket was masculine because it symbolized serenity in the face of the vagaries of fate and it incorporated the feminine within the game's version of the masculine.⁶⁶

In the West Indies players adapted to this image of controlled violence, which perhaps suited the conditions faced by a recently liberated slave population. The game provided ways of covertly intimidating white opponents within an acceptable framework.⁶⁷ It was not until well into the twentieth century that the violent nature of the game was acknowledged and a corresponding change in the image of masculinity associated with it took hold. However, it still does not convey the same physical prowess of rugby.⁶⁸

The 'warrior ethos' of indigenous Fijian men translates well into the physical and immediate violence of rugby. That this ethos was still current and important is demonstrated by the willingness with which Fijian soldiers distinguished themselves during World War II. There is a telling incident with Don Bradman which illustrates how Fijians equated sporting prowess with physical strength and size. Turaga, a 6ft. 4in. demon bowler and tremendous hitter was introduced to Bradman in Suva in 1932. Bradman explains:

they started to feel my arms and shoulders, and to laugh. The size of me appeared to amuse them, and although they made no attempt to hide their mirth, I felt it prudent, in view

⁶⁵ See Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players*; Nauright and Chandler (Eds), *Making Men* and Nauright (Ed.), *Sport, Power and Society in New Zealand*.

⁶⁶ Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, p.xx.

⁶⁷ Maurice St Pierre analyses the suppressed violence of West Indian society and its outlet in aggressive cricket performance in 'West Indian cricket – Part I: a socio-historical appraisal' in *Liberation cricket*, pp. 111–114.

⁶⁸ Although Australians would argue that the Bodyline series (1932–33) was the first public manifestation of this trend towards overt violence, these changes did not consolidate until the 1970s. As with so many of the changes to the game they have been attributed to the Australians and the West Indians. The increase in violence has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in protective clothing to counteract the physical danger, which has somewhat mitigated images of obvious, raw courage.

of the disparity in our respective statures, to join heartily in the hilarity. They made no secret in the fact that they very much doubted any ability as a cricketer in me...⁶⁹

Similarly, the game's image may not have been able to compete for spectators. Cricket is a relatively slow game, often with long intervals between the exciting highlights. The spectators' attention may wander while players are preparing to bat and bowl or rearranging themselves on the field. In contrast with other team sports such as soccer and rugby, traditional cricket spectators remain quiet and show their appreciation of good play with polite applause. A number of reasons have been suggested to explain this phenomenon. The spectators were mainly drawn from the upper and middle classes, there was less drinking and gambling at cricket matches, and cricket spectators remained seated and had little body contact.⁷⁰ There was little involvement between the spectators and the players and cricket's slow pace did not encourage emotional outbursts.

In the test playing countries where the game became important culturally, this traditional spectator response to the game changed dramatically. Australian crowds have earned the ire of British players for their notorious practice of barracking and their manipulation of play.⁷¹ In the West Indies the spectators became intimately involved in the game. Richard D.E. Burton explains the extent of this involvement:

The spectators are, in a very real sense, just as much participants as the players themselves, so that the frontier between players and spectators – the boundary-rope which, in England until a few years ago, represented a quasi-sacred *limes* (space) that no spectator would dare transgress – is, in the West Indies and in matches in this country in which West Indians are involved, continually being breached by members of the crowd to field the ball, to

⁶⁹ Bradman, *My Cricketing Life*, p.77. Bradman names the Fijian player as Edward Cakobau but Snow maintains that the player was Turaga. Edward Cakobau was 'a man of the outside world and could not have displayed this naivete,' while Turaga was from a remote village outside Nadi and spoke little English. (Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.108).

⁷⁰ Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, p.124 -25. Sandiford is summarising the findings of Wray Vamplew. Although conceding these assumptions may have some merit, Sandiford cautions that club and village cricket crowds were often from the lower classes and that they could be volatile at times. However, the overall image of decorum and respect for the game in Victorian England cannot be denied.

⁷¹ Barracking which deliberately targets specific players puts them off their game. They become annoyed, angry or flustered and miss hits, drop balls or bowl badly. For a detailed analysis of barracking and its implications for the game in Australia see Richard Cashman, 'Cricket and Colonialism: Colonial Hegemony and Indigenous Subversion?' in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism*, pp.264-70 and 'Ave a Go, Yer Mug! Australian cricket crowds from larrikin to ocker', pp.47-54.

congratulate successful batsmen and bowlers and, in not a few instances, to express their disgust at umpires' decisions, the tactics of the opposition, and so on.⁷²

In India the crowds have a volatile reputation which is aggravated by their size and diversity.⁷³

When the game was first introduced to Fijians, the divide between players and spectators did not exist. Like other islands in the Pacific, everyone was involved in the game, part of the action. However, as the traditional game spread, conventional patterns of behaviour were established. The involvement of the chiefs as players may have contributed to the formal atmosphere, necessitating expected forms of respect and causing constraint. It was accepted practice for the *matanivanua*, the chief's herald, a man in constant attendance who acted as the chief's mouthpiece at official functions, to regularly call encouragement when the chief was batting. 'Good batting, sir', at the end of each over, resonates of British formality.⁷⁴

In sharp contrast, the spectators at rugby (and soccer) games are vitally involved in the play. There are 'strong aural and visual links between spectators and players' which builds a closer shared experience between them.⁷⁵ The speed of the game creates continuous excitement and entertainment. Spectators are physically active, waving and shouting, and calling out to players.

As the Fijians turned to rugby, the Indo-Fijians adopted soccer as their sport. Philip Snow attributes the division to the difference in physique between Indians and Fijians.⁷⁶ Mohit Prasad expands this point attributing rugby's success with the Fijians to its 'emphasis on running, passing, [and] physical tactics such as tackling, scrums, rucks and mauls',⁷⁷ whereas the Indo-Fijians 'found a comfort zone in the relatively less physical game of

⁷² Richard D.E. Burton, 'Cricket, carnival and street culture in the Caribbean' in *Liberation cricket*, p.91.

⁷³ See Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*. Cashman's wide ranging analysis of cricket crowds in India considers the diverse influences operating in different Indian cities as well as changing crowd behaviour over time.

⁷⁴ Snow, *Cricket in the Fiji Islands*, p.16.

⁷⁵ Bale, *Landscapes of Modern Sport*, p.90.

⁷⁶ Snow, *The Years of Hope*, p.310.

⁷⁷ Prasad, *Sixty Years of Soccer in Fiji, 1938-1998*, p.19.

soccer with its emphasis on passing and teamwork'.⁷⁸ Soccer was being played by Indo-Fijians before the end of the indenture system in 1916 and soon after the system ended regular organised competitions became popular.⁷⁹ The game was cheap to play and needed no special equipment or facilities. Soccer matches provided an important site for social interaction for the developing Indo-Fijian community and, along with Hindi films and music, became an identifying cultural activity of that community.⁸⁰

Another important aspect of the diffusion of sport in a community is the role of the media. Newspapers served to disseminate an understanding of the game, both within a country and internationally. In the test playing nations, radio and television have served to reinforce and extend the popularity of the game. Appadurai attributes a crucial role to the media in the indigenisation of Indian cricket.⁸¹ The move from English radio broadcasts to the use of vernacular languages has allowed the domestication of cricket terms.⁸² Television strengthened cricket's popularity by transforming players into film stars in a country where the cinema plays a vital cultural role.⁸³

Fiji was well served with English language print media from 1869 when the *Fiji Times* was established. A Fijian language official news bulletin, *Na Mata*, was circulated regularly by the Colonial Administration from about 1876 but its main aim was to inform Fijians of colonial policy rather than disseminate local news. In 1946 its circulation was only 1,900 which allowed only one copy to be forwarded to each village.⁸⁴ After an abortive start in 1917, a Hindi language paper was established in 1927. Although the *Fiji Times* reported sport both at home and from abroad and claimed a fairly extensive circulation, the language barrier hampered its effectiveness as a tool in promoting sport. *Fiji Sport* was not published until 1970. Other attempts at English language newspapers were short lived and it was not until after independence that a substantial rival paper emerged, the *Fiji Sun*.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.31.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.29.

⁸¹ Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, p.100.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Appadurai, p.101-102.

⁸⁴ 'Report of Secretary for Fijian Affairs for the Year 1946: Broadcasting', 1948 Legislative Council, Fiji, Council Paper, No.18.

Radio broadcasting began in the colony in 1935 but its effectiveness was curtailed by a number of difficulties. The original transmitter was 500 watts and only provided good reception in Suva and southeastern Viti Levu.⁸⁵ Wireless receivers were expensive and ‘far beyond the pocket of most natives’.⁸⁶ Even after capacity improved, receivers had to be powered by batteries if they were outside Suva, Levuka and the CSR mill centres, which had electricity supplies. These batteries had to be taken by ship to one of the major centres to be re-charged which meant long periods without reception.⁸⁷ The Fiji Broadcasting Commission was appointed in 1953 but its aims were primarily commercial and there was ‘no money available for such things as a local news service, or elaborate transmitters to serve outer islands, or programmes in languages other than English’. Sports coverage was limited until after independence and, even then, was handled by part-time staff until 1979.⁸⁸

The reach of the media in Fiji was limited. The English language dominated both the print media and broadcasting so their ability to communicate with the general population would have been limited. What time and space were given to the Fijian and Indian languages were devoted to conveying information the government considered essential. Media could not have played a significant role in disseminating knowledge of sport or in the construction of sporting images.

* * * *

This chapter has shown that, although cricket initially flourished in Fiji, the nature of the game, Fiji’s climate and geography and the competition provided by rugby union and soccer, led to its decline. Its very exclusiveness and emphasis on hierarchy may have contributed to its loss of popularity. The weather and terrain frustrated the most enthusiastic attempts to promote the game. On the other hand, rugby provided Fijians with a more compatible form of entertainment and excitement, dovetailing with current images

⁸⁵ Len Usher and Hugh Leonard, *This is Radio Fiji: Twenty-five years of service 1954-1979*, produced for Fiji Broadcasting Commission by Information Services South Pacific, Suva, 1979, p.5.

⁸⁶ ‘Report of Secretary for Fijian Affairs for the Year 1946: Broadcasting’, 1948 Legislative Council, Fiji, Council Paper, No.18.

⁸⁷ Usher and Leonard, *This is Radio Fiji*, p.5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.5 & 25.

of maleness and masculinity. Soccer gave Indo-Fijians a cheap leisure activity in which all could participate. Cricket remained a chiefly game and did not become popular with the general population.

Conclusion

This thesis has filled a gap in sports history, Pacific history and Fijian history. It has taken a broadly comparative approach to address the question of why so many ex-colonies embraced the game of cricket when it epitomised British culture. Building on previous research which concentrated on the test playing nations, the thesis identified the way cricket developed in those nations and explored its development in a non test playing nation to compare the process. Using Fiji as a case study, where the game is still played, it has shown that sport was an important site of cultural interaction for the colonisers and colonised. The study traced the development of cricket in Fiji and integrated the history of the game into the social, political and cultural history of Fiji. It established that, although the Fijians took to cricket with enthusiasm, the game did not prosper and that it did not become a prominent part of Fijian culture or identity. The factors which affected the game's pattern of development in Fiji included: the pre-colonial construction of Fijian society, the missionary influence, the education system, the inherent nature of cricket and the geographical and physical conditions of the islands combined with the popularity of rugby and soccer.

This thesis posed these research questions:

- *What were the similarities and differences between the development of cricket in the test playing nations and Fiji?*

It was determined that cricket was not important to the early missionaries who provided the first sustained European contact with the indigenous Fijians. In contrast to many of the colonies, the Fijian education system did not incorporate the British public school system with its emphasis on the playing field and sport. As was the case in several of the test playing nations, cricket became the game of the ruling elite and remained principally their provenance.

- *What, if any, role did cricket play in the development of national identity in Fiji?*

Although the Fijians were not an homogenous group prior to European contact they did share a common sense of ethnic and cultural identity, thus their sense of identity did not need to be consolidated as they moved towards independence from the colonial empire. Cricket did not play a role in the development of national identity in Fiji.

- *What geographical and physical features influenced the development of cricket in Fiji?*

The spread of the game was discouraged by the nature of cricket itself and the geographical and physical conditions in the islands, which made it difficult to both play the game and develop the necessary infrastructure to allow it to prosper.

The pre-colonial construction of Fijian society

The research revealed a number of characteristics of Fijian pre-colonial culture which may have predisposed the Fijians to accept the game of cricket. Although a diverse group of peoples drawn from both Melanesian and Polynesian backgrounds, the Fijians shared a common cosmology and cultural base. They derived their sense of identity from their place within a complex system of kinship arrangements where the chief was paramount. Even in the less hierarchical Melanesian society chief and kin defined an individual's place. War dominated the lives of Fijians throughout the island group.

Their men were therefore used to an authoritarian regime which demanded obedience. They had developed natural abilities which would later prove useful on the cricket field, particularly throwing skills. However, the feature of pre-colonial Fijian society and culture which may have detracted from their enthusiasm for cricket is the *meke*. This combination of song, dance and feasting was a public event in which nearly everyone in the community was intimately involved, something lacking in most of the test playing nations. Part of the exchange based society, the *meke* consolidated and perpetuated cultural mores and traditions while providing a source of entertainment, fun, excitement and competition for both men and women.

The missionary influence

The Fijians first sustained European contact came through the Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries. Unlike their Anglican counterparts, the Methodist missionaries were drawn from the lower middle class and working class. Their austere puritan ethos did not encourage either the frivolous leisure activities or sport of middle and upper class Victorian England. The Methodist missionaries had little or no education and had not

been exposed to the British public school system. Sport was not part of the model of European culture which they introduced to the Fijians.

The education system

Colonial education systems usually perpetuated cricket once it had been introduced into a colony. Sport was central to the public school system in England and this model was transplanted to the colonies with varying degrees of success. This thesis has found that this model was not implemented in Fiji and that the emphasis in colonial education policy had shifted from academic to vocational and agricultural training for indigenous peoples by the time Fiji came under colonial control. The aim was to equip individuals to operate effectively within their own culture rather than become 'black Englishmen'. There is no evidence that sport played a significant role in the education system which struggled to provide even a rudimentary standard of education.

Cricket was first introduced to the Fijians through the colonial officers of the Armed Native Constabulary (ANC). These men were Oxbridge graduates with strong playing records and were responsible for training the indigenous recruits. Sport was an important part of British military culture. The playing field mirrored the battle field. It was here that the concepts of leadership and team spirit promoted by cricket were used to reinforce obedience and discipline. The Fijian chiefs, taking on a leadership role within the ranks of the ANC, took to the game with enthusiasm. Therefore, this thesis proposes that it was through the milieu of the military tradition, rather than the education system, that cricket established itself in the colony, thus retaining its association with the elite.

The inherent nature of cricket

The traditional game of cricket was governed by an entrenched set of laws and bound by a code of conduct which incorporated middle class Victorian values. It was an elitist sport which required a specific space, expensive equipment and prescribed dress. This thesis has found that the Fijian chiefs were the ones who adopted the game because of their close association with the colonial rulers. They had access to the equipment and could commandeer space and players. There were similarities with the original English

model of class hierarchy and with the process on the Indian sub-continent. However, it is significant that in the matter of dress, the Fijians, while conceding to wear white shirts and even blazers, retained their *sulus* and played in bare feet. Wearing the *sulu* is a matter of national pride in Fiji and it is still part of the modern dress uniform of police and military services.

This research has identified the monopoly of the game by the chiefs as an important factor in its ultimate decline. The hierarchical system was maintained as the colony moved towards independence and the chiefs became the political leaders of the new nation. They had less time for sport as they took their place on the national and international stage and the game had not put down roots amongst the commoners. Although isolated pockets of players remained, notably in the Lau islands, no core of up and coming players had developed at a national level.

A further contributing factor to this lack of potential players, was the absence of a centralised administration. It was shown that the Fijian attitude to chiefly standing inhibited their involvement in the administration of the game which largely remained in the hands of Europeans. Many of Fiji's outstanding players were commoners and therefore, would not take a leading role in coaching or administering the game. Perhaps because of the lack of urbanisation or development of an educated middle class, the club structure, which was so influential in many of the test playing nations, never developed. With no central administration and no club system, efforts to establish national competitions did not succeed. Thus a necessary ingredient for nurturing talent and promoting strength and skill in players was missing.

Geography and weather

This thesis has found that the hot, wet tropical conditions in Fiji combined with its rugged terrain substantially affected the development of cricket in the islands. These adverse conditions may have been overcome if, as in the West Indies, other favourable factors had been in place. There the education system and the underlying need to find a common

cultural identity, gave the game impetus. However, without these incentives the physical conditions proved too difficult.

The large level areas of ground required for a cricket pitch were unavailable and it was impossible to create the necessary fine, even lawns from the thick tropical grass. Tropical temperatures and high rainfall were not conducive to play. The islands were scattered over a large area and transport between them was, and still is, difficult. This affected the development of regular local competition and also involvement in international competition. Unlike the West Indies, no regular intercourse was established with the British cricketing world.

Rugby and soccer

Ultimately, this thesis concludes that it was the competition posed by rugby and soccer which prevented cricket from becoming nationally significant in Fiji. Although these sports would appear to share many of the same problems which faced cricket, they flourished and captured the public imagination. They were simpler to play and required no expensive equipment or large playing field and the inherent nature of the two codes of football was more appealing to Fijians and Indians. Rugby meshed with the existing concepts of masculine identity current in Fijian society while the less physical soccer became important for the emerging Indo-Fijian community. This thesis also proposes that football provided a more dynamic and exciting entertainment for spectators, encouraging their involvement in the game.

Conclusion

This thesis concludes that although cricket had flourished in Fiji, the nature of the game, Fiji's climate and geography and the competition provided by rugby union and soccer, led to its decline. Its very exclusiveness and emphasis on hierarchy may have contributed to its loss of popularity. The weather and terrain frustrated the most enthusiastic attempts to promote the game. Rugby provided Fijians with a more compatible form of entertainment and excitement, dovetailing with local images of maleness and masculinity.

Soccer gave Indo-Fijians a cheap leisure activity in which all could participate. The game remained a chiefly game and did not become popular with the general population.

This thesis has found that cricket did not play a role in the development of national identity in Fiji for a number of reasons. The concept of national identity within the Fijian state poses problems. National identity is intrinsically linked to nationalism and nationalism to the nation. Fiji does not fit comfortably within accepted definitions of the nation. During the period under discussion, indigenous Fijians acknowledged cultural differences in their own society but retained a cohesive sense of ethnic identity which consolidated their polity. Nationalism, and national identity, presupposes an 'other'. For the Fijians the 'other' was the immigrant Indian community, not the British. The need to prove themselves against the coloniser which drove India, the West Indies, or even Australia, did not motivate the Fijians. They were not establishing a 'new' national identity, only strengthening and re-working their existing identity to fit new circumstances.

Under these conditions, sport, including cricket, only served to reinforce the ethnic divide between the indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities. Within the political and geographical state of Fiji there have developed two ethnic, or perhaps national, identities. For a variety of reasons Indians did not take to cricket until quite late. Racial and social barriers had become entrenched and cricket did not break them down. Cricket played a different, but no less interesting, role in Fiji reinforcing the need to consider the fragmentary nature of the colonial experience and acknowledging that it was different for each colony.

What the thesis has unequivocally demonstrated is that Fijians made choices and exercised agency with regard to colonial culture. Ratu Kadavulevu of Bau chose to play the game and organise an overseas tour to Australia while the chief of Taveuni could prohibit the game from ever being played in his domain. They played the game on their own terms: dressing in their traditional *sulus*, playing with bare feet, incorporating the *yaqona* drinking ceremony and developing their own field etiquette. Rather than

confirming notions of cultural imperialism their interaction with the game showed their ability to negotiate the imperial culture and mould it to suit their own ends. Ultimately, the people of Fiji adopted rugby as their sport, stamped it with their own imprint and excelled at it. The game translated easily into their existing cultural identity and practice and provided their *entrée* into the international community.

Future research directions

This research has opened up several other avenues for future research and laid the foundation for a more extensive exploration of sport in the Pacific. Individual sports, their development and cultural implications, have not been thoroughly investigated in any of the other island nations in the area. Given the influence of a variety of imperial powers in the region this would prove a profitable exercise and add significantly to the history of the area and the study of cultural politics. A related issue which needs to be explored is the role that international events such as the Pacific Games have played in creating a sense of regional identity.

The thesis has also shown that sport can be an effective tool for studying the relationships between countries in the region. Rather than British imperial culture directly affecting Fiji, it was filtered through the cultural lens of Australia and New Zealand, particularly in the important area of education. Education itself needs more attention in the Pacific. Whereas British colonial education policy has been extensively examined with regard to India and Africa little work has been done in the Pacific.

More narrowly, consideration might be given to a research project which would undertake the personal interviews of past and current cricket players and administrators in Fiji. This would add substantially to the indigenous voice in this area of history and contribute to the understanding of agency and cultural interaction. Ideally the research would be undertaken collaboratively with local researchers.

Finally, the thesis has provided another example of the neglect of indigenous women's history. Sport could be used as a focus to explore the lives of these women and their interaction with colonising cultures. It could also be used to further an understanding of the lives of colonial women throughout the Pacific.

Further research in these areas would considerably expand the growing understanding of the colonial experience of indigenous peoples in the Pacific region. It would contribute to the history of individual nations within the area as well as the history of the Pacific more generally. In line with current trends, sports history, education history and women's history provide lines of enquiry which can be used to overcome narrow national histories, and instead, examine areas of influence between Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

Epilogue

The highlight of the year was the cricket section of the South Pacific Games, held in Fiji for the first time since 1979. In a thrilling final, Fiji lost by two runs to their old rivals, Papua New Guinea. Fiji qualified for the final through a superior run-rate to Samoa and Cook Islands after a shock loss to Samoa in the round-robin. In an all-Fijian Dwarka Prasad Tournament (the successor to the old Crompton Cup) held in Suva, Suva Crusaders beat Moce to win the trophy. The competition, which formerly attracted teams from Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, has not recovered since the 2000 coup. Generally it was a difficult year as Fijian cricket struggled to regain old momentum.

Peter Knight, President of the Fiji Cricket Association¹

The hot and humid day was cloudy and showery. It was mid October, 1999 and the first match of the 1999-2000 cricket season was scheduled to start at 10.30am, between Suva and Nadi. The small local crowd, all male, lingered around the pavilion chatting to the players and each other. They were mainly Fijian with a couple of European faces. A passing American tourist was heard attempting to explain the game to his companions, without much success.

The Hibiscus Festival had been staged on Albert Park the previous week-end and puddles of water lay on the churned up, muddy surface of the field. The starting time came and went with no sign of the match commencing. The spectators showed no impatience with the delay. It seemed that a couple of the Suva players had failed to show up. After some debate amongst the team a couple of players jumped into a car and raced off to round up some substitutes. They duly returned, the teams took to the field in traditional white (mobile phones clipped to several belts), the spectators seated themselves in the small pavilion and the match commenced belatedly at around 11.30. Around the unfenced Albert Park passers-by stopped to watch, call encouragement and move on.

Among the spectators was Andrew Eade, newly appointed ICC development manager for the East-Asia Pacific region. Cricket's reputation had suffered in recent years and the ICC had put in place a global development program aimed at increasing the game's profile and encouraging participation. Over the next few years, with the financial backing of the program, the Fiji Cricket Association recruited a national coach, Neil

¹ 2004 Wisden Almanack Review,
http://use.cricinfo.com/link_to_database/NATIONAL/ICC_MEMBERS/FIJI, accessed 25.03.2005

Maxwell (an Australian A player), provided equipment to schools and districts, installed artificial turf pitches in Labasa, Lautoka, Nadi, Tuboi and Cicia and practice nets in Labasa, Tuboi and Suva. The first ground solely dedicated to cricket was developed in Nadi.²

The program inaugurated the Pacifica Tournament to encourage the game throughout the Pacific region and revive interest in the Dewar Shield competition. Suva unsuccessfully challenged Lakeba in Lau, who had held the cup for 39 years, in October 2001.³ To some extent the problems identified in this thesis appear to have been addressed, but, despite these efforts, cricket retains only a small following in the islands. Lau is still the stronghold of the game, but even here it is the cricket veterans who dominate the game with few young players involved. Although Fiji has been a regular competitor in the ICC trophy, it has never been a serious contender. Enthusiasm is generated by the prospect of overseas competition but momentum for the game cannot be sustained.

The current President of the Fiji Cricket Association continues the lament of his predecessors. Cricket remains a game played by a few for their own pleasure and entertainment, but without a substantial following amongst the broader population. It remains to be seen whether the efforts of the ICC and local stalwarts will prevail and inspire a younger generation to take to the game.

² *East Asia-Pacific News Archive: Fiji Cricket Association Chairman's Report 2000-2001*, CricInfo, http://www-usa.cricket.org/link_to_database/NATIO.../EAST_ASIA-PACIFIC_20010424.htm, accessed 04.06.02.

³ *Dewar Shield Challenge, 2001: ICC Development (East Asia-Pacific) Media Release – 2 November 2001*, CricInfo, http://www-usa.cricket.org/link_to_database/ARCHIV.../841294_ICC-DEA_02NOV2001.htm, accessed 04.06.02.

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University of London
Candidates' papers
Personal papers
Miscellanea

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