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Land and differentiation in rural Fiji

John Overton

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John Overton

Series editor Helen Hughes

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Abstract

Fiji, despite the peculiarities of its indigenous social structure and its land tenure systems, can be seen to be exhibiting patterns and processes of socio-economic differentiation that, in some respects, are not unlike those experienced in rural communities in other parts of the developing world. Previous explanations of such differentiation pointed to various dichotomous relations: between traditional and modern, individual and communal, rural and urban, Fijian and Indian, or capitalist and proletarian. This study, involving the analysis of survey data on a number of Fijian communities, questions all these suggested divisions. The theoretical perspectives adopted to date - modernization or Marxism - do give some insights into Fijian society but cannot explain the complexity of social and economic divisions. Instead, it is suggested that there is no basic pattern of significant socio-economic differentiation within the Fijian communities studied, though there are major tensions, conflicts and differences in outlook. Any class divisions that may exist are predicated externally upon the relations between rural people and the urban-based entrepreneurs.

Critical in all these relations, and for simmering tensions within rural society, is land tenure. The case study evidence points not only to severe pressure on land, and inequalities in land endowment, but also to 'extra legal' practices being used by landowners and tenants together to circumvent a cumbersome, inequitable and inflexible official land tenure system. Land is the key because its availability or otherwise largely determines the ability of people to engage in commercial agriculture, their involvement in off-farm labour, and many of their day-to-day relationships with their neighbours. Differentiation in rural Fiji cannot be understood without reference to the realities of land and land tenure.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------|---|
| ADP | Agricultural Development Programme |
| ALTA | Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act |
| CSO | Colonial Secretary's Office (Archives) |
| CSR | Colonial Sugar Refining Company Ltd |
| FDB | Fiji Development Bank |
| FSC | Fiji Sugar Corporation |
| ha | hectares |
| LDA | Land Development Authority |
| MPI | Ministry of Primary Industries |
| nd | not dated |
| NFP | National Federation Party |
| NLC | Native Lands Commission |
| NLTB | Native Land Trust Board |
| NMA | National Marketing Authority |
| TFO | Department of Agriculture - Departmental Files and Reports (Archives) |
| USP | University of the South Pacific |

Key to symbols used in tables

- .. not available
- n.a. not applicable
- zero

Glossary

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>bati</i> | lit. 'teeth' or 'edge', a group that comprised a warrior unit, usually living on the border land of a higher ranked group to which it owed allegiance |
| <i>buli</i> | administrative head of <i>tikina</i> unit |
| <i>galala</i> | a person who is independent of the village and free of, or exempted from, communal obligations |
| <i>kerekere</i> | to request |
| <i>koro</i> | village |
| <i>lala</i> | the calling by a chief on the labour of his people, a form of tribute |
| <i>magiti</i> | ceremonial feast |
| <i>masi</i> | bark-cloth, tapa |
| <i>matanibure</i> | a division of a composite <i>mataqali</i> (Draubuta) |
| <i>matanitu</i> | a political confederation of <i>vanua</i> . Now used to mean the government |
| <i>matanivanua</i> | a herald, usually the spokesman of the chief |
| <i>mataqali</i> | an agnatically related unit, usually a lineage of a <i>yavusa</i> clan unit. It is exogamous, patrilineal and the main recognized land-owning unit. |
| <i>oco</i> | a small feast prepared by a household to feed relatives who help them with labour, the act of preparing. |
| <i>qele</i> | soil — <i>qele ni teitei</i> is garden land |
| <i>ratu</i> | a title for a man of chiefly status |
| <i>sevusevu</i> | ceremonial offering, usually of <i>yaqona</i> , to the host or when a request is made |
| <i>solu</i> | a collection |
| <i>solu-ni-yasa</i> | a tax levied on absentees |
| <i>tabua</i> | whale's tooth, used for ceremonial exchange |
| <i>tau</i> | a friend, sometimes used to describe traditional links of friendship between the people of one region and another with a common founding ancestor. This relationship is known as <i>tauvu</i> |
| <i>taukei</i> | the Fijian people, the owners of the land |
| <i>teitei</i> | garden, plantation |
| <i>tikina</i> | an administrative unit below that of a province |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>tokatoka</i> | sub-lineage of <i>mataqali</i> , an 'extended family', often given as <i>i tokatoka</i> |
| <i>tui</i> | a paramount chief of a <i>vanua</i> |
| <i>turaga</i> | chief |
| <i>turaga-ni-koro</i> | village head, usually an administrative position, elected or appointed |
| <i>turaga-ni-yavusa</i> | head of <i>yavusa</i> , sometimes <i>turaga ni qali</i> |
| <i>turaga-ni-mataqali</i> | head of <i>mataqali</i> |
| <i>vakavanua</i> | in the customary manner, the way of the land. Forms include <i>oga vakavanua</i> , <i>sala vakavanua</i> |
| <i>vanua</i> | land, the people, custom. Also an association of <i>yavusa</i> under a <i>tui</i> |
| <i>vasu</i> | a relationship between a person and their mother's clan which involves certain rights and some obligations |
| <i>veikau</i> | bush or forest |
| <i>vulagi</i> | foreigner (kai) <i>vulagi</i> |
| <i>vunivalu</i> | a war chief |
| <i>yasa</i> | an absentee from the village, a migrant |
| <i>yavusa</i> | agnatically related clan, comprised of a number of <i>mataqali</i> and sharing a common founding male ancestor. It is the widest kinship group |
| <i>yavutu</i> | sacred ancestral site, usually marking the clan's place of origin |

For Fijian names for crops, see Appendix 3.

Source: Capell 1968; Nayacakalou 1978; Ravuvu 1983; Lasaqa 1984.

CHAPTER 1

The study of differentiation in rural Fiji

An introduction to rural Fiji

My first real visit to a Fijian rural community was in 1985 when, as a newly-arrived lecturer at the University of the South Pacific (USP), I joined a student field excursion to Lomaivuna Settlement Scheme. It was raining and the rain and mist obscured from view much of the countryside that I would visit often over the following two years. The heavy rain also made the Sawani-Serea road very slippery and the rivers en route swelled to the point where there was a danger that the bridge at Naqali would be closed (as it was many times following rain storms) and block our return. It was a typical field trip: visits to the local officials at Lomaivuna, an inspection of some of the leading settler enterprises, tours of the fields and bush, and a hearty social gathering at the local school. The hospitality, if not the weather, augured well for what was to become a case study for research.

Despite the novelty of the *yaqona* ceremony, ginger farming and what seemed to be an unusually heavy involvement of government agencies in the area, much seemed vaguely familiar. The landscape was characterized by smallholder plots and intensive agriculture, and many of the crops grown, the regularity of settlement, and the pace of life were not dissimilar to my earlier limited impressions of Kenyan resettlement schemes or a later experience of Malaysian peasant agriculture. The uniformity of housing, plots of land and crops; the high labour-intensity of cultivation; even the multi-racial character of the area, were things I was familiar with. Was small-scale agriculture basically the same the world over?

Perhaps also some of the patterns and processes of change that had been noted in rural communities elsewhere could be discerned here. In particular, I was interested in the question of socio-economic differentiation in the countryside, the historical origins of which had been of recent concern in my Kenya research. Were these resettlement areas, and the Fijian villages I was soon to visit, egalitarian communities where the impact of capitalism had been relatively small? Or were there people who were busy acquiring land, businesses, or other enterprises that would increase their wealth and set them apart from their present neighbours? Could Lomaivuna settlers be termed 'peasants'? In short, were there broad processes of social and economic change operating in Lomaivuna, just as they were in the Kenyan Highlands, the Kedah rice lands of Malaysia, or the *minifundia* of Bolivia?

Subsequent fieldwork, including a much closer look at Lomaivuna, and reading on Fiji soon dispelled the view of universal and uniform processes of change. Fiji was different, not just with its people and cultures, but also with a land tenure system that, at first, suggested in its history the work of an unusually paternal,

even altruistic, colonial state. There would be great difficulty applying theories developed in different historical and political contexts.

However, after reading the Spate Report (1959) and the works of Ward (1965), Belshaw (1964b) and Watters (1969a), it became apparent that theories and experiences of change elsewhere had been applied to late colonial Fiji, and these authors had not been diverted by the distinctiveness of Fijian culture and history. One could draw on this research as well as recent work. The social scientists at USP, the Brookfield-led team in the Eastern Islands, Ward's village resurveys, and the regional planning projects in Vanua Levu and Vunidawa were all examples of research that was both increasing our understanding of rural Fiji and, in some cases, applying new theories of change.

My personal challenge was to begin to study rural Fiji first-hand and to try to resolve what I saw as a gap between, on the one hand, the 1960s focus on modernization and the dichotomy between progressive *galala* individualism and restrictive village collectivism and, on the other, more recent interest in Marxist theories of class formation. That led to a study of established *galala* settlements and, to balance this, of villages experiencing close ties with the urban and international economies. And behind this lay the original question: what are the processes leading to socio-economic and spatial differentiation in rural Fiji?

Theories of differentiation

Notions of differentiation, stratification and class formation have probably formed the most important paradigm in Third World studies by social scientists in the 1980s. Though some ideas have utility, much of the literature concerned with social change has been confusing, overly theoretical and too wide-ranging to be able to provide a sound conceptual framework for empirical research in countries such as Fiji. The starting point for this study has been general political economy and modes of production approaches, strongly influenced by recent historical studies of Africa.¹ Thus, it is recognized that the rural areas under study are strongly linked to other areas through systems of exchange, labour and capital flows, and political control and regulation. In addition, the areas contain individuals and communities with different but interacting modes of production, articulated at the local, national and global levels.

This approach departs from Marxist theory, however, in its view of change. There is no assumed model of a class society in Fiji, either now or in the future; indeed one of the major tasks of the study is to investigate what types of classes exist and what are their interrelationships. The emphasis is on adaptation, persistence and local elements of change, rather than on structures of heavy external dominance and manipulation. Change, it is argued, comes from within as well as being pushed by outside agencies and structures.

This study draws upon theories of differentiation developed elsewhere, especially in Africa (see, for example, Kitching 1980; Arrighi 1970; Bernstein 1977 and 1979; Cliffe 1977; Lonsdale 1981a and 1981b; Leys 1982; Iliffe 1983; and Freund 1984). Most of these have not been orthodox and rigid Marxist class analyses, but have sought to identify how different groups (peasants, capitalists, proletarians) have emerged in similar historical contexts and what their relations have been with each other and with the state. Such is the approach adopted here.

¹ This use of African work is much more the result of personal experience with this sub-set of the literature than it is the end product of a comprehensive analysis of theories of social change.

Apart from these influential African studies, there are models for the study of Fijian differentiation in much recent work on Papua New Guinea. Writers such as Howlett (1980), Connell (1979), Curtain (1984), May (1984), Morauta (1984), and Fahey (1986) have been interested in the rapid transformation of rural society under the influence of cashcropping, population growth and land tenure changes. Finney (1965, 1973) was concerned with similar changes in Tahiti. These have relevance for Fiji, especially with regard to agricultural societies, for the authors who have attempted to analyse class formation in Fiji (including Sutherland 1984; Narayan 1984; and Plange 1985a, 1985b) have concentrated largely on urban proletarians or more general issues of class formation. Only the earlier work of Watters (1969b, 1970), Anderson (1969, 1974) and Ward (1980) addressed specifically the issue of rural classes at the micro-level.

A broad view of 'differentiation' is adopted in this study. Differentiation is not seen just as class formation or social stratification but as both pattern (are there distinct social and economic groups in an area and what is their nature?) and process (what forces are bringing about new groupings and separating one from another?) in society. Nor is differentiation here concerned just with society. Spatial differences — regional groupings and contrasts — are equally of concern. To an extent there may be coincidence between socio-economic and spatial differentiation, with similar processes operating, but this is not always so. The contrasts in the landscapes and economies of different regions in Fiji need to be explained in greater depth than is possible merely by considering environment, accessibility, ethnicity, or dominant modes of production. In short, the question of differentiation is a way to understand how and why change is occurring in rural Fiji and where it may lead.

These questions deserve attention because of the recent rapidity of change and the apparent political and social crisis in the country. The traditional bases of the Fijian economy — communal landholding, relatively easy access to land, communal labour, redistributive mechanisms, ascribed social status, and prescribed social obligations — in many cases have slowly disappeared. Among these land is crucial. Land availability and land tenure systems have facilitated the emergence of new groups of leading Fijian farmers in the villages and settlement schemes, but it is also land shortage and the same land tenure systems that have militated against widespread land accumulation and the emergence of a rural capitalist/proletarian split. There has been no simple pattern of differentiation, no simple rural-urban sectoral dichotomy, and no simple forecast of future change.

Given such complex systems and patterns which are not replicated in other countries (Fiji's land tenure systems are unique), it is necessary now to turn from general theories to reviewing the ways in which differentiation in Fiji has been studied to date.

Theoretical traditions in Fiji

Theories or perspectives. The questions of socio-economic and spatial differentiation in Fiji have been of concern to many academics and administrators in the past thirty years. Whilst a few have adopted explicit theoretical frameworks for studying differentiation, most have approached it as a side-issue. This section will

review three general theoretical perspectives as well as the use of dichotomies, and then deal in detail with the approach of this study.

The three perspectives may be conceived of as points along a line from two poles, at one end being traditional/communal society and at the other, capitalist class society. Both these are extreme models of society but all approaches suggest processes whereby one (traditional/communal) is transformed into the other. What may be perceived as the first perspective, that of traditional society, has an anthropological focus, and stresses the importance of the structure of pre-contact society. It views change as occurring from this base and differentiation as the process of transforming traditional patterns of hierarchy and status. The second perspective, modernization, may be seen as located half-way along the line connecting the poles, its focus primarily on transition. Modernization theory is concerned with the emergence of a capitalist, modern society, economy and polity out of a largely unspecified (or little understood) traditional world. It stresses the leading elements of change (urbanization, literacy, individualism) and decries elements of resistance. Marxist class analysis, at the other pole, suggests that a stratified class society will develop with the penetration of capitalism and the dissolution of pre-capitalist societies. Its main concern is with this resultant society and its conflicts. Processes of articulation and exploitation, and patterns of inequality are the foci.

While these three perspectives are simplifications of the complex theories involved, they do summarize how the subject has been studied in Fiji (see Overton 1987a and 1988e for further discussion of these traditions of study).

Traditional society. Of all studies in rural Fiji, traditional society — its structure, customs, and relationship to the land — has received more attention than any other, with the main impetus from anthropologists. Examples of work within this perspective include the pioneering research of Thompson (1940), Geddes (1945), Quain (1948), Roth (1953), Nayacakalou (1955, 1957, 1975, 1978), Sahlins (1962, also 1985); and Stanner (1953), Barnard (1974), Rutz (1976, 1977, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1987), Walter (1978a, 1978b), Ravuvu (1983, 1987) and Turner (1986a, 1986b) have been later contributors. Of related concern have been the links between traditional society and contemporary politics, as seen in the work of Nacola (1970), Nation (1978, 1982) and Macnaught (1982). Geographers, such as Ward (1960, 1965) and Frazer (1961), have also been interested in traditional society, particularly as it affected agriculture, land and economic change.

The approach of these researchers has been to describe, through detailed micro-studies, the nature of society: how it is structured, how systems of exchange operate, how agricultural production is linked to clan and culture, and how interrelationships are regulated internally. It has been descriptive and empirical and has stressed hierarchy, community and environment. Many of the societies examined have been seen as isolated, relatively self-contained and, seemingly, static. Indeed, the interest in understanding traditional societies and systems took researchers into ever more remote areas where modernism and other outside influences were little in evidence. But whereas communities such as these could be found in the 1950s, they are virtually non-existent thirty years later.

Despite its static view, the anthropological focus on traditional society has had important implications for the study of differentiation by detailing how Fijian social systems work. It has also questioned what could be considered traditional.

Too often it is assumed that pre-contact Fijian society was relatively stable and that what could be observed in villages in the 1950s was the way of life practised from time immemorial. More realistic is the view that what was seen and described were structures and systems fossilized by colonial authorities in the early years after Cession, but more than that, systems, such as land tenure, that were enshrined in colonial laws were based on simplistic misunderstandings of what was 'traditional' (Clammer 1973, Chapelle 1978a). Whether by missionary influence, *Pax Britannica*, colonial rule, or trading and migration linkages with the outside world, 'traditional' societies in Fiji changed rapidly throughout the colonial period, despite the outward appearance of cultural authenticity and stability.

The conclusions that may be drawn about social and spatial differentiation from these studies of traditional society are limited. If it is assumed that traditional society is strong and stable, then stratification is conditioned predominantly by birth. Individual social and material advancement could not be sanctioned by traditional society and the only way forward for individuals would be to migrate. New forms of social differentiation could not occur as long as the village survived. This assumption was to become central to the modernization paradigm.

The implication for spatial differentiation was similarly narrow. Given that traditional society and cultural norms inhibited the development of capitalist accumulation in the villages, it follows that there was unlikely to be any major difference from one village to the next. The village economy was based upon subsistence agriculture (supplemented in places by fishing or wild food gathering), and the limited production of surplus was destined more for ceremonial uses than for commercial sale. The prospects for cashcropping and the increase in individual/household (as opposed to community) well-being this might bring were severely constrained. 'Village Fiji' was seen as a relatively homogeneous sector of the economy, subsistence based, stable and unproductive. It was placed in juxtaposition to the Indian cane-farming sector or urban centres.² Spatial differentiation was seen much more in terms of these sectoral divisions (they each had distinct 'spaces') rather than in terms of differences within the sectors. There was a coincidence of space and race. When differences might be identified between villages, they could be explained by environmental contrasts: between the island maritime economies and the forested hills, between wet-side and dry-side regions (with their different ecosystems), or between the swampy deltas and the fertile valleys.

Modernization. It is somewhat misleading to caricature anthropologists and some geographers as being concerned only with 'pure' traditional society in the 1950s and 1960s, for most did identify change and the processes responsible. Yet their focus was the traditional base for change, not change itself. In the 1960s, work appeared which dealt primarily with the ways in which Fijian society was being transformed and rapidly so. Such work addressed the question of ends — where the changes were leading — less than beginnings. This work is included under the heading of 'modernization', because it recognized the central process of change as a transition from traditional society and economy to a more complex, externally

2 The terms 'Indian' and 'Fijian' are misleading. Here 'Indo-Fijian' or 'Indian' refers to those Fijian-born residents of Indian ethnic origin, and 'ethnic' or 'indigenous' or 'Melanesian' Fijian refers to those of Melanesian extraction. 'Fijian' as an adjective covers both groups at the national scale. However, when the context is clear, 'Fijian' may refer to Melanesian Fijians. For rural Indo-Fijian studies see Mayer 1981, Jayawardena 1971 and Chandra 1980.

oriented and linked 'modern' Fiji. Implicit was the assumption that such a transition was desirable, beneficial and inevitable.

Most of the 'modernization' studies came in the wake of the Spate Report (1959). This report was no paragon of modernization theory, though it was a landmark study, for it not only identified the features of traditional village Fiji but also dealt at length with aspects of change: individualism, urbanization, monetization and Westernization. Furthermore, these were seen as processes to be welcomed and encouraged, processes that would result in the economic development of the most stagnant and unproductive sector of the Fijian economy. The reformist thrust of the Spate Report, in suggesting 'a turn from communalism towards individualism' as its main finding (Spate 1959:97), was echoed by Frazer (1961) and Ward (1965) in their surveys. Yet it was Watters (1969a, 1969b, 1970) and Belshaw (1964b)³ who gave the observed processes of change greater theoretical context. Belshaw's concern with 'emergent enterprise' in Fiji was a part of his wider interest in the development of new economic and social institutions out of traditional systems (1963, 1965). Watters suggested that a modernization continuum could be seen between traditional villages and those which had 'modernized' through wage labouring, *galala* individualism, cashcropping and new forms of leadership. This model of change depended to a large degree on the *galala* peasantry emerging from the development of capitalism (1969b:17-18),⁴ the same group that Spate had identified as being crucial for change in rural Fiji.

A common assumption through all these studies was that traditional society was an obstacle to change and that secular capitalism was the best way forward. Traditional society mitigated against individual accumulation (because of redistributive systems and *kerekere*), communal and ceremonial obligations consumed scarce capital and labour resources,⁵ communal land tenure was insecure and not sufficient to be able to raise credit, and communal labour provided insufficient incentive for economic advancement. The chiefly hierarchical system of leadership, too, it was implied (for example, Spate 1959:109) was exploitive and not in touch with commoners and their needs. Barriers of race and rank should be removed and, whilst protection for Fijian lands and culture should be maintained, individualist, capitalist and 'modernized' Fijians were to be the models for the development of rural Fiji. This contradiction between a desire to preserve some elements of Fijian culture but break down the communal social basis of that culture has been the dilemma facing all governments in Fiji since 1874.

The modernization perspective led to a very different view of differentiation. No longer were villages and rural Fijians to be seen as homogeneous, stagnant and conservative. It was possible, as Watters and Belshaw did, to identify progressive communities and individuals in stark contrast to traditional and, by implication, backward villages. Socially, those involved in *galala* farming, running co-operatives, working in towns, or gaining higher education formed a class that, even if their present standards of living did not suggest it, would be a future bourgeoisie or, at least, prosperous peasantry.

3 See Fisk and Honeybone (1971) for a resurvey of some of Belshaw's work and a discussion of its implications.

4 Crocombe (1971) produced a sharp critique of Watters' assumptions.

5 Rutz (1978a) disputes the view that ceremonial obligations have a wholly negative impact upon economic development. See also Belshaw (1964a) and Rutz (1987).

Just as the modernization approach led to a new view of social differentiation, the approach to spatial organization and inequality changed markedly. Progressive villages and areas of *galala* farming or wage labouring were located in close proximity to cane regions or cities. They had a different outlook and a higher level of participation in the modern cash economy than remote hill or outer island villages. Accessibility was seen as being more important than environmental contrasts in determining spatial patterns of modernization. There was also a temporal dimension. If it was assumed that modernization would spread into the periphery over time, then space became a surrogate for time. What was happening close to Suva or Lautoka or Labasa was a model for change in peripheral villages in the future.

If Watters had done his research a few years later, he may well have made use of the 'modernization surface' concept that Soja (1968) and Gould (1970) developed in Africa, which mapped the spread of modernization over space and time and which suggested a leading role for urban centres, transport and communication. The modernization surface in Fiji in the mid-1960s would have revealed 'islands' of development in Suva and the sugar towns; intermediate grey zones around these nodes where Indian (and some Fijian) sugar cane smallfarming progressed and wage labouring was common; and a barren hinterland, where traditional villages and society survived to varying degrees, but which would be transformed and incorporated over time into the more modern space. These assumptions and patterns were important because they had major implications for planning. Roads, rural education, educated rural development officers, and modern institutions (co-operatives, *galala* settlement schemes) could be provided by the state in order to facilitate the process of modernization and integrating the spatial economy of Fiji.

The Marxist political economy approach. Modernization theory and its geographical variants were much criticized in the early 1970s. Dependency theory and neo-Marxist concerns with exploitation, class formation and modes of production broadened the scope of researchers working in the Third World and forced many to reconsider their ideological and methodological assumptions. But because most of these Marxist theoretical streams were concerned with issues of broad theory and global processes of capitalism and exploitation, they were not paralleled by a surge of empirical research. The Marxist approach eschews studies which are based on rural, racial or regional divisions in favour of those which address class and class relations. Subsequently, despite the undoubted influence of Marxist and neo-Marxist theories in academic circles in recent years, there has been relatively little contribution to what may be considered 'rural' research in Fiji.

Nonetheless, the focussing of attention on global and historical processes by some writers on Fiji has affected the way the issue of differentiation must be addressed. Indeed, the very topic of 'differentiation', implying new forms of class formation and inequality, is one that has been highlighted by Marxist theories.⁶ Social stratification and inequality are seen as the inevitable by-products of capitalism. Whereas the modernization theorists may have applauded the emer-

6 Durutalo (1985a) and Robertson (1986), in their contributions to the debate over Fijian historiography, have pointed to the need to examine relations of production, appropriation of surplus and alienation. Other recent products of the University of the South Pacific social science group, such as Naidu (1980), Narayan (1984), Sutherland (1984), and Lal (1986), have addressed some of the wider political/ economic and historical structures in Fiji. See also Cameron (1987).

gence of new progressive classes as a sign of nascent development, the radical theorists would see them as the signs of deliberate proletarianization and peasantization of the traditional mode of production in order to serve the interests of foreign capital.

Thus the view of socio-economic differentiation is one that derives from theoretical analysis, the logical outcome of the dominance of capitalism, rather than that which may be observed in micro-studies, which, it would be argued, are blinkered from the wider processes of change. Research directions might include the influence of foreign capital, the growth of urban and rural landless working classes, processes of land accumulation and new political movements which reflect class rather than ethnic or traditional social orders. Differentiation is seen as a vital area of interest but it is one that must be incorporated into a broad political economy approach and one that can only proceed with a solid understanding of the processes of capitalism, social relations and class formation. It would be argued that social differentiation within rural Fiji would be conditioned by capitalism. The expected pattern would be: a dissolving pre-capitalist society, though one where some elements have been deliberately preserved in order to support and subsidize capital accumulation; a new, though dependent and subordinate *bourgeoisie* (merchants, individual large landowners); and a growing rural proletariat that is supported by the subsistence economy (landless peasants, impoverished wage labourers, petty-traders, and the 'drop-outs' from capitalism — the unemployed, women, children and the elderly). This three-fold model of rural Fijian society will be tested in this study.

The spatial implications for rural Fiji of this Marxist/political economy perspective are manifest. Rather than the 'inevitable march of modernization', there is a view that rural areas are already well incorporated into the modern economy but are being maintained and exploited as backward areas by the agents of capitalism (including the state). Some recent studies have adopted this approach. Brookfield (1977) advanced the notion of 'rural slums' spreading through Fiji in an early focus on inequality, whilst Bedford's (1984) paper examined the conservation argument with reference to Lau and the maintenance of, and subsidy for, a system which supported a cheap pool of labour. Britton's (1980a, 1983b) study of tourism in Fiji noted the heavy involvement of foreign capital as well as the marked spatial concentration of the tourist economy and the limited spread effects into other sectors. But it has been Sofer (1985b) who has carried the spatial inequality and exploitation themes furthest. His analysis of the peripheral economy of Kadavu was extended to a more wide-ranging discussion of core-periphery structures in Fiji (Sofer 1988) and the roles of capital allocation, migration, and the preservation of the 'village mode of production'. Most recently, UNESCO/UNFPA researchers have analysed some aspects of Fijian spatial organization, with particular reference to the eastern island periphery (Bayliss-Smith *et al.* 1988). The political economy paradigm, then, seems to have much potential for understanding spatial differentiation in Fiji.

Utilitarian studies. Whilst much research on rural Fiji has adopted, at least in part, one of the above approaches, many have not. Some have used theory, but only as a means of addressing more central practical topics or problems such as migration, food and agriculture. Other work has been undertaken on the impact of roads (Chung 1986, 1988) and erosion (Clarke and Morrison 1987).

Much recent research effort has evolved from consultancy reports on topics such as regional planning (McKee 1976, Titley 1987), population-environment relationships (UNESCO/UNFPA 1977), and the rice industry (UNFAO/Fiji Ministry of Primary Industries 1982; Australian Agricultural Consulting and Management Company, 1982, n.d.). Also there has been a series of commodity profiles published by the Fiji Ministry of Primary Industries Agricultural Commodities Committee (1985a, 1985b).

Another focus of consultancy work was the regional development imperative detailed in Development Plan Eight which gave rise to two integrated regional development plans, for Western Vanua Levu (Atkins 1983) and Vunidawa (McLennan Magasanik 1984). The Atkins study also led to some ancillary field work which stressed the heavy involvement of rural households in external economies, through migration, remittances and limited cashcropping (for example, Bayliss-Smith 1983; Gunasekera *et al.* 1983; Waymark and Young 1983).

Perhaps the most important major study recently has been the Fiji Employment and Development Mission. This used consultants to conduct basic research and review general topics such as land use, employment generation and key sectors of the economy.⁷ The report of the mission (Bienefeld 1984) suggests that there are limits to the extension of agriculture and to the labour absorptive capacity of villages.

Thus, an understanding of the dynamics of Fiji's rural economy has been built up over a number of years from many different sources. It forms a body of literature that offers a fairly full account of economic conditions and change though it has not had the issue of differentiation foremost.

The use of dichotomies. All the above approaches to the study of differentiation in rural Fiji have adopted simplified models of Fijian economy and society which, to a large extent, have involved the setting up of dichotomies. Some writers have moved from the establishment of these dichotomies towards their resolution but most have not, thus leaving the impression of deep contrast and division. Such dichotomies, insufficiently analysed, have been misleading both as theoretical constructs and models for research and policy.

Some of the main divisions that have been proposed in the past are discussed briefly and, during the course of the study that follows, most of these will be challenged and/or qualified.

(a) *Rural/urban.* The terms rural and urban describe the distinction between town and country, a distinction which, in practice, has become blurred and even fallacious. Before the mid-1960s and the rapid changes in Fijian social and economic life (Lasaqa 1984:196), and especially outside the cane regions, the rural/urban distinction was apparent and useful as a theoretical model. Many villages were still providing the great majority of their subsistence needs, there were laws to restrict Fijian movement away from the villages and the limited development of urban centres meant that urban wage opportunities were restricted. But today this distinction is much less marked. There is free movement from villages to cities (and vice versa), wage opportunities are numerous, there is considerable flow of goods and services between town and country, and many of the trappings of urban life (electricity, radios, videos, government services) have

7 Unfortunately, few of the Mission's working papers have been published: only those of Ellis (1983a, 1983b, 1985), Brookfield (1985) and Ward (1985) are available in addition to the general report of the mission.

so percolated into the villages that their inhabitants have everyday experience of city living. Many even commute daily or weekly to and from the cities and towns. Also, whereas agriculture (and fishing and gathering) in the past could be considered by far the predominant economic activity of villagers, today in many areas non-agricultural exceed agricultural incomes and many households gardens supply only part of their food needs. And, in the cities, there are rural communities who grow much of their food requirements, some even selling a surplus, and many of whom are only marginally incorporated into formal sector employment. The rural/urban dichotomy is not tangible.

Yet the term 'rural' still has some utility in distinguishing settlements, by size and function. Rural areas consist of small settlements of dispersed homes or villages where most economically active household members are engaged predominantly in agriculture.

(b) Indian/Fijian. The ethnic division of society has limitations and qualifications but is still useful as a broad categorization of population in Fiji. The principal objection to using ethnic based studies is that they may overplay cultural differences and disguise common features, structures and influences (such as class). Indeed, in this study it will be argued that Indian and Fijian rural households share many common features and are influenced by common processes of change. There is also considerable interaction between them in everyday life. Nonetheless, the ethnic focus is maintained for a number of reasons:

- Fijian land is protected by the state and, in the villages, this means that there are opportunities (and constraints) available to Fijians but not Indo-Fijians.
- Traditional social status and means of exchange (reciprocity and redistribution) are still recognized amongst Fijians. These affect methods of production and patterns of accumulation.
- Race is a political issue and, since the May 1987 coup, ethnic political polarization may be expected. This has implications for changed relations between the state and agricultural smallholders.
- There are significant differences in methods of production. The root and tree crop base of Fijian production is still secure, in contrast to Indo-Fijian farmers' sugar, rice and vegetables. But there is overlap.

Thus there is still a role for ethnic-based studies, but they should acknowledge overlap, similarities and processes of change that affect all racial groups in Fiji.

(c) Traditional/modern. In its distinction between traditional and modern sectors of the economy, modernization theory implies a process of change and a continuum between the two. The traditional sector is assumed to be static, conservative, backward, an impediment to economic growth, and a sector that will disappear inevitably with the march of time and development. Neo-Marxist critiques of modernization theory argue that: traditional sectors can be conserved alongside a 'modern' capitalist global economy; inequalities often increase not decrease over time; there are alternatives to the modernization path of transition. What the neo-Marxist argument does not take account of is the resilience and adaptability of so-called 'traditional' society. In Fiji, traditional leaders and many commoners have embraced capitalism and the modern state without rejecting their cultural and social conventions. Individuals and communities reflect a complex mix of traditional and modern influences and there does not seem to be any inevitable disintegration of the former at the expense of the latter. Nor does

either set of influences seem any more desirable or beneficial than the other — modernization may bring cassette players and health centres; it also brings diabetes and 'Dallas'. The dichotomy is not a useful one.

(d) *Communalism/individualism*. This dichotomy also derives in part from modernization theory. Some authors argue that communalism (or collectivism) is not an effective base for economic development: it leaves little room for individual initiative or incentive; marginal productivity is low or zero; and it involves a wasteful and inefficient use of resources through ceremonials. However, others see merit in co-operative enterprises which build on the Fijian sense of community and sharing, and have a sympathetic view of the personal and cultural benefits derived from communal living (Brookfield 1988).

Individualism, on the other hand, is seen by most as an essential feature of progress: decision-making is rapid and rational; there is scope for accumulation and incentive; the rewards for increased effort are tangible; and productivity is high. To many Fijians, however, complete individualism is anathema, and even the older *galala* at Waibau maintain communal links and obligations. Life involves a mix of individual and communal pursuits. Furthermore, it is wrong to assume that communalism implies lack of change or development. Hundreds of successful community projects throughout Fiji bear testament to that. Nor are individuals necessarily more successful, rational or efficient. Distinctions between individualist *galala* and communalist villagers are very difficult to draw (Overton 1988a) and this is no longer a helpful dichotomy. What may have been a valid and useful distinction before 1967, with restrictive Fijian administration, is now largely erroneous.

(e) *Core/periphery*. In studies of spatial organization and inequality, the core/periphery model is used often. It parallels the modern/traditional and urban/rural models, as well as theories of dependency and underdevelopment. Thus it is possible to model a hierarchy of 'cores' (global metropolises, national enclaves and secondary urban centres) grading to a series of peripheries (predicated upon distance from the cores).

But again, in the case of Fiji, this can be misleading. Inequalities are often great within core areas (Suva); some rural areas (such as Cautata) have high levels of services and access to employment opportunities; and one periphery (the Lau Islands) may be considered a political 'core' as many Lauans have become leading politicians and bureaucrats in Fiji. Remoteness does not automatically mean marginalization or exploitation.

(f) *Capitalist/non-capitalist*. This dichotomy postulates two separate economic and social systems in which the social relations of production are in stark contrast. Whilst non-capitalist (or pre-capitalist) modes of production are usually somewhat vaguely defined in Marxist theory, in the Fijian context, they might be taken to encompass the communal system of land and labour organization, a hierarchy of chief and commoner classes, and reciprocal and redistributive means of exchange. The failings of the capitalist/non-capitalist distinction are broadly the same as those of the traditional/modern and communal/individual dichotomies: it lacks empirical verification, for no 'pure' non-capitalist modes of production survive in Fiji; there is no inevitable total replacement of one with the other; and it is in the co-existence and survival of the two that interest should be focused. An appreciation of the capitalist mode of production as it affects rural

producers and inhabitants, as well as an understanding of elements of the pre-capitalist 'traditional' system, provides a framework which is of some utility.

Sharpening the issue: the political crisis of 1987

The military coup of May 1987 ended forever the myth of political and social stability in Fiji. It changed irrevocably the course of post-independence politics, and the wider implications for economic and social change are yet to be felt (Cole and Hughes 1988). But the May coup, a second coup in September, and the ensuing constitutional crisis in Fiji were a manifestation of deeper, less overt, processes of change in Fijian society. Despite the journalistic and political explanations of the first coup as an ethnic conflict (between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians), it was as much to do with widening divisions and conflicts within (indigenous) Fijian society and the national political economy: 'It is the changing attitudes amongst indigenous Fijians that the chiefly aristocracy fear as the primary threat to their power and authority, not the Indians' (Robie 1987:12).

To some observers, the May coup represented a reactionary response by the Fijian chiefly class and the traditional order to its election defeat at the hands of a multi-racial coalition that represented the interests of urban and smallholder farmer classes. Many Fijians saw (and opposed) the new coalition government as 'Indian dominated' and a threat to their culture and land. Yet the electoral success of the coalition could not have occurred without the substantial support of ethnic Fijians which led to the capture of key urban seats by the Labour Party. The 1987 election, like the 1982 one (Lal 1983), also revealed strong Fijian opposition in the western region of Viti Levu to the ruling Alliance Party. Furthermore, in the months leading up to the election, there had been opposition from many Fijians living in villages to the Cole Report (Cole *et al.* 1984), a report which was seen to represent the re-imposition of strong chiefly control over individual actions of villagers.⁸ Clearly, there was no unanimity amongst Fijians, and the traditional order of chiefly and Eastern dominance was being challenged in the towns, in the ballot box and around the *yaqona* bowl.

Yet the coup and its aftermath have also demonstrated that such a challenge has been far from universal, and many rallied to the Taukei movement's call for a re-imposition of Fijian dominance. Since the coups, those high in the established Fijian social and political order have been able to recover their political pre-eminence.

Fieldwork for this study was carried out before those events and the focus has been on geography, land and society at the village level rather than national politics. But the political situation has focused attention on social change and division and highlighted the importance of the land issue. It is hoped that this study can cast some light on divisions, frustrations and perceptions in rural Fiji in the two years before the May 1987 coup.

The study

The aim of this study is to examine and explain processes of socio-economic differentiation within Fijian rural communities and to discuss the implications of

⁸ There seems to have been a difference between the Cole Report as written, but not released publicly, and reports of its supposed contents. The Report itself was confined to issues of administration and channels of consultation. It advocated greater democracy. But many accounts in the local press stated that the Report favoured greater chiefly control and less freedom (see, for example, *Fiji Sun* 12 December 1986).

these for the national scene. The perspective chosen is that of indigenous Fijians in selected areas of southeastern Viti Levu. It was adopted because the original aim of the study was to focus on Fijian *galala* farmers outside the villages. This was broadened during fieldwork in 1985 to include villagers for comparison. In the course of data collection, it became apparent that not only are there broad areas of overlap between the villagers and the settlement scheme *galala*, but also it could be suggested that, in economic if not social and cultural senses, there are marked similarities between many Fijian and Indo-Fijian rural households in both the patterns and processes of change. The reasons for maintaining the Fijian/Indian dichotomy, though, have been discussed earlier.

The case studies. As with the ethnic division, there may be some element of a false dichotomy employed between the village studies and those of the settlement schemes. However, this division is used because of the individual/communal contrast as well as the significant differences between the two in terms of institutional definition, particularly land tenure.

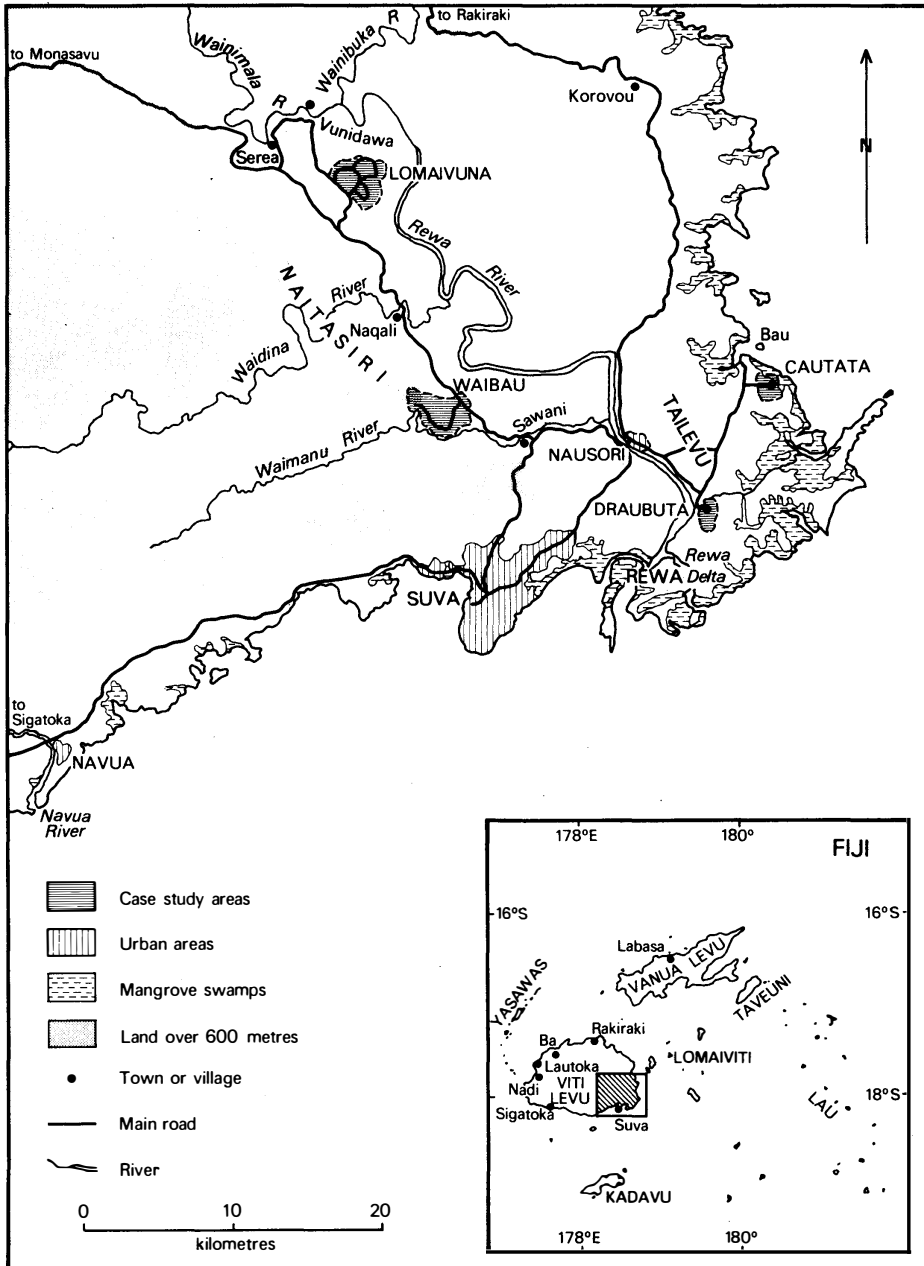
The case study areas are shown in Figure 1.1. All are within a 40 kilometre radius of the Suva metropolitan area and are well served by public and private transport linkages with the city. While this proximity and high level of interaction could suggest that the areas were atypical examples of Fijian rural communities, the choice was deliberate since many other villages in Fiji are similar: those in and around the cane regions of western Viti Levu and Vanua Levu have close links with the urban and world economies; a high level of rural-urban circular migration is a feature of even the most peripheral villages; and their 'suburban' character does not seem to have destroyed their traditional social and cultural heart.

The case studies are not typical in that the settlement schemes chosen, Waibau and Lomaivuna, do not represent the experience of most non-village *galala*, who have settled on their own initiative rather than through government schemes. However, the schemes are two of the longest established areas of *galala* settlement and so present a good opportunity to study the progress and prospects of this individualist model of Fijian rural development. In these areas the problems of adapting, repaying loans and developing a viable household economy have already been met.

Draubuta is a village of some sixty houses and its land covers 190 hectares. There is a good piped water supply but mains electricity has not been connected. It lies in the Rewa Delta region, on the banks of the Wainibokasi River, a distributary of the Rewa River. Many villagers commute to work along the road to Nausori and Suva. From the rice lands of Tailevu, with fences, individual farms and scattered houses, a high proportion of Indian leaseholders, the noise of buses, and the glare of electric lights one passes into a village that seems slower, quieter and much more 'traditional' in character. Rice fields are less in evidence and there are only a handful of Indian tenants on village land. But the impression is deceptive because there is much activity, much urbanism and much change in this community. In addition, the Tailevu rice perimeter has recently leapt the Wainibokasi River: roads will carry buses and trucks through land close to the village; mains electricity is to be connected soon; and the government's rice intensification scheme, it is hoped, will convert more of the root crop and grazing land into grain

production. The landscape will begin to match more closely the present lifestyles of the villagers.

Figure 1.1 Southeastern Viti Levu, Fiji



Cautata, also, is on the rice perimeter. It lies on a small hilltop site overlooking mangrove swamps, the sea and Bau Island. It has a little over 100 houses (with new ones under construction), an impressive church, a school of its own and a road and electricity lines right to its limit. There is more land than in Draubuta, some 240 hectares, but much of this is swampy and household gardens are restricted to the limited hillslopes. The village takes pride in its most notable achievement: for over thirty years it has been operating a co-operative bus service between the village, Nausori and Suva. Its fleet is based and maintained in the village, its drivers and managers are from Cautata and the profits are returned to the village for community projects (Tukai 1988). It is a prosperous village, but a village that, more than most, has become a suburb of Suva/Nausori. In both Cautata and Draubuta, most people are concentrated in the village nucleated area, where houses are relatively closely spaced. Some, however, have chosen to locate their houses away from the 'compound' and, approaching Cautata, there are some half a dozen houses built apart from the rest but still on village land. In Cautata, too, the large size, rapid growth and, one suspects, relative affluence of the village population has created a form of village sprawl, with new houses extending the village perimeter onto former garden lands.

There is little to distinguish the Waibau settlement scheme area from the surrounding landscape as one drives towards the interior from Sawani to Serea. There is less bush, more *dalo* and ginger cultivation, a small postal agency, and some scattered houses but not much else to mark the area from surrounding village and non-scheme *galala* lands. From the main road, a secondary road runs up to and along the ridge that forms the spine of the scheme. A bus service operates along this road and into Suva, good houses are evident, there are community and church halls, and the population is a mixture of Fijian, Chinese and Indian, with the former and the more elderly predominating. The slopes are steep and signs of erosion are clear. Towards the top-end of the scheme, where the road terminates, the settlement scheme landscape is more distinct, for settlement farms abut and include heavy bush which stretches into the hills and rugged valleys beyond. Here there is a sense of a frontier, a bush margin being pushed backward and yielding to bright green fields of ginger.

The approach to Lomaivuna, some 25 kilometres further up the Serea road, is similar to the indistinct appearance of Waibau. The Lomaivuna scheme is larger, with some 200 allotments (Waibau has around seventy), and three large loop roads serve the scheme. There are also two schools, a health centre, an administrative block (with offices for the Ministry of Primary Industries and the Fiji Development Bank), and, again, several churches and community halls. A number of houses also operate small stores, selling cigarettes, tinned fish and meat, *yaqona*, tea and sugar, and there is a large Indian-run store with a bank agency. The agricultural landscape is similar to Waibau, with ginger, *dalo* and pineapple plantings, though the topography generally is less steep and the bush frontier has been pushed back beyond the margins of most farms. But the most striking feature of the human landscape, and one that marks it as a planned scheme, is the housing. On every block is a standard two-roomed wooden and corrugated iron house, though most households have added smaller outbuildings and many have built substantial additions to the main house. Lomaivuna, once the centrepiece of the colonial government's resettlement program, and later its greatest failure, is now a modestly successful rural community of independent peasant households, some still struggling and poor but others starting to prosper.

In addition to these four major case studies, a small number of interviews were conducted outside the Lomaivuna and Waibau schemes. Most were at Navukece, 5 kilometres on the Suva side of Lomaivuna, where there are some large leased landholdings for cattle farming. These *galala* are more recent arrivals than those on the schemes and many are having problems repaying large loans, establishing cattle farming or clearing the bush. Many have pineapple or ginger crops for supplementary cash income. Their blocks are located on the margins of the two schemes, near the main road or further back into the bush along narrow tracks.

To supplement these study areas, reference will be made to the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Benchmark Survey of rice farmers in 1985. The Ministry of Primary Industries in conjunction with the University of the South Pacific undertook a household survey of 724 Indian and Fijian rice farmers, representing 39.5 per cent of all rice growers in the Central Division, as part of a monitoring exercise for the implementation of the rice intensification scheme (Australian Agricultural Consulting and Management Company n.d.).⁹ The survey conducted was similar but not as comprehensive as that for the above case studies, and the resultant data provide a useful measure of comparison between Fijian households and a larger, more varied population. Most of the areas covered — except where they cross into Fijian village land, where rice is a relatively new cash crop and is grown on a small scale only — are characterized by a landscape of intensive cultivation (some double-cropping), dispersed household settlement, good roads, electricity, and apparently higher material living standards than in most Fijian villages. But for many rice producers there is also insecurity of land tenure and land shortage, low marginal profit levels with high input costs, and a dependence on non-farm cash income. From the case studies and the rice study area, then, it can be concluded that, even within southeastern Viti Levu, there is a wide range and complexity of agricultural systems and contrasts in landscapes, standards of living, and household economies.

The principal source of data collection for this study was a household survey. Interviews were conducted with household heads in all case study areas and questions covered the demographic structure of the household, the work history of its members, land tenure, credit, assets, crops grown and livestock held, income and expenditure, and perception of problems. These were standard questions for all households that yielded mainly quantifiable answers. However, discussions often ranged more widely in a less structured form. In addition to the main interview schedule, there were additional questions of those who grew rice (a sub-study), those who considered themselves *galala*, and those who employed labour. Interviews were conducted in the Fijian language by Fijian research assistants under the supervision of the author and follow up visits were made where necessary.

Where possible the selection of households was on a random basis. In Lomaivuna, every fourth Fijian household on each of the roads was selected (Indian and Rotuman families were excluded) and, with absences, this resulted in a 20 per cent sample. These were conducted in June 1985. In Waibau, however, an attempt was made to interview a larger sample of Fijian households. With absences, vacant blocks and two refusals, a sample of 59 per cent (or 70 per cent if absentee owners are excluded) was finally interviewed in May 1986. Non-scheme

⁹ The author was the co-ordinator for the University of the South Pacific participation in survey work and was closely involved in the survey itself and data analysis.

galala were covered during the course of the Lomaivuna and Waibau work. The twelve interviews were not selected systematically, being more for the purpose of brief comparison than with the intention of detailed analysis in their own right. The Draubuta survey was the largest, being conducted in two phases: September 1985 and June 1986. Thirty-six of a total of sixty-four households were surveyed (56 per cent) and an additional three surveys of Draubuta Indian tenant farmers were conducted, again for comparison. The selection of Fijian households was not completely random, for my research assistant from the village had difficulty interviewing members of the chief's *mataqali*, because he was of lower status and wanted to avoid any disrespect. The Cautata survey did not attempt to represent all village residents. As the work there was more to do with the author's research on rice farming by Fijians, the sample of eighteen was selected mostly from those in the village who were actively engaged in commercial agriculture, and did not represent many households who were basically urban commuters with small gardens to meet household needs. The samples are summarized in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 The survey samples

| Location | Total number of households ^a | Number of households surveyed | Percentage surveyed | Date of survey | Comments on sampling |
|------------------|---|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Lomaivuna | 172 | 34 | 19.8 | June '85 | random |
| Waibau | 39 | 23 | 59.0 | May '86 | random |
| Non-scheme | n.a. | 12 | n.a. | June '85, May '86 | as available |
| Draubuta | 64 | 36 | 56.3 | Sept '85, June '86 | mostly random, omits one <i>mataqali</i> |
| Cautata | 102 | 18 | 17.6 | Sept '85, June '86 | mostly from commercial farmers |
| ADP ^b | 1835 | 724 | 39.5 | June '85 | random |

^aEthnic Fijian households only.

^bIncludes 612 (84.5 per cent) Indian rice growers.

As well as these detailed interviews, several supplementary sources were used. Frequent visits, field surveys and observations by the author acted as a check on interview responses regarding crops and area, and basic land use maps were drawn. These, in turn, were matched with evidence from aerial photographs, mainly from the 1976 series. Secondary sources were helpful for discussion of changes over time as Draubuta and Waibau had been the focus of earlier studies by Nayacakalou (1975, 1978), Ward (1965) and Lasaqa (1984). Records in the Fiji National Archives, especially Agriculture Department files were helpful in tracing the origins of the resettlement schemes and early rice programs, whilst access to Native Land Trust Board records (arrears reports and registers of landowners) provided important evidence for analyses of land tenure. Finally, interviews were conducted in 1985-86 with a number of officials from the Ministry of Primary Industries, the Native Lands Trust Board, Rewa Rice Ltd. and the Fiji Development Bank which gave important perspectives on the implementation of government policies in the areas.

Much of the survey data, if not that from other sources, have had to be treated with caution. Because it was not possible to conduct detailed diary-based household income and expenditure surveys, nor monitor cropping over a long period of time, reliance had to be placed on respondents' estimates of income, expenditure and crop areas. Whilst some of these could be built up with a degree of confidence (for example, income from the sale of crops at the market could be estimated by asking how often people go to the market, how much they sell most times etc.), and others seemed reliable (a number of estimates of crop areas, for example, were checked and found acceptable, a few were not and were corrected), it is not possible to treat precise figures at the individual level with much certainty. Instead data were categorized before being aggregated and analysed.

A further consideration in respect of the results is that they seem to be male-biased. Because the interviewers were male, because the growing of cashcrops, such as rice, is largely in the hands of men, and because in Fijian society, in some contexts, women are in a subordinate position, the great majority of interviews were with men. This means that important activities of females in food gathering, agricultural work and wage earning may be under-represented, and cashcropping and male wage labour given prominence. Unfortunately there was no obvious way to correct this difficulty. Despite these problems with data collection, however, the checks by way of observation and secondary sources, lead to the conclusion that the data, as presented at the aggregate and classified level, can be treated with confidence. The identification of patterns and processes rather than the collection of precise numbers was the objective of field research.

Hypotheses. In order to address the central questions of how and why differentiation is occurring in rural Fiji, this study poses a number of secondary hypotheses:

- The emergence of new classes in rural Fiji — both the relatively landless and large landowners — is constrained by land shortages and land tenure systems.
- The exploitation of land and natural resources does not generate substantial employment possibilities for most rural Fijians.
- Non-farm activities and income are the major factors in the development of 'rural' inequalities and change.
- New patterns of spatial organization are emerging which transcend many of the former rural/urban and core/periphery concepts.
- Former frameworks for the study of Fiji that were based on rural/urban, communal/individual, Fijian/Indian, core/periphery or traditional/modern dichotomies are no longer appropriate, principally because they bear little resemblance to forms of organization or processes of change.

These hypotheses will be addressed throughout the study, but dealt with explicitly in the concluding chapter. Chapters 2 to 6 present the bulk of the survey results. The historical background, the land situation and its problems, patterns of labour organization, the development of commercial agriculture, and the nature of the household economy will be examined and the findings from the villages and the settlement schemes will be contrasted. Chapters 7 and 8 will extend the results of the case studies into broader thematic discussions with relevance to the whole of Fiji. The question of how well the present rural economies of Fiji (and state policies towards them) are coping with the problems of economic and social

transformation, and how these systems and models for rural development might change in the future are of great importance. Finally, the issue of differentiation at the micro-(intra-village), macro-(inter-village) and spatial (inter-regional) levels will be faced again and the above hypotheses examined in detail.

A basic contradiction

Conservation or change

The landscape, social organization and economic life of rural Fiji has evolved over a long period of time. Although the pace of change has been rapid in recent years, much of what exists today is the product of the articulation of traditional systems and modern influences. But the traditional itself has not been unchanging. Historical processes of change are analysed in this section: those processes, both externally imposed and internally adapted, which radically altered the pre-contact social and economic systems in village Fiji.

Colonial conservation: the villages

Pre-contact Fiji should not be regarded as static or uniform in a spatial or societal sense. Rather, there was a high degree of mobility, social and political flexibility, and economic contrast. However, there were a number of cultural standards that imposed upon, and bound together, the people.

Society was organized by clan and hierarchy. Building up from the *tokatoka* (extended family), was the important *mataqali* (descent group), the *yavusa* (clan with common ancestor) and, with less everyday significance, largely military federations of *vanua* and, infrequently, *matanitu*, though these units could vary greatly in size, dissolve and reform over time, and cover changing spatial realms.¹ Cutting across these divisions were considerations of rank and occupation, so that certain *mataqali* had higher status than and different functions from another. Largely, status was ascribed, though significant mobility could be achieved through military or political successes (for example, Routledge 1985:35-9, Tadrau 1985). Control by one individual or group over a wide spatial domain was rare and often tenuous.

Social and political cohesion were affected by the balance between processes of bonding and dissent at all levels. Bonding was conducted through a wide variety of customary procedures that held together groups and allowed, for example, the full admission of *vulagi* (foreigners) into a *mataqali*. Opposing these cohesive forces were those which brought about fission — quarrels over land or insults, jealousy, ambition and greed — and these led to dissent and division within families, kinship groups (*mataqali* and *tokatoka*) or political alliances (*vanua* or *matanitu*). Pre-contact Fijian socio-politics were in a state of constant flux and Fijian society, probably, was never stable or infrangible.

1 The general features of Fijian social and political structures are well covered in the literature, see Roth (1953); Nayacakalou (1955, 1957, 1978); Geddes (1959); Belshaw (1964b); Clammer (1973); Walter (1978a); Macnaught (1982); Ravuvu (1983, 1987); Lasaqa (1984); Tadrau (1985) and Thomas (1986). Hereafter, the term 'clan' is used broadly to cover kinship groups: *tokatoka*, *mataqali*, and *yavusa*.

At the village level also, flexibility and mobility were the norm. Village sites changed, and some villages had relatively dispersed settlement, though most were nucleated and fortified because of military threat. Socially, however, there tended to be little change. Land was 'held', usually, by the *mataqali*, though allocation was at the *tokatoka* level and there was considerable flexibility with land rights given to non-members of the clan (Rutz 1978b; Walter 1978b; Nayacakalou 1978; Lloyd 1982). Most labour was organized at the household level but larger units were mobilized for tasks, such as bush clearing or house building and chiefs could call on large numbers for military purposes. The flow of goods reflected this pattern, with most production and consumption internalized at the lowest level but exchanges occurring horizontally between units and vertically to (and from) those of higher rank. It was a tight complex of production, society and culture.

The Rewa-Tailevu region, in which Cautata and Draubuta are located, was probably the most densely populated region of pre-contact Fiji (Erskine 1853; MacDonald 1857; Britton 1870; Thiele 1889-90, 1891; Thomson 1908). Though there was regular military conflict between the Rewa, Bau and Verata federations, and defence was accorded a very high priority, there was a remarkably intensive system of cultivation and settlement based on the highly fertile delta soils and dominated by the giant swamp taro (*via kana*) and *dalo*. Settlement was mainly confined to villages surrounded by ring-ditches and extensive, ditched *via* gardens which afforded further protection (Parry 1977:29-37; Routledge 1985:34; Overton and Chung forthcoming). Both Cautata and the former site of Draubuta were so characterized, although Cautata had a fortified hill site, rather than a flat ring-ditch system and was more dependent on nearby sea and mangrove swamp resources. Draubuta was a village in the Tokatoka region, and thus its men acted as frontier warriors (*bati*) for the defence of Rewa (Parry 1977:66). Cautata on the other hand was *bati* to the rival Bau (after the latter's emergence). Both, then, were long-settled agricultural villages deeply affected by wider political influences.

Europeans first appeared in Fiji in the late 1700s. In the Rewa region, early contact was with travellers, beachcombers and traders. Of more significance were the planters, who bought land in the area (though not directly from Draubuta and Cautata), and the missionaries, who, very slowly, converted chiefs and their people, thus evincing major changes in many aspects of Fijian culture. But there were other indirect effects of contact. Diseases such as dysentery, smallpox, measles, influenza and venereal disease decimated local populations (Parry 1977:76) and internecine warfare increased as rival groups sought to utilize and gain greater access to European materials and assistance. Thus Bau, under Ratu Seru Cakobau, eventually conquered the Rewa dominions in 1855 (Derrick 1950; Scarr 1973, 1980, 1984; Routledge 1985). Disease and warfare laid much of the Rewa delta area waste and the former *via*/ring-ditch landscape began to be transformed.

Cession to Britain in 1874 sealed many of these changes and brought others. *Pax Britannica* ended most of the wars, allowing greater dispersal of settlement and a gradual decay of the fortified village sites. The slow spread of colonial administration also brought the villages into greater contact with the outside world. Thus, in the later eighteenth century under mission and government influence, the site of Draubuta village moved from the bush margins to the banks of the Wainibokasi River and a large church was built at the centre.

Of greater long-term significance, however, was the adoption of a policy of colonial conservation towards the Fijian village economy and society. Whatever the motives for this, and whatever the long-term objectives — a genuine concern for the welfare of indigenous Fijians or a pragmatic policy of cost-effective social control — the effect was to entrench systems of chiefly control, land tenure, and economic activity that had been undergoing rapid change throughout the eighteenth century.² There were restrictions on the movement of Fijians out of the village in order to gain wage labour and there was little tax-induced pressure to develop local sources of cash income. To a large extent, the Fijian village sector was frozen: its leaders entrenched and their positions strengthened through indirect rule; social mobility severely circumscribed; the authoritarian and communal nature of Fijian society probably increased; and its economy fastened to subsistence production, despite the introduction of many new products and some monetization.³ Much of what is considered traditional about Fiji by outsiders, and even Fijians themselves, derives from this colonial policy of conservation (and the misinterpretations of 'traditional' that this involved), and from the elements of Christianity which were grafted onto Fijian culture by missionaries (Clammer 1973).

On the land little seemed to change. Land tenure was institutionalized and rigidified but, with population decline and little pressure on land until about the mid-twentieth century (in Rewa at least), flexibility was maintained through informal mechanisms. The root crops staples remained (again supplemented by tree crops, maritime resources and wild foods), though there were some new crops introduced: new varieties of taro, new trees (citrus varieties and mango), and exotic foods (rice, chillies and European vegetables). There were changes, too, in cultivation systems (Ward 1982, 1986b). But the objective of production for subsistence, with a surplus for ceremonial and redistributive purposes, remained uppermost.

Yet it must not be assumed that the economic life of village Fiji, at least that operating behind the structure of colonial conservation, was any more stable than the village society. Not all Fijians found themselves confined to the villages and many went to work on plantations or in the towns. And even in the villages there were new opportunities. Near the towns there were limited possibilities for marketing the surplus production of traditional staples and, after the 1920s, some villagers established themselves as individual farmers, growing sugar cane. Cane farming was even adopted within villages as a tax crop but this declined around the turn of the century (Knapman 1987:34). There were many signs by 1939 that the economic base of village life was undergoing major transformation. It was far from a static 'fossilized' sector.

Social and economic changes in the villages accelerated after 1939. The second world war in the Pacific was a watershed in Fiji's economic history. Fijians went overseas to defend the British Empire; American and other allied troops were stationed in Fiji in large numbers, and the airports constructed and air links forged during the war laid the basis for the later development of the tourist industry (Britton 1980a, 1980b). Fijians were exposed to the outside world as never before. The war economy widened wage employment opportunities, on the docks and bases, and proved a fillip to cashcropping. After the war, the pace

2 There is some debate about the motives and effect of Gordon's conservation policy in Fiji, see France (1968); Heath (1974); Macnaught (1974, 1982); Sutherland (1984:74); Durutalo (1985a); and Knapman (1985, 1987).

3 The demand for money was spurred by the church as cash tithes were levied (Knapman 1987:34).

and nature of change continued. More villagers left to work in the towns or establish themselves as commercial farmers, and the flow of goods into the countryside — kerosene lamps, sewing machines, Western clothing, corrugated iron and, later, transistor radios and concrete — increased. Cash and custom co-existed but the strains of monetization, population pressure and rising aspirations were evident when Spate went to Fiji in 1959 to examine the problems and prospects of the Fijian people.

Villages, such as Draubuta and Cautata, which were close to Suva, were in the vanguard of the socio-economic changes. Proximity meant opportunity. Men could work in Suva and Nausori or the Tailevu cane lands, they were in nearly everyday contact with Western ways of life — the dress, language and apparent sophistication of Europeans — and they could sell their *dalo*, bananas, fish or copra to satisfy at least some of their desire for cash. Knapman has noted that men from Tailevu Province (including the two villages) were frequently in the towns, many becoming urban 'loafers' (Knapman 1987:41). This was as early as the turn of the century and it occasioned complaints from the chiefs, who were understandably upset that villagers could skirt the absentee rules, use the village as a resting place and contribute little to the community.

Cautata, in particular, was a modernizing village. Many of its men worked on the Suva docks and some in the village were growing rice as early as the 1930s. In Draubuta, part of the village land had been leased to Indian cane and rice growers and some young men travelled to broaden their horizons and opportunities. Yet the communities remained strong. Few built their houses outside the village area, the church and the chiefs were powerful cohesive influences and many community projects were undertaken. In Cautata, the bus co-operative began in the mid-1950s when those living and/or working in Suva were levied at the rate of 50 per cent of their wages. It was a venture that owed its origin to, and accelerated the trend towards, urban wage labour, but it was also one that was firmly embedded in a strong sense of social cohesion and group need (Spate 1959:78; Tukai 1988). There was a transport co-operative in Draubuta as well — the ferry service across the river. Again it was an enterprise that reflected new links with the outside world yet was indisputably communal.⁴

If Draubuta and Cautata were exhibiting some of the first signs of emergent enterprise, they were also the stage for early stresses. In both villages, land was at a premium. True, the land had supported very intensive *via*-based systems before, but that was in a very different political and economic context. In Draubuta, the leasing of a third of village lands to Indians (Spate 1959:104), and the rigid pattern of *mataqali* holdings, meant that many of the households had little land and, in Cautata, whilst there was no loss of land area through leasing, only eighty-one of the 222 hectares of village land were 'plantable' (Spate 1959:104) because of swamp. Population pressure was increasing. Between the 1946 and 1956 censuses, Cautata's population grew from 299 to 348 (averaging 1.6 per cent per annum increase) and Draubuta increased from 175 to 213 (2.2 per cent) (Gittins 1947; McArthur 1958). Wage labouring may have been a more attractive monetary option to farming but it was also becoming a necessity for households

4 This co-operative was begun by women and its profits were redistributed in the community (Spate 1959:104). Another example of the way in which communalism was mobilized for modernization occurred in 1954, when the people of Draubuta and other nearby villages were called upon to supply cash and *dalo* to contribute to the building of a district school (Nayacakalou 1978:11).

to survive. These problems of land and population were in addition to the assumed centrifugal effects of urbanization, wage labouring and individualism.

The social consequences of these economic changes may be judged, to an extent, from the observations of Draubuta in the mid-1950s by Nayacakalou (1975, 1978). There were some minor disputes (for example, complaints over the clan share for the school fund-raising, 1975:12), some problems getting unpaid labour for house building (1975:29-30) but, in general, the story is one of a remarkably resilient society. Traditional forms of exchange, requests for labour or goods (*kerekere*), and the recognition of status and social position were very much alive. Indeed, there seemed to be an almost healthy co-existence of the new materialism and traditional sharing, such that wages might be paid to a village member for help with a harvest but, for house building, *yaqona* and other non-monetary presentations were the norm. Some products were bought and sold between villagers, others were exchanged through recognized reciprocity. In terms of authority, the word of the traditional chief (here the *vunivalu*) was always respected, whilst the government chief, the *turaga-ni-koro*, was somewhat less effective. Nayacakalou's account is one of profound economic change but remarkable social and cultural continuity and adaptation. It will be shown in the sections below that, today, Draubuta still exhibits many of these features. There is still a blend of economic activity between the city and the land (though this has changed in nature and balance), land is still a central issue, and there is still a strong sense of tradition and community.

Spate, in 1959, was somewhat less impressed by the apparent harmony between modernization and traditionalism. Perhaps this was because his focus was on problems, not on cultural accommodation like Nayacakalou. When Spate visited both villages his brief notes read:

Cautata:

Authoritarian leadership on traditional lines . . . Unity seems good: "all the ideas came from the village" (but this uncertain) . . . simplicity of kinship structure, historical and geographical individuality probably factors in this. Good deal of help from Suva *yasa* [exempted absentee]. But actual monetary basis, apart from bus, seems slight, though cocoa and (if tractor were readily available) rice may help . . . Interesting and promising (1959:104).

Draubuta:

A fairly large average near-Suva *koro* in many ways, with some interesting features . . . No very striking needs or potentialities, life much affected by money but not much of this by way of internal activity or specialisation. Quite progressive in its way, neither exciting or discouraging (1959:104).

He used Draubuta as an example of land inequalities within the traditional/colonial land tenure system and noted that, at that time, 'nearly half the adult male population has more or less regular employment' in Suva (1959:12). In Cautata, as well as the bus co-operative and the high proportion of wage labourers, the cultivation of rice and cocoa (on an individual basis) was noted (1959:78).

But, whilst he was impressed with some of the features of the two villages, his overall impression of Fijian villages and communalism was less sanguine:

The feeling one absorbs from the general run of the villages is one of frustration and malaise; the old order seems crumbling, the will to work in terms of its discipline has been largely lost; it has not yet been replaced ... by a sufficiently

whole-hearted will to work effectively in terms of a new discipline ... the "communal system" ... is still on its feet. But it gives the impression of being ill ... some course of treatment is imperative (1959:101-2).

His diagnosis was that communalism was ailing and his prescription was for a dose of social modernization: new discipline, new leadership but, above all, the replacement of retrogressive authoritarian collectivism with individualism.⁵ Whereas Nayacakalou may have recognized the ability of the Fijian body to heal itself gradually, Spate was more in favour of radical surgery and treatment, even if they were to be carried out over a long period of time. It was this treatment that led to the sponsoring of a new model of rural development for Fijians, that of *galala* settlement schemes.

Settlement schemes: a dilemma for the colonial state

The beginnings of *galala*-based rural development, however, go back before Spate and involve spontaneous rather than state planned schemes. Indeed, the origins of the *galala* movement may lie in the very nature of traditional village society. If it is assumed that constant bloody warfare was not the norm in pre-contact Fiji, in the seventeenth and eighteenth if not perhaps the nineteenth centuries, and if a more dispersed Melanesian style of settlement was adopted, then it is likely that many households, or small clusters of households, may have settled outside a large nucleated village area on their own clan land, especially if this lay far from the village. Traditional society accommodated both communal obligation and a degree of individual freedom.

After the establishment of colonial authority and the colonial economy, there arose a contradiction that bedevilled the whole individualist policy. Conservation meant that villages and traditional authority had to be maintained and strengthened, yet new economic opportunities outside the villages attracted many. The contradiction was checked to some extent by regulations (in force until 1912) which restricted periods of absence from a person's home village, but more so by the policy of Indian immigration which provided a cheap colonial labour supply rather than expose Fijians to socially disruptive activities. But these measures did not stop departures from the village. While there were movements within Fijian society to force radical change, the most notable of which was Apolosi Ranawai's Viti Company after 1913 (Couper 1968; Macnaught 1982:75-92; Knapman 1987:42; Sutherland 1984:231), individual responses had greater long-term significance.

Some of those that left wanted to start as farmers or businessmen, but many moved in response to what was happening in villages. Colonial rule had brought new laws, regulations and projects which were administered through the Fijian polity, and village chiefs were able to increase the pressure on commoners. *Galala* movement away from the village was often a reaction to these heavy obligations, rather than a result of any burning economic desire to establish oneself as a peasant farmer, a wage labourer or businessman.

There was also some ambivalence in the policies of the colonial state. Conservation was well established but the interest in promoting individualism was spurred by Governor im Thurn in the early 1900s (Chapelle 1978b, Lal 1985) and mounted thereafter. By the time of the 1946 Census, it was remarked that 22 per

⁵ Macnaught (1982:134, 162) reviews some beliefs about communalism held by colonial officials and comments on Spate's view. See also Clammer (1973) and Brookfield (1988).

cent of Fijians were living away from their villages, a rise from 17.5 per cent in 1936 and 5 per cent in 1921 (Secretary for Fijian Affairs for 1948a:7). Many went to work on copra plantations and, in time, lost contact with home (Brookfield 1976:6), while others went to work alongside Indians in the cane fields. In the early 1930s, 'a large number' of Fijians were reported as employed in the Nadi cane lands, being supplied with free housing and land for planting (Annual Report of the District Commissioner Nadi n.d., CSO 2/121), and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company was keen to see more Fijians as tenants.

It was in these sugar areas that government interest in promoting *galala* settlement gathered pace in the 1930s. To an extent, this was more the result of commercial expediency — to increase the production of commercial crops and supplement the labour supply after the end of the indenture system in 1920 — than a move to social reformism. However the opinions of colonial officials, if not Fijian leaders, during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s turned towards the objective of changing Fijian society and laid the foundation for the Spate Report. They reflected not only the officials' personally-held models for Fijian social change but also their belief that many Fijians felt the same:

I am convinced that the welfare and progress of the [Fijian] race depends upon a change-over from the communal to the individualistic mode of life, and I see no reason why, with sympathetic guidance, the Fijian should not make as good a peasant proprietor as the Indian (Fletcher to Irving 23 February 1931 CSO 2/121).

Most of the young men who take up these [tenant] farms are of the type which objects to the restrictions on their freedom which the communal system imposes . . . there are many evidences that the Fijians are clamouring for freedom to lead individual peasant lives adjacent to congenial neighbours (Jack to Colonial Secretary 23 July 1937 CSO 2/121).

Ultimately production depended upon the effort of the individual and the problem was to increase that effort by providing appropriate incentives, while retaining the Fijian social way of life (Minutes, Administrative Officers' Conference 4-7 August 1954 CSO 2/132-2).

I feel that the communal system is the greatest disincentive to individual effort of any kind . . . Successful peasants in all countries in all stages have, I think, been individualistic and the more individualistic the more successful (District Officer Ba to District Commissioner Western 30 April 1955 CSO 2/132-2).

Yet whilst many officials (the economic modernizers) were moving towards this view, there were a number (the social traditionalists) who were concerned to see the preservation of a strong society and resist urbanization and *galala* farming. It was the conservation/dissolution dilemma laid bare:

I hope we have heard the last of this [exemption] policy and that it is generally recognized that the village community is the basis of Fijian society (Governor Mitchell quoted in Council of Chiefs, 1945:3).

A large proportion of this class [Fijians in towns] forms a floating population that is never long enough in one locality to come under the influence of native public opinion and . . . is not amenable to tribal discipline. Bravado, cupidity or indigence sooner or later drives them to acts for which there is not the temptation in village life (Ratu J.L.V. Sukuna in Secretary for Fijian Affairs in 1948b:6).

The Fijian in a village has, in the security which it offers, a very real incentive to remain in its communal environment . . . The social institutions inculcates [sic] group loyalties and maintain discipline. These are essential requisites for people who must advance from one way of life to another (Ratu K.K.T. Mara in District Commissioner Southern to Colonial Secretary 21 July 1955 CSO 2/132-2).

It was no coincidence that the 'modernizers' in the colonial bureaucracy were the district and agricultural officers and the 'traditionalists' were either educated chiefly Fijians or senior staff.

Laws governing mobility reflected the contradiction. In 1927, rules were tightened; Fijians were required to have permission to move and proof of ability to live independently. It was the 1948 regulations promulgated under Sukuna, however, which gave greater institutional recognition both to chiefly sanction of movement and also to independent initiative. The regulations allowed movement away from villages, and exemption from village obligations, but at a price. Fijians who wished to be exempt had to make application through the local Fijian administration and, if granted, the *galala* had to pay a special commutation tax of £1 per annum in lieu of village obligations (in addition to normal Provincial taxes), cultivate or graze set areas (quite large by contemporary standards), earn at least £50 gross per year, and re-apply for exemption each year (Government of Fiji 1948:145-6).⁶ Not only were these conditions harsh but also, in practice, frequently it proved very difficult to get the required assent of a *buli* or other Fijian official. Spate reported cases of deliberate obstruction, favouritism and harassment by chiefs (Spate 1959:89; also Watters 1969a:265).

In many respects, the 1948 regulations were a compromise between the traditionalists and the modernizers. The modernizers were appeased, it seems, because *galala* movement was allowed, if controlled. Yet, in practice, the regulations restricted the *galala* and reasserted chiefly control. The effects of the regulations were twofold. First, they defined the *galala* as a distinctive class: individuals who had the drive and motivation to overcome the obstacles to obtaining exemption, break the bonds of traditionalism and engage in modern agriculture or business. Second, the regulations defined a limited role for the state: exemption and agricultural settlement were a matter for the individual but it was a process that traditional authority, in the guise of state bureaucracy, could effectively control. The contradiction remained.

Such was the stage for state re-assessment in the late 1950s. European officials were still keen to promote individualism and Spate's brief was based on the clear assumption that something was wrong. His terms of reference included:

the economic activity of Fijian producers, with special attention to the effects of their social organisation on that activity . . . [and] to suggest in what ways changes in that organisation might be desirable (1959:1).

Spate developed the theme:

This phrasing reflects the widely held views that the Fijian people lag seriously behind other communities in the Colony in economic matters . . . and that this

6 The application required detailed information and the onus was on the applicant to prove to the chiefs that he was suitable. The grant of an exemption was by no means automatic. For the procedure of application, see Fijian Affairs Regulations (Government of Fiji 1948:145-6). Initially, exemption was granted for one year only and the candidate had to repeat the laborious process of re-application each year. Also, the qualification of £50 gross annual income was doubled in 1955 and other restrictions were tightened (Spate 1959:87).

relative backwardness is largely conditioned by traditional social attitudes and the 'communal system' (1959:1).

His recommendation, echoed by the Burns Report (Burns *et al.* 1960:126), was clear:

It is my firm conviction that for the Fijian countryside the objective should be a community of independent farmers, living or working on holdings heritable, and alienable at least between Fijians, but retaining . . . a common centre . . . a community less the old frustrations (though doubtless with its own), but not less rich in real satisfactions (1959:9).

His sentiments echoed those of many officials and observers who came before and after (Lasaga 1980b).

As a result of the Spate and Burns Reports, the colonial government moved to a more overt policy of support for Fijian *galala* resettlement and a relaxation of the 1948 regulations. The modernizers were in the ascendancy and Fijians were to be guided by a benevolent colonial state into capitalist production. A new statutory body, the Land Development Authority (LDA) was created to establish and oversee the resettlement of village Fijians in newly-developed areas. The work of this authority and examples of *galala* resettlement have been analysed elsewhere in some detail (Watters 1969a; Frazer 1973; Brookfield 1972, 1976, 1979b, 1988; Sofer 1987; Bayliss-Smith and Haynes 1988; Overton 1988b). Briefly, the LDA undertook a number of schemes, ranging in size from a handful of families within a village area to the resettlement of 200 families at Lomaivuna. In addition to these state-sponsored schemes, spontaneous settlement continued apace with families settling on land obtained from their own village, relatives, or landowners far from their place of origin. Urbanization was also accelerating. Spate estimated that there were about 1300 registered *galala* already in the late 1950s, representing 5.5 per cent of Fijians engaged in agriculture in 1956 (Spate 1959:89-90). After that, numbers undoubtedly grew and by 1967, on LDA schemes alone, a further 5140 farmers had been resettled (Land Development Authority 1968:2).

In the face of this, colonial controls on Fijian movement had to be relaxed. It was farcical that one agency of the state, the LDA, was actively promoting the *galala* model while another, the Fijian administration, was attempting to maintain its grip through traditional authority and society. In 1967, following a wider review of the administrative system by Nayacakalou, many of the 1948 regulations applying to *galala*, including the exemption tax, were repealed (Government of Fiji 1966, 1967; Nayacakalou 1975:141-42; Lasaga 1984:157). No longer were *galala* defined and controlled by the state or by traditional authority. With the removal of traditionalist veto and the active encouragement of the state it seemed that modernization was possible. There was at last an unfettered and rapidly developing alternative of peasant agriculture to rival the collectivist village model.

Since 1967, the peasant model for Fijians has continued to evolve. Fiji became an independent state in 1970 and, despite strong Fijian chiefly representation and leadership of the ruling Alliance Party (until 1987), individualization of the Fijian economy has continued. The Seaqaqa scheme in Vanua Levu has involved settling some 450 Fijian households (and a slightly lower number of Indo-Fijians) on sugar cane leases and, because the obtaining of formal sector credit and cane contracts require the possession of registered leases to individual plots of land,

there has been great impetus towards individualist peasant farming amongst Fijians. The state has both allowed and encouraged this movement, though at the same time maintaining its concern for a traditional and stable Fijian village sector.

The Waibau settlement began in the mid-1950s, not as a government-sponsored project but as an independent movement of indigenous Fijians from the outer Lau group of islands (where land was scarce and chiefly control onerous) to Viti Levu. The early settlers made arrangements with local *mataqali* based at nearby Sawani to occupy land of a *mataqali* that was almost extinct (its surviving members being absorbed into other units). These were *vakavanua* 'leases', obtained by presenting *yaqona*, *tabua* and other gifts to the Sawani people (Lasaqa 1984:106).⁷ They became tenants-at-will, their security dependent on the continued goodwill of Sawani. However, according to the settlers (field interviews, May 1986), the Sawani chiefs proved to be nearly as demanding as in Lau, calling on the Waibau settlers to supply more gifts and also their labour for Sawani work. Objecting to these demands, and fearing for their land if they offended the Sawani chiefs, the Waibau people called on the government for assistance.⁸ Government officers were amenable for, at this time (in the late 1950s and early 1960s), there was much official support for the *galala* movement. Surveys were made of the land, leases were issued and extension support in the form of soil conservation and controlled farm management was provided by the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, new settlers were attracted and the scheme was extended to include new allotments up the valley. It expanded from about thirty original settlers to nearly seventy. It was a spontaneous resettlement scheme, initiated by the settlers themselves and supported by a responsive administration.

But the Waibau scheme did not progress smoothly, at least in official eyes. In 1966 officials reported that only a few of the settlers were prosperous and many were cultivating little more than subsistence gardens (TFO 2 52/37/1303). The settlers however, including some of those then on a Department of Agriculture 'black-list', recall a time of relative comfort, when they consolidated their position, enjoyed their independence and earned cash from a little market-gardening or wage labouring (including development work at Lomaivuna).⁹ Ward (1965:183) reported that several were quite well-off, selling *dalo* and *yaqona*. Gradually they became more prosperous. The sale of *dalo* and vegetables in Suva became a major income source and when, in the mid-1970s, the cultivation of ginger was adopted by Fijians (hitherto it had been the preserve of a few Chinese), a major new cash crop was at hand. Lasaqa was able to present five case studies of relatively prosperous Waibau settlers in 1977 (Lasaqa 1984:107-114).

Unlike Waibau, Lomaivuna was a government enterprise from the start, under the control of the LDA. A large area of land held under Crown and native tenure, and recently made accessible by the Sawani to Serea road, became the showpiece of the LDA program. Some 200 four-hectare allotments were surveyed. Land was cleared, standard permanent materials houses were built on every plot, and

7 *Vakavanua* means literally 'the way of the land' or customary (Eaton 1988b). Here it is taken to mean the traditional process (if somewhat modified) whereby land was acquired from another landholding unit, through presentations and obligations. *Vakavanua* is used also as a method of getting the permission of landowners for formal leases — as at Waibau — but it is most common for informal, unregistered leases of native and reserve land by Fijians.

8 This reason differs a little from official explanations which stressed the poor state of the settlers and their poor agricultural practices, rather than their desire to avoid obligations from Sawani, see TFO 2 37/43/718.

9 Two elder Waibau residents recalled with some humour how they had worked at Lomaivuna clearing bush and had been able to 'obtain' quantities of fertilizer (destined for Lomaivuna banana plantations) for their *dalo* at Waibau.

settlers were recruited. Most were indigenous Fijians (many from Lau), though there were also some Indo-Fijians, Chinese and Rotumans (Kaurasi 1977). Unlike Waibau, where settlers were relatively free to grow what they pleased, the new Lomaivuna settlers were heavily directed and had to agree to grow bananas on at least half of their property. Lomaivuna was part of a larger enterprise — the Banana Venture — which aimed to provide indigenous Fijians with a good cash income for a familiar crop. The cash was essential for Lomaivuna because development and housing loans had to be repaid.

The Banana Venture crashed (Foster 1966, 1967; Brookfield with Hart 1971:133, 283-4; Brookfield, 1988). Disease and the loss of the vital New Zealand market destroyed the foundations of the Lomaivuna economy. Many left, often for military service (field interviews, May 1986); loans were defaulted on, then suspended, and the scheme came to resemble a collection of poor subsistence Fijians. It was LDA's greatest failure. However, Lomaivuna has since recovered. Strong government support has been maintained, and new crops, such as pineapples and immature ginger, have successfully supplanted bananas. Slowly, Lomaivuna's prosperity has come to parallel, if not match, that of Waibau.

Since their inception, there have been considerable changes in land holding on both schemes — many of the original settlers have gone or shifted plots, and new farmers have arrived. There is a paucity of reliable data from the NLTB and LDA concerning land holding, especially for the years before 1980, but it is possible to gain an indication of changes from fragmentary evidence (Table 2.1).¹⁰

Table 2.1 Current occupancy of settlement schemes^a

| | Fijian | | Non-Fijian | | Others ^c | | Total | |
|------------------------------|--------|----------------------|------------|---------|---------------------|---------|-------|---------|
| | No. | Percent ^b | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | No. | Percent |
| Lomaivuna | | | | | | | | |
| Original settlers | 72 | 36 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 200 | 100 |
| Settlers arriving since 1966 | 100 | 50 | 24 | 12 | | | | |
| Waibau | | | | | | | | |
| Original settlers | 21 | 30 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 70 | 100 |
| Settlers arriving since 1966 | 28 | 40 | 17 | 24 | | | | |

^aThis analysis compares plots held in 1966 and 1985-86. 'Number of original settlers' refers to the number of plots with the same listed leaseholder in 1985-86 (from NLTB records) as in 1966 (from Agriculture Department files TFO 2 52/37/1303) for Waibau and from an undated map for Lomaivuna (probably 1966 - TFO 2 52/49/2557). These are considered the settlers who arrived when the schemes were initiated. This analysis does not take multiple plot-holding into consideration, nor does it allow for original settlers who have acquired new plots.

^bPer cent of existing settlers.

^cNo data available.

These data show that only about a third of the settlement plots today are held by the original lessees. But the actual number of survivors is somewhat higher due to changes in plots held and multiple holdings. A comparison of a list of occupiers in Waibau (regardless of plot titles they hold) for 1966 with those now

¹⁰ The data problem has arisen because the LDA records have been dispersed and lost since that organization lapsed, and the NLTB completely re-organized its records in 1980 and data before then are patchy and unreliable.

present gives a higher result. Of the fifty-nine occupiers in 1966 (only the lower half of the scheme was occupied at that time), twenty-three (or 39 per cent) still remain.

Also, this second set of data gives some clue to the cause of the casualties. The 1966 list of occupiers was divided into two categories: those showing 'some progress' and those with 'no progress at all'. Of the former, eighteen (72 per cent) still survive but only five (15 per cent) of the latter category are still at Waibau. Clearly, there has been a process of selection, with the better farmers and the 'developers' remaining and the less successful returning to villages or moving to towns.

Thus it seems that many settlers — perhaps a little under 40 per cent on both schemes — have managed to survive the twenty or so years since resettlement. Over half have gone. Some of these are deaths, but most are voluntary quitters and, probably, the least successful farmers. Given the length of time since inception of the schemes, the disaster of the Banana Venture, the difficulty of adjustment from village to individual-based farming and society, and the recent temptation to sell plots for high prices, Waibau and Lomaivuna must be seen as successful in resettling and holding Fijians, a vindication of Spate's vision (Overton 1988b).

Galala resettlement has provided an alternative to village-based change for rural development in Fiji. Resettlement was seen as a way of freeing Fijians from the constraints of village society and integrating them more closely into capitalist agriculture. Individually-held plots of land and cashcropping were characteristics of this 'modern' model. The experience of Lomaivuna and Waibau suggests that the resettlement strategy and individualism were successful to some degree — despite early failures and some quitters. The extent to which these schemes have proved significantly different from the villages and facilitated more rapid change in recent years, however, needs more analysis and will be addressed with regard to land, agriculture and social structure in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

Land

The limits to accumulation

Land is at the heart of any investigation into the culture, society, history and geography of rural Fiji. It is a burning political issue — one that was used successfully, if mischievously, to rally Fijian opposition to the new coalition government in 1987 — and one that affects deeply the future of Fiji as a multi-racial country.

Fiji is facing a major shortage of land. It has a total land area of 18,379 km², though only 16 per cent of this is classified as suitable for arable agriculture (Ward 1985:21). The situation is exacerbated by land tenure. Some 82 per cent of Fiji is 'native land', held under customary tenure by Melanesian Fijians and unable to be sold. Whilst this land can be leased, and 30.3 per cent of it is (Ward 1985:29), a large proportion (30.1 per cent of total land area) is 'native reserve' and can be leased only to ethnic Fijians. The remaining land in Fiji is held under freehold title (8 per cent) and by the Crown (9.5 per cent). To some extent the ethnic imbalance in landholding is illusory because most of the best land has been alienated or leased and a high proportion of the remaining native land area is not suitable for arable farming (Ward 1985:31-2).

The critical issue is how to best manage these limited land resources, bearing in mind the cultural as well as the economic importance of land. Two apparently opposite systems are being used to manage land still held under 'native' tenure: traditional/communal tenure, whereby land is allocated through clan units; and leased land, allocated through a formal and centralized system of registration and rent collection.

In this section, the operation of village and leasehold land tenure systems will be examined with reference to the main case studies. It will be shown that everyday practices of land tenure depart significantly from the official and, less so, traditional practices, with important implications for land accumulation and socio-economic differentiation in rural Fiji.

Traditional flexibility: institutional rigidity

There is a three-part system of land tenure in Fiji: the traditional/communal system of the village; the individual leasehold systems on leased 'native' land; and leasehold and freehold titles on alienated land. The genesis of this structure lies in the policy of conservation, the recognition and preservation of 'traditional' systems by the colonial government.

The 'traditional system' of land tenure, as it came to be institutionalized, was characterized by communal ownership and control of land, and the allocation of

land rights to individuals and households was regulated through the social structure.¹

Usufruct rights to gardens (*qele ni teitei*), and forest (*veikau*) and fishing resources were held by individuals and sanctioned by the clan and chiefs. Boundaries between the land holdings of individuals, *tokatoka* and *mataqali* were well recognized and usually respected, though land endowments could vary greatly.² However, there was a high degree of flexibility that allowed people to secure cultivation rights on the land of another *mataqali*, to seek new land elsewhere or to 'acquire' the land of groups that became extinct. Generally, then, population changes and inequalities in land holding could be managed through these long-established though flexible customary land tenure practices.

After Cession, this system was institutionalized in colonial law, part of the policy to preserve Fijian culture and society. However, in doing so, the system was misinterpreted, simplified, standardized and rigidified. Briefly, the main policies undertaken during the colonial period were:

- The recognition of clan units, predominantly *mataqali*, as the only institutions for land apportionment and control. This was despite regional variations, the functions of different levels of units, and important short- and long-term arrangements.
- The recording and mapping of these units by the Native Lands Commission. This took a 'snap-shot' of landholding (mainly in the 1940s) and stopped a flexible system from changing. New units could not emerge and when units became extinct, their lands reverted to the Crown, and were not redistributed.³
- A distinction was made between 'native' lands — under customary tenure but able to be leased to non-Fijians, and 'reserve' lands — customary land for lease only to indigenous Fijians.

For most of the colonial period, customary land could be leased out to non-*mataqali* (and non-Fijian) members on a tenancy-at-will basis. *Vakavanua* was the process for this with requests and presentations being made to the owners. Despite the fact that leases were informal, unregulated, there was little security for tenants and compensation for improvements was rare, some *vakavanua* arrangements became relatively long-term, secure and mutually beneficial, and large areas were released. Both the Spate (1959) and Burns (1960) Reports recommended more leasing of land and greater security.

The ability of local groups to lease their lands directly to tenants ended with the establishment of the Native Lands Trust Board in 1940. The NLTB became a guardian for Fijian lands by acting as an agent for the landlords, collecting rent and overseeing standard lease terms. By operating as a central body, and one with recognized leasing arrangements, it was hoped that more unused Fijian land could be released to (often Indo-Fijian) commercial farming tenants and that the

1 See Geddes (1959); Foster (1963); Ward (1965, 1969); Lloyd (1968, 1982); France (1969); Nayacakalou (1971, 1978); Clammer (1973); Farrell (1974); Chapelle (1978a); Rutz (1978b); Walter (1978b); Lasaqa (1980a, 1984); Ravuvu (1983); Larmour (1984); and Cole (1986).

2 The controlling unit was usually the *mataqali*, though *tokatoka* were common and in Rewa individual tenure was established (Thomson 1908:369-81; Ward 1965:133). Very large inequalities could exist amongst areas held by *mataqali* and others. These were noted by Spate who believed them to be one of the main drawbacks of traditional tenure (Spate 1959:10-12; Lasaqa 1984:41-51). See also Clay 1955:7.

3 There is an opportunity under the regulations for new groups to apply to the Native Lands Commission for registration, though this is difficult and can be costly. The Tai *mataqali* in Draubuta, officially only a *tokatoka*, has tried unsuccessfully to be registered as a separate 'extended' *mataqali*.

landowners would get a good, secure return with few disputes. This externalizing of leasing arrangements was accompanied later by legislation — the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act (ALTA) — which gave security of leases, eventually for thirty years, and compensation for improvements (Government of Fiji 1978; Chandra 1983:19-20). These are the official pillars of state land policy: there is to be no permanent alienation of native land but, with an organization to protect landowners' interests and laws to protect tenants' rights, it is hoped that enough land will be released to satisfy in part the desire of non-Fijians for land and to promote agricultural development.

The NLTB system of rent collection and distribution represents an interesting amalgam of commercial and traditional influences. Rent is levied at the rate of 6 per cent of the unimproved capital value of the land (schedules of land values are given in the ALTA regulations: Government of Fiji 1978). The proceeds of rent collection, totalling over \$F4,500,000 in 1984 (Fiji Native Land Trust Board 1985b:19), are then distributed back to the landowners through the traditional social hierarchy as follows:

- 25 per cent retained by NLTB to meet costs
- 5 per cent to the head of the *vanua* (broad territorial traditional unit)
- 10 per cent to the head of the *yavusa* (large clan unit comprising a number of *mataqali*)
- 15 per cent to the head of the *mataqali* (principal registered landowning clan unit)
- 45 per cent to be distributed amongst the ordinary members of the landowning *mataqali* (Cole 1986:15).

The leasing arrangements do not involve only non-Fijians as tenants. In 1984, 18.4 per cent of the number of agricultural leases, covering 14.2 per cent of the leased area went to ethnic Fijians and these included those with 'Class J' leases (Fijians with leases of native 'reserve' land). In 1982 'Class J' leases totalled over 4000 in number, when Fijians with ordinary native leases numbered a fraction under 3000 (Ward 1985:34). Thus Fijians have taken out leases and are paying rent for Fijian land. In some cases they are even renting their own *mataqali* land, indirectly paying rent to themselves. The reasons they are taking out such formal leases include access to credit or sugar contracts (very difficult without a registered lease), and the desire to get secure and long-term access to village land which they may lose in time under traditional arrangements. Thus, it can be very rational for individual commercially-oriented Fijian farmers to go to the trouble and expense of leasing land to which they may have access already.

These land tenure regulations and institutions are predicated by the nature of the Fijian post-colonial state. Fijian lands are protected in the 1970 Constitution, just as they were by colonial laws and policy (Lasaqa 1984:187). Even if ethnic Fijians were to lose political power, they would maintain some form of control over Indo-Fijians through their protected ownership of land. Further, the Fijian and chiefly control on land matters percolates into the state and its institutions, with the NLTB controlled by Fijian chiefs and run by ethnic Fijians (Overton 1987b:141).

So the Fijian system of land tenure is complex. In this study the freehold sector, that is alienated land, is not dealt with. What is of concern, for it has greater implications for the future of rural development in Fiji, are the village and native leased land areas. In these sectors, there have been attempts to control the systems

of land exchange and management (to protect communal landowners) and, at the same time, to promote commercial agriculture. The contradictions have become apparent.

Village land: 'traditional' systems?

Since legislative and administrative land tenure structures were established and clans and boundaries delimited and recorded, there have been considerable changes and stresses, particularly from population pressure and cashcropping. A widening of opportunities has occurred to those individuals able to exploit the new rules followed by a communal backlash against leasing to individuals. This has meant that village land tenure has not so much reverted to traditional systems but rather has abandoned many of the flexible mechanisms that characterized pre-contact land tenure. These processes are especially evident in land-scarce villages such as Draubuta and Cautata.

Census data reveal steady increases in size in the two study villages (Table 3.1). In Draubuta, there are a number of registered land owning units. Three major *yavusa* are in turn divided into a total of seventeen *mataqali*. However, there are major differences in land holding amongst these groups, in terms of both quality and quantity of land and, in addition, five of the *mataqali* have become extinct since original registration, with no surviving members resident (only three of these, though, are officially registered as extinct). It is within this clan structure that changes in population in the past forty to fifty years have been accommodated.

Table 3.1 Draubuta and Cautata: population 1956-86^a

| | Draubuta | | Cautata | |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| | Population | Households | Population | Households |
| 1956 census | 213 | 30 | 348 | 52 |
| 1966 census | 191 | 33 | 412 | 74 |
| 1976 census | 195 | 34 | 450 | 83 |
| 1986 Census | 285 | 41 | 581 | 97 |
| Field survey 1986 | 287 | 60 | | 101 |
| Total land area (ha) | 161 | 202 | | |
| No. registered <i>mataqali</i> | | 16 | | 5 ^b |

^aA full household survey was not undertaken for Cautata for this study. The 1986 census data and the 1986 household survey figures show some discrepancy. This may be to do with inaccuracies in census data collection observed elsewhere (Chung 1986) or, perhaps, a different definition of village area, which, in the census, may exclude some households outside the village area but still on village *mataqali* land. Also, the census figures are at odds with other survey data, especially that of Lasaga who found 289 people in Draubuta in 1970 (1984:44), which is significantly higher than the two census counts on 1966 and 1976.

^bAlthough five *mataqali* are registered for Cautata, a 1958 NLTB map reveals that the bulk of village agricultural land is registered only under the village's single *yavusa* (Koronikalou); the *mataqali* seem to be used only for registration of special areas amongst the mangroves. See Figure 3.3.

Sources: J.W. Gittins, *A Report on the Results of the Census of Population 1946*, Suva, Legislative Council Paper 35/1947; N. McArthur, *Report on the Census of Population 1956*, Suva, Legislative Council Paper 1/1958; F.H.A.G. Zwart, *Report on the Census of the Population 1966*, Suva, Legislative Council Paper 9/1968; R. Lodhia, *Report on the Census of the Population 1976*, Suva, Parliamentary Paper 13/1977; field surveys 1985-86. 1986 census data was provided before publication of the full Census report by kind permission of the Bureau of Statistics.

Population increases have not only increased the absolute pressure on land, but have also exacerbated inter-*mataqali* disparities. For Draubuta, work by Nayacakalou (1978), used by Spate (1959:12) and updated by Lasaga (1984:44),

showed that the range of land holding per capita of residents varied from 0.1 to 7.2 hectares (with a mean of 0.85 hectares) in 1959, and 0.08 to 7.20 hectares (with a mean of 0.51 hectares) in 1970. It was inequalities such as these that so impressed Spate (1959:10-12). By 1986, the range was from 0.18 to 1.72 (with a mean of 0.43).⁴ Thus there has been a decline in land per capita, but more than this, some *mataqali* have very little land. *Mataqali* Nabunitu is an example. This group has only 3.24 hectares and Nayacakalou and Lasaqa reported it as having the lowest land endowment per capita (Lasaqa 1984:44). Nayacakalou observed in 1954 that some villagers were becoming 'very land-hungry', and there was a reluctance to continue leasing land to Indians (Nayacakalou, 1978:24). But, interestingly, members of one *mataqali* usually could get permission to plant taro on another *mataqali*'s land (Nayacakalou, 1978:19).

Table 3.2 Landholding in Draubuta 1953-86 by *mataqali*

| <i>Mataqali</i> | Nayacakalou 1954 | | | | | Lasaqa 1970 | | Survey 1986 | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--|
| | Total area (ha) | Area leased (ha) | % total popn | % total land | % un-leased land | % total popn | Area leased (ha) | % total popn | % un-leased land | |
| Nasiganadua | 13.76 | 9.71 | 3.3 | 8.5 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 1.56 | 3.8 | 9.1 | |
| Naqara | 8.90 | - | 1.1 | 5.5 | 8.7 | 2.8 | - | 4.5 | 6.6 | |
| Marakirua | 29.54 | 7.08 | 23.3 | 18.3 | 21.9 | 27.0 | 1.18 | 30.0 | 21.2 | |
| Naividugu | 25.09 | 8.90 | 5.6 | 15.6 | 15.8 | 3.8 | 8.64 | 17.8 | 12.3 | |
| Nameremere | 7.28 | - | 12.2 | 4.5 | 7.1 | 7.6 | - | 2.4 | 5.4 | |
| Matauta | 7.28 | 4.86 | 0.6 | 4.5 | 2.4 | 0.3 | 4.80 | - | 1.9 | |
| Tai | 10.93 | 5.87 | 8.9 | 6.8 | 4.9 | 5.5 | - | 2.8 | 8.2 | |
| Nainokanidua | 4.45 | 4.45 | - | 2.8 | - | - | 4.45 | - | - | |
| Nalecava | 5.67 | - | 17.8 | 3.5 | 5.5 | 4.8 | - | 7.7 | 4.2 | |
| Nakiova | 9.31 | 9.31 | 3.9 | 5.8 | - | 6.6 | 3.12 | 2.4 | 4.6 | |
| Nakolata | 14.97 | 8.70 | 3.3 | 9.3 | 6.1 | 14.9 | 3.62 | 8.0 | 8.5 | |
| Burekalou | 7.28 | - | 0.6 | 4.5 | 7.1 | - | - | - | 5.4 | |
| Levuka | 7.69 | - | 3.3 | 4.8 | 7.5 | 5.9 | - | 9.4 | 5.7 | |
| Nabunitu | 3.24 | - | 13.3 | 2.0 | 3.2 | 13.8 | - | 5.2 | 2.4 | |
| Naviteitei | 4.05 | - | 2.8 | 2.5 | 4.0 | 3.2 | - | 5.6 | 3.0 | |
| Natabu | 1.21 | - | - | 0.8 | 1.2 | - | - | - | 0.9 | |
| Nadilo | 0.61 | - | - | 0.3 | 0.6 | - | - | - | 0.6 | |
| Other | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.4 | - | |
| Total | 161.26 | 58.88 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 27.37 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

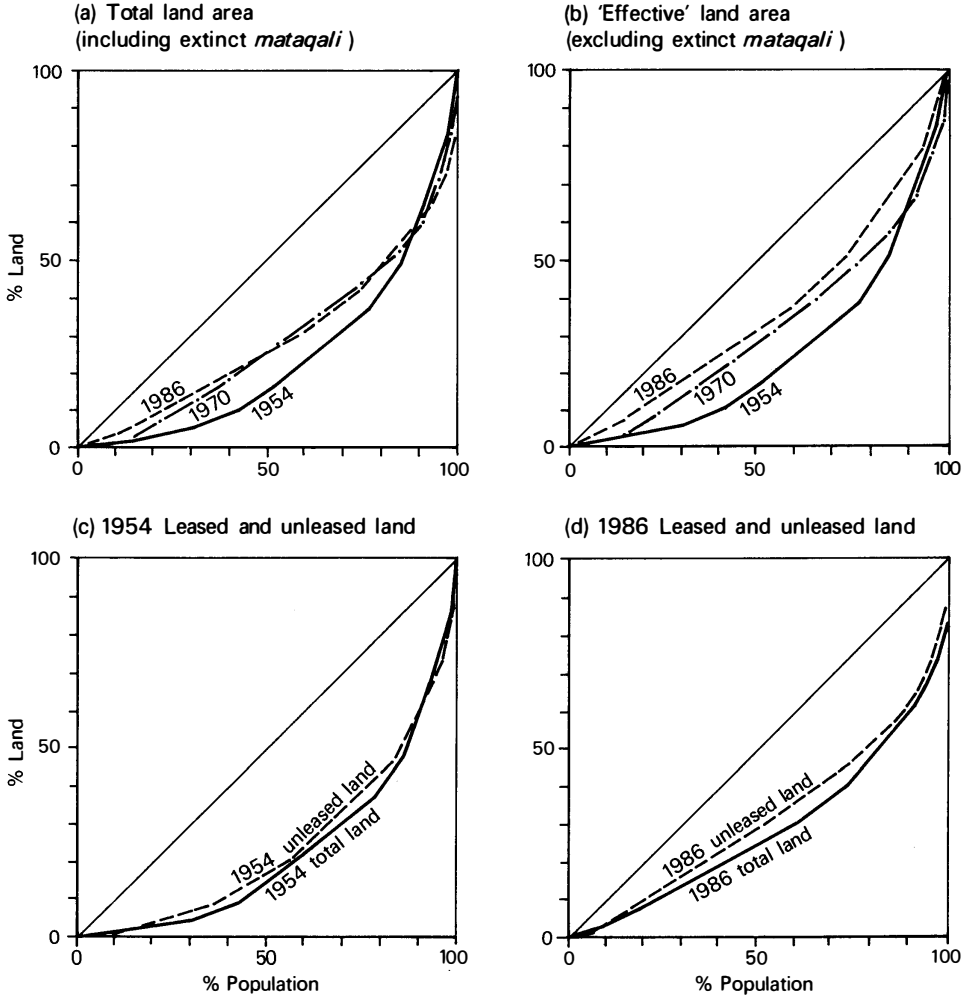
Note: Area leased in 1986 for Nasiganadua, Marakirua, Matauta and Nakolata has been estimated, as leases were recorded as being shared between these *mataqali*. Areas were allocated equally for shared leases. The leases recorded include only those registered by the NLTB and one Crown lease (Nainokanidua *mataqali* which is extinct and whose lands have been classified as Crown Schedule 'A'). It is known that there are a number of unrecorded leases. *Mataqali* are grouped by *yavusa*. In 1986 'other' was the pastor, from Lau, who lived alone. The date of Nayacakalou's survey has been unclear. Spate (1959:12) gives it as 1953, Lasaqa (1984:44) as 1959 and Nayacakalou (1978:xi) himself as 1954. The latter is used. Full population and land data for Draubuta are given in Appendix 1.

Sources: O.H.K. Spate, *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, Suva, Legislative Council Paper 13/1959:12; R.R. Nayacakalou, *Tradition and Change in the Fijian Village*, Suva, University of the South Pacific, 1978:20; I.Q. Lasaqa, *The Fijian People: Before and After Independence*, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1984:44; field surveys 1985-86; Fiji Native Land Trust Board records of leases 1986.

4 *Mataqali* which have become extinct since 1954 have been excluded from the 1970 and 1986 analyses. The upper limit of 7.2 hectares has fallen since 1970 because of the death of the last member of the Matauta *mataqali*. In 1970 the next best well-endowed *mataqali* had only 2.25 hectares per capita. See Appendix I for details.

These figures can be compared with the present structure (Table 3.2) and several conclusions are apparent from these data. First, there has been a marked decline in the area of land leased by about a half over the thirty-two year period.⁵ This reflects both the increase in population and the change from tenancy-at-will to secure NLTB leases which meant long-term loss of land. It is likely that this trend will continue and not only will no new land be freed up for tenancies, but also there will be pressure not to renew NLTB leases when they come up for renewal.

Figure 3.1 Landholding in Draubuta 1954-86



Sources: See Table 3.2.

5 The real decline in the amount of land leased may be less than this suggests because of some present informal leasing for which full details could not be obtained.

The retreat of tenant farming from village land has been accelerated during the recent political crises. Although villagers and Indian tenants appeared to have harmonious day-to-day relations, both economically (borrowing or hiring equipment and labour) and socially (drinking *yaqona*, speaking the Fijian language, or chatting about the weather), latent suspicion and disharmony amongst some of the villagers was manifested in Draubuta following the May 1987 coup. Two Indo-Fijian families who were still tenants-at-will had their houses stoned and were told to leave their land (which they did). Another household with a registered title has moved its residence away from the village for safety. In 1988 the land and houses of these evicted tenants were occupied by villagers.

The second conclusion from the above data is that population growth has not occurred evenly amongst the *mataqali*. Since 1954 three further *mataqali* (Matauta, Nakiova and Burekalou) appear to have become extinct, though none seems to have been officially registered as such (Appendix 2). Land holding and population growth thus have been concentrated into a fewer number of units. Also the relative size of remaining units has changed markedly. The resident populations of *mataqali* with good land (Nasiganadua, Nakolata, Naividugu, Naqara and, most significantly, Marakirua) have all grown appreciably. But land-scarce or bush *mataqali* (Nabunitu, Nalecava and Nameremere) have shed population (through migration) in both relative and absolute terms (Lasaqa 1984:44).

Thirdly, and most interestingly, the Lorenz curves (Figure 3.1) reveal that the changes in population and leasing have led to greater equality of landholding between, if not necessarily within, the remaining *mataqali*. It may have been expected that increased population pressure would have compounded the problem of inequalities that Spate noted in Draubuta (1959:12). Yet this is not so. The Lorenz curves showing inter-*mataqali* land distribution in 1954, 1970 and 1986 (based on total, not unleased land) indicates a clear trend towards the line of equality. Further, when it is appreciated that the 'stock' of land has decreased (with newly extinct *mataqali*), the approximation to equality is even more dramatic. Thus, population change (mainly through out-migration rather than fertility differences) has led to a greater congruence between resident population and *mataqali* land endowment. The 1967 relaxation of regulations and the allowing of greater freedom of movement probably was crucial in this regard for it allowed members of land-scarce *mataqali* to move elsewhere in search of better opportunities. In a way, then, Draubuta has reverted to what may be considered the 'traditional' (not colonial) pattern of relative equality of land holding between clans, as a result of individual decisions to migrate, and in spite of, not because of, the colonial conservation policy which aimed to protect that traditional system. What seemed so inequitable to Spate may simply have been the artificial maintenance of a resident population, through strict exemption laws, that was out of balance with land resources. When the laws were relaxed, people moved. What had caused the inequality, it could be argued, was not the inherent inequality of the traditional system, but the suppressing of normal processes of change by colonial land and exemption laws.

The second two Lorenz curves show another aspect of land equality, that of leasing. Patterns of inequality, especially for 1954, are very marked for total land holding. But when the analysis is repeated for the land remaining after areas have been leased, there is more equality. In other words, the leasing of land was by those *mataqali* who had relative surplus (an expected decision) and villagers shared the remaining land more equitably than may have appeared in

Nayacakalou's analysis. The leasing of land has not exacerbated land inequalities in the village. This should not be surprising, for traditional systems allowed the granting of land rights (where land could be spared) to outsiders. This has merely continued in a different guise. Land-short *mataqali* will resist leasing; those relatively well-endowed will allow it.

These comments relate to land tenure amongst *mataqali* and this is a primary consideration given the official recognition of these units as the landowners. Yet, for everyday needs, it is distribution within *mataqali* and even *tokatoka* boundaries that is of more concern to villagers. In general, the allocation of land within these units is carried out, as always, through customary means: *kerekere* requests accompanied by *sevu* presentations to the head of the clan. The assent of all members, or at least the senior male members, is necessary. In Draubuta this continued to work. There were cases of new households (retirees or younger men now with their own households) being able to obtain *titei* land and, in one case, others agreed to reorganize their plots to accommodate the newcomer. Broadly speaking, these traditional systems of allocation have ensured that the relative equality of land endowment between clans (in 1986 if not 1954) is matched at the individual level. Apart from one or two examples of Fijians with leases, there is no individual in Draubuta who has emerged as a large landowner as a result of land accumulation through traditional means. But traditional requests and presentations cannot always be met. On the good land close to the river, it has become very difficult for families to expand their gardens. There was one case recently where a rice farmer of proven ability had difficulty in getting extra land from his *mataqali*, though he eventually succeeded. For others in Marakirua, Nakolata or Naividugu *mataqali* it can be equally difficult, and for newcomers, whether returnees to the villages or young men, finding new land can be almost impossible. There is simply no room for new large-scale individual farming in Draubuta.

Land shortage is compounded by differences in land quality. Nabunitu *mataqali*, like six of the others, is a bush *mataqali*, most of the area is heavy bush and gardens are restricted to small bush plots (see Figure 3.2 for Draubuta clan boundaries). It is interesting to note that Nabunitu has diminished in size since 1954, with high out-migration and a resident population now of three households and eighteen people (compared with 24 people in 1959 and 40 in 1970). In addition, one of its members secured a registered lease from what was then a near-extinct *mataqali* (and is now extinct — Matauta) on good land nearer the village. Of all the bush *mataqali*, two are registered as extinct, three more are apparently so, and only two (including Nabunitu) are being actively cultivated. There are three *mataqali* which are partly under bush and partly on good, cleared land and their numbers seem to have been relatively static or risen slightly. Of the remaining seven *mataqali* in 1986, all on good land, two (one of which is registered as extinct) were given over fully to leases to Indians; one had nearly all its good land so leased; two belonged to clans whose numbers had dwindled to the brink of extinction (one was mostly leased); and the other two were characterized by high populations, growth, and intensive Fijian agricultural development, principally in rice. Increased cashcropping has meant that nearly all good *mataqali* land close to the village is now heavily cropped. The land issue is being focused only on that part of village land which is of good quality and suited to rice.

Exchanges of land between *mataqali* seem to have become much more rare. There was only one registered lease of agricultural land by a village Fijian from another *mataqali*, though three others stated that they had 'native leases' which, it

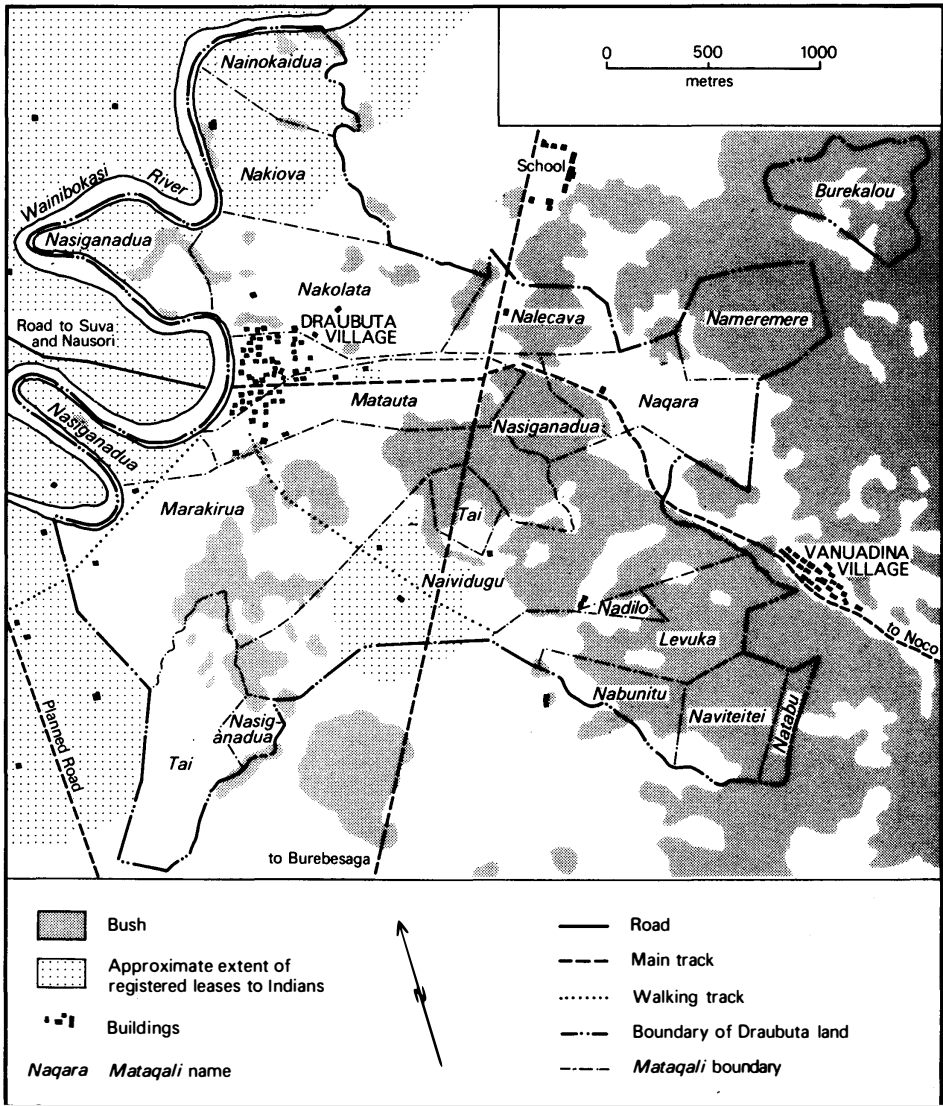
transpired, were not registered. The one registered agricultural lease was possible only because the landowning *mataqali* was facing extinction. The Fijian tenant household now grows rice on the land and, as the landowning group has disappeared, they are in the unique position in Draubuta of having secured a *de facto* lease-in-perpetuity. Elsewhere in the village, however, there were very few instances of outsiders having gained rights to a *mataqali*'s land. There were two cases of a man from outside the village having got *vakavanua* land by virtue of his wife's or mother's family links with the village, and some men from Ra seem to have moved into the village and been absorbed by one *mataqali*. However, some informal leases seemed to be in operation. The areas registered as leased from Nasiganadua and Tai *mataqali* were less than was apparent from survey work. Tai had no leases registered but much of its land was informally leased, a large part being used as grazing land by Fijians from nearby Nakaile village and a further area being cultivated by an Indian (again an informal lease). Because the Tai *mataqali* consists of only two resident households, only one of its small plots of land (near to the old Draubuta village site and bush-covered) and a small area of its second larger plot were being used by its members. In another case, one of the leading Fijian rice growers has been able to use the land of Matuata *mataqali* (extinct), though the terms of this use were not clear. As a further example of informal arrangements, the land of extinct *mataqali*, such as Burekalou, Nadilo and Natabu, is being cultivated by members of related clans (again a traditional practice) though, as bush lands, these are not greatly sought after for cashcropping. Thus, there is a degree of both traditional inter-clan reallocation and the old informal tenancy-at-will operating in the village.

Another feature of Draubuta land tenure is sharecropping, of which there is but one interesting example, of very long standing. In 1967 an enterprising villager (an exempted village *galala*) entered into an informal partnership with an Indian farmer who had a little land elsewhere and, later, ran a taxi business. The land is Draubuta village land, money for harvesting is provided by the Indian family, labour is provided equally by both families, the management is shared (though the leadership and most expertise is Indian), and the output in bags of rice is split equally. The long success of the venture is now reflected in expansion plans. For the Fijian family it has meant a profitable specialization in rice — the growing of root crops is now for home consumption only. Similar rice sharecropping (or 'cut-lease') arrangements were observed in other nearby villages and are common in the rice areas, according to a Ministry of Primary Industries' official.

In summary, the land problem in Draubuta is not just one of absolute pressure on good land, but of a land tenure system which is now out of step with the size and needs of the present population. Whereas, traditionally, the land of extinct *mataqali* might have been available for others, it is now effectively lost to the village. What has happened is that those *mataqali* with bush land unsuitable for rice and other cash crops have moved away from the village and effectively de-populated their lands. In contrast, the good land is under great pressure from expanding *mataqali* or is locked up in long-term leases. *De facto* land tenure has departed significantly from both the structure and intention of land law. The rigid clan system and boundaries have been imposed and cast a straightjacket on village agriculture. Whereas traditional mechanisms of *vakavanua* and exchange have been used, and still are, to circumvent this structure, population pressure and the loss of some of the land of extinct *mataqali* has created a shortage that means out-migration for many. In the face of population growth and cashcrop-

ping, rather than giving protection and opportunity, the land laws have created a system of 'shared poverty' in land (Geertz 1963).

Figure 3.2 Draubuta land tenure 1986

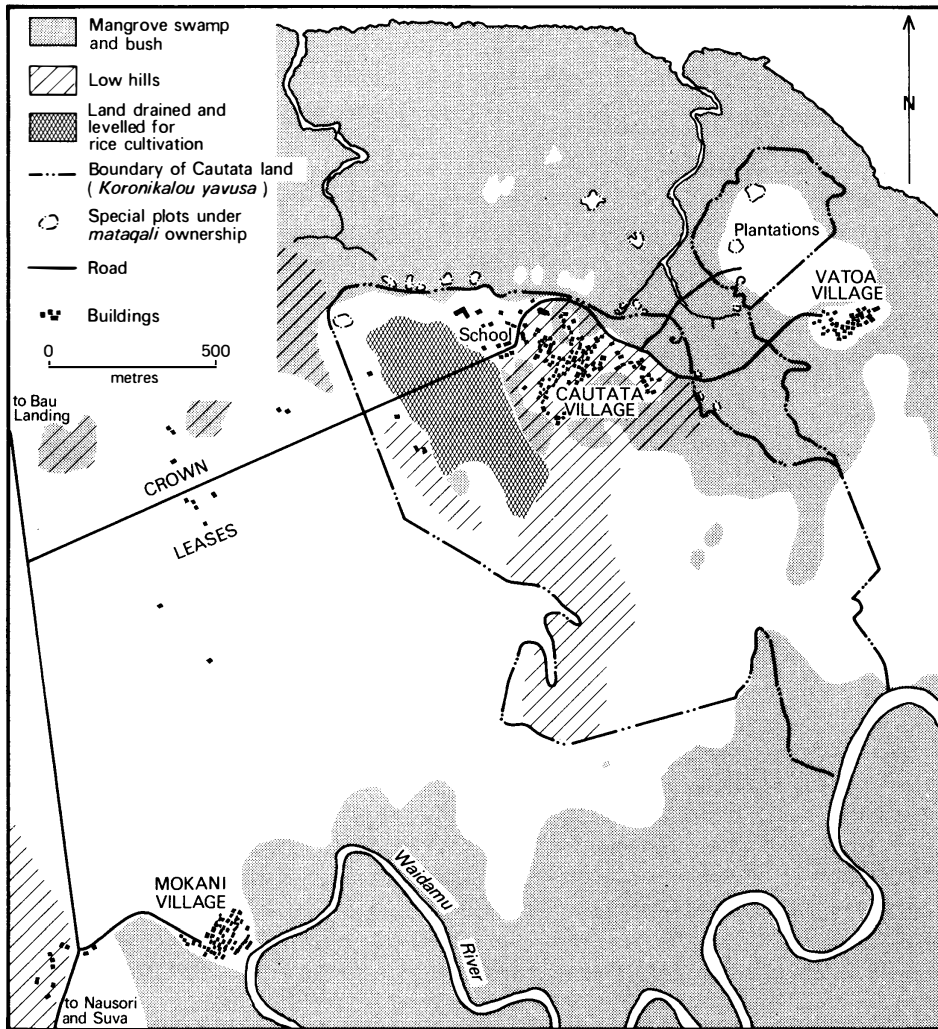


Sources: Native Lands Commission map (1920) and aerial photograph 78/19/853.

In Cautata, the situation is similar and, if anything, land shortage is more acute. Unfortunately, a similar detailed analysis is not possible because there does

not exist a good base line study (as for Draubuta with Nayacakalou) and also because there is only one registered landowning unit, the *yavusa* Koronikalou.⁶ However, some general comments are possible.

Figure 3.3 Cautata village land 1986



Sources: Native Lands Commission map (not dated) and aerial photograph 78/19/848.

The recent population growth of Cautata has been dramatic (Table 3.1) yet the land resources of the village have always been limited. There is a total land area (excluding mangrove swamp) of 202 hectares and this is split between low hills and flats. The village is situated on one of the hills and there are old fort sites on nearby hills and ridges which seem to be under threat from urban and garden

6 Although there is only one registered landowning unit, the *yavusa*, there are five *mataqali* within this unit: Koroisovivi, Nakula, Gusuna, Koroni and Nauluvatu. Nauluvatu appears to have become extinct as no households were recorded as belonging to this *mataqali*. There is no map available showing the boundaries of the *mataqali* and most land seems to be allocated within each *tokatoka* unit.

sprawl. There is also evidence of fish traps on the coast, and marine and mangrove resources have always been of great importance to Cautata. Cautata's flat land is especially swampy and unsuited to cultivation of most crops. The area did support *via* gardens in the past (Parry 1977) but after these were deserted and before rice was introduced, the tracts of flat land were uncultivated. In recent years, drainage ditches have been built by the Ministry of Primary Industries as part of its rice intensification programs and this drainage has re-introduced an agricultural system that can support intensive cultivation on the flats. However, only a few have access to this land and the majority of households are confined to small gardens of *tavioka*, *dalo*, pineapples and vegetables on the hill slopes. Even the hill land is becoming more scarce as Cautata's own form of urban sprawl occupies more land on the hillocks.

Significantly there are no leases of village land to Indians and only one registered agricultural (Class J) lease to a villager (3.1 hectares). There are eleven 'residential' leases to villagers totalling less than 2 hectares but these do not impact upon agricultural land availability. The acuteness of land shortage in Cautata is reflected in the attempts, some successful, of Cautata households to lease land from neighbouring villages such as Dravo.

But the real issue of land tenure and the contradiction between traditional equity and institutional rigidity is manifested in what has happened to the small area of flat land that has become available for rice. The landholding pattern is given in Figure 3.3. Only ten farmers have land on the flats and their rights were obtained mainly in the past when the land was seen to be of relatively little value. It is virtually impossible for new farmers to get this land through traditional means, and existing rice growers complain that they cannot get more *mataqali* land to expand their production. Unlike Draubuta, land distribution on an individual level (if not inter-clan) has become highly unequal. The village, understandably, is reluctant to grant any NLTB leases to land, thus alienating a scarce resource to an individual, and the traditional system cannot cope with the problem either. There is a dual structure, with a few fortunate enough to have flat land and the majority with small hill gardens. Those with flat land are fighting to keep it and cannot expand, and the need to give all households access to garden land has meant that the hillsides have become a patchwork of small gardens.

Thus Cautata's economy has become even more suburban than Draubuta and agriculture plays a relatively small role in its economy. Whereas in Draubuta land inequality and shortage resulted in out-migration, in Cautata people seem to have stayed but many have become *de facto* proletarians, with very little land and a dependence on non-village sources of incomes.

So Draubuta and Cautata are case studies where common problems (population and economic pressure on land and a rigid tenure system) are being met in different ways. But they are not unique villages, nor do they encompass the range of issues and responses to the land problem. Perhaps their close proximity to the Nausori rice country, and its inclusion within the Government's Agricultural Development Programme for rice intensification, makes more demands on land there. Yet similar processes, if not the intensity of land pressure, are apparent in other villages. Ward (1985, 1986a) reviewed the changes in three villages (more remote than Draubuta or Cautata) over the period 1958-83. He found that there had been considerable commercial intrusion, through cashcropping or livestock farming, a decrease in informal leasing to non-*mataqali* members, and a marked decline in the flexibility of land tenure. A mounting inequality in village land

holding was apparent (Ward 1987:43). Even in the early 1960s, researchers noted that land shortages were emerging in villages in intensive cashcropping areas and old flexible systems were disappearing (Belshaw 1964b:200-2; Watters 1969a:166-7). However, other village studies, especially in the outer islands, indicate that traditional flexibility is being maintained. Bayliss-Smith, for example, notes that on Koro Island there is considerable use of *mataqali* land by non-*mataqali* members and, in this situation 'where there is no overall land shortage ... [NLTB rules] are disregarded in most cases of need' (Bayliss-Smith 1976:44).

Perhaps land shortages could be eased if the leasing mechanisms through the NLTB worked well to give efficient farmers (Indian or Fijian) secure access to land and to give landowners some rent income and a reserve of land for subsistence needs. This is not happening. Within the study villages and others, it was apparent that residents were unhappy about leases of village land to Indians (no matter how good their day-to-day relations with them as neighbours might be) and even to local Fijians. There was much talk that when the thirty year leases expired, they would not be renewed. This was so even in 1954 (Nayacakalou 1978:24) and has been in the forefront of recent Fijian political debate.

In some ways this reluctance to renew is understandable given the inability of villagers to get land from their own or another village *mataqali*. It is even more so when the rental returns to the village are analysed. In Draubuta, there are a total of fifteen registered leases of village land (agricultural and residential but not including Crown 'Schedule A' leases). Four of these are to local Fijians, though only one is an agricultural lease. The leases cover a total of 22.7 hectares and total rental income per year is \$529.93 (making an average of \$23.33 per ha per annum). These rentals are low when it is considered that a hectare of good land in Draubuta has the potential to produce 3 tonnes of rice per crop, yielding close to F\$1000 (Overton 1988d), or large quantities of taro or cassava for sale at urban markets.

But the low rental returns are even more apparent when the NLTB system of distributing the proceeds is considered. The \$23.33 rental per hectare yields only \$10.50 for distribution amongst ordinary *mataqali* members who may number several scores (when non-residents are accounted for). For the village as a whole, then, the total rental income of about \$530 is divided as follows:

| | |
|----------|---|
| \$132.50 | to the NLTB for costs |
| \$26.50 | to the head of the <i>vanua</i> |
| \$53.00 | between the two heads of the <i>yavusa</i> who lease land |
| \$79.50 | amongst the six <i>mataqali</i> heads |
| \$238.50 | amongst several hundred commoners |

It is hardly surprising that, in household surveys, no-one considered income from rents large enough to mention. It is true that some of the proceeds going to chiefs are redistributed to the people through gifts or village projects but these are small at the local level. The cash amounts, even for the *mataqali* and *yavusa* heads, are minimal. For a member of a *mataqali* who wants to take up, say, rice farming, finding little or no land available and with only a few cents received from the clan rent of leased land, the desire to oust Indian tenants is great and opposition to granting NLTB leases, even to other *mataqali* members, is understandable.

Thus, in Fiji, there is a mounting crisis over land shortage and land distribution. The present legal framework is not working effectively, the commercial leasing alternative is being lost, and traditional systems, rigidified during the

colonial period, do not allow for the efficient allocation of land in the villages, even if they do permit a degree of equity. There is structural inequality — the codified boundaries and clan listings — and this imposes a pattern that is complicated by leasing, which translates into individual inequalities in access to land (as at Cautata), although mollified by informal and traditional mechanisms (as at Draubuta).

Group farming: a communalist alternative?

In response to the difficulties of obtaining village land for cashcropping, there is a discernible move towards clan-based enterprises but this has been initiated more by the state than by communities themselves. The reasons for government backing for this mode of agricultural organization are: easier access to land (it is rightly assumed that *mataqali* will be more inclined to release land for group rather than individual use); more employment generation (group farms will utilize the labour of the clan, not just a household, thus maximizing the number of workers if not hours worked and productivity); and better credit availability (registered group farms can obtain credit from the Fiji Development Bank whereas individual Fijians on unleased, unregistered *mataqali* land cannot).

The group farm model, its relation to the rice schemes, and the problems and prospects of two case studies are examined elsewhere (Overton 1988d). In brief, though the potential for these farms may appear bright, there have been considerable setbacks. Some groups have little cohesion as they involve a number of different *mataqali*, administrative bottlenecks in registration and credit have occurred, and future labour supply problems are likely if participants do not see returns in the form of wages or profit sharing. However, even if they do not succeed, they represent an interesting response by government and villagers to the land problem. A resuscitation of communal modes of production reflects not so much the strong communal affinities and organization within the villages (most farming is done by household units), but more the rigid communal land tenure system. The rationale is that land locked in a communal system can be released only by group initiatives, regardless of their irrelevance as economic (if not social or cultural) units.

Leased land: institutional facility, individual improbity

Land tenure laws not only protect communal ownership but also facilitate the release of customary land for individual tenancies. This 'native lease' system is of great importance for many Indo-Fijian tenants as well as for Fijians who wish to become individual farmers with registered leases (Ushman 1984). It is possible to compare the operation of the two related sets of laws — customary/colonial (as above for the villages) and commercial/individual. The leasing mechanisms, as employed at Waibau and Lomaivuna, were designed to promote the emergence of a class of Fijian peasant farmers, each with secure leases and all living as owner-occupiers. However, the examples of Waibau especially and also Lomaivuna show that both capitalist and non-formal exchange relationships have penetrated into the resettlement areas and this has major implications for the efficacy of the 'native lease' model for Fijian rural development and differentiation.

Waibau and Lomaivuna plots are held under leasehold tenure. They are registered as native leases with, in most instances, thirty year terms (there are some twenty-seven Crown leases under similar terms at Lomaivuna). The average annual rent for sample households in Waibau was \$155 per holding (\$22 per ha), and in Lomaivuna it was \$100 per holding (\$21 per ha). With such low rents it is possible for settlers to rely mainly on subsistence production, selling only sufficient produce to cover rent and basic cash outlays. But the eventual success of cashcropping has meant that most settlers are now committed to commercial agriculture and many spend considerable sums on farm inputs such as labour, weedicides and fertilizer. Furthermore, the profits obtainable from ginger, pineapple or *dalo* cultivation have led to increased outside interest in settlement plots. These have assumed commercial value and sales of leases have become common. Some of the 'casualties' on the schemes in recent years, and the turnover of leases, are attributable more to the demand for land and the good returns from sales of leases than to the failure of farming enterprises. At Waibau, one lease of about 10 hectares was said to have changed hands for \$45,000, though it was not possible to verify this.

One index of commercialization of land tenure has been the changing ethnic composition of landholding on the schemes. The survival rates given in Table 2.1 indicate that 12 per cent of the settlers at Lomaivuna and 24 per cent of those at Waibau are non-Fijians who have taken up land since the mid-1960s. At Waibau, all the original settlers were indigenous Fijians, but now, of the seventy occupied allotments, some thirteen are leased (officially) by Chinese, two by Indo-Fijians and two by a Rotuman. At Lomaivuna at its foundation, there were four Indian, nine Rotuman, two Chinese and five part-European leaseholders out of a total of 200 plots (Land Development Authority 1966: 2). In 1985, there were twenty-three Indian, two Chinese and about four Rotuman and part-European plot holders, a major increase in Indian but a decline in other 'non-Fijian' landholding.⁷ These changes have been in the face of uneven population growth and recent decline, probably mainly because the young families of the 1960s settlers have since reached adulthood and left the area.

Table 3.3 Lomaivuna and Waibau: population 1966-86^a

| | Waibau settlement | | Lomaivuna settlement | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| | Population | Households | Population | Households |
| 1966 census | 265 | 46 | 1261 | 223 |
| 1976 census | 200 | 36 | 1515 | 236 |
| 1986 Census | 135 | 23 | 1399 | 219 |
| Field survey 1986 | | 48 | | 199 |

^aThe census data for Waibau seem significantly lower than the *de facto* number of households on the scheme. This may be due to a different definition of the scheme boundaries, perhaps excluding the upper and newer half of the scheme. The 1986 field survey for Lomaivuna is of agricultural households only and excludes the houses of government officials, teachers, and those whose houses border or are on the scheme but whose land is outside.

Sources: F.H.A.G. Zwart, *Report on the Census of the Population 1966*, Suva, Legislative Council Paper 9/1968; R. Lodhia, *Report on the Census of the Population 1976*, Suva, Parliamentary Paper 13/1977; field surveys 1985-86. 1986 census data were provided before publication of the full Census report by kind permission of the Bureau of Statistics.

7 This analysis is based on an examination of leaseholders' names. Whilst it is relatively easy to pick Chinese and Indian names, it is more difficult to distinguish part-Europeans and Rotumans from ethnic Fijians. These may be under-estimated for 1985. See also Table 2.1 above.

Despite the registration of all leases on the schemes, a considerable variety of *de facto* forms of land tenure is apparent. Most settlers are owner-occupiers and this is especially true for Lomaivuna. But at Waibau, where official control over settlement has always been less, there are a number of different forms of land tenure:

- ***Fijian absentee leaseholder with sub-lessee.*** At least five Waibau plots are operated under this arrangement. Fijian absentee leaseholding was present early on. In 1965 Ward reported that several Waibau plots were held by Fijians who had land or worked elsewhere (Ward 1965:183). When there is a sub-lessee, the leaseholder (in all cases now urban businessmen or officials who are relative newcomers as leaseholders at Waibau) allows the occupants to cultivate the land much as they please. In two instances they paid a cash rent to the leaseholder (less than the NLTB rate), but in the others no money changed hands, although produce was given at times. In all these cases, the sub-lessees were related through kin (sometimes distantly) to the leaseholder. Presentations of *yaqona* and/or *tabua* had been made and the leaseholder, usually committed to urban enterprises, was content to let the land be occupied and to rely on appreciation of land value rather than rent as a return on his investment.
- ***Absentee leaseholder with employee manager.*** There was one example of this on one of the large blocks at Waibau, originally (and inappropriately) designated for pastoral use. The owner was a prominent Suva lawyer who employed a manager (no relation) to run the farm. The manager took care of the day-to-day operations of the farm, including hiring and supervising labour, but the lawyer was involved in major decisions over what to grow and also seemed to control the marketing side of the enterprise. The manager's previous experience was in village agriculture and he received a wage only slightly above the average rural unskilled rate.

A second farm was run similarly but details were unavailable. The lease was held by a senior government official who seemed to have some control over the operation of the farm but the occupants were hired and seemed to be relatives. It was probably the best situated and most productive property on the scheme.

- ***Sharecropping.*** This is an arrangement whereby the leaseholder agrees to let another party use his land in return for a share of profits. It is distinguished from the sub-lessee arrangement above because it is more of a commercially based partnership arrangement. At Waibau, this was relatively common (four such arrangements were found but there may have been more) especially in the ginger economy.⁸ Because ginger requires virgin land, the back plots at Waibau are particularly attractive to prospective growers; these blocks, hitherto remote and unappealing, are held by Fijians mainly involved in root crops.

The Chinese, the most energetic ginger producers, hold thirteen Waibau plots but these are all located near the main road on the lower half of the scheme. They have found it difficult to get new leases elsewhere in the scheme, especially as the demand for ginger land has increased and the existing leaseholders have become more aware of the value of their land.

8 It proved very difficult to obtain information on Chinese formal and informal leases as most of the Chinese were wary of outsiders and unwilling to talk.

What has evolved is an arrangement whereby outsiders, in this case Chinese, have provided the expertise and capital (the cost of bush clearing, water pumps, transport etc.) and the leaseholders the land, some labour and, often, contacts with other Fijians to obtain more labour. The profits are shared (equally, it seems). This cut-leasing has been very effective in extending ginger cultivation without alienating further land from the owners. However, in a few years they may be left with exhausted, cleared land, although perhaps a good profit. For their part, the Chinese have been able to continue their leading role in the industry without having to purchase land.

Even sharecropping mechanisms, though, are diverse. The profit sharing arrangement and agreements over supplying land, labour and capital are a matter for individual negotiation. Most leaseholders stay resident on their land, but others move off to let their partners on. In one case, there had been a complete, unofficial, swap of properties: a Fijian family with the father in good wage employment in the area had temporarily exchanged its back plots for a Chinese-held plot near the road.⁹ The Chinese owner was able to use the Fijian land for ginger and the Fijian family had the convenience of being nearer to the father's place of work, though the land was of poor quality.

- Another variety of land tenure was *vakavanua* leasing, not on the schemes themselves but on their margins and often involving scheme settlers. Land on the outside of both schemes is held mostly under Fijian traditional tenure and much of this is 'reserve' land, able to be leased to ethnic Fijians only. Some scheme residents, and members of their families, have been able to gain access to this land through informal leases. It is *vakavanua*, obtained through ceremonial presentations, but is insecure and has been restricted in practice to ethnic Fijians. Some settlers are using such land for grazing cattle or so that their adult children can get land close to home. The settlement is expanding then, but the land is of poorer quality and the tenure insecure.

Nor are Waibau and Lomaivuna unique in the operation of an informal land market and accumulation of land. Eaton (1988b) has reported that many Indian and Fijian tobacco growers in the Nadi region were planting on a tenancy-at-will basis, being unable to get formally registered titles. These involved mainly verbal agreements between growers and land owners. *Vakavanua* leasing is common practice also for sugar land (Prasad 1984); despite the fact that sugar contracts are granted only to those with registered leases, the FSC accepts cane from those on informally leased land on an *ad hoc* basis.

As well as these varieties of land tenure on the schemes, another important aspect of land holding is accumulation of plots. Of the seventy plots at Waibau, only twenty-nine are occupied by leaseholders of single blocks. Fifteen individuals (Fijian, Chinese and Indo-Fijian) hold a further thirty-three plots.¹⁰ The 1986 Waibau situation is summarized below:

9 This case, in fact, was even more complex. The Fijian family exchanged their land but as the new block did not have a house, the Chinese arranged for them to occupy the vacant dwelling on an adjoining Chinese property, with an absentee leaseholder.

10 These fifteen individuals include those listed in Table 3.4 as Fijian and non-Fijian multiple owners (together fourteen owners with twenty-nine plots) and one absentee Fijian who holds four plots (thus a total of fifteen people with thirty-three plots). The latter individual is included in the 'absentee Fijian' category in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Land tenure in Waibau 1986

| | Number of plots | Number of owners | Total area (ha) | Av. area per owner (ha) |
|---|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Fijian single plot, owner-occupier ^a | 29 | 29 | 204.70 | 7.06 |
| Fijian multiple plots, owner-occupier | 11 | 5 | 51.64 | 10.33 |
| Absentee Fijian owner ^b | 9 | 6 | 241.44 | 40.24 |
| Non-Fijian multiple plots, owner-occupier | 18 | 9 | 86.82 | 9.65 |
| Vacant | 3 | - | 16.75 | - |
| Total | 70 | 49 | 601.35 | 12.27 |

^aIncludes one plot held and occupied by a village co-operative organization.

^bIncludes one owner of four plots, the rest are single holdings. The area of these holdings is greatly inflated by the two large 'pastoral' leases, totalling 140 hectares, which are mainly under heavy bush.

Sources: Native Land Trust Board, Arrears Report 18 November 1985, unpublished; fieldwork 1986.

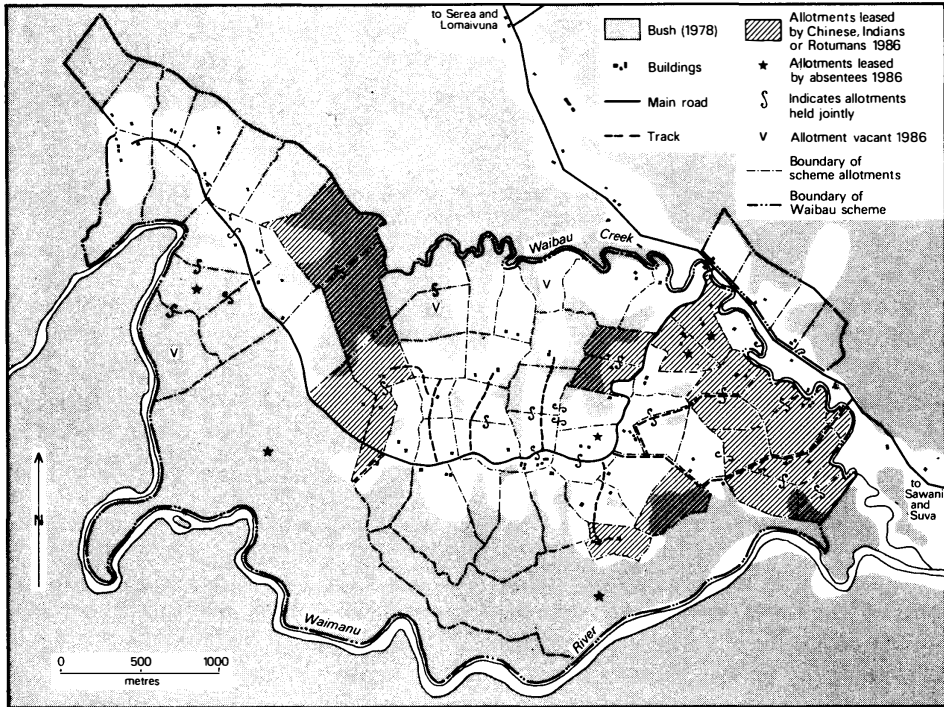
Forms of land accumulation are diverse. Of the Fijian owner-occupiers of multiple holdings, most are the result of expansion from original holdings to surrounding plots, as they have become available. Such accumulation began soon after the scheme was initiated. Ward reported that ten of his surveyed nineteen leases were held under multiple ownership (Ward 1965: 183-4). In two instances now these seem to have been also to accommodate growing families, with sons operating second plots but remaining within the household. In another case, a Fijian is cultivating and living on a second plot (a better site) and sub-leasing his neighbouring original plot to a Chinese. However, perhaps the main reason for accumulation by resident Fijians is that they have found their first plots too small. Most of this multiple holding is on the lower half of the scheme where plots are smaller and over which the ginger frontier has already passed, leaving land that is not as productive as that further up the scheme. All the non-Fijians on the scheme hold more than one plot,¹¹ but, like the resident Fijian multiple plot-holders, thirteen of the eighteen plots are in the lower half of the scheme. Thus, whilst such accumulation by resident Fijians and Chinese has concentrated land in fewer hands and has cut the number of households resident on the scheme, it has resulted mostly from agronomic imperatives, rather than widespread capitalist accumulation. Multiple holders have only slightly larger average holdings than single plot Fijian owner occupiers (9.65 hectares for Chinese and Indians and 10.33 hectares for Fijian multiple holders, compared with 7.06 hectares for Fijian single plot holders).

The most significant form of accumulation, however, and the one with the greatest implications for the future economy of Waibau, is the holding of large blocks by absentee Fijians. The two large pastoral blocks, although not part of multiple holdings and, as yet, mostly still in bush, represent over 23 per cent of the total area of the Waibau scheme. In addition there are four blocks, totalling 39 hectares, registered in the name of a well-known Fijian agricultural entrepreneur, with extensive land holdings elsewhere. Residents stated that he did not reside on the property, planted a minimal amount of crops, while he had sold his land two years previously he did not register the new title and was in dispute with the new

11 This is except for one Chinese who only has one Waibau plot but is an absentee. He is the second partner to the arrangement mentioned in footnote 9.

occupant.¹² Such dealings by speculators are a further indication of an emerging market for land at Waibau and pose a threat to the continued existence of Fijian smallholding on the scheme.

Figure 3.4 Waibau settlement scheme and land tenure 1986



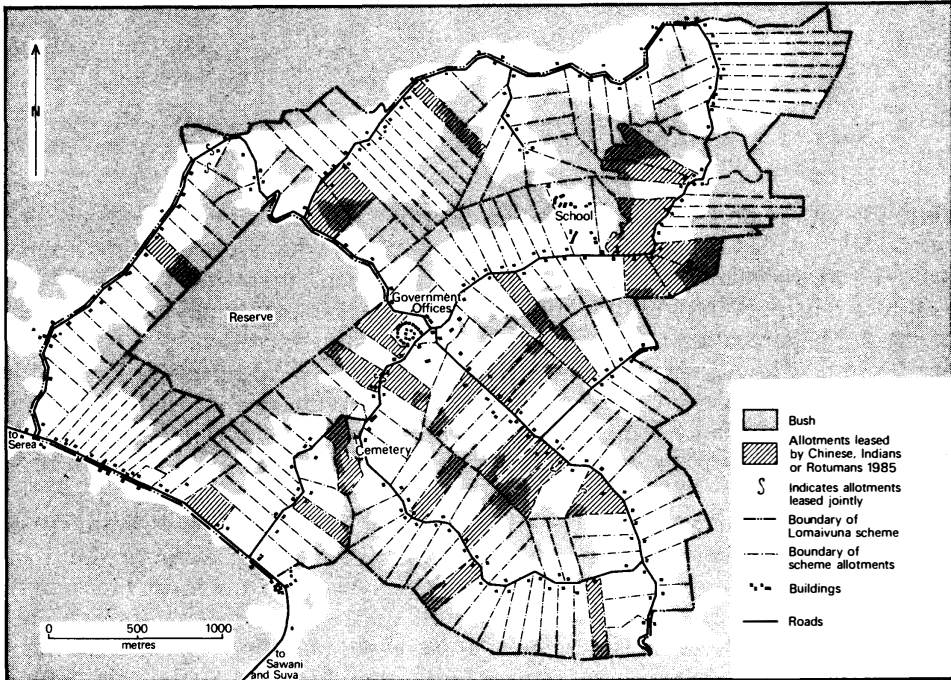
Sources: Aerial photograph 78/24/404; Native Lands Commission map (not dated); Native Land Trust Board Arrears Report 18 November 1985, unpublished; field survey 1986.

At Lomaivuna there has been far less overt land dealing, probably because the slow progress of the agricultural economy of the scheme has kept land prices down. Another factor is that ginger production at Lomaivuna is much more tightly regulated under the National Marketing Authority's immature ginger program, which imposes strict quotas for growers, so that production and the demand for land is restricted. At Lomaivuna, where government control is tighter, there seemed to be official opposition to multiple leases and, certainly, few are held. Although a detailed survey of informal land arrangements was not undertaken (as at Waibau), it was nonetheless apparent that here, too, day-to-day practices of land tenure are working outside the bounds of the formal system. An extended family of Indo-Fijians, for example, holds some nine plots (under seven different names), but they are run as six farm units. There are two other cases of official multiple ownership, though these span only two plots each. Other groups of two or three plots (sometimes with land outside the scheme) were also being

¹² The lack of registration is confirmed by NLTB records for November 1985, which show this individual still as the registered leaseholder of four plots.

run together with father and sons being separate registered leaseholders. These family enterprises were not apparent from the official land records.

Figure 3.5 Lomaivuna settlement scheme and land tenure 1985



Sources: Aerial photograph 78/25/531-2; Ministry of Primary Industries map (MS, 1985); Native Land Trust Board Arrears Report 18 November 1985, unpublished; field survey 1985.

Also, there was a case of a Fijian household that was in the process of buying a second property in 1985. They had arrived in Lomaivuna only in recent years but had worked hard to develop their first property, extend the house, secure a good ginger contract and operate a store. Their aim was to sell this plot as a profitable concern and buy up undeveloped land which they could again build up — there was a large quantity of suitable bush that could be cleared. In other informal arrangements some blocks which were vacant (the leaseholders were not resident) were being farmed by neighbours, relatives, or partners. There was also an instance on one of the multiple holdings of a house, but not the land, being sublet to a family with no land on the scheme. So Lomaivuna, also, shows the signs of a complex *de facto* land tenure structure.

Thus, far from the original objectives of establishing a community of peasants, Waibau, and to a lesser extent Lomaivuna, now exhibit the results of the operation of a commercial land market, coupled with a variety of loose and informal tenure and labour agreements. These informal tenure arrangements, whilst not strictly illegal in most cases, certainly act counter to the intention of the laws and tenancy agreements. Individuals have sought their own solutions to land problems that could not be resolved within the formal systems. The result has been a complex pattern of tenure and economic relations. Major land holders and

commercial farmers (resident and absentee, newcomers and original settlers) exist side by side. Until now, those original settlers who have chosen a quiet part-commercial, part-subsistence life have survived. But with increasing land values and continued commercialization of production and land, the pressure and attraction to sell up may become too great. The Chinese and the 'Victoria Parade farmers' have moved in at Waibau and will continue to do so there and elsewhere.¹³ Waibau and Lomaivuna are linked to the city and the national economy through a complex web of investment, marketing, land holding and profit taking.

The limits to accumulation

Both the village and settlement scheme examples detailed above have been seen as models for Fijian rural development: one exploits what are seen as traditional values and a sense of community; the other is based upon individualism and commercialism. Both reflect the dualistic view of Fijian society and the entrenchment of this perception into a legal and administrative framework for regulating land tenure. The communal option, it was assumed, would prevent large-scale individual accumulation of land and, thus, socio-economic inequalities within villages. On the other hand, *galala* on leased land would develop into relatively homogeneous communities of prosperous peasants. Neither vision has been realized.

In his analysis of three villages resurveyed after twenty-five years, Ward (1985, 1986a) advanced the hypothesis that, as a result of commercialization, land accumulation was increasing within Fijian villages. He cited the formal leasing of large areas of good quality *mataqali* land by village members for pastoral farming. This, combined with other factors, such as increased mobility, wage employment and the individualization of economic activity, would mean that 'the polarization between the richer and the poorer in rural society will become more marked' (1986a:120). It is a model for socio-economic differentiation of Fijian villages based on land tenure and, undoubtedly, has been of importance in many villages where inequalities and tensions have increased.

Yet the evidence from Draubuta and Cautata — villages where land leasing, accumulation and shortage, as well as participation in the cash economy, have been of very long standing — suggests that there are distinct limits to the process of land accumulation within the village context. It is true that a number of individuals were able to obtain NLTB registered leases to land, thus removing them from communal control and assisting in individual-based agricultural development. No doubt many more would like to obtain such leases — certainly the attraction of rice farming is enough to encourage new growers to seek land or existing ones to extend their plantings. But they cannot. The very real perception of land shortage has meant that the landowners (including commoners and not just the clan heads) are opposed to the granting of new leases, even to their own. They have learned that leases mean loss of land, loss of control and minimal payback.

The result is that land accumulation in these villages has stopped. Those that were fortunate enough to grab their opportunity and get land have been able to

¹³ Victoria Parade is a main street in Suva where most of the government and many private offices are located. 'Victoria Parade' farmers may be a Pacific counterpart to the 'Pitt Street farmers' of Sydney or the 'Queen Street farmers' of Auckland. The Fijian variety, however, probably includes a higher proportion of bureaucrats and fewer businessmen.

maintain their gains (especially if they registered their lease) but now they are on the defensive, trying to protect what they have. In Cautata these 'opportunists' were the rice farmers on drained flats; in Draubuta they were the lucky ones with leases or secure clan rights on the good rice land near the village. For the rest there are now virtually no opportunities to increase their land holdings. Despite the inequalities in land holdings between *mataqali*, a process of adjustment (using traditional and non-formal mechanisms of redistribution) seems to have occurred whereby individual holdings are roughly equalized. Those who cannot get land either leave (as in Draubuta) or stay as urban commuters (as in Cautata). But in both cases, land holdings — outside the holdings of the opportunists — are small and insufficient for viable commercial agriculture. Land has been the basis of a polarization in the villages but the process cannot continue. Other opportunities outside the village act to reduce and even reverse the effects of land inequalities, and there are signs that in the future the opportunists may lose their gains when leases and rights are not renewed. In such situations new land accumulation cannot be the basis for pervasive and marked inequalities within the village.

Outside the villages it seems there has been land accumulation and it is gathering pace. In Waibau, the commercial sale of leases and the plethora of informal tenure arrangements have meant that fewer individuals control the land. The community of peasants is being replaced by classes of absentee landlords, tenant-occupiers, and sub-lessees. But again there are limits, at least where resident Fijians are considered. Those that are accumulating most land in the settlement schemes are outsiders — people such as 'Victoria Parade' farmers or the Chinese. Locals, the established Fijian settlers, have bought and exchanged plots but only to the stage of enlarging to two or three plots. They simply do not have the means to compete on the land market with speculators and those who have accumulated capital outside the schemes' agricultural economy. Despite the big incomes from ginger, there has not been sufficient wealth generated to allow local farmers to emerge as medium-scale capitalist farmers. The transition from peasantry to yeomanry to full-blown capitalist agriculture cannot occur within a structure that has a combination of leasehold tenure, a highly remunerative crop, and a commercial land market that circumvents official and traditional constraints on exchange and management.

The prospects for rapid agricultural development and socio-economic advancement amongst the residents of villages and settlement schemes in Fiji seem rather bleak. The inappropriate legal and administrative structures which regulate land, seem to be the major reasons for such a form of 'terminal development' (Howlett 1973).

CHAPTER 4

Labour

Household necessities and monetary opportunities

Just as land provides the basic endowment for agricultural production, labour availability, organization and use provide the means whereby households can exploit the land resource as well as opportunities away from the land. Labour and employment generation are important politically also, as urban unemployment mounts. The countryside has a role to play, for if urban unemployment increases, the villages and the settlement schemes should provide an alternative — a ‘safety net’ for the unemployed (Brookfield 1988:34). Employment issues have been tackled recently by the Fiji Employment and Development Mission (Bienefeld 1984) and discussed by Cameron (1983), Ellis (1983a, 1983b, 1985), Emmott (1985:35) and Perry (1986). These studies showed that, whilst rural employment has been increasing, it has failed to keep pace with rising population and the rewards to rural wage labour are much lower than to most employment in the urban areas. The emphasis in this chapter is not so much on this macro-level, but more on the labour situation at the village level: on the amount and type of labour available to the study households in the villages and settlement schemes and how it is used. In doing so, the two models of communal and individual labour are examined as are the rewards to labour (monetary and customary). Finally, the implications for the absorption of labour in rural areas will be discussed.

Traditional labour

It is often assumed that labour in the traditional village economy was organized communally: families would work together in the fields on clan land, and village men and women would work side-by-side on tasks such as house building or preparing feasts. Certainly such communal labour did exist, though the importance of communal as opposed to individual, household, or small clan labour is often over-estimated. The village is no paragon of community effort and labour organization, and perhaps never was.

Traditional division of labour had several facets, though it is very difficult to generalize about labour relations and what was ‘traditional’.¹ However, it is probable that varying degrees of division of labour were common; on the grounds of sex, social rank and age (Ravuvu 1983:8; Nayacakalou 1978:25). For most tasks, the unit of labour organization was the household or *tokatoka*, though for community or military requirements labour could be organized on a *mataqali*

1 See Geddes (1945, 1959); Frazer (1961:123-9); Belshaw (1964b:160-80; Ward 1965:196-8); Clammer (1973); Rutz (1973, 1977, 1978a); Nayacakalou (1978); Ravuvu (1983:8-12) and Spate (1959:43-4).

or larger basis — a form of conscription. *Kerekere* and reciprocity were the common means whereby extra labour could be drawn upon by an individual or group for special tasks (Belshaw 1965:38). During the colonial period, some aspects of this traditional labour system were curtailed (such as warfare) but new communal demands were increased, especially between 1945 and 1967 when the Fijian Administration Regulations sanctioned and encouraged communal work (such as cleaning and building projects) under the control of a quasi-bureaucrat, the *turaga-ni-koro*.

Nayacakalou's accounts of labour relations in his study villages in 1954 (Nayacakalou 1978:24-32, 65-7, 94-100) reveal much about the traditional system and how it had changed by mid-century. Some of the main features were:

- The household was the central economic unit for most tasks. Decisions about daily work were made by the household head(s) and devolved into individual tasks, or enlarged from there.
- There was a degree of individual freedom (for fishing and recreation) but this was subject to the authority of the household.
- *Kerekere* was still a common mechanism to acquire assistance for a number of jobs (house building, harvesting, clearing). This was predicated upon close kinship links and involved traditional presentations, and common meals (*oco*) but had incorporated new gifts such as tobacco. Even specialized labour (e.g. a carpenter) was obtained in this way.
- The use of the whole village for common work was relatively rare, even though both the traditional chief and the *turaga-ni-koro* could call on such labour through *lala* (in the case of the former) and legal sanction (for the latter). Calls were rare and responses poor.
- Money wages were beginning to become common, though not for most tasks that used family or kin labour. There were examples in Draubuta of villagers receiving wages for casual agricultural work in nearby farms and a local *galala* paying wages to local cane harvesters.

Thus traditional labour relationships, even with the variants noted by Nayacakalou, were complex, job specific, and involved some element of return (customary or monetary) for effort.

Village labour: domestic and agricultural

The Draubuta and Cautata surveys reveal that change has occurred since Nayacakalou's work, but that many of the features he observed are still very much a part of the village economy.

Almost completely gone is communal labour on a large scale. Since the change in the Fijian Administration Regulations in 1967 (and before the implementation of new regulations in the wake of the Cole Report)² *turaga-ni-koro* do not have the power to call out village labour, at least not power that is backed by legal sanction. Chiefs with customary status can still call on *lala* labour but this is an option that is mobilized even more infrequently than in Nayacakalou's day. There is less call for communal labour not only because the administrative rules have been relaxed but, more significantly, because the village economy and technology have changed. Permanent materials (concrete and corrugated iron) have replaced

2 The Report, as implemented, restores the powers of the *turaga-ni-koro*. A visit to Draubuta in 1988 revealed an increase in village projects (mainly the construction of concrete footpaths) and rules concerning behaviour and dress.

thatch completely, thus reducing the house building burden, and heavy bush clearing is less onerous with herbicide sprays and chainsaws available. Also, with a high proportion of villagers working in the city, there is less labour available. The one remaining catalyst for larger-scale labour organization is probably the church, which can call upon members of its congregation for fund-raising activities as well as prayer. Yet communal labour seems to have been recognized as a possible model for Fijian economic and political organization, as have the group farm schemes for rice cultivation (see Chapter 3, *Group farming: a communalist alternative*), and the Cole Report's recommendations for a return to the 1948 village administration regulations would seem to rest on the assumption that communal labour can, and should, be mobilized.

But whereas village level communal labour is almost absent in Draubuta or Cautata, kinship co-operation is not. Assistance with crops (clearing and harvesting), house building (even with permanent materials) and *magiti* still utilize intra-clan *kerekere* mechanisms and reciprocity and presentations rather than cash. This is particularly evident for cashcropping farming in Draubuta, if not Cautata.

The position of the household as the basic economic unit and the centre of labour relations has strengthened. Commercial and subsistence agriculture, domestic chores and a whole range of other activities are carried out at this level. However, the household unit itself is far from homogeneous and many contain more members than a nuclear family. One of the most common forms of household, with major implications for household labour, is that which contains adult children, some of whom may be married themselves. Such children comprise a major component of agricultural labour in all the case study areas (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Household agricultural and domestic labour 1985-86^a

| | Male household heads ^b | Female household heads ^b | Male adult children | Female adult children | Number of households in sample |
|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Draubuta | 24 | 33 | 15 | 16 | 36 |
| Cautata | 14 | 29 | 15 | 25 | 30 |
| Waibau | 20 | 20 | 35 | 13 | 24 |
| Lomaivuna | 33 | 32 | 32 | 23 | 34 |
| Non-scheme | 11 | 12 | 9 | 11 | 12 |
| Total | 102 | 126 | 106 | 88 | 136 |

^aThis analysis includes those engaged in farm or domestic activities but excludes those household members primarily engaged off-farm, even though they contribute to farm and domestic work.

^bHousehold heads are the senior male and female members in the household.

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

It is clear from these data that the pool of labour available for agricultural work and the maintenance of the households is much greater than a nuclear family model of the household would suggest. In fact, overall there is a doubling of male household labour and a 70 per cent increase in female labour when adult children who work on the farm or in the house are included. If household heads and children are combined, and it is assumed that men stick to agricultural tasks and women mainly to domestic chores, it can be concluded that for every rural household in the samples, there are 1.5 units of full-time agricultural labour and

1.6 units of full-time mainly domestic labour. This incorporation (or absorption) of family labour into the household productive unit is the backbone of agricultural activity in rural Fiji.

An illustration of the importance of household labour, but also of changing labour relations in the village is rice farming. Rice is grown in both Draubuta (by seventeen households in 1986) and Cautata (fifteen households) and requires a high labour input. All non-harvest tasks were carried out by household labour, except for initial land development (drainage, clearing and levelling) which was done by government machines. A number of men said that they did not expand production (or in the past have stopped production) because they do not have enough sons at home to help with the work of ploughing, planting and maintenance. The demand for harvest labour was met in different ways. In Draubuta, all harvest labour came from within the village and mostly from the household (including women and children) or closely-related kin, and was unpaid. There was no monetized labour absorption but a recourse to traditional *kerekere* and reciprocity as a means of getting short-term labour. It is a situation very similar to that observed by Nayacakalou in 1954. In Cautata, a number of farmers used these methods also, but nine of the fifteen employed harvest labour for cash wages. This use of cash remuneration for casual labour within the village represents the beginnings of capitalist labour relations. With rice cultivation increasing and continued close contact with urban wage possibilities, such relations are likely to become more widespread.

Thus, in villages, agricultural and domestic labour demands are met mainly within the household unit and traditional practices of labour supply and rewards are still very much a part of life. Monetization of labour relations is limited, but increasing.

Settlement schemes: peasants and proletarians?

In Waibau and Lomaivuna, the individualist model adopted, with no communal land tenure or customary social control, would be expected to lead to a greater commercialization of labour relations than in the villages. There is no village communal labour controlled by a customary chief or *turaga-ni-koro*, even though there are some voluntary associations of social if not economic significance, revolving around the churches or 'sectors' and their community halls.³ Also, as kin relations are much less in evidence in the settlement schemes, a large pool of relatives cannot be drawn upon for extra labour in the traditional manner.

The peasant household is an even stronger economic unit than in the village. Land is leased usually by the household head and labour found from within. Table 4.1 shows that Waibau and Lomaivuna households have absorbed even more family labour for the home than in the villages, with a total of 2.3 male labour units and 1.4 female units per household in Waibau working on the land or in the home and 1.9 male and 1.6 female labour units per household in Lomaivuna. Part of this, though, may be explained by demographic rather than economic features; Waibau and Lomaivuna are populated by many of the former settlers who arrived as young adults in the 1950s and 1960s and now have their

3 Eight sectors were created in Lomaivuna (originally probably as a means of organizing banana packing) and these now each have their own community halls and most have shops and a church. There are three similar sectors (again each with halls) in Waibau. These sectors are the focus for any community activities but they are not surrogates for village organizations.

own adult families and grandchildren. The household and its land provides work for the settlers and at least some of their families.

But household labour does not provide all labour requirements. The model of the household as the only unit of production cannot be sustained. The success of ginger has meant that there is a heavy demand for labour for bush clearing, planting and especially harvesting. Whilst crops, such as pineapples and taro, can be managed solely by the household, ginger is a much more labour-intensive crop with specific peak periods of demand. For some, sharecropping arrangements provide a way to share the labour (and capital) burden with outsiders but, for most, it is necessary to hire casual labour. Some of the larger ginger producers at Waibau employ up to forty labourers at harvest time and many even employ part-time labour throughout the year. Eighty-three per cent of Waibau farmers and 32 per cent of Lomaivuna farmers employ more than five non-household labourers at peak times. The main source of labour is from nearby Fijian villages. While there is some non-monetary and reciprocal 'neighbourly help' with harvests, this is limited because labour demands tend to peak at the same time.

There is another aspect to these labour relations. It is not just a matter of peasants employing relatively landless village proletarians,⁴ though this is very important given the large numbers involved and the widespread use of cash wages. It must be remembered that a number of Waibau plots are owned by absentees who employ resident managers. In this way, urban capital (investors and speculators who have accumulated wealth in the cities) employs local permanent managers who, in turn, employ casual wage labour. Land, labour and capital are divided in these cases to a much greater degree than in even the most commercialized villages.

Therefore, in the settlement schemes, labour and labour relations are governed not at all by communal and customary mechanisms, nor alone by the peasant household, but by the co-existence of peasant and capitalist modes of production. The labour market on the schemes has been opened to new external sources of capital and control and new external supplies of wage labour.

Non-farm labour

The above sections have dealt solely with labour for farm and domestic activities. However, the case studies reveal that households are linked strongly to urban labour markets and the farm, and the home is not the only, or in some cases the most important, household economic activity. The importance of these off-farm activities is well recorded in development literature⁵ and has been noted for Fiji by Anderson (1968), Gunasekera *et al.* (1983), Waymark and Young (1983), Low (1985) and Ponter (1986).⁶ What this literature suggests is that significant numbers of people are released from household farm labour to work elsewhere, usually in the cities, but that their break with the household is not complete:

4 'Proletarians' is not a good term to use here because those villagers who work in the Waibau ginger harvests have access to village land and engage in wage labour on a casual basis to supplement income that is derived from village agriculture. Indeed, some of the labourers are from clans which may own the very land that their employers farm.

5 For example, Maude (1981); Freeman and Norcliffe (1981, 1983, 1984); Corner (1981); Miles and Norcliffe (1984); Chew and Shand (1984); Martin (1985); and Shand (1986).

6 It is also a feature that is noted in the work on Fijian circular migration and labour (Bedford 1980, 1981, 1984, 1985; Nair 1980, 1985; Walsh 1982; Reddy 1984; Connell 1985; Tubuna 1985; Prakash 1986; Chung 1986; Bayliss-Smith *et al.* 1988) and in work on the economies of peripheral regions (Bayliss-Smith 1978; Bedford *et al.* 1978; Brookfield 1979a, 1981; and Latham and Brookfield 1983).

remittances, periodic return, even daily commuting link the rural household to the urban economy (Brookfield 1977; Connell 1980, 1981, 1987; Watters 1984; Bertram and Watters 1985, 1986). This is certainly so for the Fijian case studies here. This section analyses non-agricultural and non-domestic labour by resident members of the households. Whilst the importance of non-resident members of a family is noted (and the value of remittances is analysed in Chapter 6), non-resident labour is excluded because many have made a definite economic break from the household and they do not figure in day-to-day economic activities and decisions.

A point of semantics needs to be noted at this stage. The terms 'non-farm', 'off-farm' and 'non-agricultural' are used here and elsewhere but they have limitations and may be misleading. In the Fijian village context the concepts of farm and agriculture do not really encompass the full range of a household's activities *in situ*. Village lands are not farms, in that they do not comprise a secure unit that is used solely for agriculture. Village land is used to grow subsistence and commercial crops and to raise livestock, but the land and the household's labour are used also for the gathering of wild foods and products (from trees, mangrove swamps or the sea). Even on the settlement schemes, where the land endowment is well defined and the commercial aims uppermost, these ancillary activities are still vital in a household's daily life and sustenance. Thus agricultural and domestic labour must include all activities such as gardening, fishing, gathering coconuts, taking produce to the market, collecting pandanus leaves and making mats, preparing food, and child minding. What is of concern under the heading 'non-farm' is the range of other activities, principally (but not exclusively) money earning, away from the household and its land and not related to the production and marketing of the products of the land.

Such non-agricultural, non-domestic activities have long been a part of life in Draubuta and Cautata. Villagers were active in the wider local and urban economies throughout the colonial period. By the 1950s, twenty-one of Draubuta's forty-one men aged between fifteen and sixty years had permanent wage employment in Suva and Nausori (Nayacakalou 1978:32), and from Cautata, there were a great many *yasa* (absentees or exempted men) working in Suva, especially on the docks (Spate 1959:104). Even in the settlement schemes there has been a tradition of off-farm labour, Waibau men having worked elsewhere or as part-time farmers (Ward 1965:183). The attractions of life in the towns or overseas and higher wages remain strong (Goneyali 1986).

The structure of non-agricultural non-domestic labour reveals both how widespread and varied such employment is (Table 4.2). One feature of these data is the difference between the villages and the settlement schemes. There is little non-local employment at Lomaivuna and Waibau but many at Cautata and Draubuta work in a variety of urban jobs. This is probably more a result of accessibility than any intrinsic difference between villages and settlement schemes. The buses that serve Cautata and pass near Draubuta carry many daily commuters to Suva and Nausori, but bus schedules make it impossible for a Waibau or Lomaivuna settler to commute to Suva on a daily basis and complete a full day's work. Those who live on the schemes and have labouring or teaching jobs all work locally. However, land availability and the success of ginger, especially at Waibau, may mean that the relative returns of cashcropping are a little more favourable (*vis à vis* wage labour) than in the villages.

Patterns of off-farm employment are related to the structure of the household. Rarely do households concentrate entirely on off-farm employment. Of those with some members working off-farm (including part-time and rural non-farm) only one household in the Draubuta and one in the Cautata samples had no adult staying at home to work on the land or on domestic duties. There were some (four in Draubuta, ten in Cautata, one each at Waibau and the non-scheme areas and three in Lomaivuna) where one or more adults worked off-farm, leaving women behind to manage domestic chores and most of the garden work. But in the great majority of cases — those households where some were working off-farm — other men and women were engaged full-time at home or in agriculture (twelve of seventeen households in Draubuta, fourteen of twenty-five in Cautata, six of seven in Waibau, fourteen of seventeen in Lomaivuna, and three of four in non-scheme areas). The main household strategy, then, is to divide work between those who are able to find cash earning activities in the city or locally, and those who support the daily requirements of the household and earn some extra through cashcropping. Only when domestic and basic agricultural tasks can be accomplished can members be released for work elsewhere.

Table 4.2 Non-farm employment 1985-86 (numbers of people)

| | Draubuta | Cautata | Waibau | Lomaivuna | Non-scheme | Total |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Unskilled labour | 8 | 2 | - | - | - | 10 |
| Skilled labour | 1 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 16 |
| Administrative and clerical | 6 | 6 | - | 1 | - | 13 |
| Teaching | 3 | 5 | - | 2 | - | 10 |
| Retail and sales asst. | 4 | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| Tertiary students | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 4 |
| Military | - | 10 | 2 | 1 | - | 13 |
| Transport | - | 9 | - | - | - | 9 |
| Part-time local | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 18 |
| Non-agricultural farm | - | - | - | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| Total | 26 | 48 | 7 | 20 | 5 | 105 |
| No. households surveyed | 36 | 30 | 24 | 34 | 12 | 136 |
| No. households with non-agric employment | 17 | 25 | 7 | 17 | 4 | 70 |
| (percentage) | 47.2 | 83.3 | 29.2 | 50.0 | 33.3 | 51.5 |

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

The occupational structure of those working off-farm is interesting. Whilst labouring (skilled and unskilled) accounts for over a quarter of off-farm labour in the two villages, it is not insecure. Most of these workers, and most of the administrative and clerical workers, are employed by government departments (Public Works, Posts and Telegraphs, Ports Authority of Fiji, Fiji Electricity Authority) rather than private enterprise. When the teachers, university students and soldiers are included, the public sector share rises to perhaps 80 per cent of village non-local, non-farm employment. Those privately employed are really only the few (in Draubuta) who have jobs as sales assistants. None are in industry and none have their own businesses.⁷ As government employees, their jobs are relatively secure and, until recently,⁷ well paid. Most are in the lower ranks of

7 All civil servants received a 25 per cent pay cut in 1987, following the May coup.

bureaucracy, with manual or clerical positions, but some in the sample are in positions of responsibility and the customary chief in Draubuta (not interviewed) has a very senior position in the Public Works Department. Thus many of the profound changes occurring in manufacturing and investment in Fiji and the controversies over poor pay and working conditions in some industries (Taylor 1987, Bienefeld 1984) do not affect these Fijian village commuters.⁸ They are relatively well insulated from fluctuations in the fortunes of private enterprise and are, in a sense, protected by the state. However, one feature of the civil service is that employment generation has not been sustained. Whereas many have been able to get good jobs in the past, several young adult villagers (some well qualified) said they could not get government employment and had stayed on the farm. The public sector thus may not continue to act as a soak for village commuters.

Military service deserves special mention for its role in village employment. Although there were no households with soldiers interviewed in Draubuta, military employment was very important in Cautata and present to a lesser extent in Waibau and Lomaivuna.⁹ Most of those whose occupations were given as 'soldier' were not resident in the village. Some were in the Middle East as part of the Fijian contingent in the Multinational Peacekeeping Force, others were in barracks and a few were reservists (and stayed at home). But, unlike other occupations, soldiers were deemed to be part of the household even if they were stationed away, for most were younger unmarried men and all sent money back to the family. It was assumed they would return home to the village when their 'tour' was over.¹⁰ The importance of military service for the rural economy of Fiji should not be underestimated. Not only does it provide employment for what might be considered 'surplus' young male labour in the villages, but those serving overseas are trained in skills that may be of use within Fiji, and most of the pay they receive can be saved and remitted to the village (Ravuvu 1985). The army is overwhelmingly ethnic Fijian in character. In 1986 interviewees explained that a considerable amount of the new house building occurring in Cautata was paid for by soldiers (there was also some from hurricane relief funds), they had saved whilst in the Sinai, returned home to the village and built a good house. If Cautata can be described as a dormitory suburb of Suva, it might also be described as a mini-barracks for the Fijian military.

Military employment has increased dramatically since the May 1987 coup. The size of the military forces was expanded in the wake of the coup and the great majority of new recruitment was carried out, as before, from younger men in Fijian villages. In Draubuta, for example, surveys in 1985-86 revealed no army employment amongst the households interviewed. Yet soon after the May coup, a regular army officer (who hails from Draubuta) went to the village and recruited some thirteen men. This included four who were actively engaged in

8 The clothing industry has been the subject of an investigation into wages and conditions of work. This revealed some deplorable conditions and very low rates of pay (for example, *Fiji Times* 3 June 1985, *Fiji Sun* 3 June 1985, (Fiji) *Sunday Times* 13 October 1985).

9 The reasons for the high military employment in Cautata but not in Draubuta are uncertain. Perhaps it has to do with the warrior tradition in Cautata and the probable history of army servicemen from the village. There were families in Draubuta who had children or close relatives in the army but they were not resident (or recently resident) members of the household. Widespread military employment for village men is evident from visits to almost any village in Fiji where proudly proffered photo albums show sons, nephews or brothers in the Sinai or Lebanon. Similarly, army clothing and t-shirts with lettering alluding to Middle Eastern service are ubiquitous.

10 Most of the soldiers enumerated in Table 4.2 are volunteer reservists who serve a short time. Regular army personnel (as with one who was recorded in Draubuta) are excluded because they do not live in the village and are removed from the household economy, even though some remittances may be received.

rice farming and one with regular wage employment. The effect on the village labour supply has been major, even if there was a degree of underemployment before. The army is becoming the principal employer for rural Fijian males and, whilst the political crises of 1987 may have led to an economic downturn in most areas, in some Fijian villages it may have triggered a form of economic growth.

Whilst these patterns of formal sector employment off-farm are very important in the two villages, there are other activities (rural non-farm employment) which are an integral part of the rural economy. Cautata is unusual in that the bus co-operative provides much local work for drivers and mechanics. They may not be paid as well as they would working for other bus companies, nor do they get as many hours driving as they would wish, but the work is at their doorstep and the profits of the enterprise go to their community. The co-operative remains a success story of local initiative and shared benefit. Other activities are varied. Part-time local employment covers nearly as many jobs as there were responses: from selling *yaqona*, casual farm work, using a truck for transport work, doing lawnmowing, hiring out bullocks or chainsaws, collecting and selling seafood, and keeping a small store. Some involve considerable capital (a store, truck or bullock team), some a high proportion of time (minding a store), but some are ephemeral and not very remunerative. All provide important supplements to household income in both the villages and settlement schemes.

The final category of employment is 'non-agricultural on-farm' work. The main activity under this heading is wood carving and basket making for the Suva tourist markets. As will be seen in Chapter 6, this work provides some Lomaivuna households with very good incomes. It is cottage industry, using local materials and skilled household labour, but it is integrated into the wider tourist industry through well-developed marketing channels. The work is flexible (it fits in with farm work) and the returns can be good. It is confined to Lomaivuna.¹¹

Thus non-farm employment (neither agricultural nor domestic) is a way of life for half the households surveyed and it affects even those areas which are not suburbs of Suva. Where the employment is in the city and in the formal sector, it is relatively secure and well-paid (if limited in its absorptive capacity), but even locally there are many income supplementing activities for households. Agriculture is a central part of the economy of rural Fiji but it is by no means the only one.

Implications for employment generation

With these patterns of labour organization and employment on and off the farm in mind, implications for future employment generation and labour absorption in rural Fiji can now be discussed.

People living in the villages and settlement schemes face a wide variety of labour options. There is the necessity of maintaining the household and growing most food requirements, but beyond that there is scope for other employment. All households, if they have sufficient land, can increase labour input into agriculture and engage in cashcropping. For those close to Suva and Nausori there is the alternative of wage employment and most who find work have entered government service. But others, further away, seek work in often less well-paid local employment (labouring, transport or storekeeping) or non-agricultural activities on-farm (wood carving). In the choice about which options to exploit, the key

¹¹ Why this handicraft industry is so strong in Lomaivuna is not certain. There are some local supplies of wood, the Lauan settlers have a tradition of carving and the marketing links have been established for some time. Also of importance is that the returns for handicrafts are higher (relative to agriculture) than in Waibau.

parameters are accessibility, availability of surplus household labour, and the relative returns of each option. In Cautata and Draubuta, urban wage employment is accessible, sustainable for most with large adult families, and well-paid. For Waibau households, the prosperity of ginger and the lack of a commuting bus service to Suva leads to agricultural specialization, whilst in Lomaivuna, greater remoteness and the somewhat slower progress of cashcropping has led many to engage in local non-agricultural work. This pattern of opportunities and constraints and the resultant pattern of employment is repeated in every rural area of Fiji.

Yet the range of opportunities and choices should not disguise the fact that growth of employment and labour absorption in the countryside is limited. Urban employment opportunities are severely constrained in a labour market that is over-supplied (Bienefeld 1984, Gounis and Rutz 1986). And, since most village workers seem to join the public rather than the private sector, relative security for those that have employment is balanced by fewer opportunities for those that do not. Private sector employment in manufacturing and retailing may be less well paid and more open to the vicissitudes of the market economy, but it does tend to expand more rapidly.

For those staying in the country, the limitations are great. The problems of land shortage (see Chapter 3) mean that few households have the land resources to expand commercial agriculture and employ extra labour. Furthermore, even when land is available, the spread effects of one household's agricultural development do not tend to be great. This is because *kerekere* and customary reciprocity persist and there are few chances for agricultural wage labour to develop within the villages. Only in the case of ginger at Waibau was there any substantial generation of wage labouring as the result of cashcropping.

Overall, whilst there may be some openings for rural labour, prospects for continued absorption of labour do not appear bright. As long as the urban labour market is tight and land shortages remain, existing and new rural households will not be able to accommodate larger numbers without an appreciable fall in per capita incomes. There seems to be no answer either in the capitalist labour market nor in the traditional systems of labour organization.

Agriculture

Security and livelihood

Agriculture remains the mainstay occupation of most rural Fijian households and, in the case study areas, it continues to be the single most important one, if not always the main source of income. All the study households have gardens which supply the bulk of food requirements but some families now also run agricultural enterprises with land under lucrative commercial crops. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the range of agricultural endeavour, from the small subsistence gardens of some to the farms of others. Case studies of two major cash crops, rice and ginger, will be presented and contrasts will be drawn between these new specialized crops and the diverse traditional system.

The traditional food crop system

Although new crops and new varieties of existing crops have been introduced and incorporated into Fijian food crop production (Ward 1960, 1986b), it is possible to identify a fairly homogeneous system of subsistence food agriculture throughout Fiji. This system is based upon root crop staples (taro, cassava, sweet potato and yams), tree crops (coconuts, bananas, breadfruit and other fruit trees) and a range of green vegetables. The mix of these varied with locality, as did the availability of important food complements such as fish, seafood and wild forest foods. Cultivation could be very intensive, as with the *via kana* economy of the Rewa Delta and the irrigated terraces elsewhere, or extensive, as with shifting cultivation in the hills and bush (Parry 1977, 1981, 1987). Such systems, in outline, remain the basis of Fijian rural food production and, in many cases, they have formed a base for the development of cashcropping.¹

The central feature of the traditional Fijian food production system was its diversity. There were a large number of crops grown and consumed and these contributed to relative nutritional balance (Thaman 1979, 1982a, 1984d, 1988a). Food was rarely in short supply, if not always abundant, and when shortages did occur following droughts, floods or hurricanes 'famine foods', such as certain tree crops and *via kana*, were often available. Usually a surplus was produced for redistribution to those in need, reciprocal exchange, and ceremonial use. Agriculture provided the basic sustenance for daily life and security against hard times. Capital inputs were very low, though technology (the skills required) could be considerable, for example, when irrigation was used. Energy input, also, was low and the systems were ecologically sustainable without external inputs (Chandra

¹ Traditional agricultural systems in Fiji are discussed by Ward (1960, 1965); Frazer (1961, 1964); Rutz (1973, 1976); Mara (1975); Hau'ofa and Ward (1980); Yen (1980a, 1980b); Chandra (1981a, 1981b); Ravuvu (1983); and Lasaga (1984).

1981a; Clarke 1978). Thus, in the Rewa region, intensive cultivation was supported on the rich alluvial soils through a constant resupply of nutrients (as a result of flooding), whilst in the forest areas, where Waibau and Lomaivuna are now, shifting cultivation ensured the regeneration of vegetation and nutrient supply. Livestock was not common, although some pigs were kept, more for ceremonial consumption than as a source of daily food.

The landscapes of traditional agriculture, and environmental interrelationships, varied greatly in space and time. In Draubuta (and Cautata in a similar way), for example, it is likely that there have been three fundamental environmental models in the past two hundred or more years. The three models relate only to the Rewa Delta, though elements of them all could be found throughout Fiji with significant variations in intensity, crops and methods of cultivation. There was the pre-colonial model where, in Rewa, the *via kana*, ring-ditch fortification complex was the most intensive of the three. The giant swamp taro dominated as the staple food, but taro, yams, tree crops and sea foods were vital as nutritional complements. *Via kana* was particularly well suited as a security against flood and hurricane damage and had military functions too. It was largely a closed system (apart from regularly deposited alluvium) with a high level of productivity because of rich soils and high labour inputs per unit area.

The second model may be termed colonial because it resulted from population decline (after contact with European diseases), an end to warfare and the introduction of new crops (principally sugar). The *via kana* complex deteriorated to be replaced by more varieties of other root crops (including cassava and *dalo ni tana*) which required less labour input (Ward 1960:40-1; Thaman 1984b). New crops introduced included pineapples, chillies, rice, mangoes, and citrus and they added variety to gardens and diets, though cassava (with lower nutritional value) may have become the dominant staple for many. More livestock (cattle, pigs and chickens) was reared too. This model was completed with the penetration of smallholder sugar cane farming into village land, bringing new agricultural practices, new people and new markets. A number of Fijians joined in this plantation mode of production, supplying cane to the Nausori mill or working as cutters.

Finally, in recent years, the third system — the post-colonial — has resulted from the closing of the Nausori sugar mill (leading to the replacement of sugar monoculture on tenant farms by a rice/mixed crop pattern), the widening of urban food markets (increasing the demand for surplus root crop, tree crop and vegetable production), and the apparent replacement of Indian tenants by Fijian rice and commercial crop growers as a result of greater population pressure on land. *Via kana* has become a minor crop whilst cassava and *dalo* are dominant. Diversity has remained and, if anything, increased since the end of cane farming.

Domestic food crop production

One of the clearest conclusions that can be drawn from the data in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 is that there is a wide spread of traditional crops being grown both in the villages and in the newly settled areas.² Agricultural modernization, such as it has occurred, has not been at the expense of overall crop diversity. There is a specialization in two root crop staples (cassava and taro) but these have replaced

2 The data are based upon interviews with villagers and settlers verified by some field checks. See Appendix 3 for notes on crop names and Appendix 4 for a full table of areas of cultivated crops.

the dominant *via*, yam and taro staples of old. Cassava has probably driven out *via* and yams (*uvi*) but a range of root crop staples remains important for nearly all households studied, with overall adoption rates for the two main staples above 90 per cent and those for secondary root crops (*dalo ni tana* and *kumala*) above 50 per cent.

Table 5.1 Percentage of households growing selected crops and rearing livestock 1985-86^a

| | Draubuta | Cautata | Waibau | Lomaivuna | Non-scheme | Total |
|---|----------|---------|--------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Mainly domestic crops - traditional | | | | | | |
| cassava | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| <i>dalo</i> | 97.1 | 93.3 | 95.8 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 97.0 |
| <i>bele</i> | 66.7 | 100.0 | 66.7 | 70.6 | 58.3 | 72.0 |
| <i>dalo ni tana</i> | 79.2 | 87.5 | 62.5 | 58.8 | 66.7 | 69.1 |
| <i>yaqona</i> | 37.5 | 50.0 | 87.5 | 70.6 | 50.0 | 60.2 |
| <i>kumala</i> | 38.2 | 46.7 | 79.2 | 70.6 | 41.7 | 56.0 |
| yams | 66.7 | 87.5 | 16.7 | 32.4 | 8.3 | 41.8 |
| <i>via kana</i> | 87.5 | 6.3 | 12.5 | 11.8 | - | 29.0 |
| <i>duruka</i> | 4.1 | 100.0 | 12.5 | 17.6 | - | 24.7 |
| Mainly domestic crops - introduced | | | | | | |
| chillies | 41.7 | 100.0 | 41.7 | 5.9 | 25.0 | 43.0 |
| English vegetables | 62.5 | 12.5 | 16.7 | 76.5 | 25.0 | 39.8 |
| sugar cane ^b | - | 93.8 | 37.5 | - | 8.3 | 26.9 |
| <i>baigani</i> | 33.3 | 37.5 | 4.2 | 5.9 | - | 17.2 |
| pumpkins | 4.2 | 25.0 | - | - | - | 5.4 |
| Mainly commercial crops - introduced | | | | | | |
| pineapples | 37.5 | 93.8 | 54.2 | 70.6 | 66.7 | 62.7 |
| ginger | - | - | 87.5 | 91.2 | 75.0 | 45.5 |
| rice | 44.1 | 56.7 | - | - | - | 26.1 |
| watermelons | 20.8 | - | 4.2 | 5.9 | 16.7 | 9.7 |
| Tree crops | | | | | | |
| coconuts | 100.0 | 100.0 | 87.5 | 97.0 | 75.0 | 93.5 |
| <i>vudi</i> | 95.8 | 100.0 | 83.3 | 94.1 | 83.3 | 91.3 |
| breadfruit | 100.0 | 93.3 | 75.0 | 76.5 | 41.7 | 80.4 |
| bananas | 66.7 | 86.7 | 83.3 | 69.7 | 83.3 | 75.9 |
| pawpaws | 54.2 | 100.0 | 75.0 | 88.2 | 41.7 | 71.7 |
| mandarins | 100.0 | 73.3 | 62.5 | 70.6 | 16.7 | 69.6 |
| oranges | 62.5 | 93.3 | 62.5 | 58.8 | 41.7 | 64.1 |
| <i>havika</i> | 70.8 | 93.3 | 45.8 | 47.1 | 33.3 | 58.7 |
| limes or lemons | 37.5 | 93.3 | 41.7 | 82.4 | 16.7 | 53.3 |
| mangoes | 62.5 | 93.3 | 33.3 | - | 8.3 | 41.3 |
| <i>dawa</i> | 75.0 | 66.7 | 37.5 | 5.9 | - | 41.3 |
| soursop | 41.7 | 46.7 | 20.8 | 5.9 | - | 25.0 |
| <i>ligani</i> | 16.7 | 13.3 | 45.8 | 17.6 | 16.7 | 23.9 |
| Livestock | | | | | | |
| chickens | 41.7 | 93.8 | 41.7 | 61.8 | 41.7 | 55.5 |
| pigs | 54.2 | 75.0 | 16.7 | 38.2 | 25.0 | 40.9 |
| cattle (dairy & beef) | 50.0 | 37.5 | 4.2 | 32.3 | 33.3 | 30.9 |
| working bullocks | 54.2 | 43.8 | - | 2.9 | 16.7 | 20.9 |
| horses | - | - | 16.7 | 2.9 | 8.3 | 5.5 |

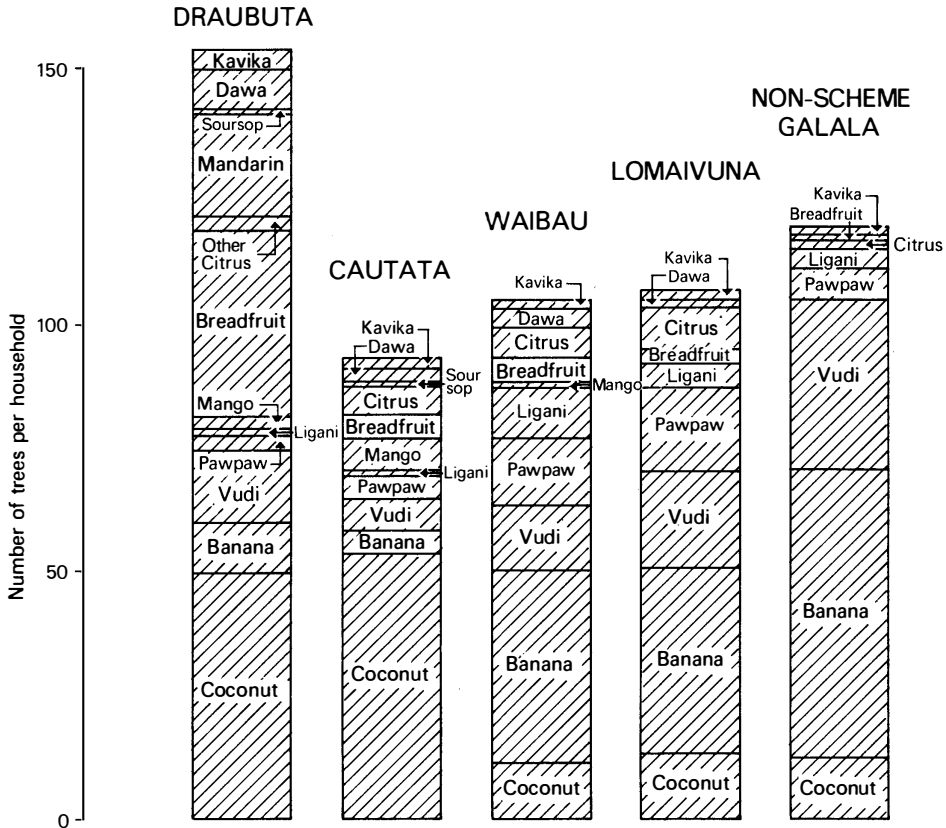
^aPercentages refer simply to whether a household grows or keeps the crop or animal, not the quantity involved.

^bSugar cane here is not a commercial crop but is grown on a small scale for domestic use

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

range, involving relatively more yams, *kumala* and the traditional *via kana* (of high customary importance) and there are also more tree crops per household (especially breadfruit) because there is more bush land as part of, and surrounding, the village. In the settlement scheme areas, there is a similar concentration on taro and cassava, though *kumala* and *dalo ni tana* seem relatively more important.

Figure 5.2 'Typical' holdings of tree crops per household 1985-86



Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

Overall, the average area under cultivation per household ranges between 1.38 hectares (in Draubuta) and 2.14 hectares (in Cautata). This value for Cautata is an over-estimate of the village average because the sample taken was biased in favour of rice farmers. The Cautata sample, therefore, should be taken as typical of those who have secured some land (the commercial farmers) and not representative of those in the village who have relatively little land. When it is remembered that Draubuta has the most fertile land of the five areas, it can be concluded that an average Fijian household cultivates between 1.5 and 2 hectares, regardless of the fact that more may be available and that land has to be set aside for fallow. It suggests a labour as well as a land constraint to cultivation.

Both traditional and new tree crops are important. In Draubuta and Cautata, coconuts are perhaps the most significant and in the Waibau and Lomaivuna

areas, eating bananas (*jaina*) and cooking bananas (*vudi*) figure prominently in gardens. Other important tree food crops are breadfruit, pawpaws (*weleti*), citrus (limes, oranges or mandarins), *dawa*, mangoes and others such as ligani (*marama*), Malay apple (*kavika*) and soursop. Overall, over 70 per cent of households have direct access to the main tree crops (coconuts, bananas, breadfruit and pawpaws). They are a vital part of Fijian diets and livelihood.

What the above data do not show is the importance of another food source, 'wild' foods. These are foods which are gathered from the bush and include *ota* (fern), wild yams (including the locally named *tivoli*, *bear* and *kawai* varieties), some *duruka*, and the fruit of a large number of trees (those named above and others such as jackfruit). Traditionally, such foods were important in daily diets but also as famine foods, when the supply of cultivated staples was short. People in all the case study areas stated that they had access to and used such foods, usually when gathered from bush in their own *mataqali* land (in the villages) but often from bush over which claims were weak (near the settlement schemes). Fish and other seafood, of course, could also be considered as wild food. These traditional wild foods have been added to by a small number of introduced plants which have become wild and supply some food (guavas and mangoes).

Thus, Fijian gardens maintain the traditional pattern (if not the detail) of agricultural diversity. In the great majority of cases, survey households met all root crop and vegetable needs from their own gardens, though there was purchase of a number of food items such as sugar, tea, bread, tinned meat and fish, and flour. Even in the settlement schemes, where farms have replaced bush, settlers have attempted to grow the range of crops they were familiar with in their former established villages. Food production remains the basis of Fijian agriculture.

The adaptation of traditional staples to commercial agriculture

It should not be concluded that all traditional crops are grown solely to meet domestic needs. For all five areas, approximately one hectare of household gardens is devoted to root crops. Yet this is more than adequate for most households with, on average, around six members. Usually considerable surplus is produced, some redistributed or used for customary obligations, but most with the clear intention of market sale. This adaptation of traditional crops for commercial production has been well noted (for example, Ward 1964; Frazer 1964; Desai 1975; Knapman 1976; Haynes 1976; Hardaker 1976; Thaman 1982b, 1984b; Thaman and Clarke 1983). Ever since Suva's population began to expand and, especially, to include a large number of ethnic Fijians, there has been a growing demand for traditional foods that Draubuta, Cautata, and later Waibau and Lomaivuna have been ideally placed to exploit. Cautata and Draubuta may be two of Suva's dormitory suburbs; they are also two of Suva's numerous market gardening areas.

Crops such as cassava and taro and, to a lesser extent *yaqona*, *kumala*, yams, coconuts, mandarins and pineapples, are ideal as commercial crops. As foods which are consumed by the producing household, they can be grown first to meet domestic needs, then sent to the market, where the returns can be used to pay for other domestic requirements such as tea, tinned food, clothes or school fees. Household and market are complementary. The crops are well established, production skills have been developed over many generations, energy inputs are low and their cultivation should not be harmful to the environment since there are no machines used for cultivation, except for the rare hiring of a tractor for

ploughing or the use by the government of machines for drainage and levelling. Marketing also has many advantages. Demand for a staple food crop on a domestic market is stable and increasing with urban growth, so producers should always find a buyer for their crops in Suva or Nausori. Marketing costs can be kept low, as members of the household can take bundles of produce directly to the market (on buses, or carrier trucks and vans) where they can sell them on market stalls. There is a cash return very soon after harvest. If this proves too time consuming, there is the option of farm-gate sale to market middlemen (Baxter 1980; Mangal 1988). But there are problems too. Whilst demand may be steady, supply is not and the Suva market is swamped periodically with taro, cabbages, pineapples or watermelons. Indeed, at times when the household faces an abundant harvest (or conversely a shortage), the market is similarly over-supplied (or runs short). Faced with a market glut many producer-vendors are often forced to sell produce at a price which barely covers, and sometimes does not cover, the cost of bus fares.

Table 5.2 The marketing of food crops and livestock 1985-86^a (percentage of those growing crops or rearing livestock who sell some of the output)

| | Draubuta | Cautata | Waibau | Lomaivuna | Non-scheme | Total all growers |
|-------------------------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|------------|-------------------|
| Cultivated crops | | | | | | |
| cassava | 47.1 | 30.0 | 79.2 | 94.1 | 100.0 | 65.7 |
| dalo | 33.3 | 10.7 | 95.7 | 82.4 | 91.7 | 57.7 |
| rourou (from dalo) | * | * | * | 6.7 | 16.7 | 5.2 |
| bele | * | * | * | 7.7 | * | 1.4 |
| dalo ni tana | * | * | * | 15.0 | 25.0 | 6.6 |
| yaqona | * | * | 47.6 | 0 | 16.7 | 18.6 |
| kumala | 8.5 | * | 52.6 | 12.5 | 40.0 | 21.3 |
| yams | 6.3 | * | 25.0 | 10.0 | * | 6.3 |
| duruka | * | * | * | 33.3 | * | 4.3 |
| English vegetables | 37.5 | 25.0 | 50.0 | 30.8 | 33.3 | 35.0 |
| pineapples | * | 12.5 | 0 | 29.2 | 25.0 | 15.7 |
| ginger | .. | .. | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| rice | 100.0 | 100.0 | .. | .. | .. | 100.0 |
| watermelons | 60.0 | .. | * | * | * | 37.5 |
| Tree crops | | | | | | |
| coconuts | 43.5 | 26.7 | * | 3.1 | * | 15.0 |
| vudi | * | * | * | 4.8 | 30.0 | 4.4 |
| breadfruit | 4.3 | * | * | * | * | 1.4 |
| bananas | 6.7 | * | 10.0 | 4.5 | 40.0 | 10.0 |
| mandarins | 62.5 | * | 6.7 | * | * | 24.6 |
| oranges | * | * | 6.7 | 7.1 | * | 3.2 |
| kavika | 11.8 | * | * | * | * | 3.7 |
| limes or lemons | * | * | * | 7.7 | * | 1.7 |
| mangoes | * | 7.1 | * | * | * | 2.6 |
| Livestock | | | | | | |
| chickens | * | * | * | 4.8 | * | 1.6 |
| pigs | 30.8 | * | 25.0 | 13.3 | * | 14.9 |
| cattle (dairy & beef) | 41.7 | 14.3 | * | 9.1 | 50.0 | 25.7 |

^aCrops not sold by any growers are excluded: *via kana*, chillies, sugar cane, *baigani*, pumpkin, *dawa*, soursop and ligani. Draught animals also excluded. A '*' represents crops grown but not sold, and '..' represents crops not grown or sold.

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

In the face of these advantages and occasional difficulties, traditional crops have proved a remarkably large source of income for many households, to the extent where they rival the specialized non-traditional cash crops, rice and ginger. The proportion of growers selling some of their crops is shown in Table 5.2

The main staples are also major cash crops. Cassava and taro are sold by around a third to a half of village growers and by 80 per cent and above of settlers. *Dalo* is second only to ginger (and is more important for some growers) as a cash crop in Waibau and, in Lomaivuna, there are a number of growers who produce large amounts of cassava mainly for the market. There are other interesting examples of local specialization in commercial food crops. *Kumala* and *yaqona* are sold by half those in Waibau who grow them, and coconuts and mandarins are sold by many Draubuta households. Many of the minor traditional food crops, though, are marketed only rarely and on a small scale. It is the main staples, rather than the traditional food supplements, that have been adapted most readily to commercial production. Their importance in providing basic sustenance for both rural and urban Fijians as well as some cash income for the former must be emphasized.

Table 5.3 Draubuta and Waibau farm incomes

| | Draubuta | | Waibau | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Av. gross income per household \$ | Per cent of total farm income | Av. gross income per household \$ | Per cent of total farm income |
| cassava | 192 | 22.9 | 315 | 9.8 |
| <i>dalo</i> | 81 | 9.7 | 800 | 24.9 |
| <i>kumala</i> | 5 | 0.6 | 166 | 5.2 |
| <i>yaqona</i> | - | - | 160 | 5.0 |
| tree crops | 75 | 9.0 | 9 | 0.3 |
| rice | 327 | 38.8 | - | - |
| ginger | - | - | 1747 | 54.4 |
| other crops | 54 | 6.4 | 6 | 0.2 |
| livestock | 106 | 12.6 | 8 | 0.2 |
| Total | 840 | 100.0 | 3211 | 100.0 |

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

These data on the proportion of growers selling some of their output give no indication of the relative value of cash crops. It is difficult to get reliable data on precise incomes from these crops as the availability of surplus for sale may be irregular and market prices vary. Also, the proportion sold or consumed can differ greatly between individuals and over time. Nonetheless, some indication of relative returns can be gauged from the examples of Draubuta and Waibau, where comparison is made between food crops and specialist cash crops. The data in Table 5.3 are from interviews of households, including those with no incomes from cash or commercial crops. An estimate of annual income was built up from discussion of marketing of traditional crops (how much is sold and whether this is weekly, only in season etc.). For the specialist crops, cash returns were well known as payments were received in one sum and could be checked against estimates of output. Given that the data are based on estimates rather than precise

records, the incomes given should be used to show relative returns from different crops, rather than exact dollar incomes.

There are major contrasts between the two villages. Waibau is a prosperous cashcropping area with most of its relatively high per capita incomes attributable to agriculture, whereas Draubuta is much more dependent on off-farm incomes. Yet, in both, traditional crops earn a significant proportion of household farm incomes. In both, taro and cassava together account for around one-third; in Draubuta, mandarins, coconuts and watermelons are important; whilst in Waibau, *yagona* and *kumala* account for about 10 per cent of farm incomes. Live-stock bring extra income for some households in Draubuta (as they do in Lomaivuna and the off-scheme areas), though in Waibau they are for domestic use only. And the contributions of traditional food crops to household income is greater when it is remembered that the above data refer to gross incomes. Root crops require little in the way of input costs, occasionally weedicides are used to clear plots and on larger, more commercial gardens, bullock ploughs and fertilizers may be used. But these are small costs in comparison to the high labour, fertilizer, spraying and cleaning costs of ginger and rice. In sum, the traditional food crops, which have been adapted for commercial use, provide a little under half of household farm income — a considerable contribution and one which puts the official emphasis on specialist cash crops into perspective. Fijians are unlikely to substitute specialist crops for their established food staples and supplements as long as these continue to provide basic food needs and a good cash income.

New commercial products

Whereas traditional food crops continue as the staples of village Fiji and also provide important cash incomes, the most significant changes occurring in Fijian agriculture are the result of the adoption of new specialist commercial crops, especially ginger and rice in the case study areas. Elsewhere, sugar and copra (another adapted traditional crop) are important (Moynagh 1981; Brookfield 1985, 1987; Knapman 1987). There are, however, other new crops and livestock which have become important sources of income and activity, for example tobacco (Eaton 1988a) and beef cattle (Ravuvu 1988). All these nontraditional crops or animals have been introduced in the last hundred years or so and new skills have had to be learnt for their successful cultivation or husbandry. Some have become a part of household diets and even (in the case of cows) part of traditional exchange. However, they are basically specialist cash crops. Ginger, rice, pineapples and some livestock production is much more capital and energy intensive than traditional food crop systems. Weedicides, pesticides, fertilizers, thorough bush and weed clearing, sheds, and even vehicles have been seen as necessary investments for the development of such commercial agriculture. Yet they have been adopted and adapted by many Fijian farmers, often highly successfully. In this section, the pattern of adoption and some of the economic and ecological consequences will be discussed.

Pineapples are grown by over 60 per cent of study households (Table 5.1) but in Draubuta, Cautata and Waibau, the amounts grown are mainly on a small scale and for domestic consumption (Table 5.2). In Draubuta, pineapples are to be found not in large cleared plots, but more often in small patches, frequently bush clearings. In Cautata, cultivation is similar, though there are a couple of large pineapple gardens. It is in Lomaivuna, however, that pineapples are being

adopted as a major cash crop, with extensive government support. Since the failure of the Banana Venture in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there have been attempts to find a new cash crop base for the Lomaivuna scheme. Immature ginger has been the most successful to date but there are plans to establish pineapples as a major alternative. Most of present production is for sale on the Suva market but Fiji's Ninth Development Plan (Fiji Central Planning Office 1985:59) foresees a major expansion in production and a move towards more processing of the fruit. Lomaivuna has been targeted as an area for development.

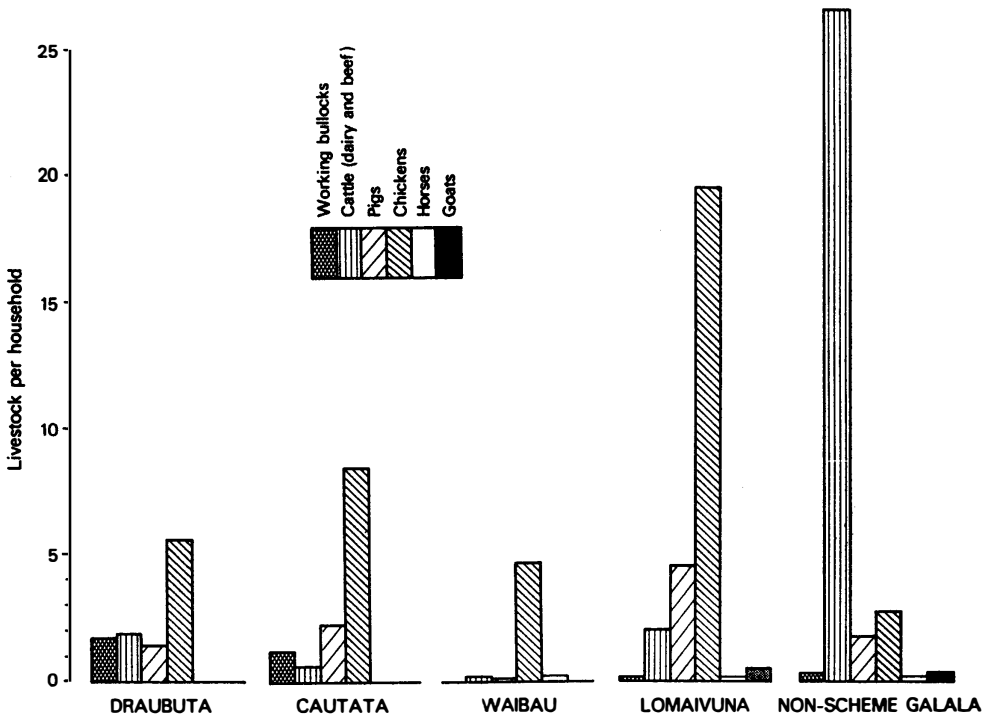
Of the twenty-four pineapple growers surveyed at Lomaivuna most were growing for domestic use or selling on a small scale (80 per cent had less than 0.5 hectare under pineapples) but two were large-scale growers (as were a number that were not part of the sample). They had plantings of 1.8 and 1.4 hectares, representing a major specialization in the crop. Many were growing the spiny variety of fruit (which was more popular as an eating fruit but which was unsuitable for canning) and a number were applying hormones to the fruit in order to extend the growing season and exploit good off-season prices. Weedicides were also used widely to clear land of weeds and there was a characteristic 'pineapple landscape' of long rows of pineapple plants separated by bare earth. It is an intensively grown and often remunerative crop. However, growers expressed the view that whilst returns from the Suva market could be good, those from supplying canning operations were less likely to be so, as prices offered were considerably less than those obtainable in Suva.

Watermelons are a similar cash crop but they are grown solely for the Suva and Nausori markets (in addition to household consumption) and their commercial production is restricted to a few Draubuta households. Nonetheless, these growers see the crop as profitable, one having about 0.8 hectare under watermelons in the season.

English vegetables — cabbages, carrots, tomatoes, beans and corn — are more widely adopted, with about 40 per cent of study households having plots of one or more of these vegetables, and the area matching *kumala* in Draubuta, Lomaivuna and the non-scheme areas (Figure 5.1). They are used in household meals but those with larger plots grow mainly for the urban markets. Cabbages, tomatoes and corn, in particular, are carried to Suva along with the more common taro and cassava. The production of these vegetables, though, is very seasonal (with large gluts on the market) and often prone to failure (through disease or pest attack). They are not tropical plants. Also, because of this, the quality is often not sufficiently good and the supply too irregular to break into the lucrative tourist hotel market. Cultivation of English vegetables is likely to remain limited.

Livestock have become a part of the Fijian rural scene (Figure 5.3). Draught animals (bullocks for ploughing and, in the hills, horses for carrying) are vital for the development of cashcropping and an important alternative to expensive mechanization. In the two villages, the ownership of bullock teams and ploughs is around 50 per cent and, with hiring and *kerekere*, this means that most farmers can prepare land without recourse to heavy labour or tractor hire. Indeed, with cultivated gardens of between one and two hectares (Figure 5.1), draught animal power is much more appropriate and cost-effective than machine drawn ploughs. But it is as a source of food and incomes that livestock are more important.

Figure 5.3 'Typical' holdings of livestock per household 1985-86



Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

Chickens for meat and eggs are kept by over half the households, though only two households in Lomaivuna raised them on a large scale (with 100 and 300 birds respectively) for sale. With the advent of 'factory poultry' in Fiji, comprising large-scale rearing, processing and marketing of birds, the individual farmers find it difficult to compete. Similarly, pigs are kept by many but sold by relatively few. Households tend to have only a couple which they sell rarely and only on an informal basis to neighbours. In Lomaivuna and Waibau there were a handful of larger piggeries (twenty to fifty animals) and these, again, were struggling to compete with big commercial piggeries. There was a piggery at Waibau with some 400 animals but it was destroyed by a landslip in April 1986. Cattle are kept in all areas (except Waibau) by a third or more of households (Table 5.1). They are similar to pigs in that they are kept (in numbers of two or three) for mainly local and customary use (*oga vakavanua*), when occasions, such as marriages and funerals, demand that presentations of food be made for *magiti*. Cattle are sold individually once or twice a year, or kept by the household until required for a special ceremonial purpose. Commercial beef or dairy production does not seem possible in the villages. A number of observers have discussed the role of *oga vakavanua* in the slow progress of a Fijian livestock industry in the villages (Spate 1959:25-6; Belshaw 1964b:150-1; Watters 1969a:94; Rutz 1978a) but there seem to

be economic difficulties as well. Fencing is difficult on customary land, unless formal leases are held (Ward 1987) and tethering and constant minding of stock are necessary. One Draubuta family had kept many cattle in the 1960s but had sold them all, not being able to profit from them and being a target for many *vakavanua* requests and obligations. One non-scheme settler at Navukece who was interviewed in 1985 had 250 head of beef cattle but was none too sanguine about his prospects, being faced with high loan repayments (for his stock), high costs for fencing, and low prices. This single cattle farm accounts for the high per capita cattle holdings of non-scheme settlers in Figure 5.3.

Despite the progress and pitfalls of pineapples, cabbages and cattle, though, it is rice (in Draubuta and Cautata) and ginger (in the other three areas) that are having the greatest impact upon agriculture and household economies. They present clear examples of the opportunities and constraints of successful cash crop adoption in rural Fiji.

Rice. Rice was introduced to Fiji by Indian indentured labourers in the later part of the nineteenth century, and for most of the colonial period it remained in the hands of Indian estate workers and smallholders. It was restricted to the sugar areas (including the Navua and Nausori areas where the sugar operations eventually closed) and, within these regions, its development was restricted by the policies of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company which was fearful of competition for land and labour between sugar and rice. There were attempts in the 1930s and 1940s by the colonial government to boost rice production and decrease imports, but the progress during this period was reversed in the 1950s when sugar prices recovered and more land was required for cane. Government attempts to encourage rice farming in the 1930s and 1940s led to the adoption of rice by some Fijians in Cautata and Draubuta, even though they opted out later. When the Nausori sugar mill was closed in 1959, there was a major freeing of land for rice in the Tailevu-Rewa region and many former Indian tenants and Fijian cane growers turned to rice. There was an attempt at Lakena (near Nausori) to introduce mechanized irrigated rice production but this has struggled to find success. The real expansion in rice production on a national scale has come in recent years with the reclamation of non-sugar areas in Vanua Levu and southeastern Viti Levu. The post-colonial government of Fiji has placed a great deal of emphasis on rice, both as a means of lowering the rising import bill for rice, and of increasing the living standards of poorer Indian and Fijian rural dwellers.

The program for the development of the rice industry has involved a range of measures (Fiji Ministry of Primary Industries, Agricultural Commodities Committee 1985a; Overton 1988d). Land development has aimed at irrigating existing single crop areas to allow for double cropping, and extending the area under rice by levelling and draining areas such as parts of the Rewa Delta. Extension services — involving credit, advice and research — have been expanded and, most significantly, marketing has been stabilized with a supported guaranteed price for paddy (of \$300 per tonne in 1986) and a quasi-government processing and marketing agency which will accept all rice and pay farmers on delivery. This contrasts with sugar cane farmers who may not receive final payments for their crop until twelve months after harvest.

The targets for increased output are ambitious, involving a doubling of output between 1984 and 1990 (Fiji Central Planning Office 1985:63) and a major increase in participation in the industry by indigenous village Fijians. The latter is neces-

sary as it is believed that new rice land can be opened up only in areas held under customary tenure. Of the planned 4150 hectares total increase in planned rice area in 1984-90, 2818 hectares (68 per cent) will be in the Central Division (in which the study area lies) and, of this, an estimated 73 per cent will have to occur on Fijian owned and farmed land (Overton 1988d). Rice farming will be pushed into the villages and Draubuta and Cautata are on the frontier of this development.

Yet the adoption of rice in the villages has major implications for traditional food production systems, land tenure and social and economic equity. In both villages land is scarce, particularly land which is level, cleared of bush and suitably drained. When these physical factors are overlain across *mataqali* land boundaries, it is apparent that only some of the villagers (those in *mataqali* with good land) have access to rice land. The shortage of *mataqali* land is seen as the main obstacle to future expansion. Nearly half of the respondents in both villages stated that land shortage and the reluctance of the rest of their *mataqali*, let alone another clan, to grant them more land, restrict them considerably.

There were seventeen households growing rice in Draubuta and fifteen in Cautata in 1986. All were interviewed. In Cautata, all were newcomers to rice in the past three years, except for one who planted the crop in the 1930s (then stopped and has restarted) and one who began in 1969. In Draubuta, the history is similar: fourteen have started recently, two began in the 1960s (one has since stopped, the other has a successful and long-standing sharecropping arrangement with an Indian farmer) and one began in the early 1970s. The areas grown vary greatly within the villages (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Area under rice, Draubuta and Cautata 1986

| | Total area (ha) | Mean area/household (ha) ^a | Standard deviation | Range |
|----------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Draubuta | 19.20 | 1.20 | 1.14 | 0.08-4.05 |
| Cautata | 22.66 | 1.51 | 0.96 | 0.40-4.05 |

^aPer household areas refer only to those growing rice, not all those in the village.

Source: Field surveys and household interviews 1986.

In each village there have emerged some leading growers (five in each) with over 2.0 hectares. The rest are mainly new adopters, have smaller plots, and appear to be experiencing more difficulty. There have been few absolute failures, despite major flood damage in Draubuta in 1986 (they were given government assistance to replant) and inexperience there and in Cautata. Indeed, the only two who later abandoned rice were both elderly and complained that they were now too old themselves for the hard work and their sons had left home. There were, however, some growers in both villages who were clearly struggling with low yields, crop damage (from birds, weeds and leaf roller) and shortages of equipment (ploughs and sprayers). Their future is uncertain.

Capital is a major constraint. Bullock teams, ploughs, and occasionally land clearing are major costs for villagers who have few savings and often restricted access to other sources of income (although most land clearing, levelling and drainage has been carried out by government and the expense borne by its rice development loans). The shortage of implements ranked on a similar level to land shortage as a barrier to future expansion. For farmers outside the villages on

freehold land or registered leases, access to credit through the Fiji Development Bank is relatively easy. But where land cannot be used as security for a loan (the Fiji Development Bank will accept only a formal lease, not communal land), credit is very difficult to obtain. In Cautata, however, four villagers were able to get loans in excess of \$1000 as part of a government experiment in lending to village farmers. It has not been continued. In Draubuta, only two villagers have succeeded in getting loans from the Fiji Development Bank and one was fortunate enough to get a large loan from American aid. It is likely that the credit/capital constraint will remain a considerable obstacle to individual village farmers.

Labour requirements are less of an obstacle to development. For rice, most pre-harvest tasks can be carried out by the farming household, though for harvesting, larger numbers are required for up to a week. The differences observed between Cautata and Draubuta are illuminating and have implications for the future of Fijian rice schemes. In Draubuta, all labour for rice farming came from within the village and mostly from kin and clan (themselves growers of rice or root crops). No payments in cash were made. Workers were paid in kind: cigarettes, meals, kava and, rarely, some of the output. In other words, there was no monetized labour absorption and no real extra employment generation within the village as a result of rice development. In Cautata, however, perhaps because more people are engaged in off-farm employment (creating a greater awareness of the opportunity cost of labour), nine of the fifteen farmers employed extra village labour for cash payments. Though the periods of employment were short, to cover harvesting, there were flows of money from the rice growers to labourers who were often very short of land and dependent on casual work. Thus, whilst the Draubuta model of payment in kind might assist capital-scarce growers to become established, the Cautata cash payment model will have to be adopted in the future if the benefits of the rice schemes are to be spread more widely amongst Fijians.

Another difficulty facing individual village rice growers is the shortage of technical advice. Whilst the Ministry of Primary Industries has helped establish new areas by draining wetlands and clearing and levelling fields and has also expanded extension services, these latter seem to be limited, especially in Cautata. A number have complained that the difficulties encountered with pests, diseases, spraying times etc. have not been met by extension workers who 'only appear at harvest time'. It is apparent that some of the growers just do not have the knowledge to successfully adopt rice, which is so different from root crops to cultivate. Others, however, are thriving.

Environmentally, rice has wrought major changes, and will continue to do so. In Draubuta rice was grown for many years by Indian tenants and, as some of this land has reverted to village farming, part of the rice development is really the substitution of Fijian for Indian growers. However, rice cultivation is extending beyond the limits of former leased land. Government levelling and drainage is transforming the landscape close to the village: mixed gardens and fallow land, together with the remnants of some of the smaller old ring-ditch fortifications and gardens, are disappearing under the bulldozer. In their place are flat fields of rice monoculture. Soon there will be a new road through Draubuta land as a result of the rice development program and buses and trucks will become a more direct feature of village life. Clearing for rice has not yet affected the large areas of bush and, given its importance for gardens, tree crops and sacred sites, there would be much opposition to its destruction. Yet there has probably been some indirect

effect. Traditional foods are still grown but the location of these gardens is different now that rice is taking the best land near the village and the river. Where *mataqali* have bush or waste land, the root crop gardens are often relocated there or on the margins of the rice fields. There is more pressure on all land, even if rice is being accommodated without a major impact on the composition (if not the location) of traditional gardens.

In Cautata the environmental impact has been less, for rice is being grown on newly-cleared swampy land that did not support much cropping earlier. But the deep drains have cut into the important mangrove areas (as have efforts to clear the mangrove for houses and a rugby field) and this may affect the resources there. In both areas the intensive rice system being adopted, with single crop varieties and extensive use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, may have longer-term impacts on the biota and resources of the land. At this stage these can only be guessed at (Thaman 1984c).

Despite the problems, rice remains very popular with growers. The main attraction of rice, according to farmers, may be summarized as 'good, quick and easy money'. Rice matures much faster than root crops (a return can be had 120-150 days after planting), the price is good and secure, and farmers do not have to sit all day at the Suva market trying to sell their crop. Payment is in a lump sum upon delivery at the rice mill at Nausori. It is apparent that, at \$300 per tonne, the rewards to labour are much higher for rice than they are for taro and cassava. This pecuniary advantage of rice over root crops is likely to sustain cultivation of the crop.

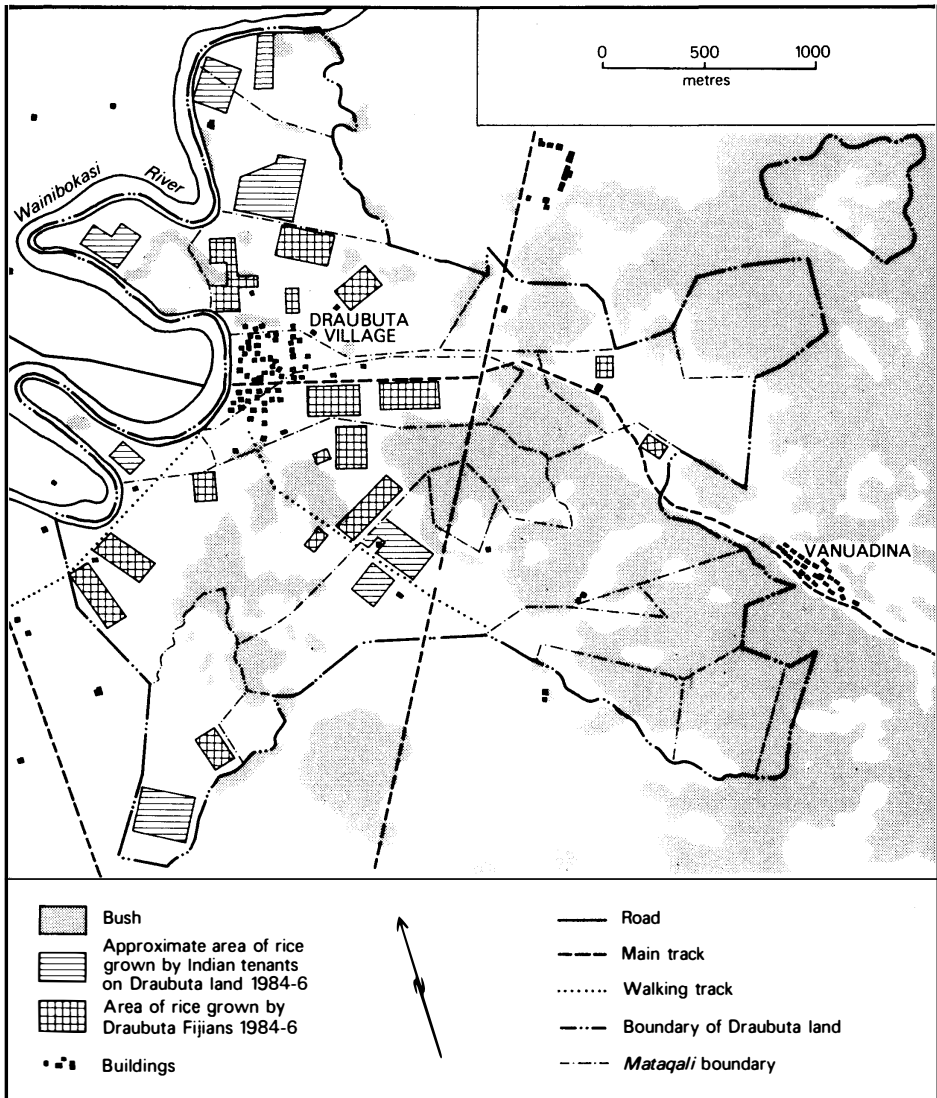
There was an interesting secondary advantage for rice given by over half the respondents. Rice was being used more and more for home consumption. It could be stored for long periods, was a popular food for breakfast (though some were using it as a staple food for two to three months of the year), and one household used it also as poultry feed. There is evidence, then, of a partial dietary substitution of rice for cassava and taro amongst rice farmers, if not other villagers. Rice is becoming an important complement to root crops in some household diets.

Given this dietary substitution, it could be expected that there may be some land and labour reallocation from root crops to rice and a decline in the output of the former. Farmers were asked if rice farming had affected their cultivation of other crops. Out of a total of thirty-two responses, eight farmers indicated that they had decreased their area of root crop cultivation. Thus, for most farmers, there has not been any major decline in staple food production since adopting rice. All grow only one crop of rice per year and many stated that they could deal satisfactorily with their taro and cassava at other times. Two in Cautata even said that growing rice motivated them to give more attention to farming and their root crops. For these farmers with no negative impacts on root crop production, it is probable that rice has utilized surplus labour time. Traditional food production and its labour inputs have been readjusted to accommodate the new crop. It is too soon to tell whether such a reorganization will lead to the concentration of root crop output during certain times of the year and shortages at others, though the increase in household consumption of rice suggests that this might occur.

The 25 per cent of respondents whose root crop production had declined are significant. Their reason for a decline was mainly the increased labour input for rice, which left less time for other crops. There is little or no surplus labour available for this group. Most stated that they had reduced root crop production to the level of household needs, having previously sold considerable surpluses at

the urban markets. This substitution of one cash crop for another may have important consequences for future supply of marketed root crops to meet the needs of urban Fijians, as this region is one of the main taro and cassava producing areas for the Suva market. A dual marketing structure is emerging, whereby one staple (rice) is on a protected, price supported market and the other (root crops) operates through a free market.

Figure 5.4 Rice land in Draubuta 1986



Source: Household interviews and field survey 1986.

Whilst farmers whose output of root crops had declined believed this was the result of a labour/time effect, it is clear from field surveys that there has been

considerable encroachment of rice onto root crop land. Figure 5.4 shows the distribution of rice areas in Draubuta village. As well as the 19 hectares of Fijian-grown rice, there are a further 28 hectares of land leased to Indian smallholders who are growing rice on most of their land. Rice has occupied a significant portion of the best cleared land close to the village and the Wainibokasi River. Root crops have 'retreated' back to the bush margins and into bush clearings. There seems to have been, then, a division of village land (and by implication, clan specialization) into rice-dominant and non-rice areas. Similarly, at Cautata, the flat lands that have been drained for rice are becoming dominated by this crop and household root crop gardens are found on the hill slopes

Rice growing by village Fijians, however, seems to have been affected adversely in the aftermath of the military coups of 1987. A brief return visit to Draubuta by the author in August 1988 revealed that no rice at all was being grown in the village. Although it was the off-season, it was clear that few preparations were being made for the next crop. The reasons for the decline were varied. One of the most significant was that the Indian tenants had left and their former land was not to be planted in rice. In one case, former tenant land had been taken over by a Fijian to grow commercial taro, but in the others, household gardens were present. Other reasons stated included the loss of labour (young men had gone to join the army, including two of the leading growers in 1986), uncertainty over prices (relative to root crops), and rumours of harvests being affected by salt-water incursion. The decline in rice planting may recover in time, though its adoption by Fijians seems to have been severely affected.

Thus, at least until May 1987, the adoption of rice by individual Fijian village cultivators had been generally recent and responsive. There had been some failures, or near failures, but many found it a profitable and successful crop. Because it has been a recent innovation in the villages studied, some of the longer-term consequences are not yet apparent. However, preliminary results have shown that, should its adoption recover and continue, there will be important effects on village land (exacerbating shortages), village labour (limited generation of wage employment), crops and diet (rice partly replacing root crops), and socio-economic inequalities (rice farmers with land will prosper alongside those with little or unsuitable land).

Ginger. Ginger has emerged as a leading export cash crop in Fiji. It now ranks third (behind sugar and copra) as an agricultural export earner, and the country's planners have set much store by its future development (Fiji Central Planning Office 1985:54-7; Fiji Ministry of Primary Industries, Agricultural Commodities Committee 1985c:2). There is to be an increase in the production of and area under green (immature) ginger, though no increase for mature ginger (immature ginger is harvested at its green, partly matured stage and is used for crystallizing; mature or fresh ginger is used in cooking and is exported in its root form). By increasing farmer productivity and improving local processing it is hoped that employment and earnings will continue to increase. Within this overall scheme, Waibau and Lomaivuna are crucial. Together they account for 49 per cent of Fiji's ginger output, Lomaivuna producing two-thirds of the immature ginger and Waibau one-third of the much larger mature ginger output.

This importance in ginger production is reflected in the incomes and prosperity of the Waibau and Lomaivuna settlers. In many ways, ginger rescued Lomaivuna from the post-banana depression and, in Waibau, the income data in

Table 5.3 indicate that ginger provides over half the relatively substantial household farm incomes. If these two areas may be called successful settlement schemes, it must be recognized that this has been as a result of the ginger industry.

Adoption rates are high. Interview and field surveys in 1985 (Lomaivuna) and 1986 (Waibau) covered, respectively, 20 per cent and 59 per cent of Fijian settlers. These showed that around 90 per cent were growing ginger and all these were doing it commercially (Tables 5.1 and 5.2). The areas grown do not dominate household gardens to the extent that rice does in the villages (Figure 5.1) but the intensity of cultivation means that labour and capital inputs are much higher than other crops. The areas grown vary relatively little between farmers (Table 5.5).

The difference between the two settlement areas — larger plantings in Waibau — has to do with the different marketing structures for green and mature ginger. In Waibau the mature ginger is marketed by commercial firms and the aim is to maximize the area grown within labour and capital constraints. In Lomaivuna, however, most growers harvest immature ginger which has a premium value but a lower yield per hectare. Marketing of immature ginger is handled by the National Marketing Authority (NMA) which allocates contracts to growers. Usually these are smaller than the growers would wish and most are 0.05 - 0.15 hectare. Some though have larger plantings, selling mature ginger on the open market.

Table 5.5 Area under ginger, Waibau and Lomaivuna 1985-86

| | Total area (ha) ^a | Mean area/ household (ha) | Standard deviation | Range |
|-----------|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Waibau | 10.29 | 0.49 | 0.36 | 0.16 - 1.46 |
| Lomaivuna | 6.74 | 0.27 | 0.24 | 0.06 - 1.01 |

^aTotal area refers to the total in the sample only. If this is extended to the population of Fijian settlers (excluding Indian, Chinese and Rotuman settlers), the estimate for total area under ginger is 17.44 hectares in Waibau and 34.04 hectares in Lomaivuna on Fijian leased land.

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

Just as rice land is proving very difficult to acquire in Draubuta and Cautata, so too is ginger land in the settlement schemes. The areas needed to get a good return from ginger are generally small (under 1 hectare) and average holdings are usually 4 hectares or more, so there is no absolute shortage of land. However, the high natural fertility requirement for ginger soils means that only newly cleared land, or land that has been left fallow and fertilized, is suitable. This is in short supply, so that there is a land constraint for ginger just as for rice.

Gross incomes for ginger are high and the average income of \$1700 per annum from ginger in Waibau is much higher than most rural Fijians could contemplate from other crops. But the costs are high too. As ginger grows best on newly cleared land and cannot be grown for more than two seasons on the same patch, land clearance is a costly exercise, since most households do not have sufficient household labour to undertake this task. Land preparation, planting and harvesting usually require hired labour. Other costs include seed material (when good tubers have not been saved from the previous season), sprays and fertilizer. Also,

the harvested ginger has to be washed (often necessitating the purchase of a water pump), packed and transported. Wastage is high, for the ginger can be easily damaged during harvesting and packing and much of the fresh ginger is rejected before being processed or marketed. Many farmers in both areas complained that returns were not good enough to cover their effort and costs (though they keep growing it). The capital constraint has been a major reason for the development of sharecropping arrangements with Chinese growers.

Despite the high labour requirements, households seem to manage by hiring help (Overton 1988b). Household labour resources simply cannot manage the peak demands of ginger cultivation, there are few opportunities to *kerekere* extra labour from relatives (who usually live far from the schemes), so hiring is the only alternative. Because hiring is used so much and because ginger involves selective peak demands for labour, most of the other tasks can be performed by household members and there is relatively little impact upon the cultivation of traditional food crops. Indeed, after the ginger has been harvested, household labour and land are often available (good for *dalo* or pineapple if not more ginger). As a result, the settlement scheme areas have developed significant secondary cash crops and support sizeable household gardens (Figure 5.1). There has been no apparent loss in the diversity of gardens. Thus, ginger has not monopolized domestic labour and also has led to off-farm spread effects through wage labour.

Perhaps the major long-term constraint on the ginger industry is not net returns (which remain high) but land and environment. Clearing of bush has led to a major change in the landscape and, ultimately, carrying capacity of the land at Lomaivuna and Waibau. Both scheme areas were originally covered by heavy bush. At Waibau, clearing was carried out by the settlers themselves but at Lomaivuna, the government cleared part of the allotments before settlement. Since the 1960s deforestation has continued apace. In Waibau, nearly all the farms in the lower (eastern) half of the scheme are fully cleared of indigenous trees and only a few fruit or decorative trees have replaced them. In the upper half of the scheme and on the two large blocks, considerable stands remain but are being rapidly cleared for ginger. At Lomaivuna also some blocks are virtually bare and in others the forest margin is being steadily pushed back.

Some of this deforestation, especially at Waibau, has been on land with very steep slopes and thin soil cover. It is hardly surprising that soil erosion has become a serious problem. At Waibau, in May 1986, the effects of prolonged and heavy rainfall in April were readily discernible. The road through the scheme was cut by slips in six places, several houses were threatened and the loss of soil was severe. One subjective estimate was a loss of 10 hectares of root crops in the area (*Fiji Times*, 5 June 1986), but the effective loss was much greater, probably triple that amount, when fallow land is included. Also the erosion, though widespread, hit some settlers harder than others with some farmers reporting losses of over 50 per cent of their crops while others were relatively untouched. Because of the steep topography of Waibau, concern has been expressed by officials since its inception that serious erosion could occur unless farmers adopted careful soil conservation techniques and planned their gardens accordingly (TFO 2 37/43/718, 11 May 1959). In 1986 those fears seem to have been vindicated. But it would be wrong to blame the erosion entirely on poor farming by the settlers, for whilst some officials have been uneasy about cultivation on steep slopes, others have been more active in encouraging such practices, especially in the case of ginger. Even the down-slope rowing of ginger (which accelerates run-off and

erosion) has been pushed by extension workers. Furthermore, given that 1986 was the first time that such serious erosion has occurred, it could be argued that twenty-five years or so of relatively erosion-free cropping is a good return from such steep land. The 1986 disaster was abnormal when it is noted that serious erosion occurred not only on the scheme where bush had been cleared but also on nearby slopes where thick forest remained.

However, it is clear that at Waibau, at least, deforestation and erosion have begun to diminish the soil resource and, consequently, the ability of farmers to respond positively to good market opportunities for *dalo* and ginger. At Lomaivuna, where slopes are not generally as steep, soil erosion is not yet as debilitating to the local economy as at Waibau. But with ginger and pineapples, both ecologically damaging crops, being developed on a large scale, environmental limits to extended or continued cropping could soon be reached.³

Much of the cause of environmental degradation on the schemes is attributable to what may be called the 'ginger ecology' (Overton 1988b). Ginger is a crop that has tight ecological requirements. It needs high rainfall, good drainage and fertile soils; nematodes become a problem when the same area is under ginger for more than two seasons. Because Fijian ginger producers are small-scale, low-cost producers they cannot afford to fertilize or sterilize their soil on a large scale. Thus, ginger in Fiji is best suited to a form, albeit considerably modified, of shifting cultivation. It grows best on newly cleared bush land where natural fertility is high, it prefers steeper slopes where drainage is better and it cannot tolerate repeated croppings without lengthy fallow periods and fertilizers. Consequently, one can perceive a 'ginger frontier' where plots of ginger are grown extensively on the forest margins, but behind is a cleared, less fertile area where *dalo*, vegetables and pineapples predominate. This is especially the picture at Waibau, but is also evident at Lomaivuna. In the latter area, MPI efforts to promote immature ginger production, partly to avoid the nematode problem, mean that soil fertility problems are not quite as severe, though fertilizer applications (again resulting from closer MPI and NMA guidance) are higher. However, given the delicacy of its environmental requirements, the evidence of erosion at Waibau and the inability of settlers to invest extensively in fertilizers without commensurate increases in yield (compared to the 'shifting cultivation' method), the continued value of this crop and the importance attached to it by Fiji's planners are in serious doubt.

These important specialist cash crops — rice and ginger — have become a crucial part of both the national and local economies. Despite problems, they have been adopted widely, they have provided good incomes for a number of leading growers, and they have developed without major adverse effects upon traditional food crop production. But there remain important reservations concerning the sustainability of both rice and ginger. Rice has been so attractive because it is heavily supported by a high price and government attention, and ginger has been profitable for some because it has swept through virgin country, exploiting natural soil fertility. Both are unstable bases, vulnerable to political or ecological changes, and a more solid foundation for rural prosperity needs to be sought.

3 Pineapples are damaging because they require the removal of all vegetation before planting and regular weeding (though some intercropping with vegetables is possible), which exposes bare soil to the elements and accelerates runoff.

Implications: new crops and old

Recent studies (Thomas 1981; Thaman 1982a, 1984a, 1988b; Ali 1988a, 1988b) have suggested that extensive cashcropping leads to specialization and 'de-diversification' of traditional or established domestic food production systems. Such is certainly the case for sugar cane, where the profitability of the crop has led smallholders to substitute sugar for food crops (Ali 1988b). Given the volatility of export crop prices, such changes may be detrimental economically as well as ecologically and nutritionally.

However, the above case studies of agricultural patterns in areas of southeastern Viti Levu suggest that diversity has been maintained in Fijian village and settlement scheme gardens. In the case of the settlement schemes, diversity has been introduced in the past thirty years, with the conscious planting of a variety of cultivated and tree crops, and has been maintained alongside the rapid development of cashcropping. What is probably instrumental in this maintenance of diversity in Fijian agriculture is both the cultural preference for traditional foods (to plant and eat) and, perhaps more, the fact that traditional foods have become good cash crops themselves, meaning that there is no chasm between the relative returns for old and new crops.

In accommodating new specialized crops and growing them, sometimes on a large scale, there has been re-organization: land has been made available for the new crops (though this is proving more and more difficult) and the old ones relocated, and household labour is allocated to both tasks, with extra labour when required being hired or borrowed. What is apparent is that there has been no wholesale substitution of new for old and, although there has been conflict and competition, traditional agriculture has remained strong and adaptable. This Fijian model of complementary development of traditional and specialized crops is, surely, a good one if the twin aims of increased production and increased rural quality of life are to be maintained.

It can be argued that this model is capable of further development. In parts of Fiji (the Rewa Delta, if not the hills at Waibau), soil and topography are such that further intensification of agriculture is possible. The work of Parry (1977) suggests that *via kana* has supported a highly intensive agricultural system in the Rewa Delta with populations possibly higher than present levels, and Chung (1988) has argued that this might prove suitable again as a disaster food (Overton and Chung forthcoming). Similar intensification, based on root crop production (using old and new technologies) might be possible in the future. Others (some of the foreign consultants from the Asian Development Bank and other agencies who are advising on the rice intensification scheme) would like to see hectares of irrigated, double-cropped rice throughout the Delta and elsewhere, a 'little Asia' in the Pacific. Even in the hills, traditional models of irrigated taro terraces are available, and careful environmental and agricultural management could lead to intensification even there.

But what the foregoing chapter has stressed is that there are limits to the present course of agricultural change in Fiji — limits that, in Waibau at least, may have already been exceeded. Environmental deterioration means that the present ginger industry cannot be supported for long without major costs in terms of soil erosion, flooding and deforestation. Similarly, the artificial base of price support cannot sustain the present rice industry without the continued compliance of urban consumers or the will of government. If agricultural development is to

proceed in Fiji and provide rural dwellers with security, food and incomes, then it would be foolish to concentrate on a small range of cash crops. Traditional systems, even if greatly modified, must remain as the foundation, the basis from which new crops can be accommodated (or not), according to the needs and resources of Fijian households.

Society, settlement and differentiation

Having analysed the processes of change in land, labour and agricultural production, it is now possible to examine the patterns of social organization and contrast, and to begin to relate these to wider notions of social change, whether traditionalism, individualism, ethnicity or class formation. This discussion will be conducted with regard to the case study evidence, leaving the wider implications for Fiji to Chapter 8.

The focus in this chapter is on cash incomes (as a surrogate for material well-being and socio-economic differentiation) though it is recognized that many other factors (such as access to land, balanced diets, social interaction) are important in people's perception of their quality of life. One example of this was a Lomaivuna settler who, during the course of an interview in 1985, recounted how he had retired from the civil service in Suva. He talked on his balcony overlooking the hills and bush towards the centre of Viti Levu and said that when he worked in Suva he earned good money but was very fat and the city was noisy and too busy. Now, a fit 55 years of age, his stomach had flattened, he grew his own food, he ran a store ('to help the community, not for profit'), held two green ginger contracts and, though his income was less than in Suva, he said he was much more contented and his life was better.

All the subjects of this study share many of these advantages of rural life (fitness, land, tranquillity), even if they do not have the long experience of city life for favourable comparison. However, money is important. It allows them to buy a few luxuries, to give to the church or to pay for a marriage. And more, it is the basis for any new form of socio-economic differentiation because money is needed to secure a lease to land, to pay for children's education or buy a house in the city. Good cash incomes are both a way to achieve material goals and invest in longer-term accumulation of wealth.

Traditional society and status: survival and transformation

Money and material wealth cannot acquire or replace traditional status. Both survive and the relationships between them are important for understanding Fijian society. Traditional status is well recognized in Fijian villages. In Draubuta, for example, the parameters of an ordered village society are complex but understood by all. There is a hierarchy — the customary head of the village is the *vunivalu* and his *mataqali* and *yavusa* rank above others. Indeed there is a ranking of clans from high to low status, which proscribes an individual's position in village society. There is also an element of hierarchy within clans, as well as the respected position of elder people. Cutting across these hierarchical divisions are

important specialist roles which carry additional status. Thus there are the spokesmen, the *mata-ni-vanua* (the chief's herald and the link between the people and the *vunivalu*) and the *mata-ki-Burebasaga* (the village customary spokesman for its relations with the paramount Burebasaga hierarchy). Also, there is a recognition of some people who have customary rank or occupation which has lapsed since colonial times. Finally, there is the position of *turaga-ni-koro*, which, although not as strong a position as before the 1967 repeal of Fijian administration regulations, is still recognized and indeed has enjoyed a renewed emphasis since the Cole Report (et al. 1984). This ordered structure is large for a village of sixty households, yet it is replicated throughout Fiji and it is these positions and concomitant relationships that are still the strongest determinant of status in the village, even in such strongly urbanized and 'modernized' villages as Draubuta and Cautata.¹

This social structure and the associated social relationships (including ceremonial obligations, *kerekere* etc) still exist strongly, though their relation to material accumulation and cash incomes is unclear. Four hypotheses, involving two sets of opposite propositions, could be suggested:

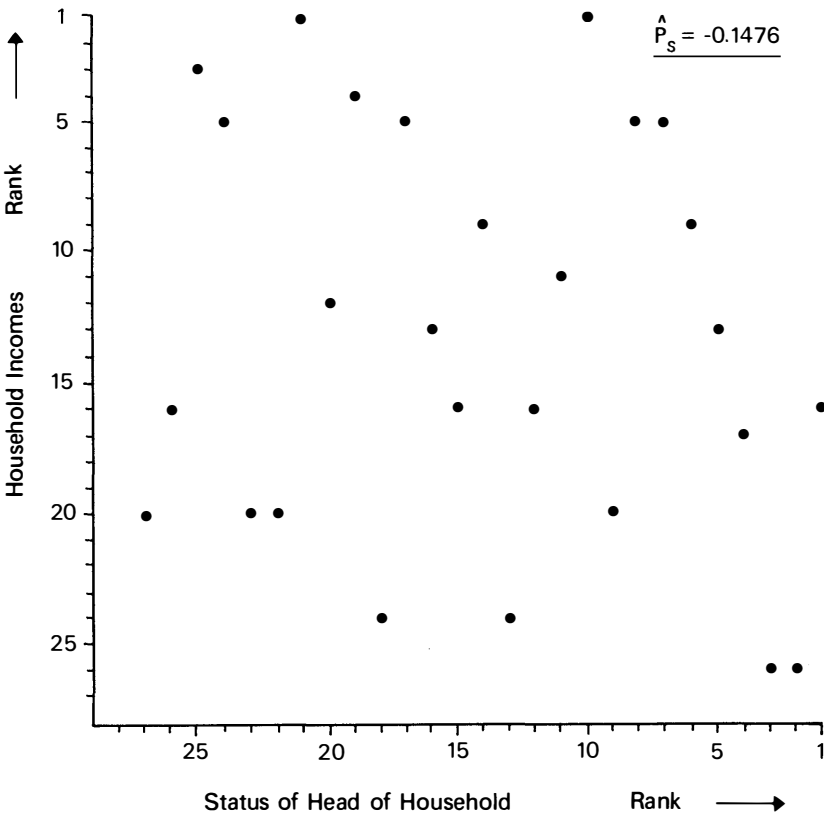
- Traditional social status can be translated into higher cash incomes. The reason for such a proposition is that those of high rank should be able to exploit traditional relationships in order to control land, call on communal labour and even accumulate wealth on the basis of customary tribute. Chiefs become capitalists but straddle both sectors. Conversely, commoners are an exploited class, they cannot accumulate wealth. They become, in effect, rural proletarians.
- Traditional status inhibits capital accumulation. This hypothesis suggests that those with high traditional status are too strongly bound to customary systems of behaviour and redistribution to allow them to engage and specialize in capitalist agriculture or entrepreneurship or accumulate and keep excessive material wealth in the village context. Conversely, those of lower status are freer to move from the village, more inclined to break away from communal obligations, and thus more likely to establish themselves as individual economic agents.
- Traditional social obligations and behaviour are amenable to capital accumulation. In this context, ceremonial needs are an inducement (not a disincentive) to grow more crops and keep more livestock (Walter 1974; Rutz 1978a) and, more importantly, virtually free customary land and free or cheap *kerekere* labour are resources that can be exploited to develop commercial agriculture. Capitalism and a modified communal mode of production can co-exist.
- Traditional obligations and social relationships are an obstacle to economic development. This is an oft cited view (Watters 1969b, Rika 1986) that sees reciprocity, *kerekere* and ceremonial demands as factors which spread wealth and quash individual incentive to accumulate. Those that live in villages and are tied to its society are bound to a system of levelling and sharing. Traditionalism and capitalism are always incompatible.

¹ There is similar debate about the role of traditional status and social relations amongst Fijians in urban areas: Nayacakalou (1963); Bakker (1986); Rika (1986); Suguta (1986); and Rutz (1987). See also Knapman and Walter (1980) for inequalities in Lauan society.

These four hypotheses can be tested, to an extent, with case study material. The first two, those to do with traditional status, are examined first and the second two, to do with village society, are discussed later.

The relationship between social rank and cash incomes in Draubuta is plotted in Figure 6.1. The data are from sample households only and exclude members of the highest ranked *mataqali*. Though it seems that some members of this group do earn relatively high incomes, others do not and if this group had been included, the conclusions would not be appreciably different. Rank was determined from the sample of twenty-seven respondents (those who had reliable income returns) by accounting for the rank of the *mataqali* to which they belonged and special positions (for example *turaga-ni-mataqali* or *mata-ni-vanua*) they held. There is no clear pattern. Larger incomes are accrued by members of all groups, and title holders and commoners alike. Also, members of the same clan experience a wide spread of incomes. As a further measure, these data were analysed statistically by means of the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. This yields a correlation coefficient of -0.1476 , indicating no real relation, or, if anything, a very slight negative relation (higher status is very weakly correlated to lower incomes). Thus, neither of the first two hypotheses are proved by the Draubuta data. Incomes of resident villagers are not determined by traditional status.

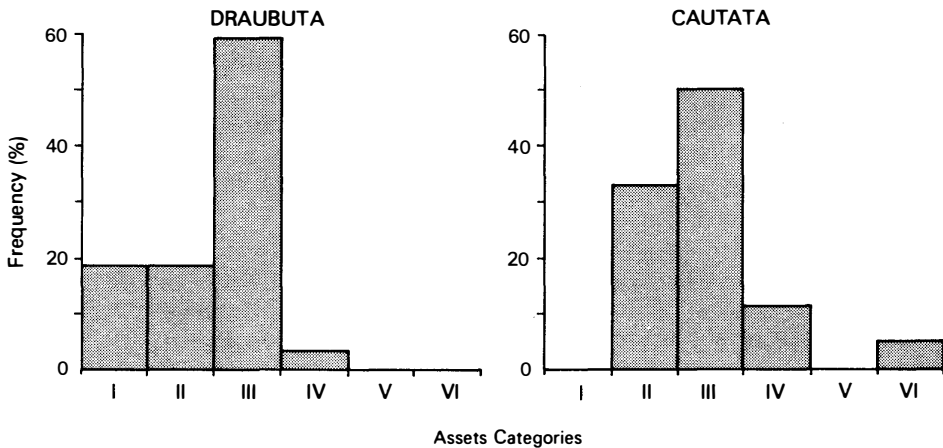
Figure 6.1 Social status and cash incomes in Draubuta



Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

It is apparent from Figure 6.1, and it will be shown further below (Table 6.1), that cash incomes do vary a great deal. However, cash incomes are not always translated into assets and differences in material well-being. The question of the effect of customary social relationships on material accumulation can be tackled first from impressionistic evidence. Draubuta appears to be an homogeneous society (in a material sense). All houses are built of permanent materials, and none stand out as being especially grand or opulent by village standards. One house was recently modernized to include an indoor toilet, kitchen and washing facilities but this was designed as a guest area, not for normal habitation. Even the *vunivalu* and those on higher cash incomes have not built large houses. The situation is similar in Cautata, although there the housing standards are somewhat higher and there is a slightly more noticeable range in housing quality (though this seems a result of the age of the houses, not so much the incomes of the inhabitants).

Figure 6.2 The holding of assets, Draubuta and Cautata



Assets categories:

- I Basic assets: house, kerosene cooking and lights, radio
- II Basic assets plus some 'luxuries' (kerosene fridge, sewing machine, etc.)
- III Basic assets, some luxuries plus some farm equipment (sprayer, plough etc.)
- IV Many household assets including some electrical appliances
- V Many assets, some electrical appliances plus some farm equipment
- VI Many assets, electrical appliances, farm equipment plus motor vehicle(s)

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

Similarly, the material assets held by households seem to vary very little. Figure 6.2 shows that in the two villages, most households possess a basic house with kerosene lights and cookers, transistor radios and cassette players and some extra 'luxuries', such as a sewing machine, lawnmower or kerosene fridge, as well as some basic farm implements. Very few own video players and televisions or motor vehicles.² Even in Cautata, where mains electricity is available, few electri-

2 There was no broadcast television service in Fiji in 1985-6. It was planned to be introduced in 1988 but this was postponed after the May coup. Televisions though are owned in conjunction with video players as there are many video tape rental shops in the towns.

cal appliances are owned. In Draubuta, one man had a video player and television (run by a portable petrol generator). There are a number of households in Draubuta (just under 20 per cent) who possess only basic assets, though these are not perceptibly worse off than their neighbours, who might own a sewing machine. Such 'luxuries' are usually circulated amongst related households. If there are differences in cash incomes amongst villagers, they do not seem to lead to conspicuous consumption or the identification of 'rich' people. In the towns it may be different. Many people spoke proudly of family members in Suva, Lautoka or overseas who owned cars, electrical goods and new furniture and who lived in good houses or flats. It seems as if Fijians are more able to enjoy their cash incomes (by accumulating goods) when they are away from the village and there is a form of hidden social scorn upon individual wealth and its display in the village. The third hypothesis above, therefore, seems in doubt and the fourth more convincing.

Thus traditional society and customary relationships do seem to suggest some resistance to the emergence of new forms of socio-economic differentiation, even though the means of economic differentiation (differences in cash incomes) may be present. Traditional status still forms the basic social structure and, within the villages at least, there are social limits to the exclusively individual accumulation of material possessions. It would be unacceptable, probably, for a low-status individual to build a two-storey house with electricity generator and to own a motor car next to the modest house of a chief. If such an individual had the money, the preference would be for an urban residence. It is unlikely, then, that the village can provide the context for overt capitalist class formation. The constraints are too great.

Yet it must be questioned whether the homogeneity of material living standards in the village is the result of social levelling or merely a consequence of fairly basic incomes. There are differences in income but the data do not point to anyone in the villages receiving very high cash incomes (all are below \$20,000 per household per annum). Only when comparison is made with the settlement scheme areas can this hypothesis of traditional village disincentive to accumulate be tested.

Resettlement and social change: *koro* and *galala*

If village society seems to impose constraints upon individual accumulation and new forms of class formation, it might be suggested that movement away from the village would lead to a freeing of these constraints. Whilst this study does not include urban society, it can examine the situation in non-village Fijian rural areas, such as Waibau and Lomaivuna, where *galala* farmers have been established for some time.

The *galala* movement and ideas about its efficacy as a means of overcoming traditional constraints to economic development have been discussed in Chapter 2. In short, the movement of *galala* Fijians out of the village was seen by a number of social scientists as being symbolic of a break with the past and a quest for modernity. Such a view would rest on the assumption that hypothesis four (traditional society is an obstacle to development) holds true. It can be tested using the income data from the case studies. However, there is a problem in this exercise and that stems from the definition of *galala*. Clearly those in Waibau and Lomaivuna are *galala*, but there also are a number of people living on village land,

even with their houses within the village area, who consider themselves to be *galala* (Overton 1988a). Comparisons must take account of these different definitions.

Data on household incomes for the villages, the village *galala* and the settlement areas are presented in Table 6.1. The income data were gathered by means of a set of income categories, rather than exact dollar values. Respondents were asked to indicate in which category their incomes (from different sources) lay. From these, mid-point values were calculated and aggregated to yield average figures.

Table 6.1 Household incomes 1985-86

| | Mean household Income/year (\$) | Standard deviation | Coefficient of variability (%) | Range (\$) ^a | Number in sample |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Draubuta | 4342 | 4793 | 110.37 | 400 - 17500 | 27 |
| Cautata | 5595 | 3947 | 70.53 | 400 - 12500 | 21 |
| Village non- <i>galala</i> | 4516 | 4053 | 89.74 | 400 - 12500 | 24 |
| Village <i>galala</i> ^b | 5266 | 4858 | 92.26 | 400 - 17500 | 24 |
| Village sep. <i>galala</i> ^b | 4211 | 3572 | 84.82 | 400 - 12500 | 18 |
| Waibau | 4089 | 3467 | 84.79 | 900 - 12500 | 24 |
| Lomaivuna | 2908 | 3057 | 105.13 | 400 - 17500 | 34 |
| Non-scheme <i>galala</i> | 3938 | 2604 | 66.14 | 900 - 8750 | 12 |

^aRange is taken from the mid-points of income codes used in the survey questionnaires. It is misleading in that the difference between \$12,500 and \$17,500 is a difference of only one income code.

^b'Village *galala*' are those who considered themselves *galala* (usually on the criteria of living on their own *mataqali's* land) even if their house was located within the village area. The sample is drawn from both Draubuta and Cautata and those not in this group are 'village non-*galala*'. 'Village separate *galala*' are a subset of 'village *galala*', being those who consider themselves *galala* but whose houses are located separate from the village compound. They include all the Cautata *galala* but exclude six households in Draubuta who consider themselves *galala* but whose houses are in the village area. See Overton (1988a).

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

On first inspection, these data show that there is a surprising lack of contrast amongst the different groups and much variation within. The range in mean incomes between areas is small (\$2908 to \$5595) despite the contrasts in accessibility and resources, and even the high variability within the samples is similar. But more revealing is the fact that there is no clear difference between villagers and *galala*. The modernization hypothesis would suggest that those living outside the confines of village society should have higher incomes (there are less constraints in the form of customary obligations and redistribution) and that incomes should vary more ('progressive' households should prosper whilst those with less ability would falter). Yet, if anything, the reverse is the case.

Contrasts can be examined on three levels. First, there is a difference between the two study villages and the three settlement samples. Average incomes in both villages exceed those of the settlements. This is not to suggest that villagers, in general, are more enterprising than settlers; it is probably much more to do with the fact that Draubuta and Cautata are in closer proximity to Suva and the high non-farm incomes there. What the difference does suggest, though, is that the village does not seem to offer a barrier to the earning of good cash incomes and that movement away from the village does not necessarily loose one from the shackles of traditionalism or lead to high incomes.

At the second level, there are differences within villages between those who consider themselves *galala* ('village *galala*') and ordinary villagers ('village non-*galala*'). *Galala* do have higher mean incomes (by about \$750 per annum) but the variability in both samples is high (there are relatively rich and poor in both groups). Also, when it is recognized that the difference in mean household incomes between Draubuta and Cautata (about \$1250 per annum) is greater than the difference between villagers and *galala*, the significance of the result is further diminished.

This view is supported by the evidence from the third level of comparison, that between ordinary villagers (again 'village non-*galala*') and those *galala* who actually live separately from the village settlement but still on village land. This shows that those living outside have lower mean incomes (though the difference is small) than those within the cluster of village houses. However, this result arises mainly because two of the men in Draubuta who called themselves *galala* (and who had high incomes) lived on their own *mataqali*'s land but this lay on the village perimeter and their houses were, in effect, part of the village. Their exclusion lowers the mean *galala* incomes.

Perhaps the whole concept of *galala* has been misunderstood (Overton 1988a). Whilst there was a degree of individual freedom in pre-colonial Fijian society, *galala* were really colonial creations, especially between 1948 and 1967 when the Fijian Administration regulations tied them to village and new forms of authority and service. Those who became exempted were not necessarily making a fundamental leap from communalism to individualism (and those terms are not especially meaningful constants) nor becoming 'economic men'. They chose, in many cases, a quieter life with fewer hassles and obligations and to them this was a more accurate measure of being 'better-off' than the size of one's bank balance. Many, no doubt, did seek economic independence and better prospects for their families but becoming a *galala* in the 1950s, or labelling oneself as a *galala* now, does not necessarily identify one as a member of a separate class in Fijian society.

These observations might be challenged on two points: it may be that settlers' perceptions of their life, if not their realized incomes, are an index of enterprise and freedom; and, secondly, *galala* may be more able than those in the villages to acquire and keep material possessions. Both points can be examined.

Table 6.2 The stated advantages of *galala* life (percentage of respondents indicating - includes multiple responses)

| | Draubuta | Cautata | Waibau | Lomaivuna | Non-scheme | Total |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Higher living standards/cash | 15.8 | 50.0 | 70.8 | 21.2 | 33.3 | 36.5 |
| Better for raising children | 31.6 | 25.0 | 41.7 | 24.2 | 41.7 | 32.3 |
| Personalsatisfaction/tranquillity | 73.7 | 50.0 | 16.7 | 54.5 | 66.7 | 50.0 |
| Own boss/more time/proximity | 68.4 | 62.5 | 70.8 | 48.5 | 58.3 | 60.4 |
| Fewer obligations | 36.8 | 62.5 | 83.3 | 30.3 | - | 43.8 |
| Number of respondents | 19 | 8 | 24 | 33 | 12 | 96 |

^aCautata and Draubuta include only those who considered themselves *galala* and, for Draubuta, two men who were once *galala* elsewhere but now no longer are.

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

Table 6.2 summarizes the responses of people when asked what they considered to be the advantages of their lives as *galala*. This open ended question

yielded many different and multiple answers. Interestingly, personal and social advantages seemed to outweigh the economic. For about a third of the *galala*, especially those in Waibau, higher incomes have been achieved. For Waibau, this perception is probably due to the success of ginger and the fact that most settlers came from the Lau Islands, where land is scarce. But it is significant that two-thirds of the respondents did not say that higher living standards were an advantage of the new life — they were not markedly better off. The next two stated advantages, that *galala* life is better for raising children (they are away from bad influences in the village etc.) and is more peaceful (with less noise and fewer callers) are revealing. These are social advantages and have to do with the personalities of individuals. The most common advantage expressed throughout the areas concerned agriculture. People found that they were their 'own boss' and could do much as they wished. They enjoyed the advantage of being closer to their land and having more time to work on it. Finally, the freedom from the constraints of customary obligations was important, but more for the older Waibau settlers (who told of heavy obligations and control in Lau in the 1950s) than for others, especially the young. Therefore, settlers' perceptions of their *galala* life reveal that freedom has been achieved for most: freedom from noise, interference and calls on their time and resources. However, it has not necessarily been associated with earning lots of money. That has come for some, but there has not been a general realization of greater wealth.

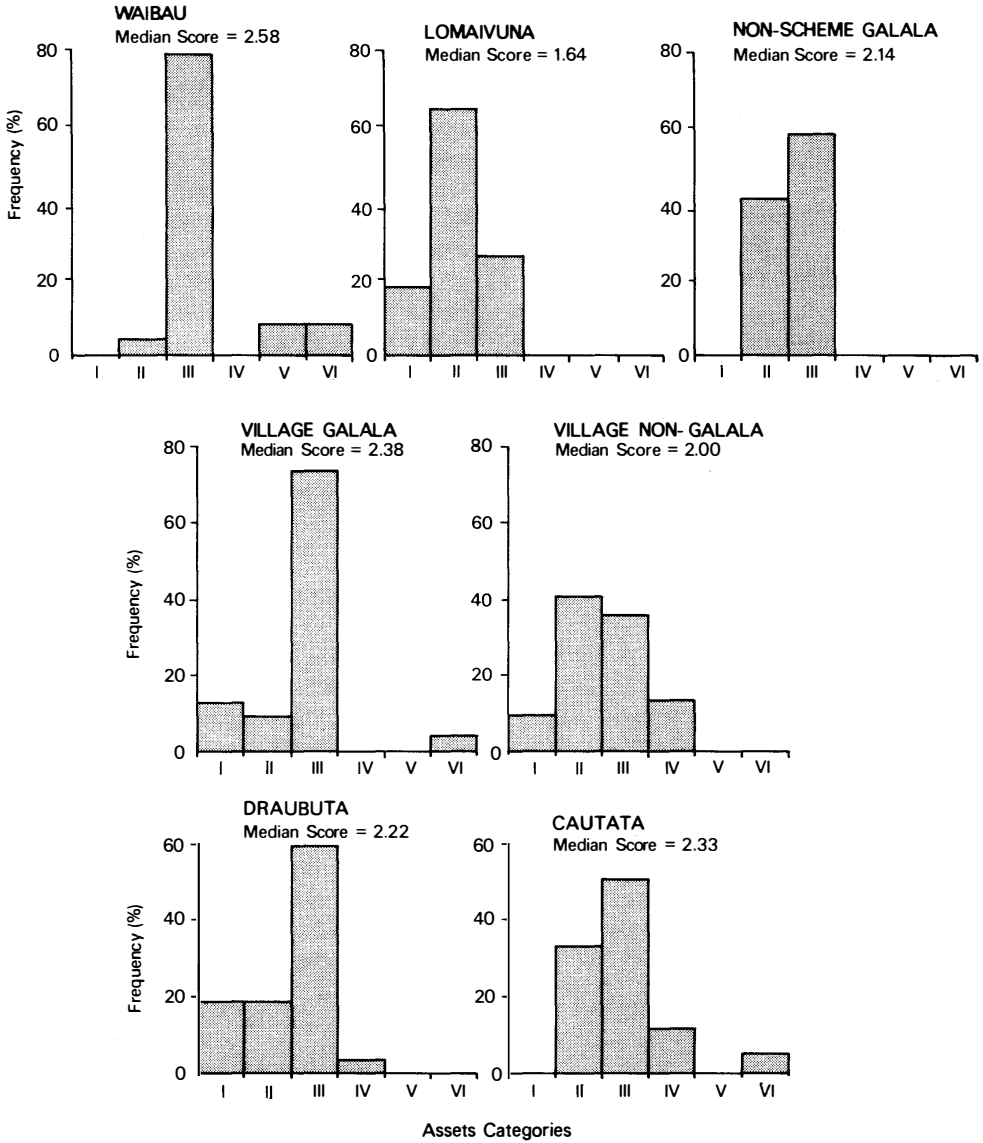
What then of assets, of the acquiring and keeping of material possessions? Away from the village, from *kerekere* and obligations, people should be able to keep more of their income in material form. The *galala* should appear better off and there should be a greater spread of material living standards.

The first point of contrast in Figure 6.3 is the average holding of assets (expressed as the median for each sample). This median lies in Category III for all samples (except Lomaivuna), a category that sees households with a basic house and necessities plus a few luxuries and farm equipment. Comparing village *galala* (those who define themselves as such) and ordinary villagers in Draubuta and Cautata, it seems as if the *galala* are better off, with a higher score, though with much less variation between households. However, the difference is marginal and can be explained (especially with reference to the high *galala* proportion in Category III) by the fact that the *galala* may be more engaged in agriculture and own more sprayers and ploughs, but not more television sets. Furthermore, when comparisons are drawn with the settlement areas, it can be seen that, far from being significantly higher than the villages (or 'village non-*galala*'), the settlement scheme samples cover a greater range than the *galala*/non-*galala* difference.³ There is no evidence that *galala* own more possessions than villagers. Not only that, the data suggest that inter-household differences in material standards of wealth are less for *galala* than for ordinary villagers. Resettling outside the village has not led to greater wealth accumulation or greater differentiation in wealth.

This lack of evidence of differences in wealth between villagers and settlers is not surprising given the patterns of social interaction between settlers and their home villages. Certainly settlers (even village *galala* living separately) have less contact with their home villages and relatives, but the link is never broken

3 The difference here (1.64 in Lomaivuna and 2.58 in Waibau, compared to 2.00 to 2.38 with the non-*galala*/*galala* split) is due to the overall difference in incomes between Lomaivuna and Waibau, rather than any fundamental distinction between various types of villagers or settlers.

Figure 6.3 The holding of assets, *galala* and villagers



Assets categories:

- I Basic assets: house, kerosene cooking and lights, radio
- II Basic assets plus some 'luxuries' (kerosene fridge, sewing machine, etc.)
- III Basic assets, some luxuries plus some farm equipment (sprayer, plough etc.)
- IV Many household assets including some electrical appliances
- V Many assets, some electrical appliances plus some farm equipment
- VI Many assets, electrical appliances, farm equipment plus motor vehicle(s)

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

entirely. In the villages, *galala* have daily contact and are still usually called upon to help kin or the church or to participate in village projects. They are not free from social obligations, though their burden may be lighter. Even in the settlement areas, contacts are kept. Most of the Waibau and Lomaivuna settlers originate from Lau, remote from the schemes. But there is a variety of economic and social interaction. Often provincial taxes are paid via Lau, rather than locally; marriages and funerals lead to visits and presentations of gifts (which can be substantial for close relatives); social visits are common with meetings in Suva on market days or trips 'home' to Lau; and some even donate money to home churches and village projects, as well as to local organizations. The home village and island is still a very real aspect of *galala* life, even though many resettled twenty or thirty years ago.

Therefore, becoming a *galala*, whether by settling at Waibau or Lomaivuna or by shifting one's house to *mataqali* land, does not provide a passport to new opportunities or to higher incomes. What may have been true before 1967, when village administration was tight and qualifications to become a *galala* stringent, is no longer the case twenty years later with no such institutional fiat. Possibly what has changed is not so much that the *galala* have become any less enterprising, but more, that the villages have become more tolerant of wage earners and commercial farmers and that they are characterized now by more commercial economic relations, cashcropping and wage labouring. Perhaps 'all rural Fijians are now *galala*; but the majority continue to live in their villages' (Lasaqa 1984:201). Economic opportunity is not necessarily restricted by village society, and individualism is no panacea for prosperity.

The modernization hypothesis, that traditional society is a barrier to development and that individualism is the best way forward, has not been proved. Far from being conservative and restrictive, villages, such as Draubuta and Cautata, have been home for many who have sought and achieved economic advancement. There is no simple explanation for social change and socio-economic differentiation if analysis is based upon the assumption of traditional village constraints and modern resettlement opportunities. Similarly, the earlier suggestion that traditional village society acts to level out material accumulation must be questioned when it is seen that settlers are equally homogeneous, sometimes even more so, in terms of material wealth.

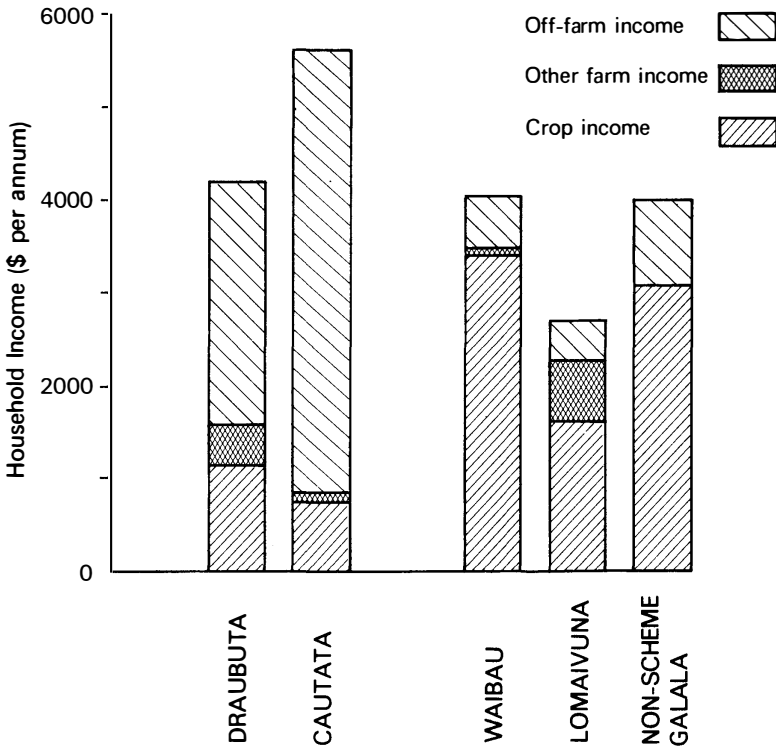
Household incomes

If there is no direct explanation for differences in incomes and material standards of living in the suggested models of village society or *galala* resettlement as analysed above, answers must be sought in new models and theories of differentiation. But first it is necessary to describe in more detail the patterns and contrasts in household incomes, especially the different contributions to household incomes, in each of the case study samples.

The mean levels of household income and some indices of variation were given in Table 6.1. These mean levels are disaggregated in Figure 6.4 to show how the total household income figures are made up. Incomes are in three groups: crop income, that from the sale of farm-cultivated crop production; other farm income, a range of activities (such as livestock rearing, the selling of tree crops, the making of handicrafts) that are carried out on the land; and off-farm income, that

income accruing from wage labour by resident members of the household locally or in the towns.

Figure 6.4 Mean household incomes



Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

The data reflect the generally small range in average incomes from a low in Lomaivuna of around \$2900 per household per year to over \$5500 in Cautata, though they do show marked contrasts in the components of this income. The description of Draubuta and Cautata in Chapter 4 as dormitory suburbs and the identification of a process of suburbanization is borne out in this diagram. About 85 per cent of Cautata income and over 60 per cent of Draubuta income comes from wage and salary earning away from the village, with no significant difference in the off-farm incomes of village *galala* and ordinary villagers (Overton 1988a). Thus the prosperity of these villages and many others in the area seems to be explained by their proximity to off-farm employment opportunities, opportunities which are readily exploited. Crop incomes are relatively small and only in Draubuta are other local income sources (principally the sale of tree crops) of any importance. In the settlement areas, though, off-farm employment opportunities are restricted and crop incomes (from ginger, *dalo* and pineapples) are much more important. They are farming settlements. Their success balances the lack of wage labour. Waibau especially is a cashcropping economy above all. The difference in crop and total incomes between Waibau and Lomaivuna is at-

tributable to larger mean land areas (13.67 hectares against 5.38 hectares)⁴ and larger areas under ginger (0.56 hectares against 0.25 hectare). The non-scheme settlers have also benefited from cash crops and limited wage employment, though interestingly, as several keep livestock on a relatively large scale, other farm income is negligible. In Lomaivuna, the economy is different again. Although immature ginger and pineapples are successful for some, many have diversified into other farm activities, here woodcarving and livestock rearing. Off-farm incomes are also higher in Lomaivuna.

Having established this broad pattern of incomes and income components in the schemes, it is now possible to analyse further the variability between households (this analysis includes only resident Fijians, not non-Fijians or absentee Fijians who may be involved in the local economy). The data in Table 6.1 suggested high variance within the samples but relatively little difference in the range, standard deviation and coefficient of variability amongst the samples. However, this conclusion is not reflected in deeper analysis of the income profiles, the frequency distribution of different sources across a range of income values (Figure 6.5). These data allow for the initial identification of different income groupings within the case study areas.

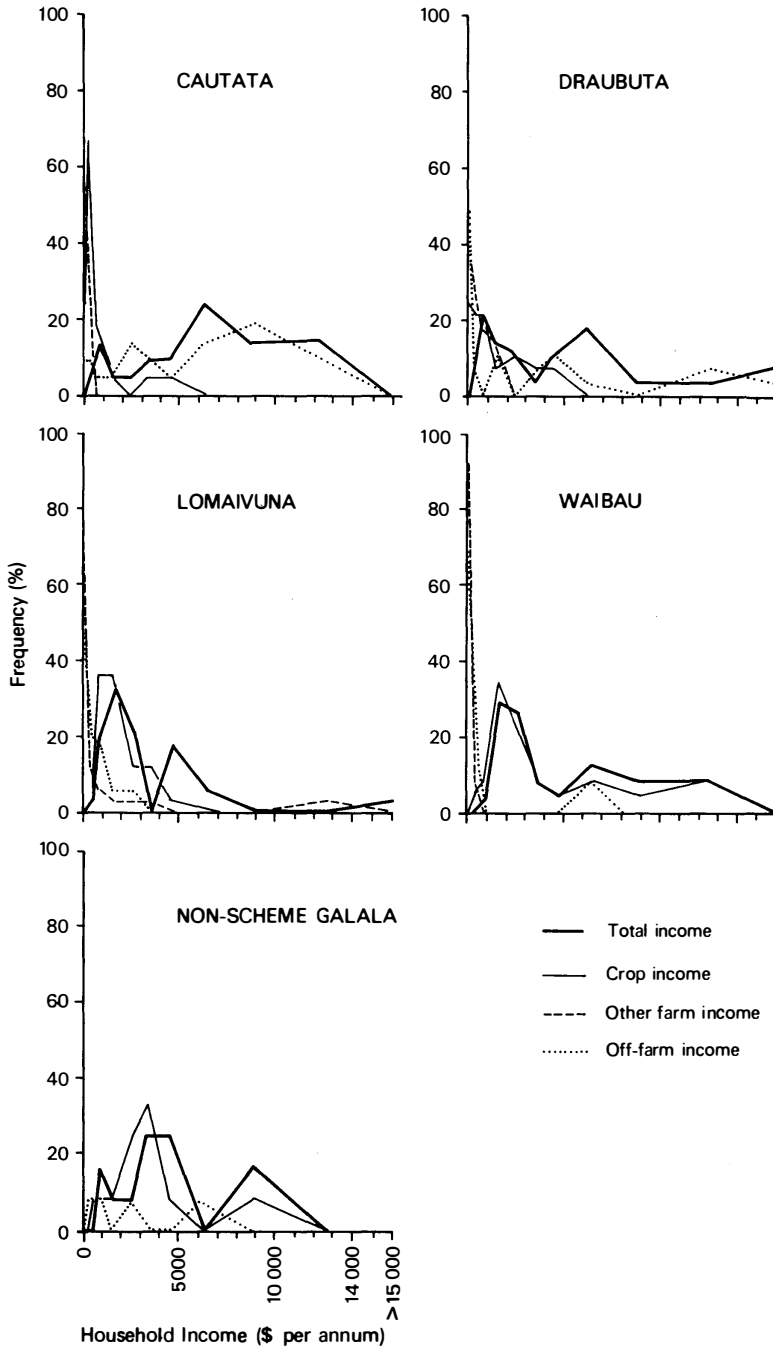
For the settlement schemes the distribution of total household income is generally negatively skewed, with modal incomes around \$2000 per annum and a tailing off in the proportion of households with higher incomes. This is understandable as, in Lomaivuna especially, the size of land holdings is very similar (with standard plots), there are certain institutional standards (such as the set immature ginger contracts), and the range of alternative incomes is limited. Waibau has a longer tail indicating more households with incomes over \$10,000 per year. Again higher crop incomes are the main determinant of differences between the schemes. At Waibau, ginger and market gardening have meant that more than 40 per cent of Fijian households earn over \$2500 per annum, whilst at Lomaivuna the corresponding figure is only a little over 25 per cent.

Three major income groupings can be discerned for the schemes. There is a distinct group in both Waibau and Lomaivuna (less obvious for those non-scheme settlers) in the \$1000 to \$3000 range. This represents the majority of settlers, growing nearly all of their household food requirements and earning on average \$20 to \$50 a week from cash crops. People in this group may be seen to have a reasonable basic cash income and standard of living and they correspond to those holding basic assets and a few home and farm extras (Categories I-III in Figure 6.3). Though not high, these cash incomes compare favourably with the majority of Fijian villages, if not Draubuta and Cautata, and there are none that suffer from absolute poverty.

A second group, somewhat less distinct, is discernible in the \$3000 to \$8000 range. In Lomaivuna, these are farmers with similar cash incomes to those in the first group but they have important income supplements from other farm and off-farm sources. At Waibau and the non-scheme areas this second group derives most income from higher crop revenues, especially ginger, though there is some contribution from off-farm employment. These are prosperous households, able to afford a few luxuries (extra furniture, sewing machines, kerosene fridges) and to invest more in their farming

4 Waibau, however, has a much higher variation in size of land holding, mainly due to two large 'pastoral' blocks — they are largely bush covered. When these are excluded, the average holding is 6.17 hectares for all holdings and 8.92 hectares accounting for multiple holdings, still larger than the Lomaivuna mean farm areas.

Figure 6.5 Income profiles: the frequency distribution of income sources^a



^aThe data are based on responses to questions which specify income categories. The line graph joins the mid-points of these categories (\$875, \$1500, \$2500, etc.) and the >\$15,000 point is derived from an open-ended top income category. Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

enterprises (fertilizers, sprayers, water pumps, bush clearing). They are well-off by Fijian rural standards.

The third income group (over \$8000 per household per annum) is evident only in the Waibau sample, with the exception of one household in Lomaivuna. These are prosperous farmers, heavily involved in specialist cashcropping (principally ginger) and with high cash turnovers. They are the major employers of casual wage labour, and the settlers investing most in bush clearing, fertilizers, machinery and even purchase of extra land. They include those with electrical appliances and even vehicles (Figure 6.3). By Fijian standards, they are commercial farmers rather than peasant cultivators.

Turning to the study villages, similar groups can be identified, though the bases for their incomes are different. Unlike the negatively skewed distribution of the schemes, though, the distribution is more even, even slightly positively skewed in the Cautata case. Such a greater spread of incomes is due both to the inequalities in land holding (Chapter 3) and to the different rates of participation in wage employment. Whereas in the settlement schemes, it was crop incomes that led to the emergence of groups on higher gross incomes, in the two villages off-farm incomes are far more important.

In Draubuta and Cautata, those in the first group (the \$1000 to \$3000 range) are much less numerous, though one might suspect that they comprise the largest group in more remote villages. Again these are households with subsistence food production and regular, if small, sale of cultivated or tree crops in the Suva and Nausori markets. They have basic material standards of living and are not investing in agricultural development. Included in this group are a number of villagers who have retired from wage employment and are enjoying a quiet village life with little beyond basic food and shelter necessities.

The second (the \$3000 to \$8000 range group) is the most common in the two villages. They are households, typically, that derive their livelihood from either off-farm employment (in regular, lower to middle wage jobs) or cashcropping, or a combination of these. The village 'rich' farmers (those with more than a small plot of rice) are included in this group. They are those in Category III of Figure 6.3 (with a few luxuries and/or some farm equipment). Again, living standards are good by Fijian village standards — there is enough cash for necessities and some left over to buy cassettes, extra clothing or go to the movies in Suva.

Those in the most prosperous group are well represented in the two villages, especially Cautata. Incomes are derived from farm and wage sources, but it is off-farm work that is central to the economies of these households. Typically, they are households that have more than one member earning wages (or farming commercially) or, in rarer instances, there is one person who has a highly paid job in the city. In incomes, if not always material standards, these are households that match the middle-class families of Suva, for this, in effect, is what they are.

So all the case study areas contain households with a range of incomes and living standards. In general, three groups exist: those basically subsistence households, with marginal though regular participation in the cash economy and security in village (or scheme) land and society; those who mix diverse subsistence gardening with some cashcropping and/or wage employment; and those who have become well-off with specialist commercial agriculture or good wage and salary employment off-farm. These are 'groups' rather than 'classes', normative rather than relational categories, for it is possible for a household to move between groups with changing circumstances and objectives and there is no real

evidence of class exploitation between, nor class identification within, the groups. Exploitation and identification lie in larger, more external relations.

Some village household case studies

The above analyses have attempted to use aggregate income and other data to identify emerging classes in the case study areas. Whilst there was variation, classes were not distinct. Yet where empirical evidence cannot reveal, more qualitative treatment of individual case studies can sometimes give insight. The following are brief sketches of a number of villagers in the two case study villages that highlight some important features and even processes of differentiation that are perceived by Fijians themselves. The names used are fictitious. The first three are considered by fellow villagers to be relatively well-off; the last three are thought of as being amongst the poor families.

Joeli and his family live in one of the largest houses in their village, a well built and comfortable residence. Joeli, aged in his early forties, works at Nausori as a driver. It is a good job and well paid. His wife, Asela, does not work and five children are still of school age. Asela is considered by neighbours a good manager of their finances. They keep cows and a bullock team for the half hectare of rice they recently started growing. With a registered lease of a small amount of village land, they plan to develop further with rice. As well, they grow nearly all of their food requirements. Joeli calls himself a *galala*, living on his *mataqali*'s land, though the family participate fully in village activities. They are respected as a hard working family who manage both agriculture and off-farm employment with success.

Ratu Epeli bears his title as brother to the village chief. Around forty years of age, he and his wife both work in Suva for government departments, though they are not in senior or highly paid positions. They have one child. Agriculture is restricted to small plots of root crops for household use only. Their house is new and large with, unusually, an inside bathroom and toilet. In effect, they are a suburban wage earning family fortunate enough to be able to be domiciled in their home village.

Pauliasi is a retired civil servant who receives a pension. His house is large and replete with modern furniture. The household includes two sons (one with a young family of his own) resident — a total of seven people, all but two being adults. Both sons work off-farm. They have a good quantity of *mataqali* land on which they grow cassava and *dalo* in quantity, selling some at the Suva and Nausori markets at times, and a wide variety of other crops.

Senitiki is sometimes bemoaned by his neighbours as being lazy: someone who likes *yaqona* but not farming. In his mid forties, he and his wife have six children (the eldest eighteen) but only one has paid employment (the household's only real source of cash income). Senitiki himself used to work in Suva (a skilled labouring job) but, after the business he worked for closed several years ago, he had saved enough money to build a new house. Now he just works on the farm, growing enough for the family but not enough to sell commercially. They are struggling, having to pay school fees and other expenses for their children, but being unable to find much cash. They are nearest to being below the village poverty line.

Samuela, similarly, has a large young family and also was made redundant from a job in Suva. He, too, used savings from that job to improve their house — it is a good size, well furnished and well maintained — and now finds there is none left over for daily expenses. Neither he, nor his wife, nor children get regular work. Their *mataqali* land is not suitable for rice and is restricted in size, though they are able to raise a few cattle, some to sell occasionally. Samuela suffers from ill-health. Many in the village put this household's poor situation down to bad luck rather than lack of effort.

Lepani is an interesting case of changing fortunes. In years gone by he was regarded as perhaps the wealthiest man in the village, growing sugar cane (in the days when CSR still operated a mill at Nausori), raising dairy cattle (employing boys for milking), and having large areas under traditional crops. He was respected as a fine farmer and was a 'colonial' *galala*, paying the old exemption tax. His family was large and helped with the farming and their house was one of the first in the village built of wood and iron. The transformation began when the CSR mill closed. Like many Indian cane growers, Lepani switched from cane to rice but that failed for him. The marriages of his daughters proved costly (coming as they did when he was still relatively wealthy) and took their toll on his cattle herd. Now well into his sixties, he has poor health, their once fine house has not been properly maintained, and only one daughter now lives at home to care for him and his wife.

These six cases, then, show that material standards of living in the villages are conditioned by many different factors: size and age of family, land availability, hard work, off-farm employment, even luck. Furthermore, both relative wealth and poverty are fickle — a new job, grown-up children, or a good crop may be just around the corner, as could be ill-health, unemployment, or loss of savings. Certainly, some have succeeded, and been seen to succeed, as a result of their own endeavours, but there are many real excuses and a heavy dose of fatalism apparent when others face poverty. And it is factors such as land, luck and lassitude that mean more in an everyday sense than the big questions of conservatism, communalism, or class.

Other rural classes

This study has examined ethnic Fijians in villages and settlement schemes. Obviously this does not include the spectrum of rural society in Fiji: the cane farmers of the west, the peripheral island villagers, or the absentee landowners. But in the course of research it has been possible to identify and compare the study samples with others who are important in the rural economy: non-Fijians on the settlement schemes; Indo-Fijian and Fijian non-village rice farmers; some absentee landowners on the schemes; and some Fijian chiefs. Each of these groups is examined briefly, which may allow for the identification of wider class groupings or processes of differentiation.

Fijian chiefs are an important part of the rural society and economy in Fiji, more because of their power than their numbers. There is a problem defining who is a 'chief'. In Draubuta, for example, there are three men who hold the title '*Ratu*' (one derives his title from another region) as well as the *turaga-ni-koro*. This section deals only with 'high chiefs', those who hold power and influence over areas larger than a single village.

Research is difficult because of the social status of chiefs and the need to accord necessary respect (thus precluding asking personal and financial questions). They were not a part of this study, though some of the lower ranks (with relatively high status within the village) were included in the survey and were analysed in Figure 6.1. Some of the more important chiefs play a powerful role in the Fijian countryside. They have effective control over state land policy and receive a healthy slice of NLTB collected rents (Overton 1987b). A number live in the village and participate fully in village life and these may not always be wealthier than their subjects but they are guaranteed daily respect and social subservience. Many others are absentees, living in towns, participating in politics, the bureaucracy or business, though they still maintain strong and frequent links with the villages, for their power and prestige is based upon such customary contact and respect. There is a distinct set of social relations, ancient and modern, that define their relative position in society, a position that is prescribed by birth and strengthened by modern political hegemony.

The economic power of many in this chiefly class is not well understood but some brief accounts of the wealth of some of the higher chiefs (for example the story of the Mara 'Empire', *Fiji Sun* 2 August 1985) indicate that social status is matched by material wealth and political power. Others have succeeded in the bureaucracy and some in business, whilst others have substantial incomes from land. Yet high chiefly status does not guarantee wealth, and commoners with ability, education and even perhaps luck can become wealthy and even acquire political power, examples being Apolosi Ranawai and Dr Timoci Bavadra. Thus, whilst the title of 'Ratu' does define a class in terms of traditional rank, it is much less valid as a parameter of a distinctive socio-economic class.

A second class which has emerged in Fiji depends on entrepreneurship for its position. This class, the Victoria Parade farmers, is manifested in Waibau as the absentee leaseholders. These are people who have gained their wealth mainly in the urban areas, through business, good salaries or good luck, but who have invested in land and, sometimes, commercial agriculture. The Waibau absentees give some insight into the composition of this group. They include men with a range of primary occupations, from lawyer, senior civil servant, and night-club owner, to a businessman with diverse agricultural investments. They are employers, developers, speculators, or a combination of these. They include some who have the largest and most successful farms, and others who are merely sitting on the land, with the prime aim being speculation not land development. Their entry into the rural economy has probably acted to force up land values, in some cases it may have assisted in the development of commercial agriculture (by providing capital inputs), and it has established new relations of agricultural production between absentee capitalist employers, resident managers or caretakers, and casual wage labour. However, the continued development of this class in rural Fiji is likely to be restricted, simply because the land tenure system means that little good freehold land is available for exchange and accumulation on the land market and leasehold land is similarly scarce and bound by fixed terms and renewal clauses. Agricultural entrepreneurs and landless wage labour are unlikely to replace resident peasant producers and villagers as the predominant models of Fijian rural society.

Non-Fijians make up another class in rural Fiji. Ethnicity does not necessarily predicate a class boundary but, because Indo-Fijians do not live in Fijian villages, and because they are largely restricted to leased land, they do have different

patterns of social and economic organization. Yet, on the settlement schemes and other leased land, Indians and *galala* Fijians live as neighbours and usually grow similar crops and work in similar ways. This study has not focused on Indo-Fijians in rural Fiji, yet comparison can be made from two sets of data related to the study: housing quality in Lomaivuna and a socio-economic survey of rice farmers in Central Division (the Agricultural Development Programme survey).

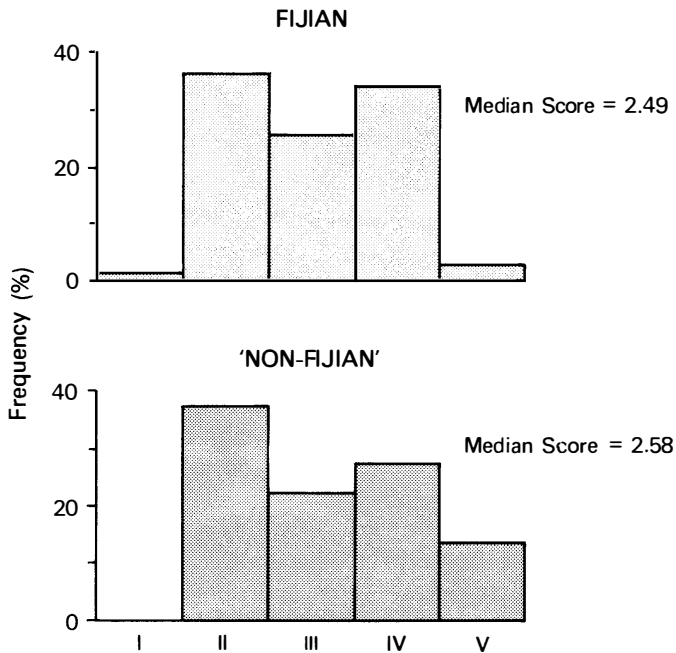
At Lomaivuna, as at Waibau, settlers include Indo-Fijians, Chinese and Rotumans as well as indigenous Fijians. At Waibau, the Chinese dominate the non-Fijian group. They are heavily involved in the ginger industry (in production and marketing), they have many business relationships with Fijian settlers, and they seem to be prospering (even though their Waibau homes are very modest). Similarly, at Lomaivuna the large number of non-Fijian settlers (a little over twenty Indians plus a few Rotumans and Chinese) have daily social and economic contact with their Fijian neighbours. Some Indians at Lomaivuna appear to be very well off by local standards. One extended family owns several properties (and sub-leases houses), they run a busy carrier business, and they operate the largest store on the scheme. On the other hand, other Indian households seem to cover the spectrum from struggling to thriving.

One index of comparison is housing quality. Ward (1987:43) has noted overall improvement in Fijian village housing in the past twenty or thirty years and also greater differences in housing quality. Similar features can be observed in the settlement schemes and are an indication of varying material standards of living. The Lomaivuna scheme began with all settlers receiving a standard two-roomed wooden house. Twenty years later, some remain unchanged, others have had outbuildings added and yet others have been substantially rebuilt. A survey of all Lomaivuna scheme houses in 1985 and the ethnicity of owners is summarized in Figure 6.6. This shows that, on average, non-Fijians have a slightly higher standard of housing (a higher median score) but, with the exception of the highest category, their houses cover the whole range in an almost identical distribution to indigenous Fijian settlers. Extrapolating from this, it could be concluded that most Indian settlers appear to have material standards of living little different from Fijian settlers. The only difference seems to lie with a handful of Indian households who, through business success, limited land accumulation and cashcropping (all, interestingly, local sources of accumulation) have emerged as slightly better off than the more prosperous Fijians. They own larger houses and motor vehicles but make up only a small proportion of the settlers. These data indicate that there is no clear ethnic distinction on the settlement schemes and that, despite cultural and institutional differences, ethnicity does not form the basis of deep divisions in rural classes.

Another means for comparison between Fijians and non-Fijians is the household data from the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) survey in 1985 (see Table 6.3). While the data from the ADP survey, especially on incomes, may be slightly doubtful because a large number of interviewers were used and quality control was not as complete as hoped, this was offset to some extent by the very large sample size (around 40 per cent of all rice farmers). The comparison here is between Indian and Fijian rice growers. The Fijian data include some 26 per cent of village *mataqali* land cultivated by resident villagers as well as many independent farmers outside their home villages on leased or freehold land. The differences are interesting. In terms of land holding, Fijians have more freehold land and larger holdings (the latter because of larger *mataqali* holdings and easier

access to village land). They also grow more rice, their yields are higher (perhaps they have adopted higher yielding newer varieties, whereas many Indian growers have stuck to preferred traditional varieties), and their incomes from rice and other sources are greater. In other words, commercial Fijian farmers are successful in comparison with Indian growers.

Figure 6.6 Lomaivuna housing quality 1985



Housing categories:

- I House demolished, not replaced
- II Basic unit only, no improvements, small outbuildings
- III Minor improvements: larger outbuildings, small addition to original house
- IV Major improvements: outbuildings plus additions up to the size of the original unit
- V Substantial rebuilding, more than double original size

Source: Field survey 1985.

Table 6.3 ADP Benchmark Survey 1985: Indian-Fijian comparisons

| | Fijians | Indians |
|--|---------|---------|
| Percentage holdings under leasehold tenure | 43 | 80 |
| Average size of land holding (ha) | 16.68 | 3.85 |
| Average area under rice 1984 (ha) | 2.66 | 1.76 |
| Average yield 1984 (tonnes/ha) | 1.11 | 0.99 |
| Percentage with agricultural loans | 65 | 54 |
| Average rice income (\$/year) | 617 | 478 |
| Average farm income (\$/year) | 1142 | 774 |
| Number in sample | 111 | 583 |

Source: Fiji Ministry of Primary Industries, Agricultural Development Programme, Benchmark Survey 1985, Suva, unpublished.

So, overall, there is no *a priori* reason for differentiating between Indo-Fijians and Fijians in terms of impediment or impetus for rural class differences. There are differences, of course, and the contrast in physical appearance and landscape between Indian farms and Fijian villages is an obvious and continuing feature of rural Fiji. But these differences have more to do with land laws, history, and political economy than with innate ethnic distinctiveness.

Thus, though this study concentrates on Fijian rural society in settlement schemes and rather atypical villages and, within this, fails to identify distinctive classes, it does see broader contrasts, outside the direct purview of the surveys, but with discernible links to the case study economies. The above discussion seems to point to a lack of ethnic class divisions but more to the importance of two classes — higher chiefs and entrepreneurs/speculators — which transcend the rural-urban division and which impinge directly upon the economies and societies of village and peasant dwellers. Below these classes lies a broad range of society, with groups that may be identifiable by socio-economic well-being, location and farming systems, but which contain no sharp class distinctions: a large and homogeneous peasantry. There are obvious differences between the farming systems, attitudes and incomes of a remote subsistence villager as opposed to a prosperous Indo-Fijian sugar cane farmer, but drawing the boundaries at a finer level, say between a Draubuta commercial *dalo* grower, a Cautata wage earner, and a Waibau ginger farmer is much more difficult. Artificially drawn distinctions would disguise the very real similarities and considerable overlap between them.

Rural transformation in retrospect

The previous chapters have presented some of the data from fieldwork carried out in five Fijian case study areas. Whilst the principle aim of the study was to investigate patterns and processes of differentiation in rural Fiji (the subject of the final chapter), it is also possible to relate the findings to the wider issue of rural change: what has happened; how fast has been the change; what are the implications for the models of Fijian rural development that have been adopted by the state; and how should future studies proceed?

There is an obvious difficulty in moving from an analysis of a small number of atypical village and settlement scheme sites to general conclusions about rural change in Fiji. To an extent, one can draw upon other recent studies¹ but it can also be argued that what has been observed in Draubuta or Cautata — whether land shortage and conflict, off-farm incomes, arrested socio-economic differentiation — are processes that are more general: processes that might be more apparent in villages close to urban centres and opportunities, but which could well affect in time, and perhaps with somewhat diminished magnitude, the economies and societies of more isolated communities.

Understanding rural change

This study, like most others of the geography of rural Fiji, has involved a survey of contemporary economic, social and spatial conditions in a relatively short space of time, 1985-86. Such a snapshot of rural Fiji does illuminate certain processes of transformation: one cannot but be aware that there are major modifications taking place in land use, population and the environment. Yet, without proper historical depth to such research, it is difficult to understand the dimensions of change: what has been the base from which change has occurred, and for how long has it been in motion. It is often tempting to assume that change has been recent, rapid and inexorable. Certainly, what has occurred in Lomaivuna and Waibau in the past twenty years has transformed radically the economy, society and environment of the region.

However, two factors have led to a questioning of the rapidity, recency and nature of change. In land tenure, for example, practices such as *vakavanua* leasing are being sought as a way around institutional obstacles, but these represent not the adoption of new arrangements, but a reversion to, and modification of, the

1 For example UNESCO/UNFPA (1977), Brookfield (1979b, 1988), Bayliss-Smith (1976, 1978, 1983), Ward (1985, 1986a, 1987), Sofer (1985b, 1987), Ponter (1986), Overton (1987c), Eaton (1988a, 1988b), Ali (1986, 1988a, 1988b). These studies, whilst identifying many contrasts with Draubuta, Cautata, Lomaivuna or Waibau, do at least confirm some of the broader conclusions about the processes of change in land tenure, labour relations, commercial agriculture, and socio-economic well-being.

old. Secondly, judicious reading of Nayacakalou (1978) reveals interesting comparisons between his 1954 survey and this study: there has been a decline in the area of village land leased to Indians and others; equality of landholding seems to have improved; there may have been a decrease in the proportion of men working off-farm for wages; unpaid *kerekere* labour has remained for work on the land of relatives; wage labour within the village may not have increased significantly; and social relations conditioned by traditional status and customs are as important as before.

These latter points deserve greater scrutiny. In terms of land tenure, greater pressure (through population growth and agricultural development) has not led to the wholesale adoption of capitalist models of individualized tenure. Though some Fijians have had recourse to this option, there has been an important customary reaction, with resistance to continued formal leasing (even to village members) and attempts to accommodate more people on the land through a rigidified customary system of clan-based distribution. Change has been reactionary. In terms of employment, both villages studied have been integrated into the urban labour market for a long time. That has continued, but it has not increased significantly (in relative terms) in the past thirty years and it has not led to great divisions in wealth between households with recourse to off-farm wage employment. Wage labour has not disturbed the social order. Finally, the persistence of non-monetary relations of production (for some labour and land requirements) and the continued recognition of Fijian culture, traditional status and clan affiliation demonstrates that social change has not permeated deeply into the village.

In visiting and studying the villages, one might be impressed with the extent of off-farm incomes, with the area under cash crops, with the number of new houses being built and with the apparent co-existence of tradition and modernity. But these are not new phenomena and were noted by Nayacakalou in his 1954 work. What is remarkable is that so little has altered in thirty years. Even the changes that have occurred over the period have precursors. The adoption of rice cultivation by many villagers has had some major effects on land use but rice was grown by Cautata and Draubuta villagers (and their Indian tenants) in the 1930s and before and, to an extent, this crop barely begins to match the intensity of pre-contact *via kana* cultivation systems. Similarly, though population growth has been significant, perhaps it is only now beginning to mirror early nineteenth century levels. Even mobility, individualism and education have antecedents in the societies of Draubuta and Cautata in the first half of this century.

It is clear, then, that changes have not been inevitable or even, nor can they be explained by theses of immizeration (an increase in exploitation, landlessness and proletarianization) or development (increase in living standards, intensification of production, the replacement of customary by capitalist relations of production). Of course the lives of villagers and settlers are different from what they were thirty or a hundred years ago. Many things have come from outside: food, electricity, roads, buses, corrugated iron, government extension services, market demand and labour opportunities. These have all led to local accommodation and change at different times and in different ways. Money has become an everyday part of life and, for most, its attainment is an everyday objective. To meet these influences, people have been personally amenable to change (they have wanted better houses, jobs and education for their children) but they have also lived in a system which respects and preserves customary relationships, and

forthcoming with reciprocal exchange of food and even money. Village social security is a flexible system and one that is not just confined to the old ways. Extended family relationships mean that assistance is given to the elderly but may mean also that working parents can call on others for child minding and domestic chores. For those out of work (temporarily not a part of the wage labour market) the village is a place where at least the basic subsistence requirements of food and shelter can be met for very little cost. Thus, because land and labour are relatively freely available and because the exchange of these is often non-monetized, the social costs of reproduction can be largely internalized.

It is this factor — the internalizing of social costs — that underlies the importance of the villages on a macro-economic level. Capital-scarce governments have recognized that village land, housing and social care (even village funded education and health facilities) are ways of supporting those in the economy who may otherwise look to the state for assistance. It was why colonial authorities fostered a policy of conservation and why, now, the independent state of Fiji is in no mood to oversee the disintegration of village society. There are also obvious social and political considerations that militate against the destruction of village society in Fiji. Much of the political support for the former Alliance government came from Fijian villages. Socially, the villages provide a home and security for those unable to find these in the towns. The village is, then, a safety-net for otherwise destitute Fijians² and a major pillar in a political economy of recent economic growth with insufficient employment generation (Bienefeld 1984). It is vital to conserve a sector which can provide the subsistence needs of up to a half of the country's population at little or no cost to the state and which provides the social and cultural foundation for that population.

The other role of the villages is rural development. Again, this is a function that has both personal and macro-economic facets and it is one that has been present ever since Fijian villages were opened to external economic influences and opportunities. For many individuals, village land is seen as a key resource in the development of their own commercial agricultural enterprises, growing sugar cane, rice, coconuts or vegetables, or raising livestock. If they can obtain village land, preferably with a secure lease, and use some of the labour of their family, relatives or fellow villagers, they will have cheap access to two key resources and, thereby, enhance their chances for prosperity and success. The village is a good starting place for those wanting to become commercial farmers: it is cheaper (they may not have to buy into expensive leases or use hired labour to break in the land); there is not such a marked shift in lifestyle and conditions (they do not have to sacrifice existing homes and gardens); and the risk is less (if it fails, they always have a subsistence base). These individual commercial plans for village land are in competition with the communal security objectives above.

Rural development is a major macro-economic as well as an individual objective. For most of Fiji's colonial and post-colonial history, the villages have been neglected by the state as possible arenas for accelerated and sponsored agricultural development. Commercial agriculture was concentrated on freehold and leased land, especially in the cane regions, and the villages were left, apparently, for the primary aim of subsistence production. There were attempts in the colonial period to promote some commercial enterprises (in bananas, copra or tobacco), often on a co-operative basis, but these paled in comparison the

2 Ward (1987:44) however notes that there is evidence of destitution in some villages and this is attributed to the weakening of traditional reciprocity and sharing.

dominant sugar sector. Recently there has been a change and this has come about mainly because it is apparent that the limits of the non-village sector to have been reached and because rural Fijians have demanded greater attention in the political economy of independent Fiji. Alienated freehold land and land under secure leases occupies much of the most fertile country in Fiji but production cannot be intensified further (at least with present technology and with the major emphasis on sugar). Extension of non-village commercial agriculture onto village land is precluded by strong Fijian opposition to the leasing of further land and to the renewal of present leases. New settlement schemes, like Lomaivuna, are unlikely because no suitable or available land exists; the limits to extending non-village agriculture have been reached.

Thus attention is being turned to village land, to developing further what are seen as idle or under-utilized lands. Such is the rationale for many of the measures being taken to extend rice production. As long as world markets remain favourable to the growth of certain cash crops or the political will continues (for example for agricultural import-substitution), village land will stay a prime focus for rural development initiatives. Such state interest in village land foresees more commercial agriculture (perhaps in place of subsistence food crop production), greater efficiency (through economies of scale), more capital injection (whether private, group or state), and an aggregate increase in material living standards.

Both village social security and rural development in the villages are being promoted by the Fijian state for a variety of economic, social and political objectives. Yet the contradictions of the two are apparent. One stresses community, security, stability and basic needs; the other change, commercialism, individualism and materialism. There have been some attempts to resolve the contradictions but these remain ineffective and insufficient. For example, the recruiting of young men from the villages to serve in the Fijian army may soak up some surplus labour and relieve the pressure on land and the social order, but it does not solve rural employment problems. Nor has the co-operative movement or group farms proved effective alternatives to peasant, household-based enterprises in commercial agriculture. To a number of observers, village Fiji is in trouble: frustrations have mounted within the villages, there have been major strains on social relations, inequalities have increased, and the contradictions are becoming clearer and more intractable (Ravuvu 1983, 1985; Ward 1986a, 1987).

Data from Draubuta and Cautata suggest some possible ways of averting the growing crisis. First, there is the rigid land tenure system. Land tenure reforms have been suggested (Overton 1987b) which involve both institutional reform and recognition of commercial imperatives:

- The NLTB structure for rent collection and distribution is excessively unwieldy, expensive and inequitable. Too much of rent income goes in administration costs (25 per cent) and to chiefs and clan heads (30 per cent). If resident clan landowners received, say, 90 per cent of rents, they would be in a better position to assess the relative merits of leasing, their own commercial agriculture, or subsistence agriculture. At present, the value of leasing (and of land) is greatly understated.
- Rents are too rigid and not related to commercial value. With open market leasing and commercial rates and conditions, the value of land could be more closely approximated to land quality, accessibility and suitability for particular crops. Again this would allow for a better trade-off between different land use options for the *mataqali*.

- Alongside secure, longer-term leases (which should remain), there needs to be recognition of, and encouragement for, the range of informal (and extra-legal) land tenure practices that exist at present, principally unregistered *vakavanua* leases and sharecropping. Given some official regulation against abuses and assistance with draft agreements, land, labour and capital should be combined more easily. Villagers could keep tighter control over land (leases might be for shorter terms) but, with a greater proprietary interest (through participation) the benefits of flexible and joint ventures should be more apparent.

Thus a more flexible land tenure system might help to break down the gulf between village subsistence and non-village commercialism by maintaining (and strengthening) local ownership and control over land but also allowing for a more rational choice to be made about land use.

As well as such changes in land tenure, intensification of agricultural production is necessary if the twin needs of security and cash are to be met. With greater pressure on village land (from population growth and commercial enterprise), clearly more must be produced from the same area of land. What is suggested here is not necessarily a 'Green Revolution' model of intensification (involving land development, mechanization, heavy use of imported fertilizers, pesticides and weedicides, and new crop varieties) but a range of alternatives. There is land in the villages that could produce much more, whether by replacing fallow and grazing land with crops, by draining some swamp land, or by using terracing and careful crop rotation on the hills. The models of pre-contact *via kana* and irrigated taro intensive systems are alternative models to rice, sugar and coconuts that should be investigated further.

Greater flexibility in land tenure and intensification, however, should not follow blindly the path towards more commercial, specialized agriculture. There must be recognition and support for traditional subsistence crops because they are important for village households, provide dietary and cultural value, and are important also as cash crops. If excessive subsidy is given to specialist cash crops (in the form of research, credit, land development and market support), they will have advantages over traditional food crops which will be apparent and the effect on household diets and incomes deleterious. If special incentives are to be given for rice, they should be there also for *dalo* and there should be no long-term institutional price support for one rather than the other. Correct price signals, education on the value of traditional crops, research, credit and infrastructural support for all crops should reinforce the high value that villagers place on traditional crops and agriculture.

All these measures suggest that a more pragmatic approach is needed, rather than one which is ideological and prefers one system over another (cash crops over food crops, modern over traditional, or vice-versa). Villages will remain the dominant feature of most of rural Fiji (unless there is a dramatic change in policy), they will attract more attention as the state attempts to promote economic growth, and they will continue to act as a safety net and a source of security for most Fijians (even those who do not live in the villages). This study suggests that neither rigid preservation nor radical transformation is necessary if the twin objectives of development or security are to be met. As long as Fijians value their own culture and society and as long as resident villagers have a greater share in the control over the proceeds from land, then choices about what and how to produce can be met within the village context. Traditional values of community,

culture, history and society need not be incompatible with new values of money, materialism and individualism. Accommodation and modification have to be made for both, but that is occurring now and has for the past century.

Non-village agriculture. The situation facing agricultural systems outside the Fijian village (whether on leased or freehold land) is somewhat less pressing but is no less important for the country. Whereas the villages have a dual role, with historically the social security aim being dominant, non-village agriculture has always been geared much more towards commercial production. It is true that some of the settlement schemes began with the partial aim of resettling Fijians from land-scarce areas so that they could pursue almost village-like agriculture, but cashcropping has been the primary goal.

This model of rural development appears successful. With the advantages of credit availability, state support, a nearer approximation of land value to land capability, and sometimes favourable market conditions, specialized cashcropping of sugar, rice, ginger, vegetables or coconuts, and the raising of livestock outside villages has contributed much more to the marketed output of Fijian agriculture than the villages. In doing so, this sector has also supported many households in the countryside (with some internalizing of the social costs of reproduction) and generated employment in related agricultural labour and service sectors. Its economic importance is recognized.

However, the future of non-village agriculture in Fiji is far from clear. Not only may it not expand: it may suffer some contraction. This is due to the land constraint. Secure, non-village, smallholder agriculture is confined to freehold land and, to a lesser extent, Crown land. Crown land is not totally secure for tenants, because there are moves to revert lands under Crown Schedules 'A' and 'B' to *mataqali* ownership (*Fiji Sun* 2 August 1986). Though such land is often of high quality, covering most of the good land alienated prior to 1874, it is limited in extent and can only increase in area slightly, through the transfer of extinct *mataqali* land to Crown Schedule 'A'. Any rise in the area of non-village agriculture must be on native leases. Not only are many Fijian landowning groups opposed to the leasing of new areas (especially within the present NLTB/ALTA structure), they are likely to oppose the renewal of many leases coming up for renewal in the 1990s. This means that there is very little prospect of new resettlement schemes being founded, even if there were suitable land available (Ward 1985), and it affects not only Indian tenants but also a large number of Fijians wanting to establish sugar, rice, ginger or cattle farms.

Given this political reality, the future of non-village agriculture must be, as it is with village agriculture, in intensification. But the course of intensification may run a different path on leased and freehold land. Much of the sugar land in Fiji, together with some rice and market gardening areas, is heavily cropped, with high inputs of fertilizers and monocropping. Intensification of production on such land could only proceed through mechanization and/or economies of scale, meaning larger and more capital-intensive farms. One brake to this may be the insecurity of leases (thirty year terms at present) which may mean that investors will shy away from heavy capital inputs and improvements. Another alternative might be a switch to a more productive crop, such as irrigated double-cropped rice, though the state commitment to sugar production would seem to preclude this.

The move to more capital and larger holdings is already evident in Waibau. The investment of Chinese and 'Victoria Parade' capital and their increasing participation in land ownership (even if this is not direct), may be an embryonic model for the future development of non-village agriculture: land shortage and profitable crops force up land prices; land accumulation will occur as subsistence peasant smallholders are squeezed out; and specialized capitalist farming with a small permanent labour force and casual wage employment will become the dominant model (although this possible transformation will be slowed or arrested if world sugar prices continue their long-term secular decline). Such change will have severe social implications for rural Fiji for it may spell the end of a smallholding tenant farm sector, a sector which, in the sugar areas, is presently the economic backbone of rural Fiji and which is capable of considerable employment generation (Ellis 1985). Capital-intensive farming might not be quite as efficacious in absorbing labour or spreading wealth widely in the community.

This scenario, basically of a dual structure between semi-commercial villages and capitalist farms, is likely as long as there is a commitment to protect village land (and keep it in customary ownership), cash crops remain profitable and dominant in the Fijian economy, and there are relatively few enforced restrictions (as now) to land accumulation. Yet the transition to larger capitalist farms from peasant smallholding in the non-village sector need not be inevitable. State intervention to protect peasant agriculture by preventing accumulation, absenteeism or extra-legal land dealings might slow down the trend. But this is unlikely, for not only would it be costly administratively (and it seems that the present land administration cannot even enforce current regulations let alone new restrictions), but also much of present state policy favours the emergence of capitalist farming by encouraging specialist farming of sugar and rice through price supports and land development. There is also an awareness that economies of scale and greater efficiencies are desirable in some areas (Sevele 1980).

Another means of protecting the tenant peasant sector is to tackle the land supply problem. Some of the reforms mentioned above to change the NLTB rent collection and distribution system, to move to more commercial rents and to allow more flexible leasing and sharecropping arrangements, may release more village land for leasing and thus ease the pressure on present land and land prices. This should diminish the attraction of land speculation and accumulation and allow smallholders to adopt more flexible, if still rather insecure, farming practices. Land reform is the key to protecting both village and peasant agriculture.

Thus the two models for rural development in Fiji — village and non-village — appear to be quite different in terms of their future course and implications for Fiji's economy and society. Further, the two models have implications for the wider debate over smallholder agriculture in the Pacific (Ward and Proctor 1980; Ward 1982; Hardaker *et al.* 1984; Ward 1984).³ What may happen in Fiji is a growing division between capitalist farming (on limited freehold and leased

3 The debate between Hardaker and Ward may not be as sharp as suggested. Both seem to agree on the efficacy and desirability of smallholder agriculture (unlike Sevele 1980) but they disagree over the question of management, whether this should be internal to the production unit, or whether there is some scope for the intervention of a larger unit to assist in research, credit, marketing etc. See also Fisk (1986) on agricultural development options and Evans (1982a, 1982b) for an analysis of the plantation mode of smallholder management at Sevaqa.

land), small peasant holdings on leased land (gradually declining in importance), and village agriculturalists (themselves divided between mostly subsistence producers with small plots and some with larger more commercial gardens). The pace of transformation will be conditioned by two major factors: the world economy (affecting the profitability of Fiji's exports and imports),⁴ and the continuance of the land tenure bottleneck (which may accelerate the move to capitalist land accumulation). Only one of these lies within the ambit of the Fijian state and that — land — requires urgent attention.

The role of the state

The preceding sections have hinted at the importance of the Fijian state in charting the course of Fijian rural development in the future. The present structure is a product of past land and social policies and the future lies in the way social, political and economic imperatives are handled. The state, its policy assumptions and objectives, are the subject of more detailed analysis here.

Many of the present problems within rural Fiji stem from the contradictory ideologies adopted by the colonial and post-colonial Fijian state with regard to rural economies and societies (Ravuvu 1985). On the one hand has been the ideology of colonial (and neo-colonial) conservation of village society and traditional polity. This was an essential feature of colonial policies and was reinforced by the 1948-67 Fijian administration regulations. Though relaxed after 1967, there are signs (with the implementation of the Cole Report and in the political climate following the 1987 coups) that such an ideology — that traditional Fijian society must be the basis of Fijian life — is still very strong. This ideology points to strategies which protect and strengthen Fijian communal ownership of land, respect chiefly authority, maintain customary (and non-monetary) economic relationships, and encourage communal enterprise. It also means that the social costs of labour reproduction can be delegated to the village economy (not the state) and that a 'reserve army of unemployed' can be maintained in a part-subsistence village economy.

The contradictory ideology is of economic development, a strategy which aims to raise material standards of living, increase production (for domestic and export markets) and generate more monetary employment. Whilst these are economic objectives, they have important social and political ramifications. Money will replace reciprocity (thus weakening traditional exchange and economic relationships), material wealth and differences in wealth will increase, there is no *a priori* reason why chiefly authority will correspond to economic power, and individual enterprise is likely to be more effective in a capitalist economy than communal co-operative ventures. The ideologies are at different poles and they lead to conflict.

But the two ideologies have arisen largely because of a number of misleading assumptions that have been made concerning the nature of both traditional and commercial agriculture and society. Principal amongst these has been the assumption of a static and basic village system. The implicit view is that land is held communally and that there are few if any long-term individual rights to land, that communal labour is still an everyday part of the village economy, that traditional authority extends to all economic life, and that subsistence agriculture is

4 The profitability of certain export crops does not depend just on prices but also on the question of market access. Thus guaranteed markets for Fiji's sugar — 'aid with dignity' (Taylor 1987:1) — are crucial for the maintenance of this sector.

dominant. Villages are not all like this. The Draubuta and Cautata cases suggest that land tenure is varied and that some individuals have been able to get secure access to land, that household labour and occasional *kerekere* is much more important than any large communal labour operations (especially in agriculture), that chiefs have an important social and cultural role but interfere little in daily economic life, and that cashcropping has become an essential part of most household economies. Villages are not static, nor uniform, nor do communalism and traditionalism play an over-riding role in daily economic activity. Neo-colonial conservation, therefore, is an ideology that is based on a myth — a myth that villages are thoroughly 'traditional' or, if they are not, that 'traditionalism' can be recreated. It cannot, for change in village economies has been too fundamental for any retrogressive or conservative strategy to be implemented.

On the other side, there is the assumption that the non-village sector is capable of expansion without a fundamental change in the peasant mode of production. The key assumption of colonial and post-independence conservation is that smallholding can be extended, intensified and capitalized considerably more than at present, yet continue much as now: a peasant sector which is household-based and relatively productive. But it is clear that the limits to extension have been reached (as no new native land is likely to be leased and current lease terms are insecure), that environmental degradation restricts forms of intensification, and that further capital inputs are more likely to be externally generated (from merchant and urban capital, with consequent accumulation and peasant disintegration). The dynamics of smallholder agriculture are poorly understood.

The contradictions of pursuing the policy strategies of the two ideologies are clear. There is a major conflict between political, social and economic goals — between conservation and development. Nayacakalou identified that a choice had to be made between preserving the indigenous Fijian way of life or changing it (Nayacakalou 1975:135; Ward 1987:44-5). This involved major social, political and economic changes and was behind Nayacakalou's recommendations for reform in Fijian administration. Yet, in many villages such as Draubuta and Cautata, that choice has already been made. Changes have occurred, especially in economic life, in the past fifty years and more. Preservation is no longer an option because what was traditional cannot be defined, let alone recreated. But still the state tries both. In Draubuta, for example, simultaneously with the implementation of the Cole Report (with tighter village administration and more power to the *turaga-ni-koro*), a new road is being built (throughout the Rewa Delta) and major land development for rice farming is being undertaken.

The effect of such contradictory policies, in short, are social and economic schism: a division between traditionalism/ authority/ stability and modernism/ materialism/ change. Whilst there is no overt hostility and conflict in the study villages, there are obvious tensions: the younger men, the wage earners, and often those from lower status clans favour change and 'freedom', whereas the elders and the established hierarchy support the Cole Report and, presumably, at least some of the aims of the coup leaders.

Given that such ideologies and policies have deepened divisions in Fiji, and that they have been based on certain suspect assumptions, it might be suggested that new approaches be adopted. One essential starting point would be a deeper understanding by politicians, officials and planners of the complexity and dynamics of rural societies and economies. The simple assumptions of stability and traditionalism in the villages must be discarded for an approach that recog-

nizes not only the nature and magnitude of change to date, but also the capacity for future change. What new assumptions and policies should focus upon is the commonalities of Fijian rural economies (not the divisions), those aspects of economic life where new features (such as wage labouring or cashcropping) have been adopted and adapted by the established society. Change need not be revolutionary and it need not involve dualist models of rural development.

Whither studies of rural Fiji: dichotomies or convergence?

It is apparent from this study that much more research is needed in order to improve the understanding of processes of change in rural Fiji and to suggest ways around the impasses of present policies and politics. Such work must involve a better comprehension of change, it must adopt new sets of assumptions and new models and it must continue to draw from studies at the micro level. Such empirical work could focus on more peripheral village economies, on the overlap and interaction (rather than the distinction) between Indian and Fijian farmers, or on the economic role of chiefs.

One of the first tasks is to appreciate better the nature and dimensions of the transformation of social and economic change in rural Fiji. Previous studies, and to an extent this one, have been based upon field surveys, upon the measuring of present patterns but only the description of assumed processes of change. More rigorous techniques are needed as is a more explicit focus on change. The context of change (the basis of change or where it is coming from) as well as the dimensions of change (how fast and in what direction) are just as important here as the description of what the changes have been. Such work might involve more analysis of archival records, it might draw upon oral or archaeological data, it may involve resurveying the work of earlier social scientists, or it could lead to the establishment of new longitudinal surveys. All are needed. Also, in studying change over time, there should be a better appreciation of contrasts in change over space. The histories of Lau, Rewa or western Viti Levu are all different, and relate to their different locations, societies and resources. Common processes may have occurred but it is unlikely that they will have been manifested in the same way in all locations.

New assumptions about rural transformation and the pattern of rural societies and economies are essential. It is argued here that many of the former dichotomies employed in the study of rural Fiji should be discarded. These draw dialectical relationships between rural and urban, Fijian and Indian, individual and communal, core and periphery, and village and non-village. These may have been of utility in the past but they have also acted to mislead researchers and policy makers alike. New perspectives should focus not so much on differences but on inter-relationships. Thus the notion of 'rural' should not embrace merely the assumption of 'non-urban' or peoples engaged solely in agriculture. It should give a perspective on people who live in dispersed or small settlements and who rely on the land for most of their income and/or welfare. However, research on rural Fiji also must appreciate the high degree of cultural and social interaction and the large flows of cash, investment and labour between town and countryside.

Just as the notion of 'rural' needs to be reassessed, so too does that of 'Fijian'. Again, this study has adopted the perspective of ethnic Fijians, for there is much, culturally and institutionally, that divides them from Indo-Fijians and others.

However, there is a danger that such ethnic-based studies blind one to similarities and inter-relationships. It may be easy to contrast an Indian cane farmer from Ba with a village Fijian in Kadavu, but it is much more difficult to separate Lomaivuna settlers on the basis of race. They overlap in characteristics and, importantly, they interact daily. Much could be gained by focussing on similarities (on common problems and common needs) and on the economic relationships (in land, labour and capital) between indigenous Fijians and others. The nexus of the groups, not the poles, is important.

'Pan-social' studies are as important as 'pan-ethnic' ones. Just as the focus on Indian or Fijian blinds one to common features, so too does the setting apart of one group in society (*galala*, chiefs or wage labourers). The interest in *galala* in the late 1950s and 1960s, for example, probably overstated the importance and dynamism of this group over many ordinary villagers who were adapting just as rapidly to economic opportunities. The focus here should be upon relationships that cross social boundaries and involve important economic interactions. Thus the chief/commoner or the landlord/tenant relationships are worthy of more attention.

Finally, studies might be more 'pan-sectoral'. Previous divisions, which draw distinctions between village and non-village may be useful, but it should not be assumed that these are separate and unrelated sectors. This study has argued strongly for a recognition of the relationships between these sectors, particularly in respect of land, and, with better understanding, it may be possible to improve the mutual gain from further activities such as sharecropping.

Thus, new perspectives may open new research possibilities. Research should continue and build upon the tradition of fieldwork in rural Fiji in the past thirty years. Micro-studies are still important to measure and assess change, but more studies, focusing on relationships between sectors and between state and producer are just as pressing a need. Rural transformation in Fiji has been major and has had implications for the national political and economic scene. It is time for research effort to match and monitor that change.

Differentiation in rural Fiji

Social change and social classes in rural Fiji have been discussed in the preceding chapters in relation to certain themes: land, wage labour, commercial agriculture and traditional status. These have outlined some of the complexities of social and economic change in rural Fiji and have indicated that many generalizations concerning Fijian classes (for example *galala* versus *koro*, rural versus urban, and communal versus individual) do not seem to fit the empirical evidence and may lead to misleading conclusions about the nature of change in rural Fiji. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify some broad parameters of class and change and these will be brought together in this chapter. Differentiation will be examined at different levels: micro (within villages), macro (the national level), and spatial (between regions). First, however, it is necessary to outline how the context of change in the mid-1980s is somewhat different from that of earlier studies.

Changing classes

Since the surge of interest in rural Fiji by a number of social scientists in the early 1960s, following Spate (Ward, Watters, Belshaw, Frazer), there have been major changes both in the way rural Fiji and Fijian society are studied, and in the broader political economy of Fiji. There has been a transformation in the socio-political context and in the academic perspective of change.

The observations made in the 1960s pointed to elements of change in Fijian society and most supported the direction and desirability of this transformation. A fairly basic model of Fijian society was adopted, based on a predominant agricultural subsistence economy, an entrenched social structure and social inter-relationships, and an overriding influence of custom and communalism. They noted the rapidity of change away from this model, but it was unilinear change: the adoption of cashcropping, wage labouring, individualism and capitalist modes of exchange. An explicit theory of change was developed by Watters (1969a, 1969b), whose theory drew heavily upon ideas about modernization and development current at the time.

Since the publication of these early works, there has been a new intellectual perspective, one strongly influenced, if not dominated, by Marxist theories of underdevelopment and class formation. Again a fairly basic model of traditional Fijian society is adopted and incorporated into notions of a 'tributary mode of production'. Also, the fundamental elements of capitalist transformation are accepted: monetary exchange, individualism, wage earning and commercial agriculture. However, there is a major difference in the way the consequences of change are seen. The emphasis is not on 'modernization' but on inequality, dependence, exploitation and new social stratification. It is assumed that a more differentiated society has emerged and will continue to do so in Fiji. Sutherland

(1984) has gone furthest to analyse the nature of the new classes, with his basic division between an 'indigenous bureaucratic bourgeoisie' and the 'peasantry'. Change is seen as being rooted in the nature of colonial capitalism, the workings of the colonial and post-colonial states, and international capitalism. Seemingly, transformation has been inevitable and steady.

Just as the intellectual climate has changed, the political economy of Fiji has undergone a significant metamorphosis in the past twenty-five years. Whereas in the pre-1967 period, rural Fijians were bound to the land and the village by a restrictive set of regulations and tight administration, in 1986 there was much more freedom of action and movement, though the Cole Report and the coups of 1987 point to some subsequent reaction. More options are open because of administrative reform but also because of technological change and economic growth. There is greater complexity in household and village economies and societies. Yet, whilst most people would consider themselves better off in a material sense, greater social and economic mobility has increased the perception of relative deprivation and frustration. A Rewan villager in late 1986 may be living in a less controlled society and getting better prices for market vegetables (relative to 1960), but compared to Indian cane farmers, urban entrepreneurs, chiefs or bureaucrats, he feels worse off and unable to catch up. Frustration has increased.

Furthermore, the political situation is different. In 1960, the colonial state was still firmly in control (and was even challenging the chiefs in the wake of the Spate and Burns Reports) and there was little room for ordinary Fijians to air their grievances or act to rectify them. Now, in independent Fiji, many vote for a ruling (basically Fijian) Alliance Party that has attempted to maintain the level of Fijian rural support by fostering development programs in the villages, perhaps more in the interests of the ruling chiefly/bureaucratic class than the peasantry (Sutherland 1984). For those who feel that the Alliance does not represent their ideals and aspirations, there have been alternatives (the Labour Party since 1986 and, earlier, the Western United Front or the Fijian Nationalist Party). So ethnic Fijians have political options, political power, and are prepared to exercise these. This willingness to exercise their political power was demonstrated in the build-up to the May 1987 coup (through the Taukei Movement), the coup itself (through the army) and its aftermath (through the Council of Chiefs).

In the face of these intellectual, political and economic changes one would have expected a significantly different scene in the villages: more mobile societies, the dominance of capitalism, and the disintegration of custom. Certainly, this study has pointed to some of these changes, to the capitalization of commercial agriculture, the importance of off-farm activities, and tensions over land. But what is surprising is that many things have not changed (the continued respect for traditional status, *vakavanua* land tenure, the centrality of household subsistence agricultural production), and there have been some instances of what some might see as retrogressive change (a possible decline in off-farm wage employment in Draubuta, less leased land, and the recent strengthening of authoritarian Fijian administration). Differentiation has been far from even, inevitable or rapid. Neither the modernization nor the Marxist prescriptions have been realized.

Differentiation at the micro-scale

This study involved surveys in four major areas but in only one, Draubuta, was it able to use former survey data (that of Nayacakalou) to analyse the patterns of change over a thirty year period. This comparison of present with past survey data is instructive. It questions the pace and nature of transformation, and allows for some conclusions to be made about socio-economic differentiation in the village. It is apparent that the overall pattern of social organization in Draubuta has changed little over the years and, furthermore, the village society has not been stratified to a major extent along new, capitalist class lines. Traditional status remains, there are some households that are doing relatively well and some general income groups can be identified. But these are not classes and they are not new. All households have access to at least some land, nearly all derive some cash income from diverse sources (whether wages, cash crops, or selling mandarins, seafood or handicrafts), and there are no great contrasts in material standards of living within the village.

This would suggest that there have been no significant processes of differentiation occurring at the local level, or at least if they have been at work, their impact is not readily apparent over a thirty year period. In other words, to use Sutherland's concept of Fijian peasantry (1984:393), there has been little differentiation within this class, no real emergence of 'big peasants' and no major proletarianization, despite a fundamental transformation of the Fijian political economy and state attempts to modernize and monetize the Fijian peasantry. Perhaps this is because the peasantry has gained relatively little from capitalism and because the structure of colonial conservation is still in place and inhibiting new forms of social and economic organization.

Another explanation is that local conditions, in terms of economic constraints and opportunities, are more important than any macro-processes. Some people and areas do well because they have political clout, are close to the cities, or have good land. Others fall behind for the opposite reasons. With an institutionalized land and social structure, local circumstances act to complicate the picture of social change so much that the identification of common processes in different areas is almost impossible. Thus, in this study, it was seen that differences amongst the four major case study areas was apparently greater than differences within. Empirical evidence has cast doubt upon the efficacy of explanations which stress macro-level processes of change within Fijian communities.

Yet to argue for the importance of local conditions or to stress the continuation of social stability and conservation within villages should not lead to the complete denial of macro-processes. Even if we cannot point to new and distinct classes, it is apparent that there are things happening in rural Fiji, across all areas, that are slowly transforming the lives of villagers, settlers and farmers. Land is most important, though labour and life-cycles are notable secondary processes.

If capitalist classes were to develop in the Fijian countryside, then land would be the key. Land-accumulating farmers and speculators would emerge who would gradually replace smallholding peasants on village and leased land. This would be associated with the development of specialist commercial agriculture and pastoralism in place of mixed commercial-subsistence gardening. For this to happen, there would have to be a commercial land market and alienation of land from customary Fijian ownership. This is not the case and, if anything, the tendency is to regain Fijian village land from tenants. Thus, with an institutional

straightjacket on land tenure and pressure on village land, the village-based peasantry (if not the tenant smallholders) seem secure. Transformation and class formation are arrested.

However, within the restricted land tenure structure of Fiji, there is room for some manoeuvre and change. Such latitude is most apparent (amongst the present case studies) where tenancies are relatively secure and cashcropping profitable, as at Waibau. Land accumulation is occurring here and will continue, but what is significant is that accumulation is based mostly on non-local capital from city entrepreneurs or larger scale rural enterprises that span a number of areas (for example, the ginger growers of Waibau). Local settlers and local capital do not compete successfully, despite some limited multiple land holding by settlers. There is not a viable local base for accumulation and differentiation within the economies of the scheme. 'Big peasants' may have emerged but their prosperity has been based on the short-term gain from ginger and is not assured.

To carry the argument further and to speculate on what might develop in the future, it could be suggested that external capital is likely to remain dominant, if somewhat short-lived (given the insecurity of thirty year leases, and the questionable sustainability of the ginger ecology). The settlers are the agents (or partners) of capital, providing land and labour and sharing in some of the profits. In this context, settlers will remain (because entrepreneurs will not want to invest directly in insecure land), and they may be relatively well-off compared to other rural areas, but they will be subordinate to external capital and unlikely to move up and out of the peasantry into specialized, sustainable capitalist farming. Whereas the 'Victoria Parade' farmers and entrepreneurs can move their capital to new areas (to a new ginger frontier, for example) or withdraw it when prices fall, the settlers are bound to the land through their leases. The base for socio-economic transformation is fragile.

In the villages, land is equally important, though much more restricted by land laws. Protection of customary titles, the demarcation of reserve land, and village resistance to leases mean that external capital is less attracted to village land. Outside capital is limited to a diminishing number of tenants, a handful of share croppers, and the small state investment in infrastructure and land development. There are no 'Victoria Parade' farmers, no speculators and no big absentee landlords. Land laws and customary practices have inhibited the development of a new class society within the villages.

There are two main, and opposing, pressures affecting any accumulation based on village land. The prospects of commercial agriculture, the work of some state agencies (such as the Ministry of Primary Industries) and projects, and the need to have a viable area of land for cashcropping together mean that many villagers seek larger areas of land for farming. Their objective is to become 'big peasants', even capitalist farmers. The opposite pressure is population and custom. Population pressure on the land, the need to maintain household subsistence food production and the maintenance of customary land tenure mean that there are strong forces acting to share what land there is as widely as possible. Would-be farmers are stifled: they are left with less land and less secure land on which to base agricultural enterprise.

The effect of these opposite pressures is a distinction within the villages between those who have a reasonable quantity of good land (whether leased or not)¹ and are able to pursue some form of commercial farming, and those who are dependent on an often small share of clan land for household needs and limited surplus production. The former wish to maintain and extend their access to the land they have been lucky enough to gain in the past, and the latter want the land redistributed more equitably. Clearly, there are major constraints on the future development of larger-scale household farming enterprises in the villages. What this means is that land ownership provides no real basis for accumulation and differentiation within the village. There may be some moderately successful farmers with enough land and skill to make a living from agriculture but they are unlikely to develop further within the confines and conflicts of village land tenure. The old contradiction of modernization and conservation remains as strong as ever, yet it is a contradiction that remains blurred to villager, politician and planner alike.

Whereas land may not allow profound socio-economic transformation within rural communities, though land-based accumulation has occurred in places, labour and non-farm employment do seem to offer a more flexible means of material advancement for some. Off-farm earnings are the major contributor to household cash incomes in most of the case studies and some households in Draubuta and Cautata have become very suburban in character. The identification of those that have the highest household incomes shows that nearly all have at least one member on wages or salaries. Such earnings tend to counter differences in land endowment and complicate any nascent differentiation based on land holding.

However, on deeper examination, it is apparent that labour, too, is a limited base for deep division in rural society in Fiji. First, not all can engage in off-farm work. Those in Lomaivuna and Waibau cannot commute daily to Suva or Nausori and have to seek either local, lower paid and restricted employment, or engage in longer-term circular migration (meaning less income accrues to the rural household as the costs of labour reproduction have to be met closer to the place of employment). Not all have the skills to find and hold jobs in a restricted urban labour market, and rural wage labour is often very low paid and insecure. Increasingly, openings in traditional urban employment (such as the lower levels of the bureaucracy, unskilled labouring, or service industries) are being restricted. And even for those who have secure jobs, the occupational structure revealed in the samples shows that very few are in the higher levels of bureaucracy and none are entrepreneurs. In other words, rural Fijians in paid employment are not likely to be earning incomes which are high enough to set them distinctly apart from their farming neighbours. Whilst vital in the rural economy, off-farm employment alone is not a sufficient basis for local level differentiation.

The life-cycle hypothesis offers a third process of differentiation. As household labour is so important both for the maintenance of the household and the generation of cash incomes, it might be suggested that households with a number of economically active adults and few dependants would be significantly better off than those with large young families or older and smaller households. There is evidence for distinction on these demographic grounds and people in the

1 Those with good land include, for example, the cattle farmers on leased land noted by Ward (1987:116) as well as those in Cautata and Draubuta with good rice land that is not leased formally but whose rights are recognized and relatively secure.

schemes and villages will point to those with many children and say how badly off they are compared to those households where many people work. But even this is an incomplete explanation and one that cannot be sustained over time. Young children grow to become economic assets to the household and active parents grow old and dependent. The life-cycle hypothesis may explain differences between one household and another at one point in time and it might explain the changing fortunes of one household over time; it does not, though, support a process of sustained differentiation, separating permanently one group and its reproductive base from another.

All of these limits to differentiation, land, off-farm employment and life-cycles, mean that there are considerable frustrations within rural Fiji. People see wealth in the towns, in video movies, and in foreign tourists, yet they feel that they cannot achieve such levels of material affluence by staying on the farm, despite the social and cultural advantages of life there. More and more, migration is seen as the way out and up. Suva and other local towns have proved places of opportunity for many in the past, but the promised lands of Australia, Canada and New Zealand are now more sought after and accessible destinations. The successful move and tend to stay away, the less successful may try a move but, in time, return to the village. Increasingly opportunities are stifled, expectations are unfulfilled, and frustrations mount.

It is very difficult to distinguish patterns of socio-economic differentiation. There are strong identifiable forces (land, labour and life-cycles) which act to separate some groups from others but all, for different reasons, are constrained. New class formation in rural Fiji is stifled by land availability and land tenure. There are pressures for commercialization and accumulation of land but land laws in the villages and external capital in the leased land areas constrict change severely. Similarly off-farm labour and household labour resources offer opportunities for some to increase their material standards of living. None, though, allow significant accumulation of land, wealth or status. Micro-level differentiation cannot occur to any major degree.

Yet some processes of class formation and conservation can be discerned. Although the use of 'peasant' terminology is rather inappropriate in the Fijian context, some generalizations can be drawn using the well-defined criteria of Athreya *et al.* (1987) and Friedmann (1980). The availability of at least some land has meant that all the households studied are able to ensure the reproduction of the family and produce some surplus. They are 'middle peasants' or 'small peasants' but hardly any, except perhaps a couple at Waibau, are 'big peasants', with significant surplus production and the hiring in of larger amounts of labour. The distinction between small and middle peasants is hazy but depends on differences in land (middle peasants have larger blocks, often with more secure rights allowing some commercial agriculture, whereas small peasants have more restricted access); labour (the former hire in some labour, the latter do not); and surplus production (middle peasants produce for surplus, small peasants concentrate on domestic production).

However, the differences are a matter of gradation rather than distinct sub-classes. Land allocation has meant that none have emerged as semi-proletarians

or proletarians, for all in the case study areas are generally able to achieve the basic reproduction of the family (in terms of food and shelter) from their land, even though many do hire out their labour.² At the other end of the spectrum, there are no real capitalist exploiting classes within rural Fiji, for hardly any enterprises employ labour on a very large scale (except perhaps for sugar cane harvesting) and there is no major landowning class (except for the trends noted at Waibau). This means that there is little or no expropriation of surplus from the Fijian peasantry by capitalist classes, though it could be argued that the state does exploit the peasantry by imposing taxes and avoiding meeting many of the social costs of reproduction. All that could be suggested by way of an 'internal' exploiting class would be the remnants of the tributary mode of production, wherein surplus is appropriated by chiefs, though such direct economic exploitation has weakened greatly in the past hundred years and is of little importance in most rural areas of Fiji.

Differentiation at the macro-scale

Whilst it is difficult to distinguish distinct classes within rural Fiji, it may be possible to discern processes of differentiation in a wider context. Despite the difficulties of moving outside the bounds of the case study data, certain general dimensions of differentiation can be identified and discussed: ethnicity, capital, traditional status, land and the state. In different ways all these act at the national level both to distinguish one group from another and to inhibit such distinction.

Ethnicity is perhaps the most visible element of social division within Fiji, yet explanations which draw a sharp boundary between the socio-economic status of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians and relate that distinction primarily to differences in culture or attitude (rather than land or colonial history) are flawed. Of course there are obvious differences between Fijian villagers and Indian tenant farmers, and there are vitally important and recognizable perceptions of differences. Yet it is not sufficient to explain these simply in terms of culture. This study has shown that there is considerable overlap between ethnic groups and considerable interaction: whether sharecropping of ginger in Waibau or of rice in Draubuta; *vakavanua* land arrangements throughout; or the similarities between neighbouring Fijian and Indian ADP rice farmers or Lomaivuna settlers. What does tend to separate the races, though, is land. Because Fijian customary land is protected, most rural Fijians are landed proprietors and Indians mostly tenants; and because, in the face of mounting pressure on land, Fijians will exert proprietary rights, many Indian smallholders (and a significant number of Fijian tenants) will find themselves as insecure tenants and potentially landless proletarians. The majority of Fijians, on the other hand, will always have access to land, no matter how small this may be. Ethnic classes in rural Fiji are apparent, therefore, almost only in so far as they relate to land tenure.³

2 However, Cameron (1983) has noted the rise in destitution reported in Fijian rural areas and in some cases it is probable that households are unable to obtain the basic necessities of adequate food and clothing, let alone important expenses such as school fees or bus fares. See also Stavenuiter (1983); Bienefeld (1984:322); and Ward (1987:44).

3 Other explanations for ethnic differences relate to colonial history. With colonial conservation and tight restrictions on movement, Fijians did not develop the experience, confidence or skill necessary to become successful entrepreneurs (Sutherland 1984:127). Now it is very difficult for many to break into a competitive and relatively closed business sector. Another reason for the small number of Fijians historically in business or the professions is that many of the most educated were snapped up by the bureaucracy and given jobs in Fijian administration. These explanations contrast with those that see obstacles in the Fijian way of life: in *kerekere*, communalism, and a leisurely, non-competitive pace of life.

Capital is similarly important as a real and perceived element of social differentiation. Capital investment in the rural economy has often come from outside (principally from urban entrepreneurs) and, to a limited extent from the savings and borrowing of rural people. Because the latter is limited, urban capital is dominant. Land prices have risen, where leased or freehold land is available, and local farmers have found it difficult to compete. For them investment has turned to capital improvements (fertilizers, chemicals, machinery, livestock) rather than land. Land within the village cannot be secured and the non-village land market is usually too competitive to allow for significant accumulation from within. Therefore any limited local capital is being channelled into the intensification of production on existing small land holdings, whilst external capital investment is often in land speculation and only sometimes in intensification. Again, it means that the emergence of rural capitalists is constrained, for investment is small or speculative. There are no big rural employers and no big rural landowners.

The issue of traditional social status has been addressed in Chapter 6. Whilst it is true that some people with high chiefly status have enjoyed success and wealth as a result of their participation in business, politics and the bureaucracy, the social fluidity and fuzziness of definition regarding this group make it difficult to draw general conclusions about the relative importance of traditional status. Whilst there are arguments that such a class exists (Sutherland 1984) and accusations that their social and political power has been used to accumulate individual material wealth, it is not possible to come to the conclusion that traditional Fijian social status is a necessary or sufficient condition for present socio-economic stratification.

Land is one of the major determinants of differentiation in Fiji. Marked distinctions, based on landholding (or lack of), might be expected in a country where land shortage is becoming more acute and the control of land becomes concentrated in relatively fewer hands. In Fiji, however, quite different processes seem to be occurring. There is not the wholesale emergence of landowning and landless classes, but there are more subtle distinctions between those with secure land and those whose tenure is insecure. Such divisions are not to do with present contrasts in wealth (for many on less secure leases are profitable farmers and have good incomes) but are more an issue of long-term security and thus sustained reproduction of wealth. Thus, even those who are accumulating land (as in Waibau), are operating within a thirty year lease period (unless they are buying freehold land elsewhere) and are looking to short-term gain (from agricultural enterprise) or medium term speculation (from rising land prices). They cannot reproduce wealth for longer than this unless lease renewals are assured. Thus land laws on the one hand sharpen the ethnic division in Fiji and profit the land speculation activities of urban capital but, on the other, they constrain the emergence of either a rural proletariat or a landlord class. Overall, they limit the possibilities for a more differentiated rural society in Fiji.

The role of the state further complicates the process of social change. It has been suggested that the colonial state exploited and controlled the Fijian peasantry (through taxes, laws and conservation) in order to serve the interests of mainly planter capital (Sutherland 1984:82-7). The post-colonial state could be similarly accused, by its commitment to conservation and the continuing levying of provincial and other taxes. However, the political economy of Fiji is now vastly different. Planter capital has all but disappeared or, in the case of sugar, been

replaced by a state corporation, and the Fijian peasantry has much more political power. This has forced the state to recognize the needs of rural Fijians and embark on many programs of rural development, in order to maintain the political support of this group (Sutherland 1984:393). In many ways, then, the post-colonial state has been a means, not for the oppression and exploitation of the Fijian peasantry, but for its relative advancement or, at least, its higher political and economic profile.

Consideration of differentiation at the macro-level reveals a complex set of often conflicting processes at work. It is possible to suggest that race, capitalism or traditional status are factors that distinguish one group from another and there are definite ways in which all of these do so. Yet, cutting across these are the complicating issues of land and the state. Land shortage and land tenure systems seem to stifle large-scale differentiation (despite promoting some forms such as ethnicity), while the state (at least until May 1987) followed policies that at the same time maintained the colonial land tenure structure but supported traditional social systems, capitalist economic development and, officially, multi-racialism. With such conflicting policies and processes, one comes to the conclusion that socio-economic differentiation in Fiji, such as it may exist, is probably much more a matter of the subtleties of land, power, and capital than universal processes of proletarianization and capitalist class formation.

Spatial differentiation

All notions of spatial differentiation seem to rest upon the assumption of a basic framework of regional contrasts. This model has been hinted at by Ward (1965) and others (Watters 1969a; Fisk 1970; Chandra 1976; Nair 1980; Walsh 1982; Chandra and Gunasekera 1984; and Frazer 1986) and shows a series of fundamental differences between areas: between rural and urban; between Suva and the port towns, the sugar towns and smaller service centres; between the sugar lands and the rest; between east and west; between Indian and Fijian landscapes; and between good accessible land and mountainous or remote areas. Such differences are readily drawn from empirical observation. It is, for example, relatively easy to identify and describe the 'cane basins' with good flat land (much under Crown or freehold tenure), dispersed settlement in smallholder farms, a high proportion of Indo-Fijians, intensive cultivation, commercial economic relations, and distinctive cane farm landscapes. This contrasts with another example, that of 'village' Fiji with usually lower quality land, nucleated village settlement, predominantly indigenous Fijians, diverse patterns of cultivation of food and some commercial crops, mixed commercial/non-monetary economic relations, and mixed tree and garden landscapes. To these can be added city and town (in their different forms), and variations on the sugar and village models (such as the copra regions, former sugar lands in southeastern Viti Levu, and the tourist centres).

Such is the basic regional pattern, one that is still evident today and one which forms the fundamental structure of Fiji's spatial economy. It is a pattern that has resulted from history, culture, location, environment and land tenure. However, many of these are not well explained and it is basically a model of pattern, not process.

Perhaps the foremost determinant of spatial differentiation is location. This factor is implicit in the works of both earlier and more recent authors (Ward 1965; Watters 1969a; Britton 1980b; Sofer 1985a, 1988; Bayliss-Smith *et al.* 1988). The

basic premise here is that the main towns and the sugar regions form the core of Fiji's economy. They are the most commercialized, the most prosperous and the most closely linked to the international economy. As one moves further from these areas towards the periphery, the costs of transport and production rise, commercialism and the intensity of economic activity decline, and living standards tend to fall. It is a model of distance decay, relative accessibility, and (for some) modernization. For the rural areas of Fiji, the model suggests that those regions closest to the towns will be relatively better-off with more profitable commercial agriculture (whether sugar or market gardening), closer proximity to wage employment and better access to services. Conversely, on the periphery agricultural options are more limited, wage labour is only through circular migration and/or remittances, and services are poor. One of the dangers of extending this notion of location and distance decay, is to assume that space may be some sort of surrogate for time, that what is happening now in the core will spread, in time, to the periphery. Nonetheless, the location model seems to have validity in rural Fiji, though other processes complicate the pattern.

Environment and land are important factors. The marked environmental contrasts (climate, soils and land availability) between the main and outer islands and between the east and west sides of the two main islands provide a basic framework for explaining major regional differences in Fiji (Twyford 1963; Twyford and Wright 1965; Ward 1965). The dry west is well suited to sugar cultivation and thus encompasses most of the towns and commercial agriculture; the wet eastern sides of Vanua Levu and Viti Levu are more suited to usually less remunerative crops, such as coconuts or root crops, and thus have a more Fijian and village character; whilst the outer islands, which are remote and have little land, have more marginal economies. Such environmental considerations are linked closely to the question of land tenure: the present and former sugar and copra lands are often under freehold or leasehold tenure, whilst the rest remain in customary control and use. Again this is a basic factor — that environment and land impose a framework for the spatial economy — that holds true in many general respects.

To these must be added the historical component, best described by Britton (1980b). The spatial economy of Fiji is a product of history, of the overlapping processes of indigenous economic inter-relations, land alienation, planter capitalism, urbanization and tourism. Thus, the smallholder agriculture of the cane regions resulted from the failure of the large plantation/indentured labour system by 1920, those rice lands around Nausori and Navua a product of failed sugar planting by 1960, the tourist centre at Nadi building on wartime transport infrastructure, and much of village Fiji the result of the policy of colonial conservation. Understanding of such historical developments is crucial to the understanding of present geographical patterns.

Yet these three factors — location, environment and history — do not go far enough in explaining spatial differentiation. They do not account for the complexity of regional organization and contrast. For this, capitalism, the state, class formation and tradition are all factors which require examination. Of these, the role of capitalism has been most recently discussed and has been tackled from a number of perspectives. Bedford (1977, 1979) began by using dependency theory to explain the relative underdevelopment of some peripheral regions but others developed this further by analysing the nature of capital and core-periphery economic relationships. Britton (1980b, 1980c, 1983a, 1983b) demonstrated that

international capital, through the tourist industry, was concentrated (in the Suva, Nadi and Lautoka urban areas and selected tourist locations nearby) and there were few backwash effects to more peripheral areas in terms of employment generation or growth in handicraft or food markets. Furthermore, most of the profits of the industry were repatriated out of the country. Thus inequalities increased between core tourist regions and the periphery in Fiji but also internationally between Fiji and other countries. Sofer (1985a, 1985b, 1988) carried the dependency paradigm further in his analysis of Kadavu. He sees spatial differentiation in terms of the establishment (in colonial times) of a basic core-periphery structure which is being maintained at present through internal migration, preservation of the 'village mode of production', patterns of capital allocation, and the monopolistic position of the core. In other words, the operation of the capitalist economy, coupled with colonial and neo-colonial conservation, has acted to create and increase regional inequalities. Whilst this argument does add some understanding, it is not wholly convincing, for it rests upon a static view of the rural economy, there is a tendency towards reification of space — the ascription of explanatory power to concepts such as core and periphery (Kitching 1979, Soja 1980) — and it underestimates the role of state policy.

It is the state, the neo-colonial state especially, that has had a major role in altering the basic pattern of spatial inequality. Because the post-independence governments of Fiji have been dependent on the support of rural ethnic Fijians, and because many of the leaders of the Alliance government have hailed from peripheral areas, such as Lau and Cakaudrove, attention has been given to certain regions ahead of others. They have benefited from government services (such as health and education), disaster relief, and the distribution of aid and rural development projects, and consequently, qualify for the term 'pampered periphery' (Bayliss-Smith *et al.* 1988). The pampering process, in a way, is an extension of the conservation strategy, for it lowers the cost and increases the attractiveness of life in the village, it enables easier social control, and it shores up political support. It means that the inhabitants of some regions, which might otherwise be described as peripheral, weak and poor, have political clout and reasonable standards of living and services, despite their narrow economic base (UNESCO/UNFPA 1977). But while some regions are pampered, others remain relatively neglected by the state. To a large degree these are regions that are less peripheral (such as Rewa, Ba and Ra) but also include those with a lower political profile (Naitasiri, Kadavu, Lomaiviti). Therefore, the state has done much to alter the basic model of spatial inequality and interaction.

Notions of class and regional differences in class relations must also be taken into account in explaining spatial differentiation in Fiji. The continued power of Fijian chiefs is obviously important in the way the state allocates social capital and thus, the constitution and dynamics of this class need to be appreciated if spatial patterns of power and state capital allocation are to be understood. Here, it might be argued that the dominance of Lau and Cakaudrove chiefs has helped divert state funds to these regions to the expense or neglect of others (Durutalo 1985b). There are other aspects to class/space relations. The investment of private urban capital in rural areas is spatially selective and constrained mainly by land tenure (it does not penetrate communal land), land quality (areas suitable for sugar, ginger and the like), and location (it tends to remain close to the core where control is more direct). Thus entrepreneurs who speculate in land and establish poultry farms or hobby farm (as examples) are an important part of the rural

economy of Fiji but are found only in certain areas, and this has major consequences for land prices, levels of capitalization and labour absorption for these 'core' rural regions.

The nature of the 'peasantry' has spatial implications. Although the term 'peasantry' is rather unsatisfactory, for it covers such a huge range of living standards, farming practices, and social relations, it does have some utility to describe the mass of rural people who are limited to relatively small holdings of land, who have a variety of limited household incomes, who are capable of basic subsistence from their land, and who maintain the household as the basic unit of production and consumption. Variations within this group are major and have spatial dimensions. Thus the 'small peasantry' (and perhaps some semi-proletarians) are often found in villages where land is restricted, on insecure tenancies of small plots of land, or where off-farm employment opportunities, or viable cash crop enterprises, are limited. These conditions are often more common in the peripheral areas (the outer islands and the interiors of the main islands) or on the margins of the cane basins. The 'middle peasants' and a few 'big peasants', on the other hand, have more secure land, and more of it, are usually able to exploit a range of agricultural or wage earning activities, and are more integrated into the national and international economies. These groups are more common in the good farming regions of the western cane lands, the Sigatoka and Rewa country, and areas close to the cities and towns. Thus, differences in socio-economic status are probably both part of the cause, and are partly caused by, spatial economic contrasts.

Finally, though many of the above processes of spatial differentiation have to do with modern aspects of capitalism, class and state, traditionalism cannot be ignored. The preservation of at least some of the elements of Fijian society and the maintenance of chiefly power has meant that some features of pre-contact spatial organization have remained, if much modified. Whilst pre-contact regional organization and interaction was fluid, it did involve the recognition of different *vanua* (and occasionally *matanitu*) which had spatial definition. These were reinforced by military alliances and conflicts, by traditional *tauvu* relationships between matched regions, by language differences and by variations in history and culture. Thus Lau, Rewa, Nadroga and Ra were recognized regions. Many of these were institutionalized in the colonial period by a system of provincial Fijian administration, with provinces and *tikina* which corresponded loosely with the traditional units and their leaders. Furthermore, economic change often exacerbated regional contrasts. Thus the establishment of sugar plantations in Ra, Ba, and Nadi, for example, created distinct regional economies that contrasted with the copra plantation systems of Cakaudrove or Lau, or the relatively untouched economy of Naitasiri. Today, those regional contrasts and affiliations remain strong and they have political and economic dimensions.

Thus, there is a complex set of processes operating to distinguish one region from another in Fiji. These are basic factors such as location and climate, capital flows and state influence, there are social contrasts, and there is the mark of traditional organization. Given these complexities, it is not possible to reach general or unequivocal conclusions. Polarization between core and periphery may be occurring but it is not even; there is no monolithic core (or periphery) with common characteristics; and there is no inevitability about the future course of spatial differentiation. That depends too much on broader processes of economic, political and social change.

Differentiation in retrospect

In Chapter 1, five hypotheses were suggested as themes for this study and these can now be assessed. First, it was proposed that the emergence of new classes in rural Fiji has been constrained principally by land shortages and complex *de jure* and *de facto* land tenure systems. This has been supported strongly by the case study evidence. Village land has been exploited by some for personal gain, but there are now strong pressures against individual accumulation and the further transfer of land from communal to leased individual tenure. Even where native land has been released through the NLTB, there are trends either for much of that land to be recovered by the landowners after the limited 30 year lease period or, where it is available, accumulation has been pushed by external capital, not by local peasants.

The second and related hypothesis, that land and the exploitation of natural resources do not provide a substantial basis for employment generation is also supported. Whilst the villages studied might be providing a safety net or soak for urban unemployment, there is little to suggest that employment, with returns to match most urban occupations, is being created by present processes of rural development. Some households have done well, but there is almost minimal spread of employment beyond the household unit and the land constraint continues to frustrate new agricultural enterprises.

Thirdly, the proposition that alternative sources of income and accumulation off the farm are now the major factors affecting rural inequalities and change has been seen to be true only to a limited extent. Certainly, there have been considerable opportunities for some households, especially in commuter villages, to exploit a wide variety of off-farm occupations and this has led to quite large differences in incomes within these villages. However, non-agricultural activities are themselves limited by the nature of the urban labour market and limited access to it, and the inequalities that have arisen are not large or widespread. They do not form the basis for a significant alternative form of socio-economic differentiation throughout rural Fiji.

The notion that new patterns of spatial organization are emerging that go beyond rural/urban or core/periphery divisions is also one that can be accepted only in a qualified form. There are deep and sustained inter-relationships between town and countryside, in terms of the flow of labour, capital, raw materials, food, manufactured goods, ideas and political influence, and the economies of rural and urban areas both include elements of agriculture, industry and wage labour. Such widespread interaction and the complexity of rural economies have so blurred these distinctions (especially in the study areas) that they no longer seem generally appropriate. Yet perhaps they never were: rural economies have always involved more than agriculture; migration has been ever present; and living in a peripheral region has not been, at least in Fiji, any guarantee of poverty. Perhaps it is not so much that new patterns and processes of spatial organization are emerging but that the old ones have been misunderstood.

This leads to an acceptance of the final hypothesis that former dualist frameworks, not just of spatial differentiation but also of the social and economic structures (such as communal/individual or traditional/modern), are no longer

appropriate as a basis for study. New research must proceed on a more sound understanding of the complexity of Fijian society, economies and political organization and reject such inappropriate and facile assumptions.

Having reviewed these central concerns of the study, it is now possible to broaden the perspective and consider some of the more general features and implications of differentiation in rural Fiji.

It is clear that in Fiji the processes of socio-economic and spatial differentiation have not advanced as far as in many Third World countries. A large rural proletariat is not in evidence, large landlords are not a feature of the rural economy, and there are only very limited possibilities for 'big peasants' and capitalist farmers to emerge out of the general mass of the smallholding peasantry. The single most important explanation for this is the state policy of conservation. It began in the early colonial period and may have been more the result of the need for cheap and effective social control than the oft-professed altruism. It may also have resulted in the creation and preservation of a privileged and protected chiefly class, it may have inhibited entrepreneurial skill and confidence amongst Fijians, and it may have created economic and social rigidities. However, conservation and colonial land laws may also have prevented the development of a more stratified society. Fiji is no shining example of communalist equality, but its society is a lot less unequal than it might have become had there been an open land market and unbridled capitalism.

Yet, if there has not been large-scale socio-economic differentiation in rural Fiji, why has there been political crisis, manifested so starkly in the coup of May 1987? The answer, if one is possible, is that there are perceptions of inequality within Fiji, perceptions that are conditioned by everyday observations, prejudices and frustrations, not by sober historical or comparative analysis. People feel frustration: tenants are anxious that they may soon lose their land and the work of decades; villagers see their land secure in the hands of tenants; rural dwellers see some of their city cousins enjoying a standard of living they cannot achieve in the village or on the farm; and common people are torn between traditional respect and loyalty for their leaders and disdain for their privilege, corruption and wealth.

Whilst this study has not identified distinct patterns or processes of differentiation within some amorphous multi-ethnic peasantry, it has led to the conclusion that there are considerable contrasts within rural Fiji and many of these lie at the root of political and social instability. First, there is land. Pressure on land from a rising population and from the competing demand for food and cash crops has created a land hunger that is not being satisfied through a rigid and dated land tenure system. Tensions exist not just between Fijian landowners and Indian tenants but, in many places just as much, between those Fijians (many fellow villagers) who have secured a reasonable area of good land and their neighbours who struggle to grow subsistence crops on small traditional allotments. Land is often seen as an ethnic issue. It is as much, if not more, a matter of general competition and institutional constraint. It is a problem that will only heighten with time unless fundamental reforms are made.

There is, secondly, the issue of social conflict. This has many facets within Fijian society. There is a simmering resentment (coupled with deep respect) for the high chiefs who have power, and sometimes wealth, and who are attempting to tighten their grip on village society. This is by no means a universal sentiment but is apparent in the subdued frustration of many. Generational conflict also is

not overt but latent. The young adults in the villages and towns see their elders established in positions of influence or control that inhibit the freedom of people who, with some education, aspire to better jobs, more say in the running of their communities, and more land. Such class and generational divisions are often matched by the rural/urban and traditional/modern distinctions. Those with experience of city life, urban wages and rapid change and with high aspirations are pitted against those wedded to the soil, to the old ways and to gradualism and traditionalism. Recognition and respect for custom and culture is always there, but it is seen by many as a part of their heritage, not a complete model for the running of their lives.

Regionalism is equally important in Fiji. This study was carried out in Rewa, Tailevu and Naitasiri, but might have achieved different results had it been in Lau or Bua, not just because of the different regional economic bases, but also because of the different social and regional affiliations there. In Rewa (less so than in the west) there is resentment that the region and its people produce wealth for the nation but they receive little by way of political power or state attention in return. Many in Rewa, though they may not have voted for the new Coalition government in 1987, were quietly pleased to see the defeat of the old Alliance order with its Lauan dominance.

Finally, there is the issue of ethnicity. Despite the arguments earlier in this work that inter-ethnic contrasts are not as marked as has been suggested in many pluralist analyses of Fiji (see Fisk 1970; Norton 1981; Premdas 1986; Sutherland 1984:74-7; Robertson 1986; and Durutalo 1986) and there is widespread interaction and co-operation, it is obvious that racial attitudes are crucial in the development of political conflict. Racial and racist stereotypes and explanations for the woes of groups on both sides of the ethnic divide have become powerful political icons for deeper problems and frustrations. These are so pervasive and effective, not so much because of fundamental differences in culture and attitude, but much more because race has become a symbol for the historical divisions in Fiji. Thus there is a high degree of correlation between race and regional differentiation, Indians find themselves on one side of the land debate (with not a few Fijian allies), and in the generational, educational and urban-modern versus rural-traditional divisions, they are allied more closely with the smaller group of 'modernist' Fijians. Race is a vital parameter of differentiation but it has come to disguise some of the more fundamental processes of change and conflict in Fiji.

The recent political perturbations in Fiji have their origins in the divisions in the country's society: divisions of class, region, outlook, race and land. They have been mounting in recent years and came to a head in 1987. But they have always been present, at least since 1874. Whilst the structure of conservation and the institution of land laws has done much to level some of the real and potential divisions in Fiji, they have also acted to rigidify and magnify others, especially divisions based on land, divisions of race and divisions of certain classes. Most fundamentally, colonial conservation has led to a situation where the debate that has plagued Fiji's economic and social history — expressed variously as modernization or conservation, change or preservation, development or stagnation — cannot be resolved one way or the other. Such a debate, and the patterns of differentiation that are associated with it, are likely to remain the central foci of Fiji's political economy well into the future.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Draubuta: population and land 1954-86

| <i>Mataqali</i> | Total area (ha) | Nayacakalou 1954 | | Lasaqa 1970 | | Survey 1986 | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | | Area leased (ha) | Resident population | Resident population | Area leased ^a (ha) | Resident population | |
| Nasiganadua | 13.76 | 9.71 | 6 | 11 | 1.56 | 11 | |
| Naqara | 8.90 | - | 2 | 8 | - | 13 | |
| Marakirua | 29.54 | 7.08 | 42 | 78 | 1.18 | 86 | |
| Naividugu | 25.09 | 8.90 | 10 | 11 | 8.64 | 51 | |
| Nameremere | 7.28 | - | 22 | 22 | - | 7 | |
| Matauta | 7.28 | 4.86 | 1 | 1 | 4.80 | 0 | |
| Tai | 10.93 | 5.87 | 16 | 16 | - | 8 | |
| Nainokanidua | 4.45 | 4.45 | - | - | 4.45 | - | |
| Nalecava | 5.67 | - | 32 | 14 | - | 22 | |
| Nakiova | 9.31 | 9.31 | 7 | 19 | 3.12 | 7 | |
| Nakolata | 14.97 | 8.70 | 6 | 43 | 3.62 | 23 | |
| Burekalou | 7.28 | - | 1 | - | - | - | |
| Levuka | 7.69 | - | 6 | 17 | - | 27 | |
| Nabunitu | 3.24 | - | 24 | 40 | - | 15 | |
| Naviteitei | 4.05 | - | 5 | 9 | - | 16 | |
| Natabu | 1.21 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Nadilo | 0.61 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Total | 161.26 | 58.88 | 180 | 289 | 27.37 | 287 ^b | |

^aSee Table 3.2 for notes on 1986 leased area.

^bTotal population for 1986 includes one person, not a member of any of the village *mataqali*.

Sources: O.H.K. Spate, *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, Suva, Legislative Council Paper 13/1959:12; R.R. Nayacakalou, *Tradition and Change in the Fijian Village*, Suva, University of the South Pacific, 1978:20; I.Q. Lasaqa, *The Fijian People: Before and After Independence*, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1984:44; field surveys 1985-6 and Native Land Trust Board records of leases 1986.

Appendix 2 Draubuta: notes on extinct *mataqali* (compiled by Josefa Raibosa Vuli)

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Nameremere ^a | There are three <i>i tokatoka</i> (one of which is extinct) within this <i>mataqali</i> . The remaining two survive in only two households, but are now incorporated within <i>mataqali</i> Naqara (to which it is closely related) and recognized as part of that unit for social purposes. Most land is under bush and only a little is cultivated. |
| Matauta | The head and only surviving member of this <i>mataqali</i> died recently. It has not been registered as extinct and its land has reverted to the use of <i>yavusa</i> Naibatisuli. The land is of high quality, it is well situated close to the village and on it are one registered agricultural lease (to a member of another <i>mataqali</i>) and several other plots, many under rice. |
| Nainokanidua | This <i>mataqali</i> was formerly the most senior of the <i>yavusa</i> Nalecava. It became extinct and was registered as Crown Schedule 'A' land and the headship of the <i>yavusa</i> passed to the <i>turaga-ni-mataqali</i> of Nakolata. The land is leased by the NLTB to Indian tenants. |
| Nakiova ^a | This <i>mataqali</i> is not extinct, though one of its two <i>i tokatoka</i> is so, and the remaining one is small (only a single household is resident in Draubuta). The land remains under the control of the <i>mataqali</i> , though much is leased to an Indian tenant. It is fine agricultural land close to the river. |
| Burekalou | The members of this <i>mataqali</i> died out some time ago but it is not yet registered as extinct. The land has passed to members of the same <i>yavusa</i> , Nalecava. Unusually, the land is not contiguous with other village land and much is under bush. |
| Natabu | Again, this <i>mataqali</i> became extinct before the NLC, its lands passing to the Crown, and little is known about it. Like Nadilo, it was within <i>yavusa</i> Burenivalu. The small area of land is in the bush and remote from the village but has, as with Nadilo land, reverted for the use of <i>mataqali</i> Nabunitu. |
| Nadilo | This <i>mataqali</i> , with only a small amount of land, became extinct before the first Native Lands Commission investigation and its land is now Crown Schedule 'A' land. The land is not leased but is used by <i>mataqali</i> Nabunitu (of the same <i>yavusa</i> and land-scarce). The <i>mataqali</i> was the most senior within the <i>yavusa</i> Burenivalu. |

^a*Mataqali* not fully extinct, though sections are and the unit is small.

Appendix 3 Notes on crops and crop names

| Fijian name | English name | Botanical name | Notes |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| baigani | eggplant | <i>Solanum melongena</i> | from Indian <i>baigan</i> |
| bele | - | <i>Abelmoschus manihot</i> | a green leaf vegetable with a number of forms |
| dalo | taro | <i>Colocasia esculenta</i> | many cultivars |
| dalo ni tana | xanthosoma taro | <i>Xanthosoma sagittifolium</i> | tuber and leaves used |
| dawa | - | <i>Pometia pinnata</i> | used for fruit and wood |
| duruka | - | <i>Saccharum edule</i> | unopened flower used as vegetable |
| jaina | (eating) bananas | <i>Musa cvs</i> | many cultivars |
| kavika | Malay apple | <i>Syzygium malaccense</i> | |
| kumala | sweet potatoes | <i>Ipomoea batatas</i> | many cultivars |
| ota | fern | <i>Athyrium esculentum</i> | used as green vegetable |
| rourou | leaves of <i>dalo</i> plant | (<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>) | used as green vegetable |
| tavioka | cassava | <i>Manihot esculenta</i> | many cultivars |
| uvi | yams | <i>Dioscorea alata</i> | many cultivars, local wild varieties include <i>bear</i> , <i>tivoli</i> , <i>kawai</i> |
| via | giant swamp taro | <i>Cyrtosperma chamissonis</i> | also known as <i>via kana</i> |
| vudi | (cooking) bananas | <i>Musa cvs</i> | many cultivars |
| yaqona | kava | <i>Piper methysticum</i> | different parts of the root form either <i>waka</i> or <i>lewena</i> |

Source: J.W. Parham, *Plants of the Fiji Islands*, Suva, Government Printer, 1972.

Appendix 4 Areas of cultivated crops (average per household, hectare)

| | Draubuta | Cautata | Waibau | Lomaivuna | Non-scheme |
|---------------------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|------------|
| cassava | 0.308 | 0.516 | 0.320 | 0.741 | 0.617 |
| <i>dalo</i> | 0.231 | 0.369 | 0.655 | 0.289 | 0.490 |
| <i>kumala</i> | 0.043 | 0.019 | 0.099 | 0.078 | 0.043 |
| <i>dalo ni tana</i> | 0.027 | 0.003 | 0.055 | 0.055 | 0.080 |
| <i>via kana</i> | 0.037 | 0.003 | * | 0.001 | * |
| yams | 0.107 | 0.004 | 0.006 | 0.022 | 0.003 |
| rice | 0.519 | 1.045 | * | * | * |
| <i>bele</i> | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.010 | 0.013 | 0.003 |
| <i>duruka</i> | * | 0.034 | 0.002 | 0.003 | * |
| <i>yaqona</i> | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.254 | 0.065 | 0.083 |
| pumpkin | * | 0.003 | * | * | * |
| English vegetables | 0.028 | 0.005 | 0.008 | 0.059 | 0.025 |
| pineapple | 0.015 | 0.125 | 0.054 | 0.264 | 0.148 |
| ginger | * | * | 0.429 | 0.198 | 0.233 |
| watermelon | 0.051 | * | * | 0.002 | 0.002 |
| <i>baigan</i> | 0.001 | 0.001 | * | 0.002 | * |
| chillies | 0.005 | 0.009 | 0.005 | 0.001 | 0.004 |

* Crops not grown or areas negligible.

Source: Household interviews 1985-86.

Appendix 5 Summary statistics for survey data (mean values unless stated)

| | Draubuta | Cautata | Waibau | Lomaivuna | Non-Scheme |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Sample size | 28 | 21 | 24 | 34 | 12 |
| Size of household | 6.25 | 6.71 | 5.88 | 5.21 | 6.17 |
| Farm size (ha) | 7.51 | 4.50 | 13.67 ^a | 5.38 | 40.60 |
| Standard deviation | 7.71 | 2.79 | 29.35 ^a | 1.21 | 45.93 |
| Crop area (ha) | 1.38 | 2.14 ^b | 1.90 | 1.79 | 1.73 |
| Percent with registered leases | 17.9 | 19.0 ^b | 100.0 | 100.0 | 75.0 |
| Percent adopting rice/ginger | 35.7 | 76.2 ^b | 80.0 | 85.3 | 75.0 |
| Percent employing wage labour | 14.3 | 33.3 ^b | 83.3 | 32.4 | 16.7 |
| Percent with agricultural loans | 7.1 | 61.9 ^b | 70.8 | 38.2 | 33.3 |
| Assets median score ^c | 2.22 | 2.33 | 2.58 | 1.64 | 2.14 |
| Household income (\$) | 4343 | 5595 | 4089 | 2908 | 3938 |

^a The Waibau mean area and variability are greatly inflated by the inclusion of one very large block of 150 ha, 130 ha of which is bush covered. If this property is excluded, the mean and standard deviation drop to 7.72 and 3.58 respectively.

^b These are high due to an unrepresentative sample in Cautata, which is biased in favour of rice producers. Accounting for those in the village who do not grow cash crops on a large scale, the adoption rate for rice, for example, would be 16.84% and the average rates for employment of labour, loans and crop area would be significantly lower.

^c Median score on categories given in Figures 6.2 and 6.3

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