

Articulated Cultures: Militarism and Masculinities in Fiji during the Mid 1990s

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Abstract

This article highlights some of the areas that would benefit from a closer analysis of the cultures of militarism. It examines how militarism extends beyond the confines of military institutions, and traces how military values and ideals influence and reflect social, political and cultural divisions in Fiji. The concept of articulation informs the discussion of militarism and its cultures in contemporary Fiji. More specifically, the paper examines the cultural dynamics of militarism in Fiji in a period after the military coups of 1987 and before the putsch of 2000, paying particular attention to representations of the military and militarizing processes collected from news media reporting between 1995 and 1996.

Prior to pacification, Fijian men kept their weapons near them at all times (Williams, 1982). These habits of preparedness, as well as ideas about acceptable forms of aggression, gender roles, the content of exchange relationships between the living and their ancestors and ancestral gods (for instance, human sacrifice and cannibalistic communion), and the configuration of the social landscape (for instance, the composition and placement of villages), were all transformed by the elimination of warfare (Turner, 1997: 370-1).

Introduction: Militarism in Fiji

Fiji's current defence system consists of an army and a navy. The naval division of the armed forces consists of four Israeli-built fast inshore patrol craft and five assorted naval vessels. Naval personnel in 1997 numbered 275 (Fiji Government, 2000). The army consists of seven infantry battalions. Personnel in 1996 numbered close to 3,796. In the 1990s, more than 800 of these were actively involved in peacekeeping

duties with the United Nations (UN) and the USA-brokered multinational forces and observers in the Middle East. Fiji's international peacekeeping engagements by the UN also extended to Somalia, Rwanda, Bougainville and East Timor. The main engagement in the Middle East was temporarily suspended due to international censure of the Fiji coup of 2000, but has since resumed with deployments to Iraq from 2004. Although the army relies mainly on the recruitment of territorial forces for peacekeeping duties, the distinction between 'territorial' and 'enlisted' forces is sometimes moot, and unofficial estimates of the size of the current standing army is as high as 10,000, making Fiji the most militarized independent nation in the Pacific.

The British colonial authorities may have eliminated indigenous or tribal warfare in the Fiji Islands by the end of the nineteenth century, but in spite of so-called pacification, cultures of militarism continued to grow and thrive. As James West Turner suggests in the quote that opens this discussion (above), martial life in pre-colonial Fiji emerged out of deeply embodied notions of masculinity, spirituality, and society. Today, the cultures that thrive in Fiji are permeated by militarized discourse and symbolism. The road from the main international airport in Nadi to the capital city of Suva, some four hours drive away, has for slightly more than a decade been punctuated by gigantic concrete replicas of indigenous war clubs or *i wau* to identify state-recognized Fijian villages. The *i wau* have been erected in a collaborative effort between the Fiji Visitors Bureau (FVB) and the Public Works Department (PWD); an effort to indigenize and exoticize village scenographies that are often resistant to such viewings. To most observers, the *i wau* might seem to be innocent gateposts marking ones entry or exit from a village; the significance of 'the gateposts' being modelled on a type of club that may have once been wielded with deadly precision in battle or wielded with gusto in a dance glorifying war, might get lost in the promotional hoopla of the FVB. On one hand there is a weighty permanence given to the *i wau* by the PWD steel reinforcing of the concrete. But on the other hand the PWD's chronic failure to maintain its constructions renders shabby these ambiguous symbols of indigenous Fijian culture (or is it hospitality, aggression or indifference that is being signified?). Either way such layering of indigenous and modern semiotics, indicate a need for close attention to the cultures of militarism in post and inter-coup(s) Fiji.

While the *i wau* is becoming ubiquitous, as it is increasingly adopted into the official iconography of indigenous Fijian organizations, there are other areas that show evidence of the robust life of militarist metaphor. As sociologist Sitiveni Ratuva has noted:

The Fijian language is full of militaristic terminology such as *katuvu*, *rabocaka*, *i valu*, 'fire-taka' etc., which are used in everyday discourse, and even used as language in the sexual domain. These are both militaristic and masculine representations....The term *liga ni wau* (literally the hand that wields the club) is also used widely in everyday discourse. After the (2 November 2000) mutiny, Qarase congratulated 'our *liga ni wau*' (soldiers) for being loyal to the '*vanua ko Viti*'. When I came back from England, my village chief during the ceremony referred to me as 'our *liga ni wau*' who went to England to '*ra-vuravu*' (do battle) and now he has come back with '*qaga*' (victory). Fijian ceremonial language is full of war metaphors (Personal Communication, 2001).

The terrain for cultural studies of militarism in Fiji would thus seem both rich and begging for analysis, but the literature on militarism in Fiji has tended to be descriptive. Fiji's military histories are sometimes biographical or based on oral history interviews (for example, Brown, 1994-5; Nawadra, 1995; PCRC, 1999). What little commentary there is in the scholarship has been polarized between anti-militarist and pro-militarist interest. The level of analysis has been polemical, and literature produced since the coups of 1987, perhaps unavoidably, bears the marks of pre-coup vested interests (for example, Griffen 1989; Lal, B. 1988; Lal, V. 1990; Ravuvu 1988).

There has been only one concerted effort at a political and cultural analysis of militarism in Fiji: Winston Halapua's most recent book courageously opens up a critical discussion of the links between indigenous Fijian ideologies of *lotu* (Christianity/Methodism), '*turagaism*' (a belief in chiefly rights to leadership) and militarism (Halapua, 2003). Halapua relies on his naming of *lotu* and *turagaism* and their links with militarism for much of the force of his analysis, and is most rigorously focused on the actions of particular individuals within those institutions. In his dedication to exposing collusions between religious, chiefly and militaristic interests in Fiji, he unfortunately fails to elaborate more fully the cultural categories that enable such dense intersections of ideology.

In this article I highlight some areas that would benefit from a closer analysis of the cultures of militarism. My interest is in understanding how militarism extends beyond the confines of military institutions. I suggest military values and ideals influence as well as reflect social, political and cultural divisions in Fiji. It is crucial, however, that militarism is also understood as something that is made as well as co-constructed; and in parts of the Pacific, indigenous people have been active participants in such co-constructions (see, for example, Underwood, 1985).

The concept of articulation has not often informed Pacific Studies (Carrier, 1992; Clifford, 2001; Kahn, 2000), but it was widely used in the British school of Cultural Studies in the 1980s. In an introduction to a volume on *Cultural Studies*, Grossberg writes that the concept of articulation 'provides a way of describing the continual severing, realignment, and recombination of discourses, social groups, political interests, and structures of power in a society' (Grossberg, et.al., 1992: 8).

Articulations generate the practice of providing layers upon layers of contextualization, of bringing backgrounds into foregrounds, and of more accurately representing cultural and political complexity.

The concept of articulation informs my discussion of militarism and its cultures in contemporary Fiji. I examine the cultural dynamics of militarism in Fiji in a period after the military coups of 1987 and before the putsch of 2000, paying particular attention to representations of the military and militarizing processes collected from news media reporting between 1995 and 1996. The events of 2000, in which an elected government was summarily ousted and held hostage for more than fifty days, can be characterized neither as a military coup nor as a civilian coup. Failed businessman, George Speight's fronting of the overthrow of the Labour Coalition Government received crucial backing from members of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces. While there is an emerging literature reviewing the historical and political dimensions of 2000 (for example, Field, Baba and Nabobo-Baba, 2005; Lal and Pretes, 2001), I believe it is as important to examine the period between coups, as it is to study the coups themselves. My intention is not so much to posit a causal relationship between 2000 and the period of the mid-1990s on which I am focusing in this article. Rather, I am asserting the value of remembering and critically assessing this era for the particular illuminations of the social, political, economic and cultural contexts of militarism in Fiji. It bears noting that the print media sources I used from the two major daily newspapers, *The Fiji Times* and *The Daily Post* were not only significant for the regularity with which they feature the military and militarized aspects of Fiji's culture, but were also constantly and explicitly engaging and invoking history and memory.

The cultures of militarism that pervade contemporary Fiji life are rapidly changing in the increasing globalization of labour and rapacious consumerization of society. There are processes currently taking place in Fiji which this paper cannot address, such as the diversification of employment options for indigenous Fijian men within the international 'security industry'. Thousands of Fiji citizens are now present in the Middle East and Gulf States, some as part of Fiji forces assigned to United Na-

tions duties, others there as recruits of the British armed forces, and yet others as contracted employees of private security companies with variable scruples. Though this article does not address the present circumstances, it is hoped that the discussion herein will help to illuminate some of what is economically, socially, culturally and historically at stake in the continuing dominance of militarism in Fiji's national development and cultural logic.

Articulated Cultures

The architect of modern Fiji, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, is said to have stated: '*Eda na sega ni kilai nai taukei kevaka e na sega mada ni dave e liu na noda dra*'. This translates as 'Fijians will never be recognized unless our blood is shed first' (quoted in Ravuvu, 1988: 15). Such was the philosophy behind young indigenous Fijian men's recruitment in great numbers to the British war effort in the 1940s. Fiji's modern military roots may be traced to colonial administration, but more specifically to a Fijian discourse of loyalty and service to the Crown of England (Brown, 1994-5; Kaplan, 1995).

In annual ceremonies, the Fiji military proudly memorializes its representation on the winning sides of World War I, World War II, and the Malayan (Anti-Communist) Campaign (for example, *The Fiji Times*, 12 August 1995). Fiji men have also served with distinction in the British army. As part of the world wide commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, a special feature in *The Fiji Times* contained a catalogue of Fiji's honours from the war: 62 medals and awards, including the Victoria Cross for a Corporal Sefanaia Sukanaivalu; 38 killed in action, 4 dead from wounds, 1 missing, 8 accidental deaths, and 6 dead from sickness. Three battalions and three commando groups and a medical corps had seen action in the Solomon Islands, while a labour corps and a naval volunteer reserve were also assigned to duties in the Solomon Islands (*The Fiji Times*, 12 August 1995: 3-5). Some 200 Fiji men joined the British army in the early 1960s. One distinguished himself in the British SAS (see Geraghty, 1981). After ten to fifteen years of service, only about thirty men returned to live in Fiji, and by 1995 there were only twenty-two surviving former British army soldiers. Some had died; others opted to leave the country again.

Fijian forces have since then gained additional international recognition for their participation in United Nations peacekeeping duties in the Middle East. The Fiji military's role was seen not so much as one of defence, but as a sort of 'freelancing' for the 'free world', that is, until the

coups of May and September 1987. Then the military came to be viewed not only as a threat to democracy, but also as a bastion of Fijian masculinity and a threat to multiculturalism. As was noted earlier, on a per capita basis, Fiji has the largest military force in the Pacific.

Like most military institutions, the military in Fiji is dominated by men; in Fiji specifically, it is by indigenous Fijian men. As a culture of masculinity, militarism entails both a disciplining of bodies and a disciplining of social relations (see Enloe, 1990). From surveying the various levels of military recruitment and proto-military training in Fiji, from Boy Scouts to high school cadet programs and the persistent 'parading' of regimented bodies at national events (for example, Halapua, 2003, *The Fiji Times*, 10 October 1994: 4-5), we can get a sense of the social value placed on militarized and masculinized discipline in Fiji.

In a national Scout Jamboree advertising feature, Deputy Camp Chief, P. V. Tuvuki stated: 'It is very unfortunate that parents still place very high premiums on academic education. Evidently, the acquisition of academic qualifications does not necessarily guarantee one a job' (*The Fiji Times*, 26 August 1995: 21). Tuvuki instead called on teachers, parents, and the general public to support the Scouts, implying that Scout discipline was more enduring and rewarding than education. This highly questionable dismissal of academic excellence for a more physical (and moral) type of discipline is given institutional weight by the relatively low academic requirements (education up to Form Four or the tenth grade) for enlisting in the military. Fiji's Boy Scouts number in the thousands, and although there is no official documentation of how many scouts go on to become soldiers, or of how many graduates of high school cadet programs go on to become military officers, it seems likely that the social prestige given to such programs both produces and is a product of a climate tolerant of and conducive to militarization (*The Fiji Times*, 14 August 1995, 5 August 1995).

Quite simply these different levels of militarization provide some of the few opportunities outside of sports for male bonding. In its 'Looking Back in Pictures' series on historical photographs, *The Fiji Times* published a picture of two smiling Fijian men with the caption 'Those were the happy days in Malaya'. The newspaper's description and background to the photograph was as follows:

This picture of happiness goes back 50 years ago when (at left) Sergeant Lagi Naikava (MM) from Ra (deceased) and Inoke Tabua (Warrant Officer Class III) (MID), from Mualevu in Vanuabalavu, Lau, were in the army. In 1953, after 30 days of operation in Malaya members of IFIR Malaya B Company won all sports in Malaya and also

were the champion in rugby (*The Fiji Times*, 29 August 1995:2).

The caption highlights the ‘mateship’ of enlisted soldiers, drawing attention to how men from different regions of Fiji were able to form significant social relations with each other. In addition, the caption signals the close kinship between the institution of the military and the institution of sport, a context for analyzing the culturally articulated character of militarism in Fiji, to which I will return.

Furthermore, the militarization of masculinity in Fiji since the commencement of international peacekeeping duties in the Middle East has engendered a romantic public image of fatherhood and a very problematic reality for Fijian families. The regular photographs in the daily newspapers of poignant farewells between soldier-fathers and children, and joyful reunions between soldier-fathers and families (for example, *The Fiji Times* 26 August 1995: 2, 29 May 1995: 5) belie the tensions created by long absences (a tour of duty is twelve months long), poor wages and pensions, domestic violence, and silence around issues related to STDs and HIV.

Cynthia Enloe has made pertinent analyses of the reinforcement of patriarchal values in militarized relations (Enloe, 1990). Many, but not all, of the First World War soldiers Enloe refers to appeared to have a liveable wage and were part of a vast military infrastructure. Fiji soldiers (remembering that the distinction between ‘enlisted’ and ‘territorial’ forces is often blurred) and their families are not guaranteed on-base housing, and those families who do live on base are housed in barracks no better than any of Suva’s high density/low-cost housing projects.

An example of the way government has been called to account for its neglect of the military was featured in *The Fiji Times* when a senior army officer reported that Fiji soldiers in the Middle East were the ‘most ill-equipped in their area of operation despite their reputation as one of the best peacekeepers engaged by the United Nations’ (*The Fiji Times*, 30 May 1995). The officer continued: ‘Let it be known that soldiers didn’t ask for the increase in their Middle East allowance from \$15 to \$30 a day. If Government isn’t prepared to give soldiers \$30 per day then give the soldiers the equipment with which they can be safe’ (*The Fiji Times*, 30 May 1995). Soldiers may remit a portion of their daily allowance to their families at home but in many ways, in the 1990s, soldiers and their families started to realize that they were subsidising the state instead of making a clear profit from their engagements with and in the military.

To illustrate further: the publication in 1995 of a book documenting Fiji’s participation in the Malay campaign did not receive any govern-

ment funding. A military spokesperson said that it was the ex-servicemen's wish to raise the money themselves (*The Daily Post*, 11 May 1995, *The Fiji Times*, 9 May 1995). He described the fundraising efforts, a dinner banquet which cost \$100 a couple, a runathon, and a bazaar, as exemplifying the principle of 'self-help'. The military spokesperson exhorted the general public to assist the soldiers by 'turning up (to the bazaar) to buy what these brave men will sell...' (*The Daily Post*, 11 May 1995, *The Fiji Times*, 9 May 1995). There are several problems here that may be attributed to either the reporting or the spokesperson's own representation. But the labour of women in the fundraising process was elided, even though 'fundraising' is almost entirely women's domain. What was claimed as the ex-servicemen's desire to forego a government 'handout' is legitimate on one hand, but emerges from a skewed logic on the other. The government begins taxation at an annual income of \$8,840 (at 15%, rising to 31% over \$20,000), and also levies a 12.5 per cent value added tax (VAT) on all sales. Like other public institutions in Fiji, the military is under-funded: the peacekeeping forces in the Middle East in the 1990s were reportedly not only issued sub-standard weapons, they were not adequately clothed or shod for the required twenty-four hour foot and mobile patrols in Middle Eastern winters (*The Fiji Times*, 30 May 1995). Fijians have come to accept the need to fundraise for basic necessities like running water and building renovations—let alone luxuries like the publication of a book. Thus, with the lowest wages per capita in the country, indigenous Fijians are the most heavily burdened by government taxation, and yet the most willing to fundraise, in effect, relieving the state of its social responsibilities. I read 'fundraising' as a modern articulation of the traditional ideology of self-sacrifice and denial which at the time was sustaining the Fijian chiefly system and the political hegemony of the eastern provinces.

Indeed, this spirit of self-sacrifice had earlier precedence: a Fijian Silver Star hero of Bougainville in WWII, Sailosi Koto was featured in a special series in *The Daily Post*: 'He now lives . . . on a mere \$32 a month ex-servicemen aftercare fund. He suffered from a stroke this year which has paralyzed him waist down. Koto cannot afford a wheelchair or decent walking stick' (*The Daily Post*, 19 August 1995). Koto's condition is not atypical of Fiji ex-servicemen. The fact that the man hailed as Fiji's greatest soldier and statesman, Ratu Sukuna, also died penniless is widely known. A certain mythology has built up around the heroic selflessness of the early Fijian soldiers. This mythology, however, was clearly not as captivating to soldiers in the mid-1990s—there is a significant difference between dying penniless after seeing heavy battle and being on the win-

ning side, and receiving a meagre pension after years of peacekeeping service in a region where peace is still a question. Ravuvu notes that for World War II veterans in Fiji, there was inadequate publicity about the availability of state assistance. 'Many did not know of the existence of an "After Care Fund", while others thought it was a sort of secret institution known by, and useful to, only a few' (Ravuvu, 1988: 57). In these tragic scenarios, the military reveals itself as an institution that can cruelly exploit those within its ranks.

The poor wages of soldiers demand that married soldiers' wives not only contribute to the family income with waged employment but also fundraise even for military projects through bake sales, craft fairs, and catered dinners (*The Fiji Times*, 9 May 1995). Indigenous Fijian ideology constructs a notion of reciprocal gender relations that does not contradict patriarchal power structures. So, for example, the *cere* ritual, which specifically involves women in the heralding of a newly built military vessel (*The Fiji Times*, 14 December 1995), affords women a traditional place of honour in (but nevertheless on the periphery of) the culture of militarism. Although at least one scholar has noted the occasion of a female chief leading military battle in Vanua Levu in 1856 (Clunie, 1977: 12), Fiji does not have a strong oral tradition of woman warriors. There have been only a very few women serving in Fiji's modern military, women being first admitted into the ranks in 1988. It was not until 1995 that the first women were assigned to peacekeeping duties in the Middle East (*The Fiji Times*, 24 March 1995). For a better understanding of the disciplining process at work in the military, it would be necessary to investigate the training process for these women peacekeepers, their self-representation of their motivations, and official and public understanding of their roles. Such an investigation is beyond the scope of this article, but would be a crucial area for refining an analysis of gender's social, cultural, economic and political articulations in Fiji.

While the under-representation of women in the military has not been cause for much concern among social commentators or critics in Fiji, the under-representation of Indo-Fijians has:

...the predominance in the army of members of one ethnic category who are closely affiliated to the chiefly hierarchy that wields political power is a matter of concern. There is something immoral and sinister about the arming and training of one ethnic category in a multi-ethnic community (Naidu, 1986: 13-4).

The imbalance between Indo-Fijians and indigenous Fijians in the nation's military forces has its roots in the colonial segregation of the communities. As the indentured and labouring class, Indo-Fijians developed a

critical perspective on colonial rule. The origins of Fiji's military forces lie in a predominantly indigenous Fijian defence force that was established to suppress a strike by Indian workers in 1920. Although an Indian platoon was later formed in 1934, Indo-Fijian suspicion of the ethnic biases in police and armed forces had taken root. When Britain required recruits from its colonies for its war effort in the 1940s, Indo-Fijians demanded equal pay as European soldiers; they were refused. Although there were 264 Indians in the Fiji Military Forces when it was at its peak strength in 1942, their numbers paled in comparison with the 6,371 Fijian and 1,070 local European recruits (Ravuvu, 1988: 8-9, 16). Not only was Indo-Fijian loyalty to the Crown, and by extension, Fiji, called into question, but so was Indo-Fijian masculinity. During the recruitment for the Malayan Campaign in 1951 a number of Indians volunteered but were not accepted because it was alleged they had inadequate 'soldierly qualities' for jungle warfare (Ravuvu, 1988: 10).

As a result, the Fiji Military Forces have been preserved as a predominantly indigenous male domain. When the military staged a coup in 1987, dissolving a democratically elected parliament and suspending a government which was perceived as predominantly Indo-Fijian, it did so against this historical backdrop of ethnic tension.

Since the 1987 coups, there have been a number of incidents where the military was implicated in terroristic acts against members of the Indo-Fijian community. The most publicized incident involved the kidnap and torture of a University of the South Pacific academic by three military officers in 1992. The academic, a physicist, had been an outspoken critic of the coups and of the 1990 constitution promulgated by the interim government. Along with other members of the Indo-Fijian community, the academic participated in a ritual burning of the 1990 constitution. The military officers justified their subsequent actions by claiming that the academic had committed an act of treason. The academic eventually migrated to the UK, where he received critical acclaim for his work in physics; he also published his account of the experience (Singh, 1991), but is reported to have returned to live in Fiji after 2000. None of the military officers involved in the incident were court-martialled, and all of them continue to serve in the force after being levied negligible fines. With the government's failure to satisfactorily redress such crimes, the military in the 1990s continued to be seen as a threat by most members of the Indo-Fijian community (and many activists and academics). However, the Indo-Fijian community must by no means be taken to be homogeneous, and it must be noted that certain sectors show more uncritical support than others do for the nationalist cause of indigenous Fijians.

Christianity forms a crucial part of the mould for the military psyche in Fiji, and the demographics, again, speak for themselves. With a predominance of Fijians in the military, the institution is unquestioningly invested with an aura of Christian mission. Fijians are, with very few exceptions, followers of Christianity. The most powerful denomination is Methodism, with Catholicism in second place. Sitiveni Rabuka, an ordained Methodist minister, explained his orchestration of the coup as simply: 'a mission that God has given me' (Dean and Ritova, 1988: 11). In his speech to the peacekeepers before they embarked for Bougainville, he proclaimed, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God' (*The Fiji Times*, 29 September 1994).

The articulation of militarism with Christianity and indigenous identity is re-enforced by the articulation of Christianity with Fijian culture. One origin story has the first Fijians coming from the Middle East or the 'Holy Land' (Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), 1996: 20) instead of Southeast Asia, as prevailing anthropological theory would have it. More importantly, however, Christianity is complicatedly and somewhat contradictorily linked up with the chiefly system. Fiji's state motto, '*Rerevaka na kalou, ka doka na tui,*' or 'Fear God, respect the chief', not only disrupts the boundaries between church and state, but also interpolates the chiefly system into the mix.

The origins of Christianity in Fiji go back 170 years to the arrival of the first missionaries. As in many other Pacific settings, the process of conversion was achieved from the 'top down' with the patronage of the chiefs. Since the 1987 military coups there have been strong calls from the Methodist Church to constitutionally enshrine Christianity as the state religion (Barr, 1994). Explicit and implicit resistance to such proposals has most noticeably come from within other Christian denominations and civic groups: on the one hand there are groups like the Fiji-based Pacific Conference of Churches and the Fiji Council of Churches who support the secularization of the state and who have taken sometimes radical positions on issues of social justice; and on the other hand there are new religious groups that are assisting indigenous people in Fiji and all over the Pacific to vote with their feet against the onerous demands placed on them by mainline religions' collaboration with chiefly systems or *kastom*. The attraction of many of the new religious groups lies in their forceful disarticulation of Christianity from the state and indigenous 'traditions' and a deft rearticulation of it with capitalistic individualism (Barr, 1998; Ernst, 1994, nd). By no means a unidirectional or logical process, however, these figurings and refigurings may unpredictably loop back on each other.

So far, I have outlined what I take to be the key nodes of articulation for militarism in Fiji, at least as it was observed in the mid-1990s. We have seen examples of militarism's economic, gendered, ethnicized and religious articulations. But it is the very rationalization of military action in cultural—almost indigenous anthropological—terms that has demonstrated the imaginative and rhetorical skill of its proponents. This cultural rationale for militarism in Fiji I describe as the *bati* ideology.

Bati translates literally as 'teeth'. In his narrative of the United States exploring expedition 1838-1942, Charles Wilkes noted what he called a 'mbati' relationship in Fiji. 'Levuka is mbati to the chiefs of Ambau', he observed, and 'The term mbati signifies allies, or being under protection, though not actually subject to it' (Wilkes, 1845: 59-60) In the context of the chiefly system, the *bati* are the warrior class bound to protect the chief and advance his or her interests. *Bati* ideology was one of the motivating forces for Rabuka's execution of the May 1987 coup. In May 2000, coup-leader George Speight, though technically a civilian, also invoked membership to a *bati*-clan to legitimize his illegal overthrow of the Labour Coalition government.

The *bati* ideology really crystallized in the coups when Rabuka articulated one of his reasons for overthrowing the Labour government as a duty, as a member of a *bati* clan of his province, to protect Fiji's chiefly system. There is considerable speculation that had the Governor General of Fiji, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, who was also Tui Cakau (the paramount chief of Rabuka's province) rejected Rabuka's claims, military ranks would have been split. The theory goes that if the Governor General, who was also the supreme commander of the military forces, had given the word, a considerable segment in the army would have resisted Rabuka's military intervention in civilian affairs, helping the Governor General to restore the democratically elected government. In the actual event, however, Ratu Penaia did not explicitly reject Rabuka's claims to be enacting a *bati* responsibility, and the Labour government was not restored.

Given that the military hierarchy in Fiji overlaps with the Fijian chiefly system in some critical areas, the *bati* ideology becomes a little problematic; for the chiefly authority of a military superior is held in awkward tension against the *bati* authority of a military subordinate. So, for instance, even though Rabuka was only a lieutenant colonel when he carried out the coups, he could, by appealing to tradition, legitimately commit these acts of insubordination to his military and chiefly superiors. That is, in the context of indigenous cultural ideology, the conflation of military and chiefly hierarchies is no protection against the insubordination of the *bati*. It is not clear how much *bati* ideology is internalized as

part of the actual disciplinary process of the Fiji military. Certainly the process is mediated and constrained by a certain 'caste' consciousness: that is, since Rabuka was indeed a member of the Tui Cakau's *bati* clan, he was almost infallible, and his actions were certainly beyond reproach. A *bati* pretender, however, someone not from a *bati* clan, but from a fishing clan, for instance, might not have had the same success with a coup attempt.

The *bati* ideology has been popularized in other arenas like sports, rugby in particular. Rugby is considered 'the national game' of Fiji and like the military, is predominantly masculine and indigenous Fijian. Ravuvu recognizes the significance of rugby's articulation with militarism, noting that the success of the Fiji Rugby team in the 1938 and 1939 tours of New Zealand 'became a source of pride and prestige...especially to the Fijians and their European supporters, who later agitated for a Fijian battalion to serve overseas' (Ravuvu, 1988: 12-3). The Fiji government reputedly spends more money on rugby development than on any other sport, and in many ways seems to consider rugby as important as its UN peacekeeping service for gaining national prestige internationally.

To illustrate the close articulation of rugby with militarism and by way of comparison: in 2000, the New Zealand army ran a television campaign promoting itself as a leading institution for training by using the All Blacks coach as a spokesperson, and juxtaposing military images with clips from All Blacks rugby games. The army has regularly run training workshops for the All Blacks. In Fiji, we are reminded of the caption to the Malaya photograph referred to earlier in this article. But it bears noting, too, that club rugby in Fiji is dominated by the police and army teams, who have an annual play-off against each other. As cultural expressions of idealized masculinity, it makes sense that military and rugby institutions would recognize and collaborate on their mutual interests.

Prior to the 1990s, what is known as rugby union was the only rugby code played in Fiji. The Prime Minister of the country who from independence in 1970 up until the 1987 elections was Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara was traditionally the president of the rugby union. As a bastion of the modern Fijian elite, the rugby union might have found it difficult to accept the labour-identified Dr Bavadra as its president had events not intervened. After the coups, however, Ratu Mara was appointed Prime Minister of the interim government, and his position as the patron of the rugby union remained intact. When Rabuka resigned from the military, ran for and won the office of Prime Minister in the 1992 elections, and Ratu Mara was temporarily sidelined from national office, a clear tension between the two emerged. In 1993, the former Governor General Ratu

Penaia died, leaving the way open for Ratu Mara to assume presidency of the young republic and retain presidency of the rugby union. But as Prime Minister, and hero of the *bati* ideology, Rabuka also needed to be able to stake a strong claim in the national rugby scene without seeming to directly usurp Ratu Mara's authority. The solution came in the formation of a rival code, rugby league, of which Rabuka was then honoured as president. Interestingly, the national rugby league team goes by the name 'Fiji Bati', while the national rugby union team was simply known as 'Fiji' until professionalization when it became identified with its corporate sponsors as 'Vodafone Fiji'.

Both rugby codes in Fiji embrace the notion that their players are somehow 'warriors' for the nation. Both codes incorporate, as was popularized by the New Zealand All Blacks' adoption of a Maori *haka*, performances of indigenous war chants and dances at the beginning of each international game. A critical difference between the two codes, is that while rugby union was until recently an amateur sport, rugby league had for a long time been professionalized. So while the Fiji rugby union team could claim to be playing purely for the love of country, the 'Fiji Bati' were not just playing for their country, they were also playing for money. This mercenarism in rugby league temporarily worked to Rabuka's advantage. He became identified with a patriotism which appeared to bring material gain to the Fijian (man), while the rugby union strongly identified with the chiefly class in the person of Ratu Mara was still demanded gruelling self-sacrifice with only symbolic rewards. With rapid losses of union players to rugby league and overseas teams, the Fiji rugby union has had to accommodate both domestic demands for and international trends in the increased professionalization of the sport. A comparison of the various ideological convergences and divergences between the two rugby codes can tell us a lot about the contested politics of nation-building and identity in post-coup Fiji, and illuminate the ways that Fijian society has been militarized outside of military institutions.

Currently, the President of the Fiji Rugby Union is the Commander of the Fiji Military Forces. As Winston Halapua has noted, there is a crucial link between militarism and *turaga*-ism (Halapua, 2003). Earlier, indigenous Fijian progressive scholar, Simone Durutalo described a sort of conspiracy of religion, what he described as *ratuism* and rugby in contemporary Fijian society and culture (Durutalo, 1986). The succession of the military commander to a position formerly the domain of the chiefly elite is not a contradiction, but an indication of the complex articulations of hierarchical social, cultural and political interests in Fiji.

Cynthia Enloe (1993) has pointed to the need for analyzing congru-

ent cultures of masculinity, as I have tried to do above, as part of the larger project of studying militarism. Enloe has also called for a critical examination of the processes of demilitarization. In post-coup Fiji a significant number of military officers and servicemen have been either seconded to civil service, or asked to resign from the military in order to take up civil service. A *Fiji Times* feature entitled 'Old Soldiers Never Die' highlighted that in 1995, there were at least ten retired colonels or lieutenant colonels holding top government positions, including that of the Ambassador to the Court of St James; Minister of Youth, Employment Opportunities and Sports; the Commissioner of Native Lands and Fisheries Commission; the Police Commissioner; the Minister for Housing and Urban Development; and not least of all, the Prime Minister (*The Fiji Times*, 8 April 1995). This apparent process of civilianizing the military, however, might also be understood as a militarization of the civil service, and evokes Enloe's caution towards too quickly assuming the fact of demilitarization (Enloe, 1993).

On the opposite end of the social scale from the civilianizing of the military's upper echelon, are, as I have already pointed out, a sort of immiseration of the military's lower echelons. This has resulted in irregular, but nonetheless disturbing, allegations of military involvement in Fiji's rapidly escalating criminal activities. A soldier accused of robbing \$66,000 from security guards outside a bank pleaded not guilty and claimed he was charged on circumstantial evidence: 'Police connected me with the case because the car used in the robbery was seen parked in the yard of my family home in Suva'. He also claimed that police procedure in the case was lax, and complained that having been charged with the robbery, he had been suspended from military service without pay, and could not earn a decent wage to support his wife and children. In a second case three officers serving in the Sinai were suspended by the UN MFO Commanding Officer with pressure from the Egyptian government over a missing M16 gun (*The Fiji Times*, 11 May 1995 and 27 July 1995).

Given that the Fiji Police Force is not armed, the use of AK-47 machine guns in at least one high profile bank robbery in 1996, and various reports of army-issue weapons being used in violent robbery attempts, has greatly alarmed the public. Though AK-47s are not army issue, in 1990 shipments of these weapons were reported to have entered the country. The Fiji army confiscated one container of weapons, so it is not clear whether any of the AK-47s currently circulating are from confiscated or as-yet-unconfiscated sources. The increasing use of balaclavas as a disguise in robberies since the coups has encouraged numerous rumours of other military-style features in reported criminal activities. A general cli-

mate of suspicion towards the military (servicemen) prevails in non-Fijian (especially Indo-Fijian) and middle-class communities. I personally know of a case from 1998, of a couple who were assaulted in their own home by two men, one of whom was wielding an army-issue bowie knife. A recent sociological study of crime and deviance in Fiji (Adinkrah, 1995) fails to account for the politics of masculinity, 'caste' in the chiefly system, or immiseration, that an attention to militarization would reveal.

What I have mapped out here is nothing more than one view of the complex articulations of the military with cultures outside the formal parameters of its institution. The military in Fiji affects and promotes particular ideals of gender, race, religion, caste and class. The military is as much a product of Fiji's indigenous, colonial and postcolonial cultures, as militarism is a force that shapes those very same cultures. By describing together the diverse cultural and political and economic mythologies with which cultures of militarism are invested, I hope to have imparted a sense of the problematic that it presents to (understanding) the process of building national unity between the 1987 and 2000 coups in Fiji.

While the military is valorized in the dominant discourses that circulate in Fiji, there is a minority discourse that critiques and resists the idea that militarization and militarism are inevitable features of Fiji society (for example, Halapua, 2003, Naidu, 1986). However, any serious proposal for 'demilitarising' Fiji must, as I have tried to show here, reckon with the profound ways that other treasured institutions and values in Fiji society form a crucial part of the support structure for its militarization: sport, capitalism, Christianity, are but a few of these. What then are the prospects for 'disarticulating' the cultures which currently support militarism in Fiji? The answers lie perhaps in a reconsideration of Fiji's more distant past.

Concluding Remarks: Disarticulating Militarism?

Fergus Clunie, in his study *Fijian Weapons and Warfare*, quotes from some of William Lockerby's amateur anthropological inquiries in the Fiji of 1808: 'We are concerned here with the martial side of Fijian life, rather than society as a whole, with the warrior rather than the fully rounded man. The other aspects of Fijian culture and character should always be borne in mind, war after all being only one of the bases of Fijian society' (Clunie, 1977: 6). What is demonstrated here is a way of thinking about militarism as unarticulated. Lockerby and Clunie, distinguish between the martial side of Fijian life and the society as a whole; they speak about the warrior as distinct from the fully rounded man; they regard war

as only one of the bases of Fijian society.

Yet shortly after making these assertions, Clunie also insists that 'Fijian religion was inextricably mixed with war and cannibalism; having developed over hundreds and possibly thousands of years of warfare and being admirably suited to the needs of a martial society. Like many other religions it was a major cause of bloodshed...' (1977: 6). Here, Clunie flouts the very premises he initially proposed to study militarism from, and abruptly shifts to frames which position the martial side of Fijian life as inextricably linked with the religious side of Fijian life. By ascribing religion as a major cause of bloodshed, Clunie suggests an articulation between indigenous militarism and indigenous religion (1977: 7, 19). At some point in Fiji's history, then, (probably at the point of Cakobau's conversion to Christianity in the late nineteenth century) indigenous militarism in Fiji began to be disarticulated from indigenous religion and rearticulated with Christianity. But the model of a militarism necessarily linked with a religion remains, and so the possibility of disarticulation recedes once more.

In order to exhibit the Leonhard Adam ethnological collection of artefacts from throughout Melanesia, D. Wayne Orchiston found that warfare provides 'a broad unifying theme that would allow the display of a range of functionally diverse artefacts, all within the context of a single exhibition...This institution, like most others...somehow manages to impinge on almost every sphere of society' (Orchiston, 1975: 2). Orchiston also notes that indigenous warfare was accompanied not just by weaponry, but by dress, decoration, feasting, voyage and travel, communication via drums (in PNG), coded markings on barkcloth and pottery, and magic (Orchiston, 1975: 38). Understood in this way, militarism reveals itself as the intersection of a variety of paths for cultural expression. But without dress, decoration, feasting, voyage, etc., would there be less indigenous warfare?

What does it take for militarism to be dismantled? Orchiston notes:

Wherever traditional Melanesian warfare was stamped out by various European administrations its place was quickly taken by other forms of competitive activity, football matches, elaboration of traditional inter-tribal exchange networks, etc... This tends to support the hypothesis advanced for Melanesia and elsewhere, that warfare was a necessary institution (Orchiston, 1975: 38).

Militarism disarticulated from indigenous warfare rearticulates itself with modern sports; competition disentangled from armed battles is rewoven in ceremonial exchanges. Mac Marshall (1979) proceeds from the same

hypothesis as Orchiston in his influential study of alcohol abuse in the Micronesian islands of Chuuk: drunken brawling replaces intertribal warfare. It seems that as quickly as it is disarticulated, militarism is rearticulated.

Is there no hope for intervention? Is militarism an inevitable feature of Pacific societies generally, and Fijian society specifically? It is useful to return to Turner's insights on the effect of colonial pacification or previously vigorous warring societies:

The new possibilities for travel and newly created institutions (for example, schools, the Great Council of Chiefs) facilitated the diffusion of cultural forms throughout the islands and played important roles in the formation of pan-Fijian identity. But if colonial rule eliminated or transformed some practices, it promoted effective (though circumscribed) chiefly rule. Those ritual and ceremonial forms that reinforced hierarchic principles were valorized, and consequently an important source of bodily memory was retained (Turner, 1997: 370-1).

Turner thus argues that the chiefly system in Fiji is the essential survival or lasting impression of a militarized history and lifestyle. This has serious implications for our understanding of the articulated nature and effects of militarism. For Enloe perceptively describes it as a culture in which 'some people's fears are allowed to be heard, and to inform agendas, while other people's fears are trivialized or silenced' (Enloe, 1993: 246). Thus, indigenous militarism in Oceania expresses itself most coherently through social hierarchies of 'race', caste, religion and gender.

If, as Orchiston's observation on the attendant layers of cultural expression and representation reminds us, militarism is not something discrete that is articulated with sport or religion or alcohol abuse, but exists primarily in the conjunction of a particular range of institutions and values, then if we take away dress, feasting, voyaging, and even weapons, militarism loses its cultural potency. It may be worthwhile also to ponder on why a nineteenth century traveller might describe the Fijians he came across in this way: 'In war they are fearless and savage to the utmost degree, but in peace their disposition is mild and generous towards their friends...' (Clunie, 1977: 19). This is perhaps the most difficult truth to confront—for Fijians have earned international respect for their fighting spirit on battlefields and playing fields, and they have elicited genuine affection for their hospitality to visitors and tourists. Would one be possible without the other?

Indeed, we are reminded that the *i wau* were once signifiers of masculinist military might, their deployment by the Fiji Visitors Bureau was

very much also intended to signify hospitality. Surveying print media reporting between 1995-96 I certainly witnessed the juxtaposition of both significations. The military and militarism as a cultural force have evolved since that time to occupy previously unimagined positions in Fiji's national public life today, demanding more than ever the application of analyses that will not only help us understand such social and political changes, and the historical and cultural continuities they variously invoke and disavow.

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